



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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<http://dnr.state.il.us>

Pat Quinn, Governor
Marc Miller, Director

Youth Recruitment and Retention Natural Resources Advisory Board Subcommittee

Monday, July 20, 2009
DNR Headquarters
Springfield, Illinois
5:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order and Roll Call

Richard Mark, Natural Resources Advisory Board, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Roll Call

Kent Adams, National Wild Turkey Federation; Glynnis Collins, Prairie Rivers Network; Elizabeth Hagen-Moeller, Environmental Education Association of Illinois; Michael Howard, Fuller Park Community Development Corp; Aaron Kuhl, Pheasants Forever; Richard Mark, Natural Resources Advisory Board; and Tim Presley, Presley Outdoors.

Remarks from Director Marc Miller

Director Miller welcomed everyone, thanked the committee for embarking on this important endeavor, and thanked to the audience for joining us to participate. Trends in youth outdoor activities have declined and we need to address this to maintain our agency over the next several decades. At these meetings we are going to discuss these trends, address them, and develop a report to be heard by the Conservation Congress. The Congress will alter the recommendations and vote on it.

It is an important to our constituents to be open, inclusive, and engaged to help us guide it. We are in a critical point in history. We've suffered through the last 6-8 years with cuts, hiring freezes, and diminishing numbers. Since Governor Quinn took office, we have been working to reestablish relationships. We need to go a step further and reestablish the Conservation Congress and engage the Natural Resources Advisory Board. If the agency does not allow the constituents to be involved we will continue down the path of the last 6 years. We are asking this committee to get engaged with the public to tell our legislatures what is needed, and have enough authority to get things done. This committee will get kids involved in nature and become tomorrow's conservation leaders.

Miller announced and welcomed the new Assistant Director, John Rogner. He was formally the Field Supervisor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chicago region office for 19 years.

Current DNR Youth Program – Olivia Dorothy, Youth Program Coordinator, IDNR

PowerPoint presentation available at <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/nrab/children.htm>

Fisheries

- **Urban Fishing Program**
 - Summer and special fishing clinics, school programs, rod and reel loaner sites, fish stockings, and other programs. Last year, over 21,000 kids attended a fishing clinic. Additionally, volunteer organizations held over 300 fishing clinics for more than 8,700 kids.

- Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs Program is a national fishing program that combines angling skills, fishing, and ethical care of the environment and it hooked 27,500 kids in Illinois last year
- The Access to Fishing rod and reel loaner program has loaned out materials more than 9,000 times since 1997 and is currently at 102 sites.
- **Assist IHSA Youth Bass Fishing Regional and State Final Tournament**
 - 220 schools in 2009, expect 350 schools next year
- **Assist BASS Federation annual statewide tournament**
- **Assist Illinois Muskie Tournament Trail (IMTT)**
 - 2-3 youth tournaments
- **Fishing literature**
 - Knot Tying, Kinds of Fish, fishing regulations, Kids Fishing Safety, how to teach kids to fish, and other publications for kids fishing.
- **Provide assistance to numerous general requests**
 - fish hatchery tours, county conservation field days, Environthon programs, park days, general school programs, state/county fairs, YMCA programs, girl scouts/boy scouts, forest preserve districts, Arbor Day, Clean Water Celebration, and many others as requested as everyone loves a fish pond shocking demo or to get hands on with fish, frogs, crayfish, etc.

Land Management

The statewide interpretive program that provide youth programming to thousands of youth each year.

- Interpreters provide **school group programs** both on-site and in the classroom. A lot of times, interpreters will go the classroom first and provide a presentation and then have a hands-on program at the park with the class.
- Interpreters work with **scout groups, 4-H and other youth environmental organizations** providing programs as well as leading activities associated with badge requirements and certifications.
- Interpreters coordinate youth **special events** such as Earth Day celebrations, It's Our River Day Celebrations, Wingshooting clinics, Fishing clinics, Archery Shoots, Conservation Days, etc.
- Interpreters provide **programming within their visitor centers** for everyday park visitors. A lot of this programming is in conjunction with educational exhibits within the visitor centers.
- Interpreters will offer programs within their park campgrounds for families and youth. **Seasonal campground program** topics vary depending on the season, current happenings in nature, state or national events, historical happenings, etc.
- Interpreters work with **constituent groups** and provide programming for their youth programs such as Jakes events (NWTF), Kids on Target (Whitetails) etc.
- Interpreters assist with **statewide educational and recreational programming** coordinated through the Land Management office in Springfield. These have included Under Illinois Skies, Wilderness Camping, Becoming An Outdoor Woman, Women in the Outdoors, Seasonal Interpreter Trainings, State Fair youth activities, etc.

