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## ILLINOIS RECREATIONAL ACCESS PROGRAM [funded]

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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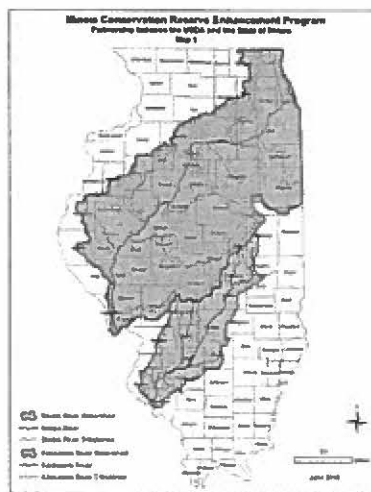
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# ILLINOIS RECREATIONAL ACCESS PROGRAM

## Illinois Department of Natural Resources



## ILLINOIS RECREATIONAL ACCESS PROGRAM (IRAP)

### Description:

- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) received a \$525,250 grant award on September 24, 2010 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency' Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Improvement Program (VPA-HIP) to develop and implement an Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP).
- IDNR requested \$1,484,750 in VPA-HIP funds over a 3 year period to implement a new Illinois Recreation Access Program (IRAP). IDNR received its first year request of \$525,250 and will receive additional funding in 2011 and 2012. It is anticipated that the amounts will be close to what was requested, \$478,250 per year for years 2 and 3. While no match was required, IDNR will provide another estimated \$1,498,560 dollars in other Federal, State and private funding and in-kind services to create a \$2,983,310 public access program and provide significant environmental and economic benefits to Illinois.
- Through this grant, the State of Illinois will launch a new public recreational access program organized into three access campaigns: (1) Fishing, Canoeing, and Boating Access Campaign; (2) Youth Turkey Hunting Campaign; and (3) Large Landowner Campaign for hunting and multiple recreational uses.
- Initial Project Area: **68 CREP eligible counties in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Watersheds: Adams, Bond, Brown, Bureau, Calhoun, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Clinton, Coles, Cook, DeKalb, DeWitt, Douglas, DuPage, Effingham, Fayette, Ford, Fulton, Greene, Grundy, Hancock, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Jefferson, Jersey, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Knox, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, McHenry, McLean, Menard, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Peoria, Perry, Piatt, Pike, Putnam, Randolph, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, St. Clair, Stark, Tazewell, Vermilion, Warren, Washington, Will, and Woodford Counties.**
- IRAP will provide annual cash payments to private landowners for 3-year access leases and provide technical and financial assistance for habitat improvements to benefit wildlife and fisheries.

### Year 1 Objectives:

- Provide access to 100 youth turkey hunting sites;
- Provide 2 new access points for fishing, canoeing, and boating on the Kankakee and Iroquois Rivers;
- Provide walk in fishing access for 200 acres of impoundments;
- Provide walk in fishing access for 5 miles of non-navigable streams; and
- Provide access to 500 acres for youth deer hunting on large landowner properties.

## **Fishing Access Campaign**

The Fishing Access Campaign will focus on providing walk in fishing access on impoundments and fishing, canoeing and boat access on navigable rivers. While the entire CREP area will be eligible, the initial focus for river, stream and impoundment access will be the Kankakee River watershed because of the large number of existing CREP enrollments, proximity to the Chicago Metropolitan area, existence of organized fishing groups, and the existence of good populations of sport fish. Cash payments will be given for 3 year access agreements with an 'opt out' option. Habitat improvements and management activities will be paid through CREP, Sport Fish Restoration Funds, and other state and federal cost-share programs. Fishing locations will be listed and mapped on the IDNR Fishing Regulations book, on IDNR website, CREP partners websites, and maps provided at county SWCD offices. Since landowners are not protected from liability when allowing fishing or boating access, all participants must sign a waiver form and register with the County SWCD offices.

## **Youth Turkey Hunting Campaign**

The Youth Turkey Hunting Campaign will allow hunting access for youth turkey hunters under the age of 16. Cash payments are made for 3-year access agreements with an 'opt out' option and assistance for additional habitat enhancements (i.e. TSI, exotic control, forest management plans) for cooperating landowners. CREP Counties where the local National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) chapters offer a mentoring program for kids interested in turkey hunting will be targeted. Permits to access enrolled properties will be issued through a random drawing administered by IDNR's Permit Office, similar those issued for IDNR public hunting areas. Hunt locations will be listed in the IDNR Hunting Regulations booklet, posted on the IDNR and CREP partners' websites, and promoted at County SWCD offices. If the Youth Turkey Hunting Campaign is successful, IDNR will approach landowners about expanding turkey hunting access to all residents.

## **Recreational Access Lease Payments**

Three year lease agreements will provide opt out options with payments pro-rated to the term of participation:

- Impounded surface water - \$12/acre to \$65/acre per year depending on size of impoundment, quality of fishery and proximity to large urban area.
- River Access - \$1000 to \$2500 per year depending on size of area, access, location, and need for property improvements such as gravel canoe launch
- Stream Access - \$500 to \$2500 per stream mile per year for walk-in access depending on quality of fishery and proximity to urban areas
- Youth turkey hunting and public hunting access - \$1.50 to \$35/acre depending on size, location and potential hunt

### **Proposed Implementation Strategy:**

- Work with Kankakee and Iroquois County SWCD offices and the KRBC to hold landowner, partner, community information meetings
- Target CREP landowners to find out if there is interest
- Landowners apply to SWCD office and property is evaluated by DNR Fisheries Biologist, Wildlife Biologist, or contractual IRAP coordinator
- Landowner accepts offer and signs 3 year lease
- Sites will be listed in Fishing or Hunting Digest
- Participants for walk in fishing, canoeing and boating register with the local county SWCDs, sign liability waiver agreements, and carry a copy of agreement or waiver card with them when accessing IRAP sites.
- Must sign in (online?) with SWCD office prior to using location
- Permits to access enrolled properties will be issued through a random drawing administered by IDNR's Permit Office, similar to those issued for IDNR public hunting areas.

### **Benefits to Landowners:**

- Pond management, riparian habitat improvement, invasive/exotic weed control and other management activities.
- Periodic IDNR Law Enforcement checks
- Know who is using their property

### **When will IRAP Enrollments Begin:**

- March or April 2011

### **What needs to be done:**

- Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to be approved by
- Pursue both a legislative change to landowner liability issues and develop a waiver agreement
- Finalize the details of the Program
- Develop Implementation Strategy

### **Role for KRBC? (DRAFT IDEAS ONLY)**

- Ideas on how to implement/assist with developing implementation strategy
- Identify partners to promote IRAP/ideas on how to promote
- Identify potential landowners
- Host meetings with landowners and community
- Identify potential funding for additional incentives
- ????????????????????