

Environmental Contributions

Since its founding, Fermilab has remained committed to responsible stewardship of the environment.

- The 6,800-acre site offers ponds and interpretative nature trails. Fermilab contains most of the major types of ecosystems representative of the Midwest: tall-grass prairies, oak savannas, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and agricultural fields. Habitat restoration encourages the growth of native flowers and trees in these areas.
- The Fermilab site contains one of Illinois's largest reconstructed native, tall-grass prairies. Fermilab's native prairies help cleanse area aquifers and prevent erosion. Less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the state's original prairies remains, including the 1,100 acres Fermilab has restored.
- Since 1993, residents of neighboring communities have joined Fermilab employees for the annual Prairie Seed Harvest. Fermilab has donated native prairie seeds to more than 40 schools as well as the Kane and DuPage county forest preserves.
- A multitude of wildlife lives onsite or use the lab as a migratory way station. Wildlife includes: approximately 282 species of birds, 56 species of butterflies, 10 species of frogs and endangered Blanding's turtles. Native species have been returning to the area as the prairie restoration proceeds. Several rare species of birds and butterflies call the site home for portions of the year.
- Fermilab keeps a herd of about two dozen bison. The animals represent the laboratory's connection to its prairie heritage and mission to stay on the frontier of science.
- The DuPage County Audobon Society and volunteer bird watchers conduct bird counts onsite twice yearly to check migration patterns and species health. Fermilab annually monitors the health of plants, butterflies, frogs and birds.
- Fermilab hosts state and regional early-warning monitoring sites for West Nile mosquitoes and invasive pests.
- Fermilab has earned a designation as one of only seven National Environmental Research Parks. These outdoor laboratories evaluate the environmental consequences of energy use and development as well as strategies to mitigate these effects. They also demonstrate possible environmental and land-use options.
- Under that designation, scientists use the laboratory to conduct eight ecology research projects.
- Argonne and Fermilab study the use of root systems of plants and native grasses to store carbon to reduce greenhouse gases. Fermilab hosts three test sites.
- Argonne and Fermilab partner on a bio-fuel research program that studies alternative-fuel options and costs.
- Fermilab has earned many national awards and consistent recognition for pollution control, environment-friendly "green" business practices, recycling programs and conservation efforts.
- Fermilab maintains the 2,500-square-foot Pioneer Cemetery, an onsite burial ground for early residents of the area dating to the 1800s.