



Inside Illinois DNR

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IDNR Careers

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources offers a wide array of professional careers in the conservation and natural resource arena. Click [here](#) to see what jobs openings are available.

A Message from Director Marc Miller



What's the future of yellow perch fishing in Lake Michigan?

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission recently hosted a Yellow Perch Summit at the University of Illinois Chicago to consider that question. I left the meeting hopeful about the future of yellow perch in Lake Michigan.

The natural resources agencies, organizations, and individuals who were there are committed to working together on lakewide efforts to sustain the perch fishery in the lake. As I told summit attendees, Lake Michigan fish populations know no state or other boundaries. Their management requires cooperation among all of us. Presentations by invited experts at the summit detailed the status of yellow perch in Lake Michigan, and why fewer perch than decades ago may be the new "normal."

Offshore productivity in Lake Michigan is much lower today than it was during the last "heyday" for perch fishing in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Productivity is now very similar to Lake Superior, the larger and colder Great Lake to the north. The food web for yellow perch in Lake Michigan also has changed due to the presence of invasive mussels, spiny water fleas and round gobies. Changes in productivity and the food web mean less food is available, which affects perch recruitment, or the number of fish reaching reproductive age. Low or inconsistent recruitment means fewer perch are available for anglers to catch. Clearer water in the lake also may mean adult perch spend less time near-shore in the summer, another factor that can affect perch fishing success.

Since the early 1990s, when yellow perch populations declined rapidly in Lake Michigan, fisheries managers have closed commercial fishing, and implemented restrictions to protect yellow perch from further declines. For sport fishing in Illinois, those restrictions include a 15-fish daily limit, and a closure for perch fishing during July (except for youth under age 16, who can catch up to 10 perch a day during the July closure).

These management efforts may have prevented a total collapse of the perch fishery, but data presented at the summit show lakewide perch abundance remains low. The option of stocking perch was discussed, but is likely impractical because stocking larger fingerlings that could survive in today's Lake Michigan would be incredibly expensive. There is also a danger that stocking might introduce new diseases or poorly adaptive genetic traits to existing perch stocks.

We heard calls from Illinois anglers for easing or eliminating the July closure of perch fishing in the Illinois waters of Lake Michigan, and instead closing fishing during the spring spawning season. These changes in management are under consideration.

Though easy fixes may be elusive, IDNR remains dedicated to the pursuit of management efforts we hope will lead to recovery of yellow perch in Lake Michigan. That means using sound science, sharing data, and working toward consensus among all partners on coordinated management goals and strategies to improve perch fishing and other Lake Michigan fishing for future generations.

If you missed the summit, the presentations and other information are archived online at this link: http://www.glfsc.org/lakecom/lmc/yellow_perch_videos.html

If you have comments or ideas on how to protect the long heritage of yellow perch fishing in Lake Michigan, let us hear from you.

Yours in Conservation,

DNR in the news

New Graduating Class of Conservation Police Officers

OSLAD grant info update

Fish Data

IDNR's good decisions

Statewide Offices

Springfield, IL
217-782-6302

Bartlett, IL
847-608-3100

Clinton, IL
217-935-6860

Alton, IL
618-462-1181

Benton, IL
618-435-8138

The Great Parks Partnership



The Illinois General Assembly passed a funding package for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources giving the agency much-needed new revenues after a decade of severe budget and staffing cuts.

The Illinois DNR is committed to protecting the integrity of these funds by using them for the purposes for which they were intended.

The Great Parks Partnership has a clear and simple goal: Use these new revenues to improve the state park visitor's experience. A majority of the new funds will be used to hire critical staff at state parks, and to cut down on the hundreds of millions of dollars in backlogged maintenance at our state parks.

Here's how IDNR Sustainability dollars are being used in our state parks this month.

Description	Location
Purchasing heavy duty fire pits & grills replacing aging pits & grills.	Various State Parks

Legislation and Government



Feral Swine Update

A new administrative rule regulating the release, transportation, and harvest of feral swine (wild hogs) in Illinois is now in effect. Hunters should be aware they will only be allowed to harvest feral swine during Illinois' firearm deer seasons.

<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/NewRuleRestrictsTransportation,ReleaseandHarvestofFeralSwine.aspx>



Coal Mine Permitting Process Reforms

The Illinois Attorney General, Lisa Madigan and IDNR's Director Marc Miller have announced major reforms to improve transparency and strengthen regulations in the department's Office of Mines and Minerals.

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



Eagle Creek State Park

Director Marc Miller approved a contract with Green Golf Partners to maintain and operate the Eagle Creek Golf Course, located on the shore of Lake Shelbyville in Findlay, Illinois.

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

Illinois Conservation Foundation

1994 – 2014

The ICF is celebrating our 20th anniversary and planning for a decade dedicated to serving the youth of Illinois. Help us celebrate and continue our youth education programming. Visit our website at www.ilcf.org to make a donation.

CONSERVATION SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

ICF is proud to announce the recipients of the 2014 Conservation Achievement Scholarships. Congratulations Kenneth Bielski of Rockton & Alex Handel of Sycamore.

Bald Eagle Release
On May 10, two rehabilitated eagles will be returned to the wild during a special event at the Torstenson Youth Education Center, in Pecatonica.



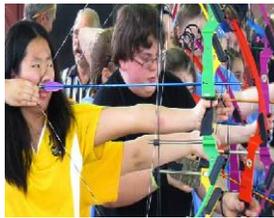
This Month's Highlights



Director Marc Miller welcomed the newest members of the Illinois Conservation Police at a graduation ceremony in their honor at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on March 28. The 14 recruits completed 24 weeks of intense general law enforcement training and specific conservation police training totaling nearly 1,000 hours to prepare them for their new jobs.

"We are especially proud to introduce the second class of Conservation Police Officers in just two years," Miller said. "I am committed to rebuilding our conservation police force so our men and women can provide increased protection to Illinois citizens and our state's natural resources."

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



The Illinois Department of Natural Resources hosted the National Archery in the Schools Program State Tournament March 22 in Springfield. More than 870 young men and women competed in the day-long event held at the Orr Building on the Illinois State Fairgrounds. Schools from Champaign and Vermilion Counties took top honors in the team competition.

Schlarman Academy of Danville took first place in the High School Division. Schlarman Academy recorded a team score of 3,279 to best second place Roberto Clemente High School of Chicago which took second place with 3,250. Armstrong-Potomac High School of Armstrong took third place with a score of 3,200.

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



On April 5th, Governor Pat Quinn announced \$16.5 million in investments for 46 local park projects across Illinois. The investments will expand outdoor recreation opportunities in communities across Illinois, and are part of Governor Quinn's agenda to ensure that no child is left inside.

"Parks and outdoor recreational activities help make Illinois a great place to live and work," Governor Quinn said. "These projects will create jobs, allow more families to get active outdoors and promote healthy lifestyles." The projects are funded through the state's Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development program (OSLAD) and administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

[http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/GovernorQuinnAnnounces\\$165MillionforLocalParksandOpenSpaceProjects.aspx](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/news/Pages/GovernorQuinnAnnounces$165MillionforLocalParksandOpenSpaceProjects.aspx)

For more check out our monthly [calendar of events!](#)

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