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IDNR Launches New Website to Encourage Habitat Protection

CICADA provides guidance to landowners, developers for voluntary conservation efforts

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced the launch of the new CICADA (Conservation Inclusive Construction and Development Archive) website, an online resource which aims to engage the public and private sectors in habitat protection, restoration, and biodiversity conservation through voluntary actions.

The site, which can be viewed at <https://cicada-idnr.org>, serves as a one-stop-shop for residential and private landowners, as well as commercial and industrial sectors, to find guidance and ideas to make their properties or development projects more wildlife friendly.

“With approximately 97 percent of land in Illinois in private ownership, it will take everyone working together to help address these challenges,” **said IDNR Director Colleen Callahan**. “From adding small pollinator gardens and nest boxes in backyards, to improving habitat on larger private properties, to implementing environmentally-responsible construction practices, CICADA has something for everyone to engage in habitat conservation.”

“The IDNR and partners developed CICADA in recognition that habitat loss, degradation, and biodiversity conservation are major challenges facing current generations in Illinois and around the world,” **said Nathan Grider, manager of the IDNR Impact Assessment Section**, which spearheaded the project. “Together, we pulled information from a variety of IDNR and partner programs to make the site as accessible and user-friendly as possible.”

The website features a clean, modern design organized by various audiences and topic areas. Within each conservation topic, those who click onto CICADA will find short, fun-to-read introductions and “how-to” conservation and habitat management guidance documents, as well as more in depth, technical documents.

CICADA users also will be linked to assistance programs for landowners, conservation tax-deductible donation opportunities through the Illinois Conservation Foundation, and much more. The CICADA website also features a project showcase page where habitat-friendly projects can be submitted by the public for consideration and viewed by website visitors to provide inspiration and share ideas. Information also is provided on how to certify habitat projects with various organizations.

“The CICADA website has something for everyone to engage more in conservation and have fun doing it,” **Grider said.** “The timing couldn’t be better with so much increasing public interest in these important topics.”

IDNR partnered with The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, a division of Lewis and Clark Community College, and 2WAV software developers for the project. Funding was provided through the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund dedicated for preserving, protecting, perpetuating, and enhancing non-game wildlife in the state.

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