

"i Volunteer" Newsletter

WINTER, 2011/2012

Volunteer Network Program

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

HUNTER SAFETY EDUCATION IS CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

Over the past 35 years, trained and dedicated volunteers have enriched the lives of Illinois youth interested in pursuing a time honored tradition...the shooting sports. Today's volunteer training force consists of nearly 1,200 men and women who have trained and certified more than 500,000 students in the Illinois Hunter Safety Education Program.



Jeff Hopkins with student during hunter safety education course

The current course structure has been in place for 35 years, although some form of hunter safety education has existed since March 1959. Throughout the years, the training program has evolved from volunteer participation and using National Rifle Association materials to a program offered through the Illinois school system to the most recent addition to the course...the option of combining an online self study phase with a field day. Today, the growth of technology help hunter safety education programs enhance a student's learning experience.

What keeps a volunteer active after logging in more than 35 years of service and witnessing an ever changing audience and method for teaching? According to Jimmy Walker of Catlin, one of the first volunteers recruited as an Illinois hunter safety education instructor in 1976, *"it's the students I taught in the 1970s and 1980s that approach me and say, 'I know what you did for me and I want you to do the same for my children.'"*

If you would like to give the gift of volunteering as an IDNR Safety Instructor, visit:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/SAFETY/volunteers.htm>

The Safety Education volunteer instructor staff is made up of men and women who donate thousands of hours of their personal time offering safety courses to many communities. These dedicated individuals form the backbone of the Safety Education Programs and we would like to thank them for keeping the Program alive and going strong. Without them we would not have a Program.

Thank You!

For questions about **IDNR's Safety Education Programs** visit [here](#) or email dnr.safetyed@illinois.gov.

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 after January 1st.

IDNR CAMPGROUND HOST PROGRAM

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. Often couples serve as campground hosts, dividing up the necessary tasks between them. We will have a list of Sites that need Campground Hosts in the Spring 2012 "i Volunteer" Newsletter issue. For more information on the Campground Host Program, visit our website at:

http://www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/Campground_Host_Manual2.pdf

JANUARY IS THE TIME TO SIGN UP FOR EARTH DAY IN THE PARKS

"**Earth Day in the Parks** is an event to promote stewardship of our natural resources by Illinois school children. During April and May, students and their teachers from throughout Illinois will come to participating 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 building brush piles for wildlife."

If you know of a school or a teacher who would be interested, please share this information.

Complete the **APPLICATION FORM** and mail it to the address at the bottom of the Application. To be accepted, applications must be received by the IDNR Division of Education any day from **January 1 through February 28, 2012**. Only one application per teacher is accepted.

For more information and to see the list of participating state parks, view the IDNR website at:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITPinstruct.htm>

For more information about this Program or other IDNR Education Programs, contact **Valerie Keener**, Division of Education Administrator at **217-524-4126** or email dnr.teachkids@illinois.gov

YOU CAN DONATE YOUR DEER HARVEST TO CHARITY

Hunters are encouraged to donate their entire deer harvest to food banks and charities. With the start of deer season, the **program will provide \$50 to assist with the processing cost of whole deer donations**. Consider volunteering your harvest to help the Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger Program feed the needy in Illinois. You can find a list of our Meat Processors on our website at: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/Pages/SportsmenAgainstHunger.aspx>.

Your tax deductible donation to assist with the cost of the processing can be made by noting on your check: "Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger" in the memo section, payable to the "Illinois Conservation Foundation" and mail to Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Sportsmen Against Hunger Program, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271.

For more information you may call **217-785-5091** or email tracy.shafer@illinois.gov.



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION SEEKING GRANT APPLICATIONS FROM FRIENDS GROUPS

The National Environmental Education Foundation's Every Day Grants, sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales USA, Inc., are intended to build the capacity of all Friends Groups to strengthen the stewardship of public lands.

For 2012, there will be two rounds of Every Day grants awarded. The first round of 25 grants will open for application in the fall of 2011. The second round of 25 grants will open for application in the spring of 2012. Applicants not awarded a grant in the first round, will be considered again in the second round.

