



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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IDNR to Honor Volunteers at Conservation World at the 2010 Illinois State Fair

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is honoring eight individuals and three groups as Outstanding Volunteers of the Year for service to Illinois citizens and visitors through volunteer efforts on behalf of the IDNR. The awards will be presented during a ceremony in Conservation World at the Illinois State Fair on Aug. 21.

“The IDNR is fortunate to have hundreds of volunteers who are doing great work on projects and programs at state parks and on conservation and natural resources stewardship efforts all over the state,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “This recognition program is one way we can thank them for the valuable service and expertise they provide to us and to the people of the State of Illinois.”

The volunteer recognition awards ceremony begins at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 21 in Conservation World at the Illinois Green Industry Association Outdoor Amphitheater, on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. This year’s honorees are:

ROBERT (BOB) CLARK, Springfield

Robert (Bob) Clark joined the Illinois State Museum’s volunteer program in October 2005 as a member of the *Changes* exhibition docent team. He works in *Changes* every Friday afternoon, sharing hands-on treasures like Tully Monsters and Mastodon teeth with visitors and answering the visitors’ many questions. *Changes* docents are required to learn and share a vast amount of scientific information. Because of Bob’s mastery of the material and his great rapport with visitors, he began training docents in 2008. He did such a wonderful job that he has become a permanent part of the *Changes* training team. It is common, too, for new docents to ask to shadow Bob while he is on duty. This is a great opportunity for the new volunteers to watch an experienced docent before they begin volunteering on their own. Bob is a great role model for new docents. In addition to his work as a *Changes* docent, Bob helps with special events such as the Museum’s 2009 teacher reception and a variety of family events. Bob has recently begun assisting with school programs in the *Peoples of the Past* exhibition.

Bob is very supportive of the Museum in other ways as well. He attends Museum lectures and he and his wife are members of the Illinois State Museum Society. Bob holds BA and MA degrees from the University of Notre Dame, and is retired from Illinois state government where he held top administrative positions with several agencies. In addition to volunteering for the Museum, he sings in his church choir and is an avid fisherman. Bob is a versatile and dedicated volunteer with an attitude of service that is rarely seen. He is most deserving of the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award.

RON COOK, Mendon

Ron Cook has been a certified volunteer hunter and boater safety volunteer instructor in Adams County for 32 years. Ron was a certified volunteer snowmobile safety instructor during 1978. Ron assumed the duties of volunteer master instructor for the hunter and safety program in 2000. During his years of instruction, he has touched the lives of 7,437 hunter safety and 838 boating safety students, young and old alike. Ron supervises a group of 10 hunter and six boating safety volunteer instructors in the Quincy area. He hosts an annual instructor meeting to organize and schedule a list of classes and the volunteer instructors needed to teach those classes. Ron is a member of the Pike/Adams Sportsmen's Alliance (PASA) in Barry. He organizes shooting activities for the participants at the annual "Master's Shooting Championship" at PASA Park. Ron has always been willing and able to help teach, recruit new instructors and share his knowledge of safety with the next generation of hunters and boaters and is deserving of IDNR's Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award.

JOHN DYER AND ANGELA DYER, Springfield

Over the years the Urban Fishing Program has had many participants with varied ages, backgrounds, and fishing skill levels. Important goals of the program include teaching attendees how to catch fish, recognizing and becoming more interested in ecosystems, and learning to avoid hazards associated with fishing and being around water. Fishing instructors also want participants to enjoy their experience in the urban clinics. As one might guess, having more adult help always makes programs more fun and effective in accomplishing these goals. IDNR is recognizing two individuals, a father and a daughter, for their long-term valuable help. For the past 12 years, John Dyer has helped almost every day with the nine-week summer fishing program at Washington Park in Springfield. Over the same 12-year period, John and his daughter Angela Dyer have helped with the IDNR fishing programs each day of the Illinois State Fair in Conservation World. John has also helped with the setup and take-down of the fair displays. John and Angela both recognize what needs to be done and work to make sure the fishing clinics and educational programs are successful. Things go much better when they help; in fact, they have made their assistance close to a necessity. The IDNR Division of Fisheries and the Urban Fishing Program appreciate the Dyers' assistance and are pleased to recognize them as Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award recipients.

