

"i Volunteer" Newsletter

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Volunteer Network Program

MOTHER NATURE'S FRIENDS

Friends Groups consist of dedicated organizations and individuals who support a specific project or raise awareness of a site's value. They provide a unique support system for our natural areas across the state. They come from many backgrounds, but they all share one thing - they want to help enhance, preserve and protect IDNR sites, including interpretive and educational activities. Some groups are independent 501c(3) non-profit organizations formed by citizens to provide for and support our sites. Friends Groups with this status also help support projects by raising funds and selling memberships; they write grants and receive donations. Each group's mission or part of their mission is to enhance an IDNR Site, Division or District to help achieve high quality. To find a group in your area, check out the list of **IDNR Friends Groups and Volunteer Groups** at: http://www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/pdf/Friends_and_Volunteer_Groups.pdf

For more information on a Friends Group's current projects or membership opportunities, you may contact the Group directly. It is a great way to connect with volunteer stewardship groups across the State of Illinois.

The next few pages of this Newsletter are set aside for a few of our Friends Groups to let you know what volunteer opportunities are currently available. **Good Friends are always looking for more company.**



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 18-24

National Volunteer Week is coming up. We want to recognize and celebrate the efforts of our volunteers. This is also "a time to inspire and encourage people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities. It's about demonstrating that by working together, we have the fortitude to meet our challenges and accomplish our goals".

This is also a good time for **IDNR staff** to be thinking about who they want to nominate for Volunteer of the Year, Friends Group of the Year and Volunteer Group of the Year. Contact **Dianne Blasa** at dianne.blasa@illinois.gov for more information or go to *SharePoint* for the Volunteer of the Year Nomination Form.



Volume 2, Issue 1
Spring, 2010

How can You start an IDNR Friends Group?

- If you are interested in starting a Friends Group at a State Park in your area, contact the Site Superintendent to see if it is an option and to receive IDNR Approval.
- You will need to ask friends, family and those with like interests to join your group. You may want to partner with other groups or hold a recruiting event.
- Formalize the purpose and mission of your group and begin the necessary paperwork to become an official Friends or Volunteer Group.
- For any further questions, contact: Dianne Blasa, IDNR Friends Group Coordinator at: dianne.blasa@illinois.gov

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The "i Volunteer" Newsletter is published quarterly by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Special Events, Programs and Promotions, Volunteer Network Program, IDNR Region IV Office, 4521 Alton Commerce Parkway, Alton, IL 62002. Email:

dnr.volunteers@illinois.gov

FRIENDS GROUPS PLANTED THE SEEDS NOW THEY NEED YOU!

FRANKLIN CREEK PRESERVATION AREA COMMITTEE

The FCPAC was established in 1981 and was the first volunteer organization in the state to improve idle, state-owned land for park purposes through volunteer efforts. The FCPAC is a 501c(3) non-profit organization. Working with IDNR, the 882 acre **Franklin Creek State Natural Area** was created in 1982. The Park is located in *in Lee County*. The committee constructed roads, shelters, picnic tables, restrooms, ran underground electric lines, drilled wells, and cleared hiking trails. The park contains a 198 acre nature preserve. In 1992, the FCPAC started the reconstruction of the historic Franklin Creek Grist Mill that was originally built in 1847. The construction was completed in 1999 and the FCPAC still operates and maintains the Mill at no cost to the State of Illinois. In 2006 the FCPAC built a handicapped accessible fishing pier on the Franklin Creek Mill Pond.

Lately, the committee has taken on the task to acquire and preserve private property adjacent to the Franklin Creek State Natural Area and/or the Franklin Creek as it becomes available to keep it from being commercially developed. Our first success was acquiring an 80 acre tract of land that went up for sale in 2009. We are in the process of restoring and preserving this unique natural land and ecosystem. The FCPAC works in cooperation with the IDNR, the Nature Conservancy, the Natural Land Institute, the Dixon Park District, the Natural Area Guardians and the Future Farmers of America.

