



State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

2009-2014



Illinois Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



Illinois Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2009–2014

This Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to comply with Chapter 630 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants Manual produced by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

Office of Realty and Environmental Planning
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Chapter One: Introduction

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is required to maintain Illinois' eligibility to participate in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program. The program funds up to 50% of eligible costs for the acquisition of land and development of facilities for outdoor recreation. Funds can be used by the State of Illinois or passed through to eligible units of local government in the form of competitive grants.

The SCORP is prepared as a five-year document by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and establishes priorities for the use of LWCF funds. These priorities also guide the use of State Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) funds. Like the LWCF program, the OSLAD program funds up to 50% of eligible costs for outdoor recreation acquisition and development; the OSLAD program is limited to local units of government.

Since 1965, federal LWCF dollars allocated to Illinois total more than \$150 million; adding the 50% match, this translates into more than \$300 million in State and local outdoor recreation acquisition and development. OSLAD similarly has provided a significant investment in Illinois' public parks and open space. From fiscal year 1986 through 2008, the OSLAD program totaled \$303,480,467. Together with local matching funds, OSLAD has meant more than \$600 million for local outdoor recreation.

These two programs represent a successful partnership among federal, State and local government in Illinois. The main recipients of LWCF and OSLAD funds – local agencies such as park districts, municipalities, forest preserve districts and conservation districts – provide needed, close-to-home outdoor recreation lands and facilities that also meet statewide priorities. The programs are administered by DNR as competitive annual grant programs. The Department periodically uses LWCF funds for eligible State projects.

2009-2014 SCORP

The 2009-2014 SCORP follows in the footsteps of previous outdoor recreation plans: it continues the assessment of Illinois residents' needs for outdoor recreation; inventories the state's outdoor recreation resources; identifies the changing ways that people recreate in the outdoors; and sets the priorities for Illinois' LWCF and OSLAD funding.

In 2008 two major research studies were completed and provide essential, updated data for this SCORP. A new inventory of the supply of community outdoor recreation facilities was undertaken as a partnership project between the University of Illinois Office of Recreation and Park Resources and DNR. A new survey of public outdoor recreation participation was conducted for DNR by the Western Survey Research Center at Western Illinois University. Both the inventory and participation studies were much-needed, since existing data are more than ten years old.

To ensure public involvement in the new SCORP, DNR sought input from citizens, state and local government officials, and interest groups. A random sample of Illinois residents were surveyed for their opinions on outdoor recreation issues. Input from local park officials helped provide the professional managers' perspective. The general public, elected officials, and outdoor recreation, natural resource, and related agencies and organizations were given the opportunity and encouraged to comment on a draft of this plan, made available on DNR's website. Constituent input helps guide DNR policies and SCORP priorities.

Continuing Priorities & Emerging Issues

This new input on outdoor recreation issues shows that the people of Illinois today continue to place a high value on the same priorities found in previous SCORP's: protecting the state's open lands and

natural resources, including prairies, forests, wetlands, rivers and lakes, and wildlife. Open lands and high quality natural resources are essential for outdoor recreation. In addition, protection and stewardship of the state's natural resources has a significant impact on the state's quality of life for present and future generations and economic competitiveness in a global economy.

Natural resource protection also adheres to and promotes the **DNR agency mission**:

To manage, conserve and protect Illinois' natural, recreational and cultural resources, further the public's understanding and appreciation of those resources, and promote the education, science and public safety of Illinois' natural resources for present and future generations.

While the need for natural resource protection remains a principal SCORP emphasis, important demographic and social changes, the desire for healthier people and communities, and new outdoor recreation trends are among the mix of factors that affect the SCORP and SCORP priorities.

The remainder of this plan discusses:

- Illinois' natural resources – the setting for outdoor recreation,
- Issues and trends of outdoor recreation in Illinois,
- The supply of outdoor recreation land and facilities in the state,
- The demand for outdoor recreation in Illinois,
- SCORP priorities for LWCF and OSLAD funds, and
- DNR outdoor recreation grant-in-aid programs.