Every Day Grants of up to \$5,000 each will be awarded.

For complete details, please visit: http://www.neefusa.org/grants/every_day_grants.htm

Apply now! The first round of Applications are due January 13, 2012.



~Did you Know?~

Blue penguins affected by an oil spill in New Zealand are wearing sweaters to not only keep warm until volunteers can clean them, but to prevent them from consuming the oil stuck in their coats.

More information can be found at:

http://www.allmediany.com/details_news_article.php?news_artid=2188

OUR CHRISTMAS WISH LIST



THE GIFT YOU CAN GIVE TO THE ILLINOIS WILDLIFE PRESERVATION FUND

If you are required to file a State of Illinois income tax return, you may contribute to the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund!

Here's How It Works

State the amount (not less than \$1) you wish to donate on the return under Section 10 (Donations).

The amount of the donation will be deducted from your tax refund (if you are due a refund) or will be added to the amount of tax owed. All donations are tax deductible.

Your Donation works in hundreds of ways!

All donations are used to fund projects awarded under the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund.

Survival of Illinois' native plants and animals is an ever growing challenge as important habitats are lost or degraded. Your contribution will pay for projects to help restore and manage habitats, monitor rare species, conduct research to help plan the recovery of endangered species, and educate Illinoisans about the values of our native species.

Your contribution will help preserve and manage state parks throughout Illinois, which are set aside to protect scenic areas and areas of important historic or cultural significance. State parks also offer diverse recreational opportunities such as camping, boating, hunting, fishing and equestrian trails.

For more information go to: <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/orc/wpf/index.htm>.

ANNUAL MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Argyle Lake State Park, located at 650 Argyle Park Road in Colchester

The **Annual Maple Syrup Festival** will be held **Saturday, March 6, 2010**. A few more volunteers are needed to help out. If you are interested, contact the Natural Resources Coordinator, **Bridget Hinchee** at **309-776-3422** or email Bridget.Hinchee@illinois.gov

GREAT RIVER ROAD CLEANUP

Monday, January 16 is a National Day of Service, honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

One area you can volunteer at is the **Great River Road Clean Up** in Godfrey. 9:00 am – 11:00 am.

“As part of the National Day of Service for Martin Luther King’s Birthday, the Sierra Club will be cleaning up the Great River Road in time for eagle viewing.”

They need volunteers! This will be a 2 mile trail clean up along the Scenic Byway, one mile downstream of Clifton Terrace Park and one mile upstream. Meet at the Clifton Terrace Park Parking Lot at 8:45 for check in. Bring plenty of layers of warm clothes; and a reusable water bottle. They will supply safety vests, work gloves, bags, and a snack. To register, or for questions contact **Christine Favilla** at **618-462-6802** or email cfavilla10@sbcglobal.net.

You can learn more about MLK Day and how you can participate at : <http://mlkday.gov/>.

To find volunteer opportunities in your area, go to the **SERVE ILLINOIS** website and put in your county or zip code at the **Volunteer Now** link.

BLUEBIRD MONITORS NEEDED

Volo Bog State Natural Area and Moraine Hills State Park Bluebird Monitors are needed to check and maintain from 10 - 20 nest boxes once per week from **late March through early August**. There are openings for bluebird monitors at both sites. Additional monitoring opportunities may be available at other trails throughout Lake and McHenry Counties. For further information on volunteer opportunities, or to obtain an application, please Contact Naturalist **Stacy Iwanicki** at **815-344-1294** or email: dnr.volobog@illinois.gov

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are you doing for others?’”

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

GOT QUESTIONS? GET ANSWERS FROM YOUR FRIENDS!

Friends Groups have great ideas to share! This will be a page dedicated to sharing information, your ideas and expertise with other IDNR Friends and Volunteer Groups. Do you have questions that other Friends Groups could answer for you? We will save this page of the Newsletter to help facilitate greater networking and communications among our Friends. You can get help and advice from others across the state facing similar challenges; discuss issues; and share ideas for strengthening your group so that we can better protect and promote our sites.

QUESTION FOR THIS MONTH: We have started a Friends Group, but still only have a handful of members. How do we increase our membership of committed and active volunteers?