Our meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Franklin Creek Grist Mill and Interpretive Center and all interested people are welcome to attend. We are currently looking for prospective directors and volunteers to be guides in the Grist Mill. We also would like any help from people that have experience in fund raising and writing grant applications. For more information, you may contact **William Abate** - Secretary at: abate@essex1.com

JUBILEE PRAIRIE DAWGS

Anyone interested in trying their hand at prairie restoration is welcome to join the Prairie Dawgs at **Jubilee College State Park** in *Peoria County*.

The volunteer group has work parties on the first and third Saturday of each month, spring through fall, starting at 9 a.m.

Members pick seeds, pull weeds, control garlic mustard, plant seeds and help conduct burns.

Call **Doug Franks** of Peoria at (309) 691-7993 or **Lisa Sandall** of Princeville at (309) 385-4462.

"Together we are stronger"
~*Craig Moser, Shawnee Muskie
Hunters Chapter 28*

SHAWNEE MUSKIE HUNTERS CHAPTER 28

We have a growing membership of 95 plus members based at **Kinkaid Lake** in *Jackson County*. Our club hosts many events during the year to support the community and the Muskie fisheries of Illinois. We are hosting five fishing events this year and we love to also share any IDNR stories and volunteer requests with our members and guests. As you know, "together we are stronger" in supporting our fisheries. For more membership information check our website at: <http://www.shawneemuskiehunters.org>

Our 7th Annual Kinkaid Lake Cleanup will be held Saturday, April 17th, 8:00a.m.-12:00 noon. Free food for participants at the Marina Restaurant after the event. Bring your friends and help beautify this community treasure. Join us for this important service project. You'll be glad you did! **To pre-register contact the Conservancy District** at 618-687-1722 or email krccdmanager@hughes.net For Questions Contact **Walt Krause** at 618-972-5584 or email krause-walter@att.net or **Jim Beaty** at 618-971-7806 or email jbeaty@certapro.com.



MORE PLANTINGS FROM OUR FRIENDS

CLINTON LAKE WATERFOWL ASSOCIATION

We are working for the future of Waterfowling at **Clinton Lake** in the *County of DeWitt*. We conserve local habitat, host a youth hunt, work with IDNR to maintain Clinton Lake State Recreation Area, promote public hunting opportunities and hold an annual fundraising banquet. Membership is \$20.00 per year and volunteers and contributors are encouraged to join. For more information, you can view our website at <http://clintonlakewaterfowl.com> or contact our President, **Ben O'Neal** at bjoneal@illinois.edu.

FRIENDS OF THE ROCK ISLAND TRAIL

Our goal is to get the trail built! Once an abandoned and derelict railroad in *Stark County*, now a peaceful haven for hikers, cyclists and cross country skiers. A slender oasis of woodland and prairies in central Illinois, 29 miles and counting. For meeting information or to become a member contact **George Burrier, Jr.** at 309-266-5085 or email at gburrier@mtco.com.

GOOSE LAKE PRAIRIE PARTNERS

*We are hoping to staff the Visitor Center at **Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area** in *Grundy County* through November of this year. With our small membership this will be a bit of a stretch. If you were giving thought to joining, this would be a good time and a good volunteer job. Just call **Susie Johnson**, the President, at 815-942-1838 or email cjohnson0969@comcast.net if you are interested and we will give you a training session and work with you as an intern until you feel ready to work the center alone. Also, please check our latest edition of our newsletter at http://www.gooselakeprairie.org/pdf_files/TJWinter2010Jan.pdf. The list of our 2010 events is on the Calendar page. *Our 26th Annual Cabin Festival will be held June 5th. This event is to celebrate cabin living and live in the 1830's. Monetary or time donations are always welcome!

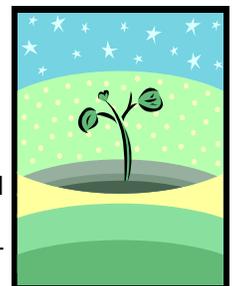
Did you Know?

Early settlers to Illinois, in an attempt to describe the unfamiliar terrain they were encountering, referred to it as "a sea of grass with pretty flowers."