ARNOLD (BILL) FRITZ, Carlyle

After a long and distinguished career as a fisheries biologist with IDNR, Arnold (Bill) Fritz retired in 1991. Little did his colleagues know that Bill was just entering another phase in his lifelong service to Illinois' natural resources. In the nearly two decades that have elapsed since his retirement, Bill has been a constant fixture on and around his beloved Carlyle Lake. He is currently President of the Carlyle Lake Audubon Society Chapter and has participated in countless birding tours around the lake and throughout southern Illinois. He is involved in their outreach activities, providing environmental education materials for fourth and fifth grade children in Clinton County. As the original Carlyle Lake fisheries biologist, on duty even before the reservoir had completely filled in 1967, Bill's experience and wisdom are frequently utilized by professionals and the fishing public. An avid white bass fisherman, Bill tracks the movements of these fish around the lake and shares his insight with other anglers throughout the summer months. On his frequent fishing, hunting, birding and mushroom outings he is always ready to share knowledge with other outdoor enthusiasts and has made literally hundreds of friends in that community. Bill has helped with youth pheasant hunts at Eldon Hazlet State Park. His passion for conservation education is evident each year as he helps collect fish and gives talks to hundreds of grade school children at events such as Earth Day and Clinton County Natural Resource Tours. Local IDNR Fisheries staff can also rely on Bill to lend a hand with various field surveys. He is often enlisted as a "dipper," netting fish on the annual Carlyle Lake fall survey, and was instrumental in completing an expansive mussel survey of the entire Kaskaskia River watershed from 2002 to 2006. He retains membership with the Illinois chapter of the American Fisheries Society (for which he once served as president) and still attends their annual meetings when he can. He also holds membership in the National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation. Bill's advocacy for our natural resources was further evidenced by his involvement in the IDNR Conservation Congress. For his lifelong dedication to the natural resources of Illinois and its responsible, recreational use, Bill Fritz is recognized as an Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award winner. IDNR has no greater ally, nor do the flora, fauna, and citizens of Illinois.

ILLINOIS ARCHERY ASSOCIATION

In 2003, the IDNR signed on as the eighth state in the nation to coordinate and offer the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), a groundbreaking archery education program through the school system. The program offers an opportunity for school-aged youth to gain peer recognition while learning the concepts of leadership, sportsmanship and mental focus. The IDNR has now trained teachers in more than 140 schools across the state in the National Archery in the Schools Program. In 2006, plans were made to host the first-ever state NASP Tournament to schools offering the program. This tournament also serves as the qualifying tournament for teams wishing to go on to the national championships. The Illinois Archery Association immediately offered its assistance and expertise in staging and managing the tournament. For the last five years, the association has provided member manpower to referee, handle scoring data input and operation, and manage equipment such as targets, bow stands, and netting to ensure a safe and tournament-friendly range.

The association has also provided trophies for the division winners and secured bows and arrows from its member clubs to use as prizes. The IDNR appreciates everything the Illinois Archery Association has done to support its Archery in the Schools Program.

TOM JAMES, Trenton

For three years, Tom James has volunteered for the interpretive programs at Eldon Hazlet State Park under the supervision of the Site Superintendent Gary Tatham and Natural Resource Coordinator John Bunnell. Tom has been an excellent volunteer. He is a retired school teacher and has many talents and skills. He is a professional photographer specializing in nature photos and has acquired his Master Gardener's Certificate. He is also a skilled carpenter and landscaper. Some of the projects include photographing interpretive programs (such as the park's annual youth pheasant hunt) and building interpretive signs for trails and exhibits. He also volunteers each year for the Earth Day in the Parks project. His current project consists of constructing a prairie seed propagation nursery at the park. Tom collected rare prairie seed last fall, cold stratified/scarified the seed, and then germinated them in a greenhouse. This spring, he placed the young plants into an outdoor nursery which he designed and constructed. He will nurture the plants for the next two years, then collect seed for future prairie restoration projects in the park. Tom has worked closely with IDNR Natural Heritage biologist Marty Kemper, identifying the right prairie plants, when to collect the seed and how to store them. Tom has seed from more than a dozen prairie plants. Tom is an extremely talented individual and has spent countless hours inside and outside the park photographing wildlife, learning how to identify prairie plants, and studying prairie restoration methods. The staff enjoys working with Tom because he is always willing to assist when needed, and is a deserving recipient of the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award.

ROBERT (BOB) PRESCOTT, Fairview Heights

Robert (Bob) Prescott is, in the words of his nominators, one of the hardest working volunteers they have ever met. Bob, who uses a motorized chair, works tirelessly with the IDNR Disabled Outdoor Opportunities Program coordinator Jay Williams in coordinating several events for people with disabilities across southern Illinois. Bob is very active in the Edwardsville Shooting Classic, Rend Lake Shooting Classic and also the Touch of Nature Archery Deer Hunt. IDNR has come to rely on Bob's tireless work and staff is very appreciative of every hour he donates to the IDNR. Bob stands out as a volunteer as he helps the IDNR Disabled Outdoor Opportunities Program run smoothly and provide special events for people with disabilities.

