



Illinois Department of **Natural Resources**

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Pat Quinn, Governor
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Jersey Community High School Lends a Hand to Conservation

Students Unveil Eagle Platform to Celebrate “It’s Our River Day”

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. – To celebrate “It’s Our River Day,” the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, along with Illinois American Water, Ameren Illinois and Jersey Community High School, unveiled a new eagle nesting platform at Stirtz Landing in Godfrey today.

“I’d like to say a special thank you to the students at Jersey Community High School. Teaching our youth to be stewards of the environment will ensure its splendor for generations to come,” said IDNR Deputy Director Leslie Sgro. “I’d like to also thank the Great Rivers Land Trust for allowing us to use this site.”

In addition to Stirtz Landing, an eagle platform will soon be placed on Chouteau Island in Madison County. Illinois American Water donated the materials for the platforms and they were built by the shop class at Jersey Community High School. Ameren donated the poles for the platforms and installed them in the air.

“As our team works to provide water and wastewater services to our customers, we also work to prevent pollution, promote sustainability and enhance the natural environment. By partnering to create these eagle nest platforms we enhance both the environment of this beautiful animal and provide an opportunity for residents to view the eagle's beauty in person,” said Karla Olson Teasley, president of Illinois American Water.

During the winter, bald eagles migrate towards rivers in search of food. The manmade eagle platform, which overlooks the Mississippi River, is designed to attract a pair of nesting bald eagles to support Illinois’ existing eagle population, while providing visitors with the unique opportunity to learn about our nation’s symbol.

“We at Ameren Illinois are serious about protecting our environment and are proud to have this opportunity to partner with the IDNR. We anticipate these platforms will attract a nesting pair of eagles, who will return year after year,” said Gussie Reed,

division 5 manager, Ameren Illinois. “Our comprehensive Avian Protection Program, developed in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, includes retrofitting existing poles to be avian safe in areas identified as prime raptor habitats. We also are committed to constructing new power lines that meet or exceed industry standards for avian use, including nesting and perching.”

Though they are no longer considered endangered, bald eagles are protected under the Illinois Wildlife Code, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board estimates there are 100 eagle nests in the state.

“It’s Our River Day” is observed each year on the third Saturday in September, with the goal of increasing awareness and appreciation of the Prairie State’s waterways. It was created by the Illinois River Coordinating Council, which Governor Pat Quinn has chaired since 1997.

IDNR will host a “Free Fishing Day” on Saturday, September 18 in conjunction with “It’s Our River Day” activities. Free fishing will be allowed within the boundaries of Illinois state parks, natural areas and wildlife areas where public fishing opportunities are available. The “Free Fishing Day” waiver of fishing license requirements will not include fishing on the Illinois waters of Lake Michigan or on river positions outside of Illinois state park boundaries.

For more information about “It’s Our River Day” activities, visit www.dnr.state.il.us/iord. For a complete list of state parks and other sites, visit www.dnr.state.il.us.

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