FRIENDS OF THE WORLD SHOOTING & RECREATIONAL COMPLEX

The Friends of the **World Shooting and Recreational Complex** enhance and provide a safe and quality experience for activities and events at the Complex in *Randolph County*. The complex hosts many shooting events throughout the year, the largest of which is the Amateur Trapshooting Association's Grand American in August. Please visit the website at: <http://dnr.state.il.us/worldshooting>

Volunteer opportunities include educating constituents of the variety of shooting sports available; assist with implementing the needs of special events, shooting leagues; helping with IDNR programs and providing information; assist with shooting programs/disciplines and development; brochure and website development; public relations and constituent monitoring; and facilitate range rules and safety policies. For more information, contact the President, **David Bath** at friendsofwsrsc@yahoo.com.



YOUR IDNR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

19th ANNUAL TWO RIVERS FAMILY FISHING FAIR

Would you like to help a child learn to fish or to become a better angler? The Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair at **Pere Marquette State Park in Jersey County** offers many opportunities for volunteers. The largest kids Fishing Fair in the State will be held Saturday, June 12th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. You can help a child learn knot tying, fish identification, fish cleaning, casting and many other skills. We also need help with set-up and tear-down for the event. This is a free event and no license or fishing gear is needed. Everything is provided. Volunteers will receive a Fishing Fair commemorative hat and lunch is also provided. For more information or if you would like to volunteer to help the youth of Illinois learn to experience the excitement and relaxation fishing offers or if you have a station you think would be good to add to our Fair to teach children about fishing, contact **Dianne Blasa** at 618-462-1181 ext. 3 or email dianne.blasa@illinois.gov. We welcome groups and individual volunteers.



Camo the Clown with a lucky little angler at the Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair

CACHE RIVER STATE NATURAL AREA

Volunteer Opportunities at **Cache River State Natural Area** in *Johnson County*:

***Cache River Nature Fest**, Saturday, April 24, 8a.m.-4p.m. Volunteers may assist regular site volunteers and site staff with programs and activities such as a guided nature hike, guided birding hike, children's activities, family activities, set-up or tear-down for event, present a program on native plants, birds, mammals in wetlands, or other topic. Check the website for information at <http://www.cacherivernaturefest.org> on types of activities for that day.

***Bluebird box monitoring**. April/May thru July/August. All nesting boxes are on the trail system at the Cache River Wetlands Center. About a two mile walk. Once nesting begins the nests need to be checked once a week either by staff or volunteers. There are usually two broods a year.

***Walk-a-Trail**—check one of eleven trails and report problems such as erosion, down trees, needed repairs to signage and etc. Volunteer will be assigned one trail to check four times a year.

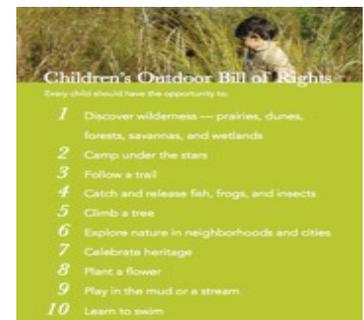
***Cache River Wetlands Center Volunteers**—all year, assist at the front desk greeting/helping visitors; present wetlands film; answer phone; assist with groups scheduled for an education program; and after a program help reorganize education materials, etc. To volunteer for any of the above opportunities, contact **Cache River Wetlands Center** at 618-657-2064 or email Mollie Oliver, the Natural Resource Coordinator at mollie.oliver@illinois.gov.

LEAVE NO CHILD INSIDE

On June 19th, we will be co-hosting a **Leave No Child Inside** event at **William W. Powers State Recreation Area** with **Chicago Wilderness**. The event will be themed to their "Outdoor Bill of Rights" which you can view here: www.kidsoutside.info/billofrights.

Three stations that IDNR has agreed to staff for the event is a fishing station, a trail station and a tree climbing station. Each station will probably need three volunteers to staff it to ensure breaks for everyone throughout the day. The trail and tree climbing station will take at least one person each to develop some kind of interpretive programmatic guidelines.

To volunteer or for more information, please contact Olivia Dorothy at 217-785-0075 or email olivia.dorothy@illinois.gov.



MORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

KANKAKEE RIVER STATE PARK IN KANKAKEE COUNTY

Our Site Interpreter is very busy during the months of April through June with programs and school guided hikes. The Visitor Center remains closed when she is away and she would love to have volunteers help her keep the Center open, offer information and/or work with children.

