

# Fermilab and the Environment

Since its founding in 1967, Fermilab has remained committed to responsible stewardship of the environment.



Fermilab's 6,800-acre site is open to the public and features prairies, oak savannas, woodlands, lakes and wetlands. It has one of Illinois' oldest and largest reconstructed native tallgrass prairies with more than 1,000 acres.

Fermilab has a long and proud history of land management based on ecological science and stewardship. Conservation work at Fermilab supports global initiatives such as climate change adaptation and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Since 1993, residents of neighboring communities have joined Fermilab employees for the annual Prairie Seed Harvest. Fermilab has donated native prairie seeds to dozens of schools, churches and not-for-profit organizations as well as the Kane and DuPage county forest preserves.

After habitat loss, the second largest threat to biodiversity is the spread of invasive species. Some ornamental plants have become a nuisance in natural areas. Preventing invasive plants from spreading and replacing them with native species are key components to the diversity of ecosystems at Fermilab.

From ospreys and green snakes to bats and bumblebees, Fermilab has a role to play in wildlife conservation and management. Recovery of rare species and high levels of wildlife diversity reflect a successful approach to environmental protection.

About 300 species of birds have been sighted at Fermilab. Bird monitoring activities by local birdwatchers have led to extensive data on what birds can be seen on the site and where and when they can be found.



A total of 54 species of butterflies have been observed on site. Dragonflies and damselflies thrive here as well because of Fermilab's diverse habitats and large number of ponds and lakes. Fifty-eight species have been observed, including several species rarely found in the Chicago metropolitan area.

A herd of about two dozen bison represents the laboratory's connection to its prairie heritage and its mission to conduct pioneering research at the frontier of science.

The Fermilab site has earned the designation of a National Environmental Research Park, one of only seven in the United States. Under that designation, off-site scientists use the Fermilab site to conduct ecology research projects to increase knowledge of existing ecosystems, to track individual species of interest, and to inform regulatory obligations.

Fermilab has conducted an environmental monitoring program on site for more than 40 years. The laboratory has earned national awards and consistent recognition for pollution control, environment-friendly "green" business practices, recycling programs and conservation efforts.

Fermilab Natural Areas is a 501(c)(3) group that provides internships, volunteer support and grant fundraising for ecology projects at Fermilab. Activities include spring seed spreading, summer invasive weed control, fall seed processing and winter invasive brush clearing.

Visitors are welcome to enjoy nature in the public areas of the Fermilab site. There is much to do and see every day of the year. Come on out and bring the family.