

Campground Hosts

Where's the trail? Who sells ice? Is this poison ivy?
Campers need help.

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Campground hosts are public relations liaisons for DNR. Hosts welcome campers, write camping permits, acquaint them with park facilities and regulations, answer questions on local and statewide attractions, and help visitors plan their trips. They live in their own RV, motor home or trailer at a special camp site. Above all else, the quality all campground hosts possess is enthusiasm for working with the public.

Special park projects or events can be designed based on a host's skills and interests. **Bob and Marge Bouldin**, campground hosts at Beaver Dam State Park and former teachers, often give nature talks to school groups visiting the park.

The Bouldins, who have served as campground hosts at the Macoupin County park for 10 years, said: "It is very satisfying when a camper tells us they enjoyed their camping stay."

Mike and Betty Plummer rarely take a day off as campground hosts at Red Hills State Park at Sumner. They help plan, organize, promote and recruit volunteers for Octoberfest, an annual weekend event at the campground that draws and estimated 400-500 campers and includes live entertainment and hay rides. Many adult campers don costumes to greet children enjoying decorated campsites while trick-or-treating.

"Octoberfest would not be a success without the contributions made by the Plummers," said Carl Aten, site superintendent.

Pat Benedetto helps with two campgrounds at Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area near Chandlerville, volunteering from early morning to late evening each day. Benedetto assists campers at the campgrounds in many ways and has always taken extra time in making sure both campgrounds are clean and in good repair. That extra effort shows in the site fireworks display

Campground hosts are often the first faces to greet state park visitors, including those at Jim Edgar Panther Creek, Pere Marquette and Red Hills (left to right).

To volunteer as a campground host, contact your local DNR park office, the Campground Host Coordinator at (217) 785-8129 or visit www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/index.htm.

Benedetto has sponsored at the site for the last two years, drawing crowds of spectators from surrounding communities.

"Pat has done an outstanding job and she is a valuable asset to the Jim Edgar Panther Creek team," stated Mike Wickens, site superintendent.

Regular campers at Pere Marquette State Park have come to know they can count on **Rich and Vi Huebner** for courteous service, as well as old fashioned hospitality. Having completed five years as campground hosts at the Jersey County park, the Huebners make new campers to the park feel welcome and give accurate information about the park and surrounding area. Always interested in providing that extra touch for visitors, in October the Huebners plan activities for the children at the campground.

"The Huebner's presence is important and greatly appreciated by visitors and staff," said Pam Warford, site assistant superintendent.

