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**MAYOR EMANUEL KICKS OFF SUMMER PROGRAMMING ON NORTHERLY ISLAND  
WITH TOUR OF NEW GREEN SPACE INVESTMENTS**

*U.S. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army for Civil Works Jo-  
Ellen Darcy Joins Tour, New Northerly Island Will Open in Fall 2014*

With Chicago Park District summer programming to begin on Monday, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy, Congressman Danny K. Davis and Chicago Park District Superintendent Michael Kelly today toured the Northerly Island construction site. The project, which includes topography changes, natural plantings and the creation of a large pond, is transforming nearly half of Northerly Island into an urban oasis in the heart of Chicago.

"The spectacular transformation of Northerly Island is just the latest in our broader effort to invest in our lakefront to preserve, protect and enhance it for generations to come," said Mayor Emanuel. "Previously the site of a variety of attractions, including Chicago's second World's Fair, a small airport and even a parking lot, this restoration project will finally realize Daniel Burnham's vision for Northerly Island as a sprawling green space and world-class urban oasis for all of Chicago's residents to enjoy."

The construction at Northerly Island, which will improve nearly 50 acres of open space in the City, is slated to be complete in the fall of 2014 with more in-depth plantings to be completed in the Spring of 2015. Public access will be increased to the wetland area, hills, camping grounds and other locations with the installation of ADA-accessible trails, boardwalks and a bridge at the south end of the island. The access paths will allow the public to interact with landscape and wildlife without disturbing the prairie and wetland plantings.

The transformation of Northerly Island includes the restoration of shoreline habitats, coastal wetland and other coastal plant communities and the installation of native plants and trees. More than 20,000 trees, shrubs and approximately 100,000 plantings will be planted.

"The key to success with any project is partnership. Projects as diverse as this one take a team effort. The Army Corps of Engineers is pleased to partner with the City of Chicago, U.S. EPA and the Chicago Park District on the Northerly Island Ecosystem Restoration Project," said the Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

The project is changing the topography of the island with landscaping and grading to create large, rolling hills and camping areas, which will accentuate the view corridors from Northerly Island to downtown. The island will also feature a pond designed to reduce broad mud flats and will help establish a habitat for the endangered mud-puppy salamander, serve as an estuary for fish and wildlife and provide a more consistently wet habitat for migratory birds.

"Chicago's lakefront is one of our city's great treasures," said Congressman Danny K. Davis (IL 7<sup>th</sup> District). "Chicago has rightfully taken great pride in preserving the lakefront as public commons, available to all without charge, and preserved for future generations. It is extremely unfortunate that many of our children have not experienced the opportunity to visit this space and take advantage of the recreational and educational opportunities it affords. The restoration of Northerly Island in conjunction with the Museums in the Park should significantly expand those opportunities given appropriate public policy support. This restoration provides a destination for recreation, but equally important, allows one of America's great cities to co-exist with nature in new and innovative ways."

When complete, the space will provide children from all neighborhoods with an opportunity to camp and learn about nature through programs with the Park District and Chicago museums. For example, the pond feature of the island will include an educational video display of the underwater habitat with a live feed to the Shedd Aquarium.

"The restoration of Northerly Island will give Chicagoans an opportunity to enjoy the natural and urban landscape of their own backyard. Lake Michigan and its shorelines are one of our country's greatest treasures, but they face challenges from invasive species to global warming," Senator Dick Durbin (D-Illinois) said. "Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, and Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy are some of the strongest allies in tackling those challenges head on and protecting Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes for future generations. And as more people have an opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Chicago's lakefront, more people will share in our resolve to protect the health of the Great Lakes."

The project is funded in part by a \$5 million Great Lakes Fisheries Ecosystem Restoration (GLFER) grant from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers for the Chicago Park District's southern 40-acre Northerly Island Habitat Development project. The Park District also contributed approximately \$2.5 million to the project. The project is part of the Northerly Island framework plan completed in 2009 by Studio Gang, JRR and Smith Group.

"The redevelopment of Northerly Island provides a unique opportunity for our patrons to connect with nature," said Michael Kelly, Chicago Park District Superintendent. "Close encounters with birds and other wildlife, and programming like family adventure days and overnight camping give many children and families nature experiences they wouldn't otherwise enjoy in an urban city like Chicago."

The transformation of Northerly Island is just one of the investments Mayor Emanuel is making to rebuild the lakefront – from the north end to the south end. In March, ground was broken on the Navy Pier Flyover to complete the 18 miles of scenic biking and walking trail along the lakefront. The new \$100 million development at the old U.S. Steele site along the south shore will include a

park for families to enjoy. And South Lakeshore Drive has been extended to accommodate new redevelopment, opening up more of the lakefront to make it more accessible to residents.

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