Office of Mines and Minerals

- Most public programs are aimed at public participation in the regulatory process. None of the OMM staff is dedicated to education.
- **The Rock Box**
 - An educational display on the **mineral resources in Illinois and their uses**.
 - OMM staff travel to 30-40 events and schools per year to give Rock Box presentations.
- Educate teachers annually on mining in Illinois at the DCEO Rend Lake conference.
- Occasional school field trips to blast sites, and educating kids on explosions safety.

Office of Special Events, Programs and Promotions

- Outdoor Recreation and Recruitment Section (Shooting Sports Development)
 - Intro to Wingshooting Program – Youth and Women

- Scholastic Clay Target Program – Competitive shotgun shooting in the disciplines of trap, skeet, and sporting clays – youth
- National Archery in the Schools Program – introducing the archery in the public, private, parochial, and academy school systems
- Outreach programs:
 - Youth Archery Clinics – churches, scouts, ag extension offices, camps
 - Youth Waterfowl Hunts
 - Disabled Youth Hunts for deer and turkey
 - Archery tent at State Fairs
- Mandatory Safety Education Programs
 - Hunter – anyone born on or after January 1, 1980
 - Boater – mandatory for ages 10-17
 - Snowmobile – mandatory for ages 10-15
 - Trapper – mandatory for any first time trapper under the age of 18
 - Outreach programs
 - BB Gun trailer at State Fair
 - Shotgun ranges at National Hunting and Fishing Days events
- Other Divisions
 - Youth Dove Hunts
 - Youth Pheasant Hunts
 - Youth Deer Season
 - Youth Turkey Season

Illinois State Museum

- 6 locations at Research and Collections Center in Springfield; Dickson Mounds Museum; Chicago Gallery; Lockport Gallery; and Emiquon
- Family Learning at site exhibition:
 - A guide geared for children and parents is created in-house for **specific exhibitions** to encourage families to explore on their own selected objects in depth.
- Changes
 - **Changes natural history exhibition** has numerous hands-on elements geared to youth and **Changes Checklist** activities are available for self-guided activities
- Self Guided Activities and School Programs
 - Orientation during the Museum’s busiest time for **school tours in April and May**, which reaches approximately 45,000 children grades K-8 each year
 - Annual **school programs** on natural sciences, anthropology, history, and art in the ISM galleries (Changes, Peoples of the Past, At Home in the Heartland) taught by an educator and correlated to the State Learning Standards (Grades Pre K through High School), as well as self-guided programs and activities
- Boys and Girls Club Camp-In
 - Annual **Overnight Camp-ins** (public and “Boys and Girls Club”) for approximately 25 children each event ages 8-11
- Family Events
 - Annual **Family Events held quarterly**, which reach approximately 500-700 per event
 - Annual **Halloween** event with numerous educational activities for all ages, which draws approximately 1800 people
- Super Saturdays
 - **Super Saturday events held monthly** - recommended for ages 4-8 and attended by approximately 200-300 monthly
- Museum Tech Academy
 - Annual **Museum Tech Academy after-school and summer program** in natural sciences and archaeology, which reaches approximately 45 students grades 7-9 each year (based on the Research and Collections Center)

- Other programs:
 - Annual **Junior Collector's Day** held for ages 8-15 attracting approximately 20 collectors
 - Annual **Summer Science workshops** reaching approximately 30 children grades 1-4
 - Annual **Summer Art workshops** reaching approximately 45 children grades K-8
 - Annual **Summer Film Festival** shown **four times weekly in June and July** recommended for ages 3-8 and attended by approximately 2100 people
 - **Summer program** for Boys and Girls Club attended by approximately 120 children grades K-8
 - **A Place for Discovery hands-on discovery center** for children ages 3-10
 - Curator and Educator-led **behind the scenes programs and tours** in the Research and Collections Center for school and other groups (grades 5-12, and college)
 - A variety of **online educational resources for Pre K-12 teachers and students** on the Museum's Web site
- Just to name a few of the Museums programs.

