

# PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

## 2024 CONFERENCE



# Connections, Cuisines, and Canopies



CHICAGO REGION  
TREES INITIATIVE



PRESENTED BY:

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Chicago Region Trees Initiative



CHICAGO REGION  
TREES INITIATIVE

# About Us

- A partnership of communities, individuals, organizations, green industry, businesses, and governments working together to develop and implement strategies for a healthier, more diverse, more equitable urban forest.



# The WaukGrow Project

From Planning to Plantings

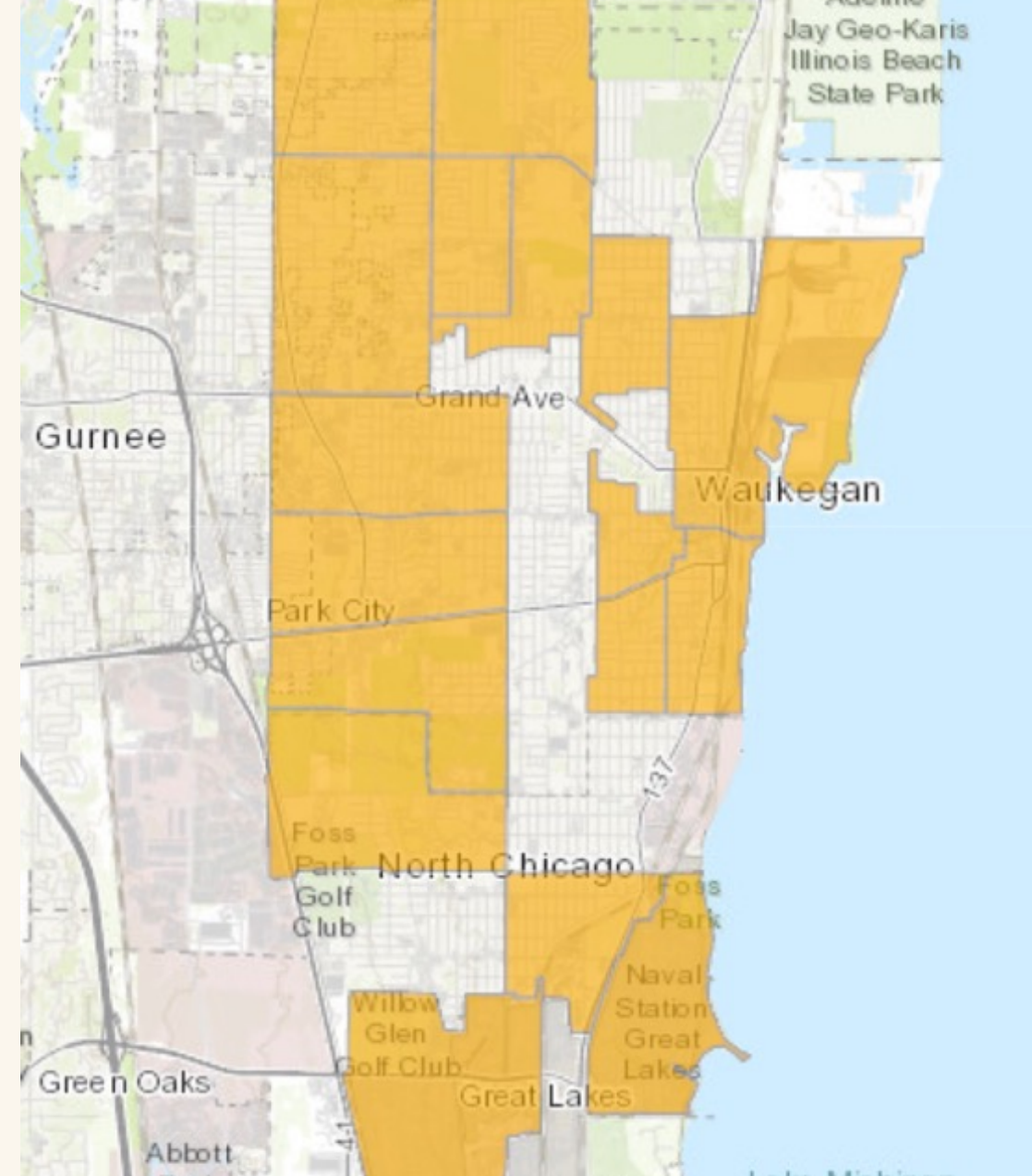


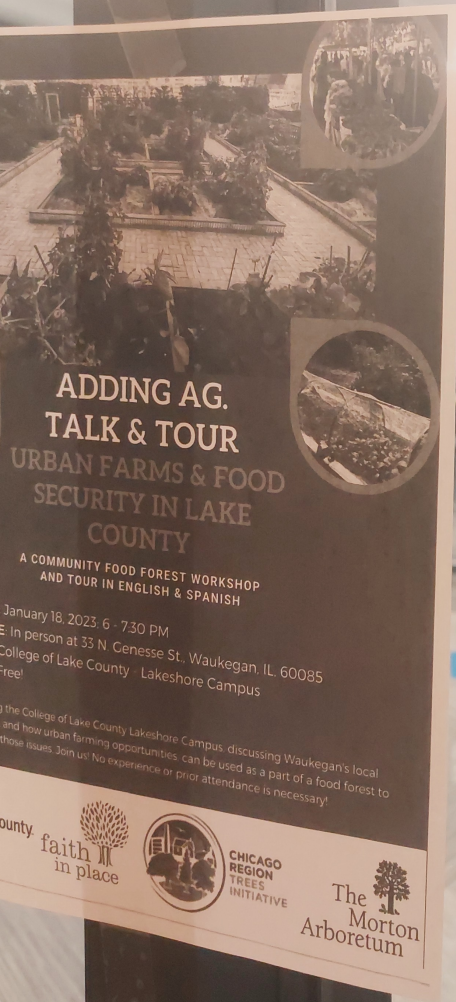


## Connections

# Waukegan's Food Desert

- USDA Food Desert – A minimum of 20 minutes commute one way for access to healthy food options
- Waukegan & North Chicago both have areas that qualify as food deserts, including downtown Waukegan
- WaukGrow aimed to present food forests as an option to mitigate the impact of local food deserts





## Workshops – The Warm-up

- Taught the basics of food forests, how to select sites for them, and their benefits
- Reached out to local schools, gardens, food growers of all capacities, etc.
- As each workshop was hosted, interest grew, as did the number of attendees

23

Project Partners



# 290

## Community Members

From Workshops to Plantings

Cuisines

# Neighborhood Nourishment

- Emphasis on native foods and local cuisines help encourage ownership of new food forests
- Native species provide ample opportunity for people to better connect with and appreciate native forests and local tribes and their cuisine



# 27+

## Native Species

To add sustainability and ecological resilience



Canopies