Chapter Two: Illinois' Natural Resources

– *The Setting for Outdoor Recreation*

Illinois' natural resources provide the setting for outdoor recreation in the state. Natural settings, most often water and woods, are important places for people to experience and interact with nature, contributing to a high-quality outdoor recreation experience.

Geography and geology shape the natural character of the state. Located in the heart of the Midwest with approximately 56,400 square miles, Illinois in physical size is 24th largest of all states. Illinois is known for its rich agricultural production and abundant water resources. The state's borders are defined by major rivers – the Mississippi, Ohio, and Wabash – and Lake Michigan. The Illinois River winds in a scenic corridor through the middle of the state.

Landscape

The general perception is that Illinois' landscape is flat farmland, but there is also rolling terrain with prominent relief features.

Four major physiographic divisions of the United States are represented in Illinois. Over 90% of the state lies within the Central Lowland Province, and all of this area is glaciated except for a small corner in the extreme northwest. Three physiographic provinces, which are predominantly unglaciated, make up the remaining one-tenth of the state—Ozark Plateaus, Coastal Plain, and Interior Low Plateaus.

Based upon bedrock, topography, soils, and the distribution of flora and fauna, Illinois has been divided into fourteen geographic regions. Representative of these are the glacial landforms, beaches, lakes, and bogs of the Northeastern Morainal Division; the fertile soils of the Grand Prairie Division in the central part of the state; and the forest hill country and high sandstone cliffs of the Shawnee Hills Division in the south. Eight natural communities have also been defined; forests, prairies, savannas, wetlands, lakes and ponds, streams, caves, and primary successional units.

These present-day features of Illinois have been created over millions of years; others reflect changes wrought in little more than a century. The pre-glacial landscape, for example, remains discernable beneath a topography and river network largely laid down during the Ice Age. On the other hand, the presence or absence of forests and prairies, the acres of cropland brought into production through clearing and extensive stream channelization and tiling, and numerous artificial lakes and reservoirs that dot the southern half of the State, are relatively recent surface features defined by human activity. Together, and in radically different time frames, natural processes and human actions have created and continue to alter the Illinois landscape.

Illinois' natural resource base has been eroding at a steady and often dramatic pace since the state was carved out of the wilderness and prairie almost two centuries ago. The tall grass prairies and forests which dominated the state's original landscape have been almost totally transformed into today's landscape dominated by agriculture and cities. Places that resemble Illinois' native landscape are few in number, small in area, and scattered throughout the state. There remains, however, a surprising diversity of natural resources in Illinois, importantly providing outdoor recreation opportunities for Illinois residents and visitors.

Rivers and Streams, Woodlands and Prairie

Waterways, wooded areas, and remnants of Illinois' prairie heritage are the state's natural resource foundation for outdoor recreation.

Illinois is a water-rich state. Ten river basins are drained by more than 26,000 miles of flowing water. Streams, rivers and creeks supply Illinoisans with a multitude of recreational uses including hunting, fishing, boating and swimming. More than 1.9 million acres of lakes, rivers, and perennial streams provide habitat for the state's nearly 200 species of fish and also host thousands of waterfowl. Waterfowl hunting and water-dependent bird-watching are popular water-based recreational activities.

Illinois has a rich diversity of wooded lands, including 14 subcategories of upland and floodplain forest plus the less common sand and flatwoods forests. Illinois has nearly five million acres of forest, mostly upland deciduous. Forested areas are extensive throughout southern and western Illinois, but in the rest of the state they are usually found along river valleys and as isolated forest remnants.

Forests comprise more than 75 percent of Illinois' wildlife habitat. Four of five Illinois mammals and amphibians and three of five birds need forested land for at least part of their lifecycle. Squirrels and white-tailed deer are the most conspicuous among mammals in the Illinois woods. This important habitat serves as a setting for a variety of recreational uses including hunting, trapping, hiking and nature walks, picnicking, camping, off-road bicycling, and horseback riding.

