



Chicago Park District

Legislation Text

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REQUEST TO OFFICIALLY NAME THE MONTROSE DUNES EXPANSION AREA IN LINCOLN PARK AS THE MONTY AND ROSE WILDLIFE HABITAT

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District

I. Recommendation

It is recommended that an order be entered authorizing the General Superintendent or his designee to officially name the Montrose Dunes Expansion Area as the Monty and Rose Wildlife Habitat.

Proposed Park or feature: Montrose Dunes Expansion Area in Lincoln Park

Location: near the eastern edge of Montrose Beach

Community Area: Lincoln Park

Ward: 46

Proposed Name: Monty and Rose Wildlife Habitat

II. Explanation

The Chicago Park District naming and renaming procedures allow for the naming of features in parks, including playgrounds and buildings. Tamima Itani, Lead Volunteer Coordinator for the Chicago Piping Plovers, requested that the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners name the Montrose Dunes Expansion Area in Lincoln Park as the Monty and Rose Wildlife Habitat, in honor of the first two Piping Plover birds that fledged at the site. This proposal has the support of the Chicago Audubon Society, the Illinois Ornithological Society, the Chicago Ornithological Society, and the community.

Montrose Beach Dunes was originally formed by landfill and has since been shaped by natural processes. In 2001, the Chicago Park District stopped grooming the area to encourage dune formation. As a result, the site now contains beach, foredune, and globally rare panne habitat, which support numerous state threatened or endangered plant species. In 2005, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources added Montrose Beach Dunes to the statewide list of high-quality natural areas known as the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI). In 2021, the area was expanded with an additional 3.1 acres, which support valued wildlife, plants and the interests of nature enthusiasts. The additional acreage comprises an open sand area that shorebirds, including the federally-endangered Great Lakes Piping Plovers, use to forage and nest during their time in Chicago.

When the two chicks Monty and Rose (named after Montrose Avenue) fledged at Montrose Beach in 2019, they were the first two Piping Plover chicks to fledge in Chicago and Cook County in 71 years. Monty and Rose used the area extensively to nest and feed their chicks; they defended it from Killdeer and gulls to retain territorial rights of the area. They captured the hearts of people across Chicago, our nation, and even outside the US. Their story was portrayed in scores of local and national newspaper articles. The chicks they fledged in 2020 and 2021 were named to reflect Chicago's roots, history, and environmental justice activism: Hazel,

Esperanza and Nish in 2020, and Imani and Siewka in 2021. Two documentaries and two children's books retell their stories. Sadly, Monty and Rose passed away in 2022, but thanks to their presence at Montrose, scores of people were introduced to the joy of birding and to the importance of bird and habitat conservation.

III. Park Naming Procedures

Pursuant to Chapter VII, Section E of the Code of the Chicago Park District, (the Naming Ordinance), this request to name the park feature had been forwarded to the Secretary of the Chicago Park District, who filed a copy of this request with the Committee on Programs and Recreation and initiated a notice period to solicit public input. Notices were posted in parks and sent to advisory councils located within a one-mile radius of the park site. Elected officials were also notified of the proposal, including the alderman of the ward in which the park is located.

The notice period of forty-five (45) days soliciting public input regarding the naming proposal was initiated on December 13, 2023. There has been positive support for this proposal from community members, and no opposition has been received. Staff recommends that the Montrose Dunes Expansion Area in Lincoln Park be named as the Monty and Rose Wildlife Habitat.