

**Transcript**  
**Audio interview with Laurel Ross and Melinda Pruett-Jones on the Chicago Wilderness Alliance's Climate Action Plan for Nature.**

Ross: My name is Laurel Ross. I am the Urban Conservation Director for the Field Museum in Chicago, and I also chair the Chicago Wilderness Executive Council.

Pruett-Jones: I'm Melinda Pruett-Jones and I'm the Executive Director of Chicago Wilderness Alliance.

Ross: For the mission of Chicago Wilderness, which is conservation of biodiversity in the parts of those four states that we work -- so that's northeastern Illinois, northwest Indiana, a little bit of southeast Wisconsin and a little bit of Michigan -- we're dealing with a lot of threats to those biodiversities - those species and communities of concern -- and those are sort of urgent threats. And we see climate change as magnifying those threats. In terms of our restoration and management of the fragmented landscape that we're working with, it really means that we will lose things faster. We need to invest resources more wisely, more quickly. Basically it takes away time from us.

Pruett-Jones: The lands where biodiversity is currently trying to survive are disjointed and disconnected. And so as we think about the whole landscape of that region, we're looking for opportunities for connectivity, and recognizing that some species in their adaptation to what we see as models of climate change for our region, they're going to need some corridors to make some movements.

Ross: One thing that the Climate Action Plan for Nature has done is to really go to the land managers that are seeing this, these changes on the ground, and finding out what they're noticing, what they're learning, and taking that knowledge and giving it back to us all. That's I think been probably the most important contribution that the CAPN has made. So it's a resource for all of us.

Pruett-Jones: It's really looking at the fact that this huge natural landscape that does exist in the Chicago region -- 370 some thousand acres -- has a real opportunity as a climate-fighting action in terms of how it is storing carbon, and improving air quality and water quality, etc. So if our plans for managing those landscapes are not incorporating what we do know about climate change in the region, again, we're behind the 8-ball.

Ross: We're trying through what we're calling climate clinics to help. Melinda used the term "climate ready." We're helping all of our member organizations, no matter what their role is in conservation, to be climate ready.

Ross: The action plan is really about adapting to what we know, change that we know will happen. So most of the recommendations are about adaptation.