At least 60 percent of Illinois' land area was once grassland of one type or another. Four million acres of rural grassland constitute slightly more than 11 percent of the state's total land area. The overwhelming majority of these areas have been plowed, heavily grazed, or frequently mowed and often are dominated by planted introduced grasses that do not resemble native prairie. Nonetheless, they may serve as a refuge for some native plant species and provide habitat for grassland-inhabiting animal species.

Only a fraction (3,628 acres) of high quality original prairie survives. Most sites of relict prairie occur on hilly land along the northern and western edges of the state (areas of more prominent topographic relief) and other places where the plow and bulldozer can't reach, such as wetlands, cemeteries, and railroad rights-of-way.

While recreational uses of the natural grassland areas must be restricted to nature observation and education to preserve their undisturbed state, other modified grassland areas (both public and private) can accommodate a variety of uses such as hunting, horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, and field trialing.

Wetlands

Prior to European settlement, wetlands covered about 8/2 million acres of Illinois, or about 23 percent of the land.

Currently about 3.5 percent (1.25 million acres) of the state land cover is classified as wetland. However, only 917,765 (approximately three-quarters) of the currently existing wetlands can be considered natural wetlands. These natural wetlands most closely represent what remains of the State's original wetlands. The other quarter of the wetland acres have been modified or created by dikes, impoundments, or excavation activities.

The Illinois Interagency Wetland Policy Act (Act) of 1989 [20ILCS 830/1-1 – 4-1] is intended to ensure there is no overall net loss of the State's existing wetland acres or their functional values resulting from State-supported activities. The Act charges State agencies with a further duty to "preserve, enhance and create wetlands where necessary to increase the quality and quantity of the State's wetland resource base." (20 ILCS

830/1-4 A "wetland" is defined by the Act as being "land that has a predominance of hydric soils (soils which are usually wet and where there is little or no free oxygen) and that is inundated or saturated at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation (plants typically found in wet habitats) typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." (20 ILCS 830/1-6) Areas which have been restored or created as the result of mitigation or planned construction projects, and which function as wetlands, are also defined as wetlands under the Act even when all three wetland parameters—hydric soils, wetland hydrology, hydrophytic vegetation—are not present.

The Act applies to all State and State-funded activities and is to be implemented through Agency Action Plans. DNR's Action Plan addresses the following elements mandated by the Act.

- Provisions for a consultation process.
- Procedures to minimize the destruction of wetlands caused or encouraged by State supported construction, land management, technical assistance, educational and other activities.
- Procedures for the development of a Wetland Compensation Plan.
- Procedures to scientifically monitor the success of wetland restoration and creation projects.
- An acquisition policy related to the implementation of this Act.
- Procedures to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands as a standard component of agency activities including incentives for the creation of wetlands in the agency's regulation of activities for which the Act does not require wetland compensation plans.

