

**State of Illinois
Pat Quinn, Governor
Illinois Department of Natural Resources**



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Volunteer Network Program

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

Site Name and Address:

Site Name: _____

Address: _____

Volunteer Supervisor and Contact Information:

Name of Volunteer Supervisor: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

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**Welcome from the Volunteer
Program Manager**

Dear Volunteer:

Welcome to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Volunteer Network Program. You have joined a special group of people. We are excited about what your volunteer efforts can provide. As you know, volunteers do not replace or eliminate our staff. They supplement, improve and enhance our natural resources. Because of your volunteer work, visitors will enjoy improved and expanded services.

We are confident that you will benefit from your experience as a volunteer. Some of the benefits of volunteering with IDNR are personal satisfaction and life enrichment; meeting people and making friends; staying active for an improved quality of life; developing new skills and gaining valuable expertise; plus hours of fun and enjoyment. It is an opportunity to be part of your community in a special way.

Please read and keep this manual with you. You will find it will help you to insure a safe and satisfying experience as a volunteer. It will also help you understand your role as a volunteer with IDNR. If you perform your volunteer duties efficiently, and communicate with staff regularly, you can expect your volunteer time to be beneficial.

Please contact your Volunteer Supervisor if you have any questions or comments on any part of your volunteer work. Thank you for helping to build our community by volunteering your time and talents to make a difference!

Sincerely,

Dianne Blasa

Volunteer Program Manager

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Website: www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/index.htm

Our Mission Statement

Our volunteers want to give back to their communities. They are concerned citizens, organizations and people with a passion who want to help us fulfill our mission:

To manage, protect and sustain Illinois' natural and cultural resources; provide resource-compatible recreational opportunities; and to promote natural resource-related issues for public safety and education.

We believe our volunteers enhance IDNR's ability to offer a quality recreation and outdoor resource program. Volunteers offer our staff years of experience, skills and talents. They are a crucial component of our Department and we appreciate their dedication.

Union Guidelines

Volunteers are used to supplement and not replace bargaining unit work. Volunteers are not directed to displace currently employed staff, used to reduce the level of funding for personal services, or reduce the customary level of services provided by employees.

The Volunteer Network Program

The *Volunteer Network Program* consists of six programs, The Volunteer Program; Kids Volunteer Program; Friends Group Program; Campground Host Program; Safety Education Volunteer Program; and the Internship/College Credit Program.

The *Volunteer Program* consists of hundreds of volunteers who donate their time at regular intervals or maybe just once a year. These volunteers may come to us as groups or individuals, and usually work on specific tasks. Their volunteer contributions can be ongoing or a one-time event. The *IDNR Volunteer Projects Manual* includes the list of volunteer opportunities available. Divisions that participate are Fisheries, Urban Fishing, Natural Heritage, Nature Preserve Commission, Wildlife, Forestry, Parks and Recreation, Disabled Outdoor Opportunities, Safety Education and Special Events.

The *Kids Volunteer Program* helps our youth learn, at an early age, that they can contribute to their community by volunteering. Youth organizations, such as Girl/Boy Scouts, 4-H groups, school groups, church youth programs, sports leagues, special interest clubs, recreation centers, performing arts group and after-school daycare groups have all helped by providing volunteers for special events or one-day projects. For youth groups, the group leader is responsible to provide a ratio of supervision of adults to youth that the IDNR Volunteer Supervisor determines is appropriate for the activity. Individual minors under the age of 16 can volunteer if they are part of an organized group or working side by side with a family member that will provide adult supervision. We also have opportunities for volunteers from schools and civics classes who are required to perform community service projects for graduation to show civic responsibility and involvement. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have their parent sign the volunteer forms.

The ***Friends Group Program*** consists of groups that are dedicated to enhance, preserve, and protect IDNR sites including interpretive and educational activities. The groups consist of organizations, businesses and individuals who like to volunteer with projects and activities on a regular basis. These groups form to promote, encourage, foster, support, rehab and develop an IDNR Site, Division or District. They also sponsor activities and outdoor recreation. Some groups may have a small membership fee and the funds will help the group purchase items that will promote the site they sponsor. An IDNR Volunteer Supervisor, from the site, will work with the Friends Group concerning volunteer duties and activities. There are many Friends Groups already in place. You can check the IDNR Website for an up-to-date list of Friends Groups or if you would like to start your own Friends Group, please contact the Volunteer Program Manager.

