



Frequently Asked Questions.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) implemented a new program, the IL Recreational Access Program (IRAP) in 2011 to increase public access on private land for outdoor recreational activities. Through grants from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the IDNR leases land from private landowners to provide access for youth and adult turkey hunting, archery deer hunting, upland, small game and waterfowl hunting, fishing and boating, as well as birding, outdoor photography activities.

What is the Illinois Recreational Access Program?

The goal of IRAP is to provide more places for outdoor recreational activities to recruit, retain and reactivate youth and families. With more than 95% of the land in Illinois privately owned and Illinois ranking 46th among states with public lands, there is a great need to provide additional acreage for public access. IRAP is also very interested in habitat management on private lands. It can be very expensive and time consuming to eradicate invasive species, prepare and plant pollinator habitat or trees, and other beneficial habitat projects.

Who is eligible to enroll in this program?

A private landowner who owns property in Illinois that has qualifying habitat for hunting turkey, deer (archery), upland bird, small game, and waterfowl may be eligible. In addition, if a private landowner has adequate access to a river on a public waterway, and/or owns a pond with suitable fish habitat that may qualify as well.

How much financial incentive is there to enroll in the program?

IRAP will provide a financial stipend to landowners who lease their property for specific IRAP activities. The amount paid is based upon how many acres are enrolled and for what outdoor activities the landowner is willing to allow on their land. Reimbursements are made on an annual basis. In addition, habitat management plans are written or update for the land enrolled in IRAP. A major incentive landowners are also eligible for is cost-share and professional assistance to implement habitat management practices.

When will the landowner receive reimbursement?

Reimbursement for each agreement year will be made in December following the activity period. Reimbursements will be based on the number of acres enrolled in for each IRAP activity enrolled in.

When does a landowner need to apply for enrollment into the program?

The landowner can apply at any time. However, if the agreement is executed in the middle of an activity season, first year payment will be prorated.

Is a participating landowner liable should the public hurt themselves while accessing their property?

No, the permitted IRAP user (hunter, fisherman, etc.) will have signed a liability waiver further removing liability from the landowner. In addition, IRAP will purchase additional liability insurance coverage for the landowner for coverage during an IRAP activity.

How long can a landowner enroll in the program?

Leases are typically for 4 years.

Can a landowner get out the IRAP lease agreement?

Yes, the lease agreement has an "opt out" clause so that the landowner or the IDNR can cancel at any time during the lease. The landowner will then be paid a pro-rated amount on the leased property. However, habitat management practices are to be managed by the landowner for 10 years.

Will there be any special restrictions for the public on the landowner's property?

Yes, IRAP permitted outdoor recreationalist are not allowed to (1) use alcohol; (2) leave any garbage; (3) have campfires; (4) swim; and (5) camp.

Can a participating landowner temporarily close off access to their property?

Yes, under certain conditions the landowner may temporarily close off access to their property for weather, fire danger, or other circumstances that would put the public in danger or jeopardize the resource. The IDNR would need to be notified of any temporary closing.

Will the IDNR post signs on enrolled property?

Yes, IRAP will post signs informing the public where to park, and may use purple paint to mark property boundaries. Replacement of signs will be the Department's responsibility.

The success of this program will hinge upon the participation of qualified landowners and the cooperation of the public using these areas. Landowners will expect the public to have respect for their land and the public will expect ease of access to areas in the agreement. The Department is committed to this program by maintaining proper signage, keeping access areas clean, communicating with landowners, and informing and educating the public about these access sites.

Information, as well as commonly asked questions, about the program can be found at: www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IRAP.

For more information you may contact Tammy Miller at (217) 524-1266 or via email at tammy.miller@illinois.gov