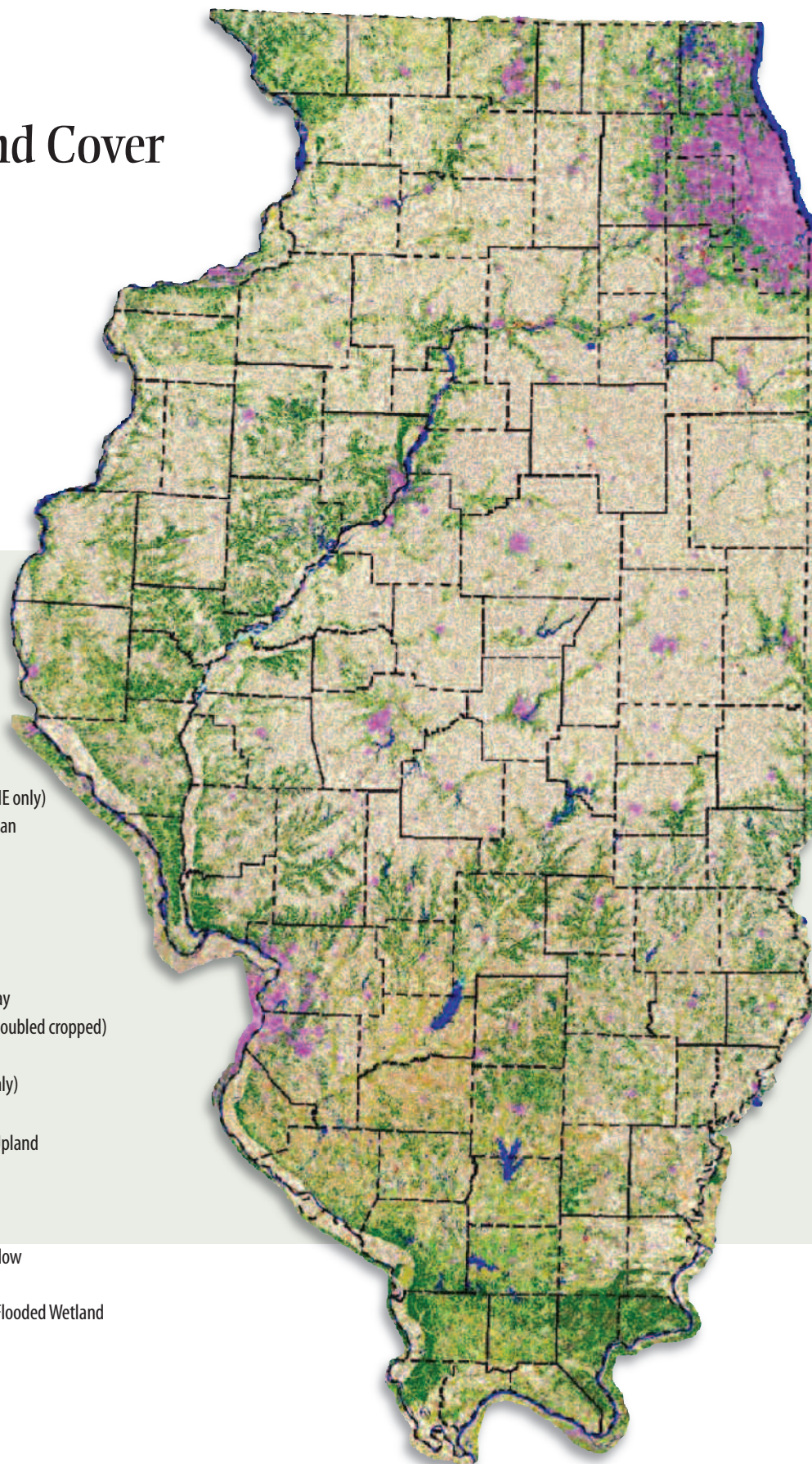
Numerous IDNR programs preserve, enhance and create wetlands, and the Department promotes a variety of incentives to further the goal of no-net loss, including cost-share programs, technical assistance, and property tax reductions. Examples of these programs and incentives include:

- Partners for Conservation, focusing on the ecological and economic conditions in resource-rich landscapes.
- The Bikeways Acquisition Fund, acquiring corridors for long-distance trails that also conserve linear greenways.
- The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) which features wetland restoration. CREP has enrolled thousands of acres of cropland that have been restored to wetlands.
- A variety of other programs that accomplish the protection and enhancement of wetlands.

Illinois Land Cover

Legend

- High Density Urban
- Medium Density Urban (NE only)
- Low/Medium Density Urban
- Urban Grassland
- Open Water
- Corn
- Soybean
- Winter Wheat
- Other Small Grains and Hay
- Winter Wheat/Soybeans (doubled cropped)
- Other Agricultural
- Low Density Urban (NE only)
- Rural Grassland
- Partial Forest/Savannah Upland
- Upland Forest
- Floodplain Forest
- Barren and Exposed Land
- Shallow Marsh/Wet Meadow
- Deep Marsh
- Seasonally/Temporarity Flooded Wetland
- Coniferous Forest
- Shallow Water Wetland
- Swamp



Source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Illinois Department of Agriculture. 1999-2000. Illinois interagency Landscape Classification Project. Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Springfield, Illinois.