ANSWER FROM GOOSE LAKE PRAIRIE PARTNERS, INC.: "In our group just this year, we added about 10 new members. One thing that helped our group was a member was willing to **talk one on one to visitors** at events and to purchasers of raffle tickets. He informed them about our group and invited them to join. Many said they had been thinking about the park and they thought they were ready to lend a hand...After he got a 'yes', he followed up with packets of our papers and lists of our projects, copies of newsletter, etc. after the one on one talk. Of these new members, we have four new weekend workers to keep the Center open; a new Holiday Party Chair; and a new Secretary!

You need a **Membership Recruitment Chair**. If a group doesn't have a recruiter.....it is hard to get new members. We have a list of names and email addresses from the visitor's center sign in book. I send out updates on events and announce that a new newsletter is on the desk in the center and on our website. This list is now about 400 names.

To keep members committed and active, we share information among our members and friends on a **monthly basis**, announcing specific friend meetings, programs and such.

Get families involved. Junior members sign up to volunteer with their family in the center on weekends. They are handy for making jewelry to sell in the gift shop and one of them is weaving rugs for the gift shop. Each year we decorate the Christmas tree with **homemade ornaments**. Some members wear 1830 period dress. Hot Apple cider and homemade cookies were served. Children and adults made holiday ornaments, one to hang on our tree and **one to take home** with them. I hope this helps others." **Susie Johnson, President**



You can view the **Goose Lake Prairie Partners, Inc.** website at: <http://gooselakeprairie.org/default.htm>

If your group has resources, you may want to initiate a marketing campaign!

ANSWER FROM FRANKLIN GROVE CREEK PRESERVATION AREA COMMITTEE: "We are working with a non profit consultant, the USPS and a commercial printing company to create **a newsletter and do a saturation advertising campaign** to the four counties around the Franklin Creek Grist Mill (about 14k households). It will have basically the same information that is on the website, but will make a big push for membership in our organization.

We have never had a marketing plan or membership program before. We are trying to get the Franklin Grove Creek Preservation Area Committee on a sound, stable financial situation.

The mailing is going to be an **eight page (8 1/2"x11") color newsprint newspaper ad supplement** type document, which will cost us only about \$.09 each (in our volume). It will be printed by the **local newspaper**. With declining readership, they are very aggressive and competitive in commercial printing. We are also using a new **USPS** product called "**Every Door Direct Mail Bulk Mail**" which is aimed at small retail businesses, but works great for non profits too. It will cost us about \$.09 each to mail each document. You can target every household in as small an area as an individual postman route to as large as or more zip codes. The USPS is also very aggressive and responsive to new business opportunities. Our entire cost is going to be about \$.18 each, so it is very reasonable price wise."

William Abate, Director of the Franklin Grove Creek Preservation Area Committee

You can view their NEW website at: <http://www.franklincreekgristmill.com/>



The following have contributed to this Newsletter: *Outdoor Illinois Issue, Dec. 2011; NGRREC Illinois RiverWatcher, Winter 2011 Issue 18; Serve Illinois Fall 2011 Newsletter; Chicago Wilderness December 2011 Newsletter; and the TNC Gatherings Online, November 2011 Newsletter.*

Happy Holidays from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Volunteer Program

The devotion of your time is a vital resource in the management and protection of our natural and recreational resources. Your help is very much appreciated.

Thanks to your efforts, a lasting difference was made in your community. We look forward to working with you in 2012 and beyond!

MAKE SURE YOU ARE COUNTED! Turn in your volunteer timesheets to your IDNR Volunteer Supervisor at the end of December! Thank you!

YOUR NEW VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK IS AVAILABLE ONLINE!

Please read and/or print the new **IDNR Volunteer Handbook** at:

http://www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/pdf/Volunteer_handbook.pdf

For more information, to change your email address or to subscribe or unsubscribe to the "i Volunteer" Newsletter you may email: **Dianne Blasa**, the Volunteer Network Program Manager at: dnr.volunteers@illinois.gov

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

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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 for giving back to your community!



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