



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 3, 2010

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## **ICF Announces Plans for Torstenson Family Youth Conservation Education Center**

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. – The Illinois Conservation Foundation (ICF) has accepted a donation of 750 acres of exceptional wildlife habitat near Pecatonica in Winnebago Co. to serve as the home of the Torstenson Family Youth Conservation Education Center. The site was donated recently to the ICF by the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation.

“We are pleased to provide this property to the ICF. Their dedication to youth conservation fits perfectly with this remarkable property. The youth of Illinois will benefit for generations to come from ICF's leadership. We are very pleased to be facilitating this effort,” said Charles S. Potter, Jr., President and CEO of the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation.

“Too many kids are spending too much time indoors...more than any prior generation. We need to get children outdoors to help advance the cause of good conservation stewardship. The Torstenson Family Youth Conservation Education Center will be a wonderful place to do just that,” said Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Marc Miller, the chairman of the board of directors of the Illinois Conservation Foundation. “Working with the donors and the ICF board, we concluded that acceptance of this site is a special opportunity for the Illinois Conservation Foundation to take a leadership role in youth conservation education.”

The property encompasses an outstanding diversity of habitat, which makes it ideal for hunting, hiking and observing wildlife. For instance, on a spring day, visitors are likely to see many migratory bird species at the property, including several pairs of nesting sand hill cranes. Waterfowl of all kinds make it their home. White-tailed deer, raccoons, turkeys and song birds are in abundance, as well.

“A program of this magnitude will require significant private funding for additional infrastructure and a staff to oversee the education programs,” said ICF Executive Director Mark Spangler. “We will be aggressively seeking corporate and individual sponsors and hope to be able to accommodate groups of up to one hundred kids in the future. The possibilities for outdoor recreation are truly endless.”

“Learning outdoor skills and activities such as rock climbing, archery, shooting and fishing will be intermingled with classroom instruction. Robert H. Torstenson had a vision for his Deer Yard Farm to become a place where young people could come and learn outdoor skills. The ICF is dedicated to making it a reality,” Spangler said.

For more information on the special hunts and programs at the Torstenson Family Youth Conservation Education Center, contact the ICF at 217/785-2003, or log onto the Illinois Conservation Foundation website at [www.ilcf.org](http://www.ilcf.org).