



## Illinois Department of **Natural Resources**

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### **Conservation World at Illinois State Fair: A Great Place to Sample the Outdoors**

***Free activities for families, children promote  
spending time outside***

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Conservation World - the 30-acre park with grass, shade trees, ponds and picnic tables on the Illinois State Fairgrounds - offers state fair visitors a chance to relax, enjoy nature and learn about some great ways to spend time outdoors. It is all part of the Illinois State Fair on Aug. 13-22 in Springfield.

"Our focus at Conservation World is on family fun and on ways for all of us to spend more time outdoors in Illinois," said Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Marc Miller. "Youngsters and adults can learn how to cast for bass, hit the target with a bow and arrow, set up a campsite, find out about the best habitat for deer and wild turkey, learn how coal is mined or enjoy a cold drink and barbeque sandwich under a shade tree – just steps away from the Grandstand, livestock shows and carnival."

Conservation World is located on the northwest corner of the fairgrounds, with free activities and exhibits open to state fair visitors daily from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. Conservation World is easily accessible through a pedestrian gate near the Junior Livestock Building and via a state fair tram stop next to the IDNR Headquarters.

New to Conservation World is an area dedicated to encouraging families to enjoy outdoor recreation activities, building on the statewide initiative intended to "Leave No Child Inside" (LNCI). At the LNCI tent, organizations will provide hands-on activities for children and their families. They include bird identification with the Illinois Audubon Society and dipping for aquatic insects. LNCI partner organizations will also provide tips for other simple, fun activities families can do in local parks and forest preserves.

“Too many kids spend too much time indoors playing with video games, watching TV and texting their friends. We want them outdoors playing with their friends, hiking or biking a trail, starting a leaf collection, taking photos or videos of birds or other wildlife, or learning how to toast marshmallows and pitch a tent,” Miller said. “If we’re going to urge kids to get outside, we need to urge their parents and siblings to get out there with them. That’s part of the message we want to deliver with our activities at the state fair.”

Among the most popular activities at Conservation World are the youth fishing clinics – which include a chance to bait a hook and go fishing – five times each day. All bait and tackle are provided. The free fishing clinics for youngsters are part of the IDNR Urban Fishing Program and are scheduled at 10:30 a.m., 12 noon, 1:30 p.m., 3 p.m., and 4:30 p.m. each day of the fair.

Kids can also practice their casting skills from the pier at the Conservation World Lake or enjoy a ride on the 20-passanger Voyager canoe.

Fishing is also the focus during the free programs at the Bass Tub, a 5,000-gallon climate-controlled water tank stocked with bass, crappie and a variety of other Illinois sport fish. Experts will provide tips on proper baits, casting and other fishing techniques four times daily at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Volunteers from outdoor recreation organizations and the IDNR Safety Education Program invite children to test their archery and shooting skills at specially-designed bow and BB gun ranges in Conservation World. The practice ranges are open from 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily during the fair.

Visitors can see a display of mounted deer heads, purchase Illinois hunting and fishing licenses, get a photo and application for a FOID card and learn about the duties of a Conservation Police Officer at the IDNR Law Enforcement tent.

In the IDNR Director’s tent at Conservation World, visitors will find displays highlighting the state’s natural resources, can subscribe to *Outdoor Illinois* magazine with a chance to win an exciting outdoor prize package, and learn about youth, habitat enhancement and outdoor recreation programs supported by the Illinois Conservation Foundation.

IDNR fisheries, wildlife, and habitat restoration biologists and staff host displays and are available to answer questions about fishing and hunting prospects, habitat enhancement programs available to assist private landowners, endangered species protection and conservation activities.

Conservation World displays also feature recreation opportunities at state parks, the state’s important mining and oil production industries and regulation, forestry management and tree farming, and flood protection and improvements on Illinois waterways.

Information on home landscaping, plants and gardens is available at the gazebo adjoining the Illinois Green Industry Association Amphitheater in Conservation World.

Demonstrations by sporting dogs and their owners are planned for the first three days of the fair (4 p.m. on Aug. 13-15) in Conservation World, and a popular antler dog demonstration includes canines that can track down shed antlers in the field.

Chris Camp, “The Whip Guy,” will present his whip-cracking show on the hillside near the IDNR Law Enforcement tent daily at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Chainsaw artists Wendy and Mike Rhodes will demonstrate their unique artistry throughout the fair.

Conservation World is one of the state fairgrounds venues for activities on Park District Conservation Day on Saturday, Aug. 21. Park districts, forest preserve districts and conservation districts from across Illinois have special activities planned throughout the day highlighting local parks, recreation programs and entertainment.

The Illinois Department of Human Services will provide an air-conditioned mobile nursery for nursing babies or changing diapers in Conservation World. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency hosts children’s games focusing on clean air, water and other environmental efforts.

Fair visitors looking for a place to relax for lunch, dinner or a snack can enjoy some delicious options in Conservation World. Southern Illinois’ famed 17<sup>th</sup> Street Barbeque returns to Conservation World with world champion barbeque, ribs, chicken and sandwiches – and the state fair’s traditional corn dogs are available at the Vose Concessions stand in Conservation World. Other vendors will have old-fashioned root beer, fresh and hot kettle corn, pork rinds, honey, jams and jellies.

Illinois State Fair admission includes free admission to Conservation World – open each day of the state fair from 10 a.m.-7 p.m.