Chapter Three: Trends & Issues in Illinois Outdoor Recreation

The challenges of meeting the outdoor recreation needs of Illinois' residents and visitors change and yet stay the same. The state's population, communities, and landscape are constantly changing. The types of outdoor recreation activities that people enjoy change as new activities become popular and new facilities become available. However, the need for natural resource protection remains largely unchanged.

Urban and Rural

Illinois has a strong rural heritage and is a leading agricultural state. It is also an urban state: Chicago is the third largest city and metropolitan area in the U.S., and there are diverse mid-size cities in all regions of the state. Nearly 86 percent of Illinois' population lives within the state's 10 metropolitan areas. Illinois is fifth highest in population among all states, with a 2008 population of 12.9 million.

Population Growth Continues

While many states have been experiencing flat population growth or loss of population, especially in the upper Midwest, Illinois from 2007 to 2008 was among the top ten of numeric gainers, according to U.S. Census Bureau population estimates.

This gain in population reflects the state's general growth trend for recent decades. After stagnant population change between 1980 and 1990, the state added a million residents in the 1990's to 12,419,293 in the 2000 Census and another half million since 2000. Much of this increase is due to migration into the state, and many of these immigrants are more ethnically diverse. Planning for outdoor recreation into the next decade therefore will assume a stable state population with potential for some growth.

	2008	2000	1990
Population	12,901,563	12,419,293	11,430,602

Living on the Edge

Kendall County, on the southwest edge of the Chicago metropolitan area, was the fastest-growing county in the U.S. from 2000-2007, with a 77.5% population increase. Kendall County reflects the typical pattern of urban

and suburban development in Illinois and the country as a whole, where open lands at the edges of urban areas are rapidly developed, in a lesser density. The challenge of conserving open lands in the face of urban and suburban sprawl is well-recognized, and conserving natural landscapes as part of development is becoming more accepted. Sustainable communities and green development are becoming more mainstream.

Accessibility for All

Segments of Illinois' population that will require continuing attention in outdoor recreation planning are people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and the economically disadvantaged. People with disabilities are benefitting from parks and outdoor recreation facilities developed in accord with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Providing accessible outdoor recreation can and will need to be expanded.

Illinois' ethnic diversity continues to grow, especially in the state's urban areas. These minority groups often have different outdoor recreation preferences and cultural traditions in how they use outdoor recreation resources, and planning must consider their needs and these trends.

Communities with high concentrations of lower-income residents are generally not as financially capable of providing parks and outdoor recreation facilities. This fact must be reflected in SCORP priorities.

Baby Boomers and Generation Y

People of different ages have different outdoor recreation needs and different perceptions on what is fun to do outdoors. Outdoor recreation agencies must understand who their constituencies or customers are, their physical and social motivations for being outdoors, and their expectations for outdoor recreation experiences. The two largest population segments

that are receiving the greatest attention for their influence on American culture are the Boomers and Gen Y'ers.

For years the focus has been on the aging of America's population, tied to the country's largest demographic group, the Baby Boomers. As members of this age segment, born between 1946 and 1964, cross the 60-year threshold, they are dramatically enlarging the group of older adults in the population. As Boomers transition to senior citizen status, they are expected to "slow down," changing from vigorous sports to more leisurely activities in the outdoors. This will have a dramatic effect on outdoor recreation participation and what sites, facilities, and programs outdoor recreation agencies need to provide.

Generation Y – those born between 1980 and 2000 and also known as the Millennial Generation – may prove to have an even greater influence on planning for future parks and outdoor recreation. This generation includes almost as many births as the Boomers and a larger share of immigrants, so in numbers alone the influence is significant. Millennials generally have a strong sense of community service and support conservation and the environment. Yet Generation Y has become most recognized for growing up with technology, at the expense of spending time in the outdoors.

Youth and the Outdoors

Connecting children with nature and the outdoors has become one of the most compelling issues of the 21st century. Books, studies, and programs are bringing widespread recognition to the need to get kids outdoors. New campaigns aimed to raise awareness have included "No Child Left Inside," "Get Outdoors, It's Yours!," "Youth Outdoors Legacy Fund," and "National Forum on Children and Nature," among many others. Federal, state, and local park and recreation agencies are re-discovering the importance of their core mission of conservation education.