The ***Internship Program/College Credit Program*** is good for college students who would like to trade credit hours for volunteering in any of the Volunteer Network Divisions. This is a great experience for the student who would like to learn more about and work with our natural resources. The Intern will gain new skills and knowledge as they work with our natural resource professionals and connect with people who have the same interests. This is a non-paid program and it must be organized through an Illinois College or University.

The ***Campground Host Program*** is fun for those who love to camp in their recreational vehicles while at the same time love the outdoors and enjoy working with the public and helping others. Our Campground Hosts serve as public relations liaisons providing information, assisting with camping permits and performing other assorted functions. Hosting opportunities will vary from location-to-location. Assignments may last from one month to six months and you need to agree to be available to volunteer a minimum of 35 hours per week including holidays and weekends. You also must be at least 21 years old. Campground Hosts are often the first contact our visitors have with the IDNR Park. You are provided a free campsite and are paid \$1.00 per day, unless you waive the payment. Alternate Hosts are also needed for times when the regular hosts need to take a short leave. For more information on this Program, you may refer to the *Campground Host Manual* at http://www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/Campground_Host_Manual2.pdf on our website or contact Barb Foster at 217-785-8129 or email Barbara.L.Foster@illinois.gov.

The *Safety Education Volunteer Instructor Program* is always looking for qualified individuals who would like to become volunteer instructors in the safety education programs. We need Volunteer Instructors for our Boating; Hunter; Snowmobile; and Trapping Education courses. There is a Certification Process; you must be 18 years of age or older; be a graduate of the student safety course in the specific program for which you are applying; and complete all Volunteer paperwork. Please go to <http://dnr.state.il.us/SAFETY/volunteers.htm> for the forms and more information if you are interested.

To learn about any of our Volunteer Network Programs, you can check our website at: www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/index.htm or contact the Volunteer Program Manager at dnr.volunteers@illinois.gov.

Equal Opportunity

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 non-merit 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.

Volunteer Responsibilities

- Know who your Volunteer Supervisor is. It is the person who discusses your duties with you and signs all of your volunteer forms. Determine who you go to if the Volunteer Supervisor is not available. Know the chain of command.
- The duties stated in your Job Description are the only volunteer duties that have been given to you to perform. Keep a copy of the Job Description with you.
- If you have a scheduled time to volunteer, show up at your time on the days that you have agreed to volunteer and stay as long as you have committed to stay, otherwise you should notify your Volunteer Supervisor.
- Represent IDNR in a professional manner.
- Complete a time sheet on a monthly basis, or make sure your Volunteer Supervisor knows the dates you volunteer and the number of hours you donate each month in the method the Supervisor requires. Also, be sure to let your Volunteer Supervisor know when you are to receive a recognition item. (See page 15 of this Handbook for recognition items)
- Let the Volunteer Supervisor know of any problems; if you have any suggestions for improvement, or need help.
- Follow all IDNR policies and procedures, State laws and regulations.
- Let your supervisor know immediately if you are physically incapable of performing your volunteer duties or if you feel uncomfortable with any job that you are asked to do.
- Comply with dress code, customer service standards, and any other expectation the Volunteer Supervisor may have given you.

Volunteer Forms

Before you begin your volunteer work, you will be asked to fill out and sign volunteer forms. Each of the forms has a specific purpose to ensure that you understand your duties, rules, regulations and benefits. Your Volunteer Supervisor will explain each form and answer any question you may have. *Please submit your time sheets or the number of hours you donate monthly to your Volunteer Supervisor.* This will help us ensure that all forms are signed and you are covered for auto and liability protection.

For returning volunteers, it is recommended you complete new forms annually. You must complete new volunteer forms if any of your information has changed or the forms have changed. ALL volunteers need to complete the Vehicle Authorization form annually, if you drive a state or personal vehicle while volunteering. (The year begins each January.)

Please supply all information requested on the following forms:

- Volunteer Application
- Job Description/Waiver and Release of Liability
- Job Description Roster - for groups
- Vehicle Authorization - if applicable
- Request for Release of Information for Background Check, if applicable

*For Groups, the Leader of the Group needs to complete the Volunteer Application, Job Description/Waiver. The names of the members in the Group are listed on the Job Description Roster. The Group Leader must have authority from the Group before completing and submitting volunteer forms. The Vehicle Authorization form is the only form that needs to be completed by each member of the Group.