QUAD CITIES NATURAL AREA GUARDIANS

The Quad Cities Natural Area Guardians (QC NAGs) are part of the Volunteer Stewardship Network – made up of various volunteer groups throughout the state working under the guidance of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). These groups offer stewardship and maintenance of natural areas, including those owned by IDNR and other state agencies, as well as sites enrolled

in conservation easements through the Illinois Nature Preserves System. Types of work performed include prescribed burns, tree planting, prairie restoration, wildlife monitoring and public outreach. Since the formation of the QC NAGs in March 2007, they have grown to more than 70 active volunteers including many Illinois Master Naturalists, teachers, and professional biologists and ecologists. In 2009, they helped host and provide logistical support for a Hill Prairie Conference attended by more than 100 people from throughout the Midwest through the support of an IDNR Division of Natural Heritage Hill Prairie State Wildlife Grant. In September 2009, QC NAGs assisted with a forestry workshop, which allowed IDNR forestry staff and other professionals to provide guidance to about 100 landowners. The group was instrumental in hosting a 2009 National Wildfire Coordination Group training in which forestry staff provided basic wildfire training to 70 people. In addition to providing logistical support for the fire training, NAGs members served as burn leaders mentoring the trainees. Many members have NWCG wildfire fighter certification and several have Illinois pesticide applicator licenses. They have been excellent public ambassadors for the IDNR and INPC and their missions, providing outreach at multiple conservation-related events held each month in the Quad Cities area. They are mentors to members of the public interested in learning how to become better stewards. Each year, they reach hundreds of students (K-thru-college level) through conservation field days and various ecology camps instructing the next generation in how to care for the land and to appreciate the native fauna and flora. The QC NAGs group stands out for their amazing accomplishments.

DON READHEAD, Taylorville

Don Readhead has been a volunteer for the IDNR for more than 10 years in a variety of capacities. Don frequently assists the Division of Wildlife Resources with spotlight furbearer routes, habitat management projects, and waterfowl banding efforts for both Canada geese and wood ducks. He is often available at very short notice and has donated more than 500 hours of time and hundreds of miles of travel to assist with both habitat and management activities. Don is a long time Acres for Wildlife cooperator, maintaining woodland and riparian habitat along the Flat Branch of the Sangamon River. He has freely given access to this land for wildlife management activities. In addition to his time working with wildlife projects, Don is an avid outdoorsman, enjoying cycling, kayaking, canoeing, outdoor photography, and pursuing bullfrogs with his son, Noah. He has been supportive of the Lincoln Hills Prairie Bike Trail between Taylorville and Pana, assisting organizers with the opening ceremonies for this trail. Don and his wife Carla can frequently be seen riding the trail and the nearby countryside on their tandem bike. He is also the director of the Taylorville Emergency Food Pantry and donates time to the Memorial Hospital Hospice program. IDNR is proud to honor Don Readhead as an Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award winner.

SALT LICK POINT LAND AND WATER RESERVE COMMITTEE

The Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve Committee was formed in 2005 to provide stewardship and promote appreciation of the 594-acre Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve owned by the Village of Valmeyer. Since its inception, the committee has worked tirelessly and enthusiastically on behalf of the reserve, logging more than 2,500 hours the last three years alone. These hours were spent on educating the public about the

reserve and its natural features, on extensive hands-on stewardship, and on important monitoring efforts. The committee, along with the Valmeyer Boy Scouts, have built and maintained three trails complete with interpretive signs, and two kiosks at trailheads. They also developed a brochure for the site. Committee members have developed an educational PowerPoint presentation about the beauty, importance, and needs of the reserve, which they have given to Valmeyer school classes. They have also hosted several guided hikes in the reserve, and hosted a trail dedication event. The committee has been monitoring and reporting rare plants in the reserve, and in 2009 their surveying documented a record number of a state-endangered orchid, now the largest population in the state. The committee posted more than 100 Land and Water Reserve signs on this large site. Individually and during workdays, they have cleared brush at six of the reserve's rare hill prairies and glades and have spent extensive time treating exotic plants in the woods. They assisted with firebreak preparation and participated in three prescribed burns at the site. The group hosted a Honeysuckle Pull Day and Exotics Workshop at the reserve. They also started a seed collection and plant propagation program to assist with the restoration of the prairies and glades. In the spring of 2010, the group organized a workday and planted approximately 1,500 plants into the cleared prairie areas. They also assisted with cleanup of a dump site at the reserve. Staff of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission salutes the Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve Committee for their extensive efforts on behalf of one of Illinois' largest, most diverse reserves. Their dedication is a model of community spirit, fused with a deep love for and enthusiasm to protect their part of our state's natural heritage.

For more information on volunteer opportunities with the IDNR, contact volunteer program coordinator Diane Blasa at 618/462-1181, ext. 3.