How is it that Generation Y, some of whom are now young adults, and today's children, while constantly exposed to the newest trends and experiences, are now being defined as having a nature deficit disorder? It is well-documented that young people's lives today are dominated by multi-tasking and technology. Kids are spending more time indoors, with more hours of their day at the computer, watching television, and on the cell phone. Accepting the indoors environment as the norm, with less time spent outdoors, means less recognition of the outdoors as fun, and even less recognition of the importance of nature. A more sedentary indoors lifestyle has also produced a generation of kids saddled with obesity -- 30% of kids are overweight and the rate is increasing, a looming health care crisis.

“ *One of my commitments is to focus on the next generation and encourage them to learn about, and participate in, nature-based activities. We are investing in parks, playgrounds, picnic tables and fishing piers to help get our children outdoors and reduce nature deficit disorder...grants are vital to the goal of leaving no child inside and helping to fashion future stewards of our natural resources.* ”

— Marc Miller, IDNR Director

The lives of children today are structured and supervised, with few opportunities for playing and exploring freely in the outdoors. Today's parents generally have more fear for their children's safety, and working family schedules limit kids spending time playing outside.

The issue of kids and the outdoors is complex. Yet a basic solution may be as simple as visiting parks. If going to the park is an easy trip and fits into a family's regular schedule, being outdoors then becomes the norm. Going to the park means more physical activity for kids. This has a health benefit, a child development benefit, and a re-connecting to nature benefit. Having an hour of play time outdoors, in green spaces to explore, imagine, and discover nature, is a key National Wildlife Federation recommendation. Outdoor play places are perhaps the most basic building block in re-connecting kids with nature.

Youth participation in outdoor sports is another indicator of the changing lifestyles of young people. According to a study by the National Sporting Goods Association, youth participation in selected sports in 2007 compared to 1998 revealed that for ten selected outdoor activities, participation rates had declined for both the age 7-11 category and age

12-17 category for all activities but one, football. Other national studies, while revealing a mix of findings due to varying methodologies, generally also point to declining rates of youth participation in many activities. The amount of time that youth are spending outdoors continues to be an important topic of study.

Health

People who lead a less active lifestyle are generally more at risk for developing coronary disease, diabetes, and cancer. Studies in the past decade have demonstrated that physical activity helps prevent age-onset diseases. With health care costs skyrocketing, increasing physical activity is critical. Outdoor recreation generally leads to healthier people and healthier communities.

Parks encourage people to get outdoors, to be more active, and to improve their health. Providing parks and outdoor recreation that are close-to-home makes it easier for people to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. Walking is one of the simplest yet most powerful ways to improve health. Trails and greenways, especially, are accessible places for outdoor activity, e.g., walking with family, taking the baby or dog out for fresh air, jogging for exercise, bicycling, or rollerblading. Trails also offer alternative means of transportation, to go to school, work, stores, neighbors, etc., reducing the negative environmental and health impacts associated with traffic congestion.

Sustainable Park Development

Parks and outdoor recreation facilities need to be developed using “green” techniques. Sustainability – choosing renewable building materials, reducing energy use, and minimizing the development “footprint” and impact on the landscape and natural resources – has long been the hallmark of park agencies, but is even more important today. Sustainable development protects natural resources and provides a great educational opportunity to the visiting public.

Parks & Recreation and the Economy

With the U.S. economy in 2009 in a major recession, directly affecting many families’ way-of-life, parks and outdoor recreation have become even more important. Green spaces offer a refuge from day-to-day problems. Historically, parks have always played this role, allowing early Americans to escape the grit and grind of city life dominated by dirty factories and crowded housing. Today parks are similarly valuable places to get away and forget the worries and concerns of tough economic times.