Liability Insurance

As a volunteer, you are covered by the State Employee's Indemnification Act for civil liability protection. This protects you against claims of negligence or injury to others. You must be working on only the duties assigned under your Job Description; perform your duties in good faith; and do not act in a reckless manner or with the intent to inflict harm on others.

The coverage is effective only if you have completed all required volunteer paperwork, approved by the Volunteer Supervisor, and functioning within the scope of your assigned duties at the time of the incident. You must notify your Volunteer Supervisor immediately and there must be a written report given to the Supervisor as soon as possible.

The Waiver and Release of Liability will protect the State of Illinois in case of injury.

Vehicles and Insurance

LICENSED VEHICLES

State Owned Licensed Vehicles

The State's self-insurance plan provides auto liability coverage to you when operating a State vehicle, as insured under the policy with limited restrictions. To be covered under the State's self-insured Plan, you must:

- Receive permission to drive a state owned licensed vehicle by completing a Vehicle Authorization form, with the licensed vehicle section completed, approved by the Volunteer Supervisor, and the Director of IDNR. The form must be completed on an annual basis (the year begins each January).
- Possess a valid driver's license for the class of vehicle you are operating, with proof of insurance.
- Be performing duties as set out in your Job Description and assigned by your Volunteer Supervisor.
- Perform your duties in good faith, and do not act in a manner that is reckless or with the intent to unlawfully inflict harm on others.
- Report the dates you volunteer and volunteer hours to your Volunteer Supervisor, in the manner specified by your Supervisor.
- Not allow passengers in the vehicle unless they are volunteers that have completed the Job Description/Waiver form, approved by the Volunteer Supervisor.
- Must have Director's approval to ride as a passenger with a state employee if it is a State Pool vehicle.
- Operate the vehicle on roadways specifically posted as traffic ways, except with written permission from your Volunteer Supervisor to gain access to project or program areas which assist the site.

- For Groups, each member of the group needs to complete the Vehicle Authorization form, approved by Volunteer Supervisor and Director of IDNR.

Personal Licensed Vehicles

The State's self-insurance plan does not provide coverage to volunteers operating their own personal vehicles. If you need to use your own personal vehicle to volunteer on State property, you will be asked to show proof of a current driver's license, vehicle insurance and you need to complete the Vehicle Authorization form. You must abide by the same above rules as set out above for state-owned licensed vehicles.

NON-LICENSED VEHICLES (Golf cart or four or more wheeled ATV)

State owned Non-Licensed Vehicles

The State's self-insurance plan provides only liability coverage when you operate a State non-licensed vehicle, as insured under the policy with limited restrictions. To be covered under the State's self-insured Plan, you must:

- Receive permission to drive a non-licensed vehicle by completing a Vehicle Authorization form, with the non-licensed vehicle section completed and approved by the Volunteer Supervisor, and the Director of IDNR. The form must be completed on an annual basis (the year begins each January).
- Be performing duties as set out in your Job Description and assigned by your Volunteer Supervisor.
- Perform your duties in good faith, and do not act in a manner that is reckless or with the intent to unlawfully inflict harm on others.
- Report the dates you volunteer and your volunteer hours to your Volunteer Supervisor in the manner specified by your Supervisor.
- Not allow passengers in the vehicle unless they are volunteers that have completed the Volunteer paperwork, approved by the Volunteer Supervisor.

- Have a flagstick and orange flag on the vehicle; a slow moving vehicle triangle on back and headlight and tail light if used during hours of darkness.
- Not drive on park (or site) roads unless the roads are properly designated. If you need to travel on a roadway, you should drive a licensed vehicle. Under no circumstances will a non-licensed vehicle be allowed to operate on a township, county or IDOT road.
- For Groups, each member of the group needs to complete the Vehicle Authorization form, approved by Volunteer Supervisor and Director of IDNR and present their driver's license and insurance verification, if they plan to drive a non-licensed vehicle.

Personal Non-Licensed Vehicles

The State's self insurance plan does not insure volunteers while operating their own personal non-licensed vehicles. You will need to provide proof of liability insurance to your Volunteer Supervisor, and sign the Vehicle Authorization Form before driving your non-licensed vehicle on State property. You must abide by the same rules as set out above for state-owned non-licensed vehicles.

Note: Handicap scooters can be used, but not on the roads. Handicap scooters, like motorized wheel chairs, are not considered vehicles. Also, non-licensed 2 or 3 wheeled vehicles (except handicap scooters) shall not be operated on IDNR properties.