Contact: **Stacey Johnson**, Site Interpreter at: stacey.johnson@illinois.gov or call her at 815-933-1383 ext. 25.



BEALL WOODS STATE PARK IN WABASH COUNTY

Volunteer Opportunities at Beall Woods State Park:

*Youth Fishing Derby on Saturday, June 12, 2010, 8:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Registration starts at 7:30 a.m.

*Beall Woods has many programs scheduled during April, May and June. We would appreciate anyone who would volunteer to help staff the Visitor Center, check the trails or assist with programs. Contact **Jacque Hallam**, at 618-298-2441 or email Jacque.Hallam@illinois.gov.

CAMPGROUND HOSTS NEEDED

Do you have an enthusiasm for working with the public and love to camp? If so, the perfect option for some volunteers is to serve as a **Campground Host**. We offer a free campsite in any of approximately 55 state parks in exchange for 35 hours a week. Hosts, in return, are given a designated campsite with water and electrical hookups at no charge for the duration of their stay.

The following sites need Campground Hosts:

Red Hills SP (*Lawrence County*)—
Contact **Carl Aten** at 618-936-2469

Clinton Lake SRA (*DeWitt County*)—
Contact **Tom Jackson** at 217-935-8722

Fort Massac SP (*Massac County*)—
Contact **Terry Johnson** at 618-524-4712

Lincoln Trail SP (*Clark County*)—
Contact **Mike Sanders** at 217-826-2222.

To volunteer as a **Campground Host**, contact your local Park Office, or the IDNR Campground Host Coordinator

at 217-785-8129 or email: Barbara.L.Foster@illinois.gov

KIDS VOLUNTEER AT EARTH DAY IN THE PARKS

Registration is still open for several of the **2010 Earth Day in the Parks** events. Students and teachers throughout Illinois participate in Illinois state parks to take part in natural resources stewardship activities such as: planting native trees and wildflowers; building and installing nesting/roosting boxes; removing invasive exotic species and construction of fish attractors. The event is held in April and May. Dates vary by location. Submit your application as soon as possible for the sites that show "Registration Open" on our website at: <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITPinstruct.htm>. The first applicant who meets the criteria for each of the remaining 10 parks, will be chosen. Last year the State Parks were fortunate to have 1,466 students and 204 teachers contribute 2,932 volunteer hours. This is a great way for students to help the environment and wildlife, and participate in outdoor activities to increase their fitness and learn that their actions can make a difference in the world.



Cedar-Waxwing

You can always check IDNR's Volunteer Projects Directory for volunteer opportunities at: http://dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/08/volunteer_projects_directory.pdf.



You can access any of the websites mentioned in this Newsletter or send emails by *Ctrl + left click*



To change your email address or to subscribe or unsubscribe to the "i Volunteer" Newsletter email: dnr.volunteers@illinois.gov

The IDNR Volunteer Network Program utilizes thousands of volunteers each year. The volunteers who devote their time and efforts are a vital resource in the management and protection of our natural and recreational resources. Our volunteers are individuals, community organizations, youth groups, retired people, families and people of all ages and backgrounds who would like to help us fulfill our mission "to manage, protect and sustain Illinois' natural and cultural resources, provide resource-compatible recreational opportunities and promote natural resource-related public safety, education and science".
Thank you volunteers for giving back to your community!
For more information, you may email **Dianne Blasa**, the Volunteer Network Program Manager at: dnr.volunteers@illinois.gov



THE I.R.S. AND VOLUNTEERS

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This may be an appropriate time to discuss reimbursements to volunteers, considering April 15th is just around the corner. The I.R.S. has determined that reimbursements to volunteers could be taxable income and must be reported in order for you to be in compliance. Check with your annual income tax preparer if you have received any of the following:

- *Reimbursement for travel or mileage while volunteering;
- *A per day flat fee for volunteering;
- *Reimbursement for an item you purchased for a volunteer event or program and you do not have a receipt for the item;
- *Reimbursement for meals when volunteering, if food is readily available;
- *Non-monetary volunteer award valued at over \$50.00.

There may be changes or more that is not listed, so be sure to do your research and/or consult with a professional.

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Go Green! Print this only when necessary.
Thank you for helping the State of Illinois be environmentally responsible.