Illinois’ state parks, national forests and wildlife refuges, and federal reservoirs are increasingly important destinations for family travel, offering nature discovery, outdoor recreation, and relaxation, without the high costs of longer trips to other states. With most families adjusting to more frugal lifestyles, the “staycation,” where a traditional vacation with higher travel costs is replaced by a more economical vacation staying at or close to home, is growing in popularity. A staycation involves short trips, and this is where county forest preserves and conservation district areas, state parks, national forests and wildlife refuges, and federal reservoirs provide inexpensive options. Some people are discovering parks “in their backyards” for the first time, and finding that such places offer affordable fun for families. Privately-operated outdoor recreation areas, too, offer a wide range of opportunities to go camping or enjoy other outdoor experiences, usually for nominal fees.

In addition to their importance to people during a recession, parks and outdoor recreation facilities also contribute to the state’s and its communities’ economies in many ways. They draw visitors into the state or into a local area, and these visitors patronize local businesses as they purchase food, gas, etc. This economic impact of tourism can be significant, especially for rural communities. Parks are also increasingly important as communities market their quality-of-life and amenities to prospective businesses and skilled workers.

Outdoor Recreation Issues

In the 2008 Illinois Outdoor Recreation Survey, Illinois residents were asked their opinions regarding ten outdoor recreation issues. There was agreement on the importance of the issues from at least three-quarters of the respondents, and over 90% of respondents agreed on the importance of three issues. Differences in responses between urban and rural residents were also noted.

Table 1.
Outdoor Recreation Resource Issues for Illinois Residents

Issue	Statewide percentage agree	Urban County percentage agree	Rural County percentage agree
Outdoor recreation areas are important for health and fitness.	97.5	97.9	97.4
Recreation areas should serve all people regardless of physical ability, ethnicity or income.	94.9	94.7	96.9
Community recreation areas are important for quality of life and promote economic development.	93.6	93.9	93.5
More conservation education is needed.	86.0	86.7	85.4
More trails/greenways should be developed.	85.1	86.8	79.8*
More wildlife habitat should be protected and restored.	84.6	86.1	79.0*
More high quality undisturbed prairie, forest and wetlands should be acquired/protected.	80.6	82.6	74.2*
More lands should be acquired for open space and/or for outdoor recreation.	80.3	83.0	70.1*
More public access to lakes, rivers and streams should be provided.	78.7	78.9	79.6
Parks need to be better maintained.	77.5	78.1	76.4

* Indicates statistically significant differences between urban and rural counties (p<.05, Chi-Square Analysis)

Source: 2008 Illinois Outdoor Recreation Survey

“State parks protect some of our most precious habitat and provide opportunities for families to find outdoor recreation close to home. These are the people’s parks and the people have the right to enjoy them in good and bad economic times.”

— Governor Pat Quinn, February 2009



Chapter Four: Outdoor Recreation
Supply in Illinois

There are more than 1.4 million acres in Illinois available to the public for outdoor recreation. Some of these lands are protected for their high-quality natural resources, such as small remnant natural areas or large tracts of wetland habitat, and offer limited opportunities for outdoor recreation. Other lands have been developed as parks in urban and suburban areas, serving many people, and are heavily used for many activities.

The state's supply of outdoor recreation lands and facilities is categorized in SCORP according to management type. Federal, state, and county lands generally offer more natural resource-based outdoor recreation; park districts, municipalities, and schools mostly offer community-based outdoor recreation; and non-profit organizations and private businesses offer facilities generally not available at public sites.

Providers of Outdoor Recreation Lands

- **Federal:** National forests, national wildlife refuges, and federal outdoor recreation areas on the state's three large reservoirs.
- **State:** Parks, fish & wildlife areas, conservation areas, forests, trails, natural areas, and larger historic sites.
- **County:** Forest preserves, conservation areas, and parks, operated by forest preserve and conservation districts, and, in selected counties, county park districts and recreation departments.
- **Community:** A wide variety of parks, open lands, and outdoor recreation facilities throughout the state, managed by park districts and municipal recreation departments.
- **Schools:** Playgrounds, athletic fields, walking tracks, and other facilities, available for community use.
- **Non-Profit Quasi-Public:** Youth camps, equestrian facilities, hunting, fishing, and related areas and preserves, selectively available to the public.
- **Private Commercial:** Campgrounds, golf courses, hunting areas, and other private facilities, mostly providing outdoor recreation opportunities not found at public sites.