# Branching Beyond

- Increasing interest through the workshops led to interest in planting food forests directly
- Connections began with workshop attendees, then spread from one planting partner to another
- 8 partners from the first 2 years alone and more have shown interest for the future as well







## A Forest to Flourish

- Food Forest design not only included plant variety, vertical layering, and species mixing to ensure companion planting support, but was customized to address additional partner needs
- Educational opportunities, production purpose, landscaping concerns, aesthetic goals, and more were kept in mind
- Students were the primary force behind several plantings and were excited to know that what they planted would someday bear fruit







# 140

**Trees & Shrubs planted  
and counting!**

# Continuing connections

# Internet Interest

- With The Plant Clinic, free virtual trainings on plant care have also been created
- Free access for anyone with a course version available
- Multi-lingual (English, Spanish), and multi-format

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← Plant Clinic

## Virtual Plant Care Training

The Morton Arboretum Plant Clinic and the Chicago Region Trees Initiative have developed several new and free virtual tree care resources for specific audiences.

### Plant Care Trainings by Topic

-  [Planting](#)
-  [Watering](#)
-  [Mulching](#)

### Plant Care Trainings by Audience

-  [Home Gardeners](#)
-  [Landscape Contractors and Green Industry Professionals](#)
-  [Homeowners Associations](#)

# Thank you.



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<https://mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/expert-advice/virtual-plant-care-training/>