

Nature Reworked: Calumet’s Diverse Landscape

Natural areas, industries, transportation and neighborhoods are found side by side in the Calumet region. Industry and nature meet each other here like few other places in the country. The mix of forest, prairie, lakes, and rivers attracted large-scale industry, agriculture, trade, and city growth. But in some places, dry sands and wetlands proved too challenging to build upon. In time, and through much effort, they were preserved for their value as open space and as refuge for diverse plants and animals.

- **Changes to lifeways and landscape.** Life and landscape in this crossroads region reflect critical touchpoints in American history. Encounters between Native Americans and Europeans, pioneer farmers and builders of metropolis of Chicago, industrialists and their growing labor force, and city-dwellers and suburbanites, are etched on the landscape.
- **A heritage of activism and stewardship.** More than a century of grassroots citizen activism has conserved, protected, and restored the biodiversity, native beauty, and recreational quality of the natural environment, making the region a significant place to the American conservation and environmental justice movements.



Photo Credit: Jonathan Van Der Brug

Landmark railroad bridges on the Calumet River, South Chicago



Photo Credit: Hannah Anderson Graver/The Field Museum

Resilient nature on the lakefront, Portage



Photo Credit: Laura Milkert/The Field Museum

Phlox bloom at Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve



Photo Credit: Hannah Anderson Graver/The Field Museum

A wetland region, Wolf Lake



Photo Credit: Jessica Jaffe/The Field Museum

Homes, sand, and steel, Portage



Photo Credit: © Save the Dunes

Senator Paul H. Douglas at the newly designated Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