Outdoor recreation lands and facilities are available in all parts of the state, but there are considerable differences in their size and relative distribution. The largest areas are the Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois; national wildlife refuges on the Mississippi, Illinois, and Cache rivers and Crab Orchard Lake; and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers outdoor recreation areas at Lake Shelbyville, Carlyle Lake,

and Rend Lake. All these larger areas have conservation purposes and offer outdoor recreation based on their respective natural resources.

State parks and other state sites similarly are mainly larger areas established throughout the state to protect natural resources and provide natural resource-based outdoor recreation, depending on the purpose of the site, i.e., more diverse outdoor recreation at state parks, fishing and hunting at state fish and wildlife areas and conservation areas, trail activities at state trails, and nature-based activity at state natural areas. Most federal and state lands are located in rural areas. The recently-established Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, located at the edge of the Chicago metropolitan area, is an exception.

County lands and facilities are mostly similar to federal and state areas. County conservation districts and forest preserve districts preserve natural resources, offer resource-based outdoor recreation, and usually have a strong conservation education mission. Because county districts are generally in metropolitan counties, they play an important role in providing resource-based outdoor recreation near most of the state's population. Counties are enabled by state statute to form conservation districts and forest preserve districts through public referendum, and eighteen counties have such districts. There is one regional (two-county) parks and recreation district which was established through special legislation.

Park districts, municipalities, and schools provide outdoor recreation in many communities throughout the state, typically larger communities. Community parks and school playgrounds respond to the most basic human need for natural experiences in the outdoors, contributing to communities' quality-of-life. The greatest value of community parks may be that residents view them as local natural landmarks vital to their neighborhoods.

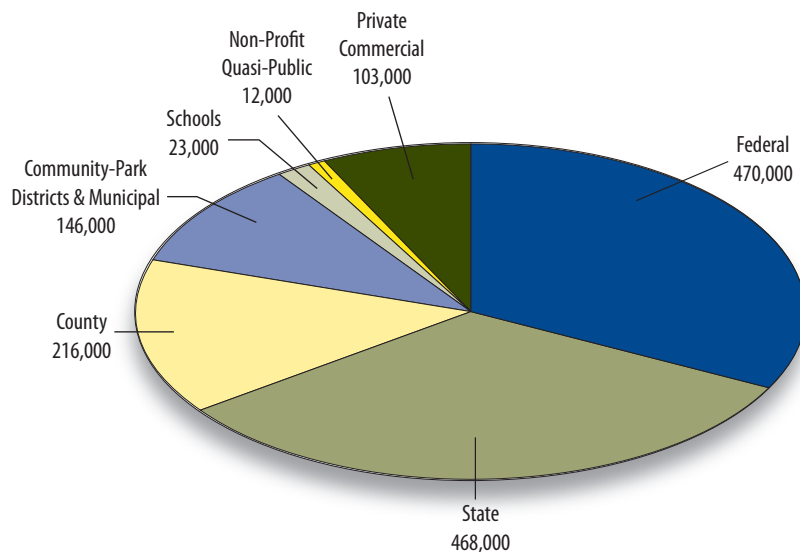
Non-profit quasi-public and private commercial outdoor recreation areas are found throughout the state and provide various, often specialized outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities. Private facilities respond to the demand for experiences usually not provided at public sites.

Despite this diversity of outdoor recreation management types, the total amount of outdoor recreation land in Illinois is low in comparison to other states. Combined with Illinois' nearly 13 million population, the fifth highest of all states, the state has a very low per capita amount of lands

for their SCORP's. Because comprehensive statewide inventories are methodologically difficult, time-consuming, and costly, more targeted data collection methods are now being employed that provide accurate and cost-effective data for the types of lands and facilities commonly funded through the LWCF and OSLAD programs.

Illinois' methods of completing the SCORP outdoor recreation supply inventory have evolved and reflect national trends. In the 1960's and 1970's, data collection methodologies were developed and employed. By the

Figure 1.
Illinois Park and Recreation Acres
 Total Acres