

Named after former Illinois governor Henry Horner, Horner Park is a large open space filled with lawns, groves, a tobogganing hill, and multiple athletic fields. The park was created on a site previously occupied by a brick manufacturer that excavated brick-making clay from the river banks. After the site was abandoned, the clay pits were used for dumping until the Chicago Park district started acquiring the land in 1946.

A riverfront woodland area **1** stretches along the river from Montrose south to Irving Park. A paved path meanders through the park, used by runners and walkers. Currently turf grass leads up to the river; access is blocked by a chain link fence. Beyond the chain link fence wooded, brushy areas border the water. Two unofficial dirt paths run close to the river on either side of the fence.

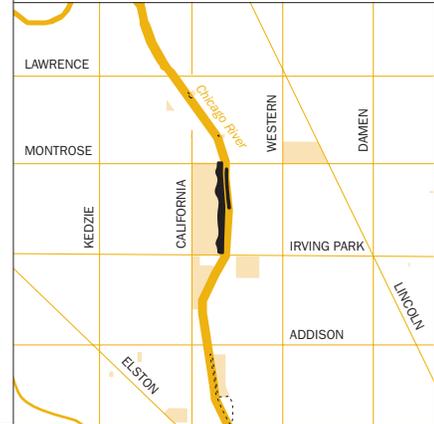
This part of Horner Park is quiet and feels remote. Plans to stabilize the shoreline and improve the habitat await funding. The oak grove at the top of the bank would be a good candidate for savanna restoration.

On the opposite (east) bank of the river from Horner Park is the ambitious, citizen-led restoration of Riverbank Neighbors **2**. Residents along the riverside blocks between Montrose and Berateau began their own native plant restoration of the river banks, bringing in the seeds of bottlebrush grass, columbine and wild rye. The group collaborates with Waters Elementary School to introduce river ecology and environmental stewardship issues into the curriculum, and it partners with the students in providing ongoing bank work. The group also operates in partnership with Friends of the Chicago River, and together they have managed to begin riverbank stabilization. Volunteers installed "wattling," (low fences made of sticks and branches) to define trails. The volunteer efforts have made the river's edge more aesthetically appealing and safer to visit.

Over the years Riverbank Neighbors has received funding from GreenNet Chicago, Chicago Botanic Gardens, and Illinois first and received an award from American Rivers for "Outstanding Educational Work." This area is leased from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District by NeighborSpace.

HORNER PARK AND RIVERBANK NEIGHBORS

Site No 33



4200 NORTH / 2600 WEST



Horner Park and Riverbank Neighbors

N: 33



ADDRESS 2600 W Berateau Ave
 OWNER Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
 ACREAGE 8.25

HABITATS **1 2** Riparian / Water Edge

DIRECTIONS For Horner Park, park in the lots along California. To see the work of the Riverbank Neighbors, it's best to take Irving Park Road to the River and turn north on Rockwell. Go north a few blocks to Berateau Avenue and turn left to find the main trailhead. On street parking is available on Rockwell, Berateau and other neighboring streets.

Horner Park and Riverbank Neighbors

Chicago Habitat Directory 2005