Division of Education

- **Natural Resources-Related Educational Materials**
 - Items are produced using the Illinois Learning Standards and Illinois Early Learning Standards as their foundation. All items are distributed **free of charge to teachers at ISBE-registered schools** in Illinois. Spanish-language versions of many items are available.
- **Many supplemental materials – 11 slides**
- **ENTICE**
 - The **ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education)** program offers **teacher-training** workshops about our natural resources.
- **Online Graduate-Level Courses**
 - In cooperation with the University of Illinois at the Urbana-Champaign and Springfield campuses, **five online graduate-level courses** are offered with the goal of providing a teaching endorsement in environmental education.
- **Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant Program**
 - This competitive grant program allows **teachers to apply for up to \$500 to take students on a field trip** to an Illinois location to study some aspect of Illinois' natural or cultural biodiversity. All funds for this program are donated.
- **Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant Program**
 - This competitive grant fund allows **teachers and other educators to apply for up to \$600 to create or enhance wildlife habitat on the school grounds or other public sites**. All funds for this program are donated.
- **Items for Loan**
 - A series of resource trunks are available from lending locations statewide. CD-ROMs are also available from lending sites.
- **Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest**
 - This annual educational program and **art contest highlights wetland and waterfowl conservation** and is open to all Illinois students of grades K-12.
- **Earth Day in the Parks**
 - Students participate in **natural resources stewardship activities at Illinois state parks** and are encouraged to return to the park to observe and study the results of their efforts. Cooperation with community college horticulture programs to raise native plants for the event is occurring.
- **List Server**
 - Educators can find out instantly about upcoming workshops, events, new educational materials and other items of interest.
- **Online Ordering System**
 - This system allows educators and the general public access to the publications of the IDNR.
- **Illinois Biodiversity Studies through the iCollaboratory Project**
 - **Students collect data** about spiders and squirrels, **interact with scientists, analyze results** and hold discussions with other participating students.
- **Interactive Student Pages**

- The interactive student Web pages offer **another educational option**, providing information to students and the general public.

Outdoor Recreation Participation Report – Marla Gursh, IDNR

Handouts available at <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/nrab/children.htm>.

Public Comment

Jim McFarlane, Illinois Federation of Outdoor Resources, offered to provide information on old Conservation Congress items concerning youth recruitment and retention.

Warren Gale, Quad Cities Conservation Alliance, commented that using online tools to encourage older youth into outdoor sport should not be encouraged.

Kristin Vacek, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, responded that IDNR uses online resources primarily through teacher education and hunting safety.

Tom Palmisano, Henry Sports Bait Shop, commented that there are over 16 miles of shoreline in Chicago, and an increased interest in fishing for sustenance. DNR should allocate more than one urban fishing coordinator for the Chicago region to address the increased interest.

Rhett Rossi, New Salem Long Beards, commented that DNR once coordinated youth hunts, other groups have continued the tradition since the program was cut, but DNR should consider reestablishing it.

Eric Schenck, Ducks Unlimited, commented that outdoors places are underutilized. DNR should create partnerships with Ducks Unlimited and others to facilitate programs. The Capital Bill includes funds for recreational facilities and DNR should focus that money on projects that will encourage youth involvement.

Joe Seten, Illinois Federation of Outdoor Resources, invited participants to the State Fair. Visitors will learn about IFOR's activities.

Jacques Nuzzo, Illinois Raptor Center, commented that DNR's hunting programs should incorporate other educational information on native prairies and wildlife habitat. He added that DNR should use more volunteers for program outreach.

Mark commented that DNR must publicize and market the programs that are available to maximize outreach.

Melanie Arnold, Macon County Conservation District, commented that DNR should target toddlers to foster an appreciation of the outdoors at an early age.

Jo Skoglund, Illinois Audubon, commented that DNR should involve more parents in family oriented programs to retain youth involvement, especially young and single parents who are more likely to not be involved in outdoor recreation.

Kuhl commented that youth safety courses alone do not retain youth interest, safety courses that are followed with group hunts increases future participation.

Collins commented that the State should audit programs with the National Wildlife Federation.

Adjourn

Mark adjourned the meeting at 7PM.