

Nature Preserve

Two-thirds of Spitler Woods State Natural Area is a dedicated nature preserve containing one of the remaining stands of climax growth timber in Illinois. In order to ensure that future generations may enjoy the unspoiled beauties of the forest, visitors are asked to remain on the marked trails. Nothing should be removed from the nature preserve. Flowers and leaves may not be picked, nuts and mushrooms may not be harvested, and firewood may not be gathered.

Facilities Picnic Areas ■■■■

Spitler Woods has a large day-use facility with many picnic areas convenient to parking. Picnic tables and fire blocks are provided. Visitors must not build fires on the ground and instead should use the fire blocks. All picnic areas are adjacent to restrooms, drinking water, horseshoe pits, volleyball courts and playgrounds. There are both large and small picnic shelters available on a first-come, first-served basis. An enclosed picnic pavilion and three open picnic shelters may be reserved by contacting the site superintendent. A softball area, two soccer fields and a basketball court provide other options for the visitor.

Trails ■■■■

There are two trails that wind through the nature preserve. Red Oak Ramble is a 1/2-mile trail specifically designed for those with physical limitations. Squirrel Creek Trail is a 2-mile hiking trail of moderate difficulty but with numerous steep grades. Please remember that nothing may be removed from the nature preserve. Trail users are required to stay on the marked trails in the nature preserve. All pets must be leashed.

In addition to the two nature trails, Spitler Woods also offers a 1/2-mile physical fitness trail with a specially designed jogging surface and 11 exercise stations.

Group Camping

Although individual camping is prohibited in Spitler Woods, an area is provided for organized group camping. Reservations and camping permits should be secured from site staff.

For reservations or further information, contact the site superintendent at Spitler Woods State Natural Area, 705 Spitler Park Drive, Mount Zion, IL 62549, phone (217) 864-3121.



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>.

If the outdoors in Illinois
is where you want to be



Keep an eye on every issue of Outdoor Illinois

DNR's monthly magazine provides current news and articles on hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational activities, as well as information on the natural and cultural resources of Illinois.

A one-year subscription is only \$15, and each December you'll receive a full-color calendar featuring important out door dates and events. To subscribe, call toll free in Illinois, 1-800-720-3249. Outside Illinois, contact DNR at (217)782-7454. TTY number is (217) 782-9175.



Spitler Woods State Natural Area
705 Spitler Park Drive
Mount Zion, IL 62549, (217) 864-3121

- 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.
- 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.



Spitler Woods

STATE NATURAL AREA



Spitler Woods State Natural Area ■■■■

A 146-acre forested tract, Spitler Woods State Natural Area is 8 miles southeast of Decatur and 1/2 mile east of Mount Zion off Illinois Route 121. The site was named for Ida B. Spitler, who donated much of the land to the state in 1937, preserving for posterity the area's shaded ravines and towering trees.

Natural History ■■■■

Large areas of east-central Illinois were once covered with thick forests. When the area that comprises Spitler Woods was first surveyed in April 1821, it was described as "gently rolling woods composed mainly of oak, hickory, walnut and maple trees." The understory of plants includes a wide variety of wildflowers. Among the more prominent are the dogtooth violet, jack-in-the-pulpit, Dutchman's breeches, wild geranium, buttercup, May apple, red trillium, black-eyed Susan, woodland sunflower, Solomon's seal, bluebell and anemone. Early area settlers used the abundant sassafras found here to make herbal tea.



Because Mrs. Spitler had a deep love for nature, Spitler Woods did not fall prey to the clear cutting and farming that destroyed virtually all of central Illinois' forests. During her lifetime, she took care to see that no timber was cut on the site, nor did she allow hunting on her land. Consequently, the woods, which retained many varieties of trees and shrubs native to central Illinois, became a haven for birds and animals.

More than 175 years after the site was first surveyed, oak, walnut and hickory trees continue to provide a soft, dense canopy for many kinds of birds. Wildlife still come to drink from Squirrel Creek as it trickles through the woodlands. While strolling along the trails through this peaceful nature preserve, you may catch a glimpse of deer, rabbits, squirrels, opossums, raccoons, woodchucks or field mice.

