



## Eugene Field Park Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project

United States Army Corps of Engineers

Contract Dates: 2010-2014

Chicago, IL

Eugene Field Park previously consisted of 12.75 acres of degraded turf grass park and ballfields, intersected by the North Branch of the Chicago River. The river and associated riparian zone were significantly degraded and overrun with invasive woody vegetation. The Restoration project included approximately 750 linear feet of bank reshaping and 20,000 CY of excavation to create a wetland basin in the central and western portion of the park site. The one acre wetland was planted with native wetland seed and plugs, and an additional 2.5 acres of wetland buffer and streambank plantings were completed to improve habitat diversity and help provide long-term stabilization.

To improve stream complexity and provide water quality and wildlife benefits, the project incorporated two rock riffle structures using rounded natural cobbles and several tree root wad structures along the shoreline offering additional habitat opportunities to fish and macro invertebrate species within the river. Native Water Willow plugs were installed within the riffle and root wad structures to further improve habitat and provide vegetative stabilization. Construction was initiated in 2011 through the use of large tracked excavators, dozers, scrapers, and tracked skid steers. The site was flooded on several occasions and adaptive management techniques ensured that the project was successful, despite difficult conditions. ENCAP, Inc. performed invasive species management and met all rigorous performance criteria at project completion in 2014.

The Eugene Field Park project was awarded the 2014 Conservation and Native Landscaping Award from Chicago Wilderness. The area continues to provide crucial wildlife habitat, water quality function and outdoor educational opportunities in a heavily urbanized area.

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