

Michelle Carr

Illinois Director
The Nature Conservancy

Michelle Carr joined The Nature Conservancy in 2013 after 16 years as an advisor at Goldman Sachs. In keeping with the Conservancy's global mission "to conserve the lands and water on which all life depends," Michelle leads strategic efforts to advance critical conservation work in Illinois and throughout the region. Her civic and professional experience helps the Conservancy bridge the gap between conservation and economic decisions to protect important places and change the way people and institutions use nature.



Today, The Nature Conservancy is advancing a path toward a resilient and sustainable future, one in which people and nature thrive together.

Key conservation efforts in Illinois include protecting and restoring prairie and other natural areas to help mitigate the effects of a changing climate, working with partners to advance clean energy policies, improving the quality of fresh water resources in the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi River basin, collaborating with local communities on urban conservation efforts and finding ways to engage more Illinoisans with nature and conservation work. Since 1957, the Conservancy in Illinois has protected more than 80,000 acres of critical habitat, and its science-driven and partnership-based approach has fueled breakthroughs that support conservation work across the globe.

Through Michelle's leadership, the chapter has successfully piloted innovative approaches to water quality improvements through the implementation of wetland restoration sites along the Illinois River, by working with agricultural partners to develop sustainable farming practices that reduce harmful runoff and protect soil health, and controlling and preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. Prairie conservation is also central to the Conservancy's work in Illinois, where only one-tenth of one percent of these iconic landscapes remain. Conservancy scientists are executing a strategic plan that is restoring thousands of acres of Illinois land to this original natural habitat. In doing so, the Conservancy is providing essential habitat for wildlife, helping mitigate the effects of climate change, and providing spaces where people can connect with nature. Additionally, Michelle's team is working closely with local partners and communities to advance urban conservation in the City of Chicago, ensuring that nature-based solutions are taken into consideration as the population grows. All of these efforts are influencing conservation at a global scale.

Michelle graduated from St. Louis University with a B.A. in history and economics, Phi Beta Kappa, and holds a MBA from Vanderbilt University. She currently serves on the executive council of Chicago Wilderness, the board of the Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern and the Cook County Land Bank board. Michelle is a consultant to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and is a member of the Economic Club of Chicago. Michelle formerly served on the board of Links Hall, chairing the finance committee; on the board of The

National Museum for Health and Medicine Chicago as finance chair; and on President Obama's National Finance Committee through his first and second elections. Michelle lives in Chicago with her husband Dane and three children.