Personal Property & Equipment

It is necessary for volunteers to carry their own insurance to cover all personal property (i.e. RVs, tents, golf carts, ATVs, automobiles, equipment, etc.). The IDNR will not, and cannot replace any lost, stolen or damaged personal property. Volunteers may be asked to show proof of insurance.

Volunteers should never borrow state equipment for personal use. Such unauthorized use of state-owned equipment is reason for termination of a volunteer's active status.

Volunteer Benefits

There are special tax rules for volunteers receiving benefits. Therefore, IDNR offers only inexpensive items as benefits to the volunteers for their hours of service. These include name badges, service pins, and award certificates.

As budget constraints allow, shirts may be provided. You may keep your shirt, name badge, service pins and any other recognition items given to you. You are eligible to receive the following:

25 hours = volunteer I.D. Badge upon request
100 hours = bronze service pin
500 hours = silver service pin
1,000 hours = gold service pin

Keep track of your hours! Give the number of hours you volunteer to your Volunteer Supervisor each month and let your Supervisor know when you are to receive a recognition item.

Some groups can be quite large and it is not feasible to issue shirts to every group member, therefore, we give recognition certificates, signed by the IDNR Director, to groups upon request. The group leader may be given a volunteer shirt, if available, to wear during a volunteer project for identification as the contact person for the group.

For smaller groups, shirts, pins and name badges may be available. This will be at the Volunteer Supervisor's discretion.

Your Volunteer Supervisor may nominate you or your group as IDNR Outstanding Volunteer of the Year, so be sure to turn in the number of hours you volunteer. Some sites hold their own recognition ceremonies and events. Your Volunteer Supervisor will keep you informed on the site's volunteer events.

Volunteer Hours

It is important for the IDNR to track volunteers and their hours for administrative reasons and to determine needs within IDNR properties. This will help us ensure that all forms are signed and you are covered for auto and liability protection. Your hours and volunteer schedule will be determined between you and your Volunteer Supervisor. There is an IDNR Timekeeping Sheet on page 22 of this Handbook that you can use to keep track of your volunteer time. Make as many copies as needed, keep track of your volunteer hours and give to your Volunteer Supervisor monthly. Thank you for helping keep our volunteer numbers current.

Safety

You must follow safety standards and practices at all times. Training is provided on the job and before operating certain equipment. Perform your duties carefully and safely. Remember:

- Always use the appropriate protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for eyes/face/head/and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices and protective shields and barriers
- Tasks that require special training, certification or equipment, should only be conducted by volunteers who are appropriately equipped and qualified.
- As an aid to locating and correcting unsafe conditions and unsafe practices, volunteers are encouraged to report hazards observed.
- Do not attempt to perform any activities for which you have not been trained.
- Know your physical limitations.
- Do not operate unfamiliar tools or machinery without training.
- Dress properly for your tasks. Wear sturdy shoes and proper clothing.
- It shall be the duty of each volunteer to consider no job so important and no service so urgent that time cannot be taken to work and drive safely.
- If you are injured, report the injury immediately to your Volunteer Supervisor.

Supervisory personnel will provide direction and the implementation of all safety rules, practices, and policies of the Department and to provide the necessary training and direction to ensure compliance.

Drug Free Workplace

The Department is committed to maintaining a work environment free from drugs and alcohol. Alcohol and drug abuse has many detrimental effects on an organization, its employees and its volunteers. Use of drugs or alcohol while volunteering will be reason for termination of a volunteer's active status.

Accidents and Emergencies

All accidents occurring during the course of volunteering involving Department employees, volunteers, and/or equipment shall be reported as soon as possible your Volunteer Supervisor.

Accidents involving a fatality, serious bodily injury, and/or serious property damage:

- Keep Calm and assess the situation
- If you have any doubt as to extent of injury or serious illness, call 911 or an ambulance.
- Know your Site name and address (Complete page 2 of this Handbook)
- Contact your Volunteer Supervisor or Site Staff immediately
- Never give medication.
- Never transport injured or sick individuals.
- Send a bystander, if you cannot leave the accident or situation.
- Make sure, before the bystander leaves to get help that he knows the Site name, address or area, and what type of emergency (i.e., possible heart attack).
- If a traffic or boating accident, try to comfort the injured or direct traffic around or away from the accident.
- Do not remove any vehicles or materials (even glass).
- If you are involved in the accident, make no statement to anyone that you were at fault or liable for the accident.
- If you witness an accident, take note of any details and give only facts, not personal feelings or secondhand information.
- Get names and addresses of any witnesses. The best thing you can do is be a good witness and take notes.
- Do not take law enforcement issues into your own hands.
- In case of fire, call 911 immediately.

