

Prior to beginning their hikes, visitors are invited to pick up a bird checklist from the site office to aid in spotting the many songbirds species that use the forest. Flowers and mushrooms grow prolifically throughout the forest and await viewing. It is illegal, however, to remove or damage plants, flowers, shrubs or trees. In addition, it is illegal to collect or remove artifacts from state property. Please remember this area is for all to enjoy.

## Camping ■■■■

Possum Creek Campground is a Class C area providing vehicular access but no showers or electricity. Facilities include drinking water, privies, a sanitary disposal station, pedestal stoves, fire blocks and a fire ring. Shady Grove Campground accommodates groups by reservation only. Ground fires in both campgrounds are allowed only in the fire rings.

## Fishing ■■■■

Although Richland Creek offers negligible fishing opportunities, Hidden Springs has five stocked fishing ponds. Hickory Ridge Pond and Prairie Pond are accessible by vehicle. White oaks, Sassafras and Park Pond available by foot on trails systems. Bass, bluegill, redear and channel catfish are stocked in all. Swimming is prohibited anywhere on forest property.



## Hunting ■■■■

Wildlife food plots, providing habitat for the forest's varied wildlife populations, are located throughout the site area.

Firearm and archery hunting are permitted at the site, except in the 240-acre portion containing the site headquarters, Possum Creek Campground and Rolling Meadows Picnic Area. Hunting information, fact sheets, maps, regulations and directions to the hunter parking lots are available at the site office. Hunters are required to complete hunter survey cards for each hunting trip. Please consult the forest superintendent about boundaries, hours and other aspects of the hunting program.

For more information about Hidden Springs State Forest, contact the site superintendent at R.R. 1, Box 200, Strasburg, IL 62465, fax (217) 644-3109 or phone (217) 644-3091. You can also visit the forest's website at <http://dnr.state.il.us/parks/park-info/hsforest.htm>.

## Recreational Trails Program ■■■■

This trail brochure was made possible due to funding provided by the Federal Highway Administration through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Monies are funded through the Federal Motor Fuel Tax and administered through the National Recreational Trails Fund Act. Trail projects are supported by the federal government, which provides up to 80% reimbursement of cost. State funds provide the balance of the funding for the projects. The trails program encourages trails management practices to serve a wide variety of trail users. The program is administered in Illinois by the Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

## Exotic Species ■■■■

Plants and animals not native to Illinois are exotic species. Most of them are harmless to our state; however, some can be very invasive to native plant communities and can overwhelm or wipe out native species. Prevention and control of exotic, invasive species requires tremendous cooperation between managers and all users of parks, natural areas, and privately owned land. To learn more about exotic and invasive species and how you can help prevent their spread, visit the IDNR Exotic Species Website at: <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/ExoticSpecies/exoticspintro.htm>.



**Hidden Springs State Forest**  
Rural Route 1, Box 200  
Strasburg, IL 62465, (217) 644-3091

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to the Department of Natural Resources, Clearinghouse, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271 visit our website at [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us).
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources' TTY number, (217) 782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other nonmerit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; (217) 785-0067; TTY (217) 782-9175.



# Hidden Springs

## STATE FOREST



## Hidden Springs State Forest ■■■■

Taking its name from the seven springs that once flowed from its 1,121 acres, Hidden Springs State Forest lies 10 miles southeast of Shelbyville and just southeast of Clarksburg. The forest consists of three separate tracts of gently rolling land. The terrain is broken occasionally by rugged steep hillsides and the lowlands bordering Richland Creek, which courses through the forest from the northeast to the southwest.

Based on the number of arrowheads and other artifacts found near them in the past, some of the springs show evidence of being frequently visited by Native Americans and early settlers. Over the decades, the refreshment the springs provided gave way to siltation and subsequent plant growth. Their locations now are marked by seeps, bogs or small marshes. Two such areas—Rocky and Quicksand springs—can be reached by trails. The others—including Fern, Indian and Stone springs—remain isolated from most forest visitors.

Hidden Springs has been managed as a state forest since 1960 and was known for its first dozen years as Shelby State Forest. Native trees include white, red, bur, post, pin, shingle and chinquapin oaks, sugar and silver maples, plus hickory, ash, sycamore, black walnut and cottonwood. Introduced species include red cedar, tulip poplar, black locust and red, white and Scotch pines. The forest produces a variety of seeds and nuts for planting at state tree nurseries, with orchards maintained to yield superior white pine and Scotch pine seed.

State-of-the-art forest management techniques are practiced and shown at Hidden Springs. To illustrate the effects of pruning and thinning, forest managers have developed a pine management demonstration area in the northeastern part of the site. Once thinned, the areas are converted to wildlife cover and food plantings.

A forest improvement demonstration area, located in the southwest section of the forest, shows the types of trees that would be removed in properly managed woodlands. Several areas demonstrate black walnut production through the use of corrective pruning and vegetation control.

The forest itself serves as an example of soil conservation practices. To combat the severe erosion that scarred the prop-

erty in the 1950s, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources worked with the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service in terracing, grass seeding and reforestation. Today, the ravages of erosion have been halted.

While sound timber and natural resource management is the main responsibility of Hidden Springs, recreation is the No. 1 interest of most visitors. In keeping with the concept of multiple use for DNR properties, recreational opportunities at the forest are numerous.

## Picnicking ■■■■

For picnickers, Rolling Meadows features a large shelter, privies, tables, stoves and a fire ring. On Rolling Meadows' south side, Red Bud Lane offers three small secluded picnic sites. The huge sycamore that lent its name to the Big Tree Picnic Area has succumbed to age, but the area continues to provide tables and stoves to picnickers at the forest's northern segment.

## Hiking ■■■■

Where the stately sycamore with a 78-inch trunk circumference once stood, Big Tree Nature Trail offers forest visitors a chance to exercise. One of the sights they'll see on their 1-mile trek is Quicksand Spring.

Rocky Spring Nature Trail, 3 miles in length, takes hikers past its namesake spring, the forest improvement demonstration area and black walnut trees grown for peak walnut production. Less than a mile in length, Oak Ridge Hiking Trail provides anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts access to Hickory Ridge Pond.

Possum Hollow Nature Trail is a 35-station interpretive route, for which the park office has printed trail guides. Providing access to Park Pond and the pine seed orchard, Possum Hollow is about 0.75 mile in length.

In addition, Hidden Springs' 17 miles of fire lanes, which provide access to remote portions of the forest, are available to ambitious hikers. The routes range from moderate to strenuous. Horses, motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles are not permitted on any trail or lane. All vehicles must stay on gravel roads, pads or parking lots.

