

Volunteer opportunities abound in Illinois, and thousands of our citizens give generously of their time to assist local community social service agencies, schools, libraries, museums, civic and service organizations.

The generosity and dedication of volunteers can also be seen every day at sites and facilities managed by – and in programs offered by – the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Volunteers often play important roles in furthering the mission of the IDNR to manage, protect and sustain the state's natural and cultural resources, provide recreational opportunities, and promote natural resource-related public safety, education, and science. Individuals and organizations with a passion for the outdoors and for protecting the state's natural wonders are willing to share their knowledge and give of their valuable time to help IDNR staff and other constituents in meeting that mission.

The IDNR Volunteer Program helps coordinate a statewide network of people and organizations capable of providing a wide variety of services. Details are available at this link:

<http://www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/index.htm>

Anyone, and everyone, interested in volunteer opportunities can find at that link a Volunteer Projects Directory, with contact information on the IDNR staff coordinating the opportunities. Information is also available on volunteer position descriptions, waiver and background check requirements.

Who are IDNR volunteers? For example, last summer the IDNR honored for their volunteer service:

- An Illinois State Museum docent who volunteers to assist with exhibit and education programs at the museum in Springfield;
- A father-daughter team who assist with youth fishing clinics each year the Illinois State Fair;
- A retired biologist who assists with youth education programs, youth hunts, and fisheries surveys on Carlyle Lake;
- A retired school teacher who assists with youth hunts, photography instruction, and prairie seed propagation and Eldon Hazlet State Park;
- A Fairview Heights man who helps coordinate shooting sports programs for other persons with disabilities through the IDNR Disabled Outdoor Opportunities Program;
- A downstate landowner who participates in the IDNR Acres for Wildlife program, promotes the value of habitat enhancement and wildlife management programs, and assists IDNR wildlife staff in a variety of activities and surveys;
- Members of the Illinois Archery Association, who help coordinate the National Archery in the Schools program in the state;
- Members of the Quad Cities Natural Area Guardians, who assist the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and The Nature Conservancy with natural areas maintenance and stewardship; and,
- Members of the Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve Committee, who provide stewardship of that reserve owned by the Village of Valmeyer in southwest Illinois.

If you have an interest in volunteer opportunities through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, check the web page at <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/index.htm> or contact IDNR Volunteer Program coordinator Diane Blasa at [dnr.volunteers@Illinois.gov](mailto:dnr.volunteers@Illinois.gov)

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