Finally, do not put yourself in harm's way!

Volunteer Tips

1. Feel free to ask your Volunteer Supervisor and/or staff questions.
2. Remember: Safety first.
3. When you are asked a question by a visitor and do not know the answer, tell the visitor you will find out and get back to them or refer them to your Volunteer Supervisor.
4. Do not get involved in domestic disturbances. If you witness fighting, assaults, foul play, drinking or drug use, do not solve the problem yourself. Call your Volunteer Supervisor.
5. Don't try to enforce site rules and regulations. Call your Volunteer Supervisor.
6. Training is an ongoing process. It will help you understand exactly what your duties are and how to get the job done well. If you feel training or guidance is needed, please ask your Volunteer Supervisor.
7. Ask your Volunteer Supervisor for feedback on your volunteer performance.

Ending Volunteer Service

You may at any time decide to terminate your volunteer relationship with the Department or make changes in your volunteer assignment. All we ask is that you let your Volunteer Supervisor know as soon as possible of your decision.

You will be dismissed from your volunteer duties, if your behavior is detrimental to the department, visitors, staff members, or if you do not meet the requirements of the program. You will be terminated for any of the following causes:

- Being habitually absent, if assigned hours to work
- Imposing personal, religious or political views on others
- Abusing alcohol or drugs, or possession thereof
- Smoking when/where prohibited
- Failure to observe IDNR rules and regulations
- Deliberately violating instructions of the Supervisor
- Stealing property belonging to others
- Possessing a concealed weapon
- Sexual harassment
- Insubordination or conduct unbecoming a volunteer
- Conviction of any felony or crime

IDNR Rules and Regulations in a Nutshell

ALCOHOL RESTRICTIONS: Several IDNR sites have alcohol bans. Check with your Volunteer Supervisor or call the Site directly.

ARTIFACTS: Report any prehistoric and/or historic artifacts you find to your Volunteer Supervisor. Removal of any resources including rocks, plants, fossils and artifacts is prohibited. Berries, mushrooms and nuts may be harvested, depending upon the specific site regulations.

BOATING: All Boats must be registered and titled. For more information call: 1-800-867-3542 or visit our website at:

<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/boating/Pages/default.aspx>

CAMPING PERMITS: Camping is permitted only in areas designated for camping. Select state parks and recreational areas offer advance reservations. Please call the parks directly. A limited number of primitive cabins are also available. Campsite facilities vary, call ahead for specific amenities, or visit the IDNR website at:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/Programs/Camping/>

CAMPFIRES: Never build a campfire on dry, windy days. Use designated fire rings or a camp stove so fires can't spread. Never leave campfires unattended. Due to the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer, firewood transport is regulated. Check

www.IllinoisEAB.com for additional information.

FISHING AND HUNTING: Regulation Digests are available wherever fishing and hunting licenses are sold. The Digests are also on the IDNR website. Hunting and fishing licenses can also be purchased over the Internet by accessing the DNR website at:

<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

HIKING: Stay on the designated hiking trails and roadways. Going off the paths can damage vegetation, cause erosion and accidents! Check our website at:

<http://www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/Programs/hiking/> for hiking maps.

LITTER: Properly dispose of any litter and use recycling bins where available.

PETS: Always keep pets on a leash.

SNOWMOBILING: Snowmobiles must be registered. To renew your registration call: 1-866-867-3542. For snowmobile law changes, visit our website at:

<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/snowmobile/Pages/default.aspx>

IDNR Volunteer Time Sheet

Volunteer Name _____ Month _____ Year 20____

Site/Division _____

Volunteer Supervisor _____

Date	Activity	Total Hours
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		
	Total Hours for Month	

IDNR VOLUNTEER NETWORK WEBSITE:

www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/index.htm

VOLUNTEER NETWORK PROGRAM **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Dianne Blasa
Volunteer Program Manager
IL Department of Natural Resources
4521 Alton Commerce Parkway
Alton, IL 62002
Email: dnr.volunteers@illinois.gov

**Thank you for volunteering your time and talents
to make a difference!**

