

**Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund
Large Project
Grant #14-L04W for *Earth Day in the Parks*
Final Report**

**Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Education
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702**

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Dept. of Natural Resources

Seventeen Illinois state parks hosted 20 *Earth Day in the Parks* events during April and May 2014. A total of 56 teacher applications were received for the events. The 866 participants included 674 students, 139 teachers/parents/volunteers and 54 staff members of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Participating parks were Argyle Lake State Park, Beall Woods State Park (two events), Cache River State Natural Area, Clinton Lake State Recreation Area, Giant City State Park, I and M Canal State Trail, Illinois Beach State Park, IDNR Headquarters, Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area, Lincoln Trail State Park, Pere Marquette State Park (three events), Moraine Hills State Park, Pyramid State Park, Starved Rock State Park, Walnut Point State Park, Weldon Springs State Park and William Powers State Recreation Area. Projects included removing invasive exotic plant species, building fish attractors, constructing containers to collect used fishing line, transplanting white oak seedlings, planting butterfly gardens, planting tree seedlings and planting native wildflowers and grasses to develop new or enhance existing prairie habitat. Two of our regularly participating parks did not take part this year due to staffing issues. We were able to add new sites, however, including those with newly hired interpretive staff.

More than 11,300 native plants and thousands of native plant seeds were planted by the participants. A few plants were purchased, but the majority of them were raised for the events through cooperative agreements with Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, Kishwaukee College in Malta, Rend Lake Community College in Ina, Robinson Correctional Center in Robinson, Western Illinois Correctional Center in Mt. Sterling, Illinois Valley Correctional Center in Canton, Logan Correctional Center in Lincoln, Decatur Correctional Center in Decatur and Jacksonville Correctional Center in Jacksonville. Plants were picked up and delivered to the event sites by staff from the IDNR Office of Strategic Services and Land Management. Some plants and seeds were also obtained from the IDNR Mason City Nursery.

Three events received publicity through local media (all newspapers). All events were recognized on the IDNR Division of Education's Facebook page (see April and May postings). Snacks and other assistance were provided by the "Friends" group at several parks.

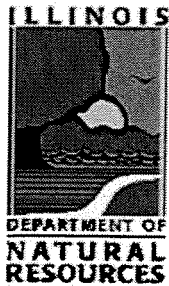
IDNR site coordinators and participating teachers were each asked to complete an evaluation through the IDNR Survey Monkey site. Eight of the 17 IDNR site coordinators (47 percent) completed the form. Eighteen of the 31 teachers (58 percent) completed the evaluation. Copies of the responses from both groups are included with this report. The responses were very positive from both groups.

Funds for the project were expended as follows. Copies of the IDNR payment vouchers are attached.

1. Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund Grant - \$5,000.00
 - \$999.00 – Industrial Supply Consultants – hand tools for Pere Marquette State Park
 - \$80.88 – Vienna Nursery – plants for Giant City State Park
 - \$231.25 – Industrial Supply Consultants – hand trowels for Giant City State Park

\$871.00 – Carlin – potting mix for Western Illinois Correctional Center
\$487.00 – Carlin – potting mix for Logan Correctional Center
\$487.00 – Carlin – potting mix for Decatur Correctional Center
\$407.00 – Carlin – potting mix for Robinson Correctional Center
\$808.00 – Carlin – potting mix for Kishwaukee College
\$86.99 – Valerie Keener – reimburse for plant growth materials

Total Event Expenditures = \$25,767.37, not including staff time



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way · Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

Pat Quinn, Governor
Marc Miller, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 11, 2014

CONTACT: **Chris Young**
(217) 557-1240
chris.young@illinois.gov

Earth Day in the Parks Promotes Natural Resources Stewardship for Students

Eighth annual event will be held across the state on several dates in April and May

SPRINGFIELD, IL – More than 750 students will visit Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) state parks in April and May for the eighth annual *Earth Day in the Parks* event series. *Earth Day in the Parks* is an initiative of the IDNR to introduce students to environmental stewardship.

“Students participating in *Earth Day in the Parks* will have an opportunity to perform meaningful natural resources stewardship activities, including planting native wildflowers and grasses, transplanting trees, constructing bat roosting boxes, building fish attractors and removing invasive, exotic plant species,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller.

Earth Day in the Parks offers students the opportunity to get outdoors and work in nature. Their hands-on experiences will lead them to develop a sense of ownership of the natural resources in our state while also increasing available wildlife habitat. Students and teachers are encouraged to return to the park to study the effects of their work.

“This is more than just a field trip. It’s an investment in a future generation of potential conservationists,” said Director Miller. “We hope these students will continue to visit the parks, not only to witness the success of their projects, but perhaps to volunteer and develop a personal connection to a natural place.”

School groups were selected by random drawings from an application process held earlier this year. Fourteen *Earth Day in the Parks* events will be held between April 17 and May 1 at state parks across Illinois. Funding for the events comes in part from voluntary tax check-off donations to the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund.

One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702
Phone: 217-524-4126

Carlinville
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Moraine Hills State Park
1510 South River Road
McHenry, IL 60051
Phone: 815-385-1624

April 17 Cary-Grove High School in Cary and
Matthews Middle School in Island
Lake
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Pere Marquette State Park
13112 Visit Center Lane
Grafton, IL 62037
Phone: 618-357-2574

April 25 Dr. Katie Harper Wright Elementary
School in East St. Louis, and Metro
East Montessori School in Granite
City
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Pere Marquette State Park
13112 Visit Center Lane
Grafton, IL 62037
Phone: 618-357-2574

April 28 Waverly High School,
Waverly
Time: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Pyramid State Recreation Area
1562 Pyramid Park Road
Pinckneyville, IL 62274
Phone: 618-357-2574

April 23 St. Bruno School, Pinckneyville
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Starved Rock State Park
Routes 178 and 71
Utica, IL 61373
Phone: 815-667-4726

May 1 Delta Learning Center, Robbins
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

William Powers State Recreation Area
12949 South Avenue O
Chicago, IL 60633
Phone: 773-646-3270

April 29 Passages Charter School, Chicago
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.