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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ComEd, Openlands Award Green  
to Municipalities, Nonprofits for Protecting Green Space**

*Inaugural Green Region environmental grant program to fund 17 projects in nine Illinois counties*

**CHICAGO** (Oct. 28, 2013) – ComEd and Openlands awarded \$125,000 in Green Region grants to 17 municipalities and nonprofits throughout northern Illinois to support their continuing efforts to conserve and protect open spaces. Many municipal and nonprofit budgets are stretched thin and U.S. cities face falling revenues for a sixth-straight year in the current economic climate, according to the National League of Cities (Sept. 12, 2013), which makes these grants even more important.

This is the first year of the Green Region program in Illinois, a joint effort by ComEd and Openlands to fund municipal conservation and environmental projects. The Green Region grants relieve some of the financial strain faced by numerous municipalities and nonprofit organizations forced to make significant cuts to environmental programs due to budget constraints. The grants subsidize existing open space projects at the municipal level focusing on conservation, preservation, protecting endangered species, and improvements to local parks and recreation resources. Each grant applicant was eligible for a maximum of \$10,000 per project.

Openlands, a Chicago-based nonprofit focused on land conservation, is administering the Green Region program. Municipalities and nonprofits throughout northern Illinois submitted their applications for a Green Region grant earlier this year. The applications were reviewed by an advisory committee of local environmental leaders selected by ComEd and Openlands.

The grants will be distributed by ComEd over the next two years. Openlands will monitor the 17 projects by developing applications, guidelines and a scorecard to track and measure the impact of each project.

The 17 inaugural Green Region grant recipients are:

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## Cook County

- **Village of Brookfield, Village of Brookfield Open Space Plan**  
This project will fund an update to the Village's Open Space Plan and will address key natural systems within Brookfield, such as Salt Creek.
- **Enlace Chicago, 6062 Trees Community Garden and Outdoor Classroom**  
This project will fund the design and installation of a rain garden and outdoor learning area within a community garden in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago.
- **Village of Hillside, Illinois Prairie Path Landscape Enhancement Project**  
The project includes capital and landscape improvements to the Illinois Prairie Path main stem segment passing through the village of Hillside.
- **Village of Homewood, Izaak Walton Preserve Trail System Footbridge Replacement**  
This project will fund materials to build a replacement bridge for the existing footbridge located at trail marker BR0.11 on the four-mile Izaak Walton Preserve Trail in Homewood.
- **Village of Orland Park, Orland Park Nature Center**  
This project will fund the site preparation including prairie seed mix and the development of a master plan for the Pebble Creek property and future nature center.
- **City of Palos Heights, Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens**  
This project will kick-off implementation of the master site plan for Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens by rebuilding the deteriorating bridge at the park entrance.
- **Village of Park Forest, Central Park Wetland – Three Year Ecosystem Enhancement Plan**  
The three-year improvement plan aims to restore the quality and habitat of the site through enhancement activities like invasive weed control, mowing and prescribed burns and water level management.
- **Village of Wilmette, Elmwood Dunes Preserve**  
This project will restore and protect the bluff and dune ecosystem at Elmwood Dunes Preserve by purchasing and planting native plants, trees and seeds, and installing educational signage.

## DeKalb County

- **City of Genoa, Trail Project**  
The trail improvement project would provide a gravel trail through parts of Genoa's Prairie Corridor project allowing the community to have greater access to recreational opportunities and scenic natural areas in the Grand Prairie.

### DuPage County

- **Glen Ellyn Park District, Ackerman Park Access from the Great Western Trail**  
This project will construct an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant, crushed limestone, 140-linear-foot trail extension connecting Ackerman Park in Glen Ellyn to the Great Western Trail.

### Kane County

- **Campton Township, Invasive Species Removal at Harley Woods**  
This project will remove invasive plant species at the Harley Woods site.

### Kendall County

- **Village of Oswego, Paddle the Fox**  
The project will fund the design and fabrication of five signs to identify the water trail as part of the “Paddle the Fox” project and placed along the Fox River at established canoe launch sites.

### McHenry County

- **Village of Bull Valley, Still Farm Restoration**  
This project will restore five acres of a 52-acre former farmland site (now village-owned) into savanna and wetlands, including walking path and signage for the public’s education and enjoyment.
- **McHenry County Conservation District, Trail of History Woodland Restoration**  
This project will fund 1,500-2,000 local-genotype oak and hazelnut seedlings to restore a 160-acre tract of historic oak woodland in McHenry County.

### Ogle County

- **Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District, Skare Park Restoration**  
This project will implement targeted control of highly invasive herbaceous plant species in select areas within Skare Park on a priority-based treatment schedule.

### Will County

- **Village of Mokena Public Works Department, Restoring and Revitalizing Mokena’s Crystal Creek Prairie**  
This project will support Mokena’s ongoing partnership with the Land Conservancy of Will County for improved land management and educational outreach activities at the 45-acre Prairie Park Preserve, a public parkland of wetlands and prairie.

### Winnebago County

- **Rockford Park District, Aldeen Park Dam Basin Restoration**  
The project will convert four acres of Aldeen Park to natural vegetation to promote flood management, water infiltration, and ecological biodiversity.

“Green Region is a great opportunity for local governments, nonprofits and ComEd to work together in improving our environment and conserving open space across nine counties in northern Illinois,” said Jerry Adelman, president and CEO, Openlands. “This program—which is an effective tool to help local municipalities and nonprofits invest in their own future, especially in this economy—is possible because of ComEd’s remarkable commitment and dedication to our region.”

“At ComEd, we’re always looking for innovative ways to better partner with the communities we serve. Supporting organizations that are doing great work to protect and preserve resources is a natural fit,” said Fidel Marquez, senior vice president of Governmental and External Affairs, ComEd. “As a company, we are dedicated to creating a more sustainable future and our Green Region grantees are key partners in that ongoing effort.”

The Green Region grants were presented to the 17 organizations during Openlands’ 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon in Chicago. The luncheon is the largest gathering of the conservation community in the Chicagoland area.

Green Region was first established by ComEd’s sister company, Philadelphia-based PECO, in 2004. PECO has distributed more than \$1.1 million to open space projects in the Philadelphia area.

Additional information on the Green Region program can be found at [www.openlands.org/greenregion](http://www.openlands.org/greenregion).

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**About Openlands**

*Founded in 1963, Openlands is one of the nation’s oldest and most successful metropolitan conservation organizations, having helped secure, protect, and provide public access to more than 55,000 acres of land for parks, forest preserves, wildlife refuges, land and water greenway corridors, and urban gardens. For more information, visit [www.openlands.org](http://www.openlands.org).*

**About ComEd**

*Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd) is a unit of Chicago-based Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation’s leading competitive energy provider, with approximately 6.6 million customers. ComEd provides service to approximately 3.8 million customers across northern Illinois, or 70 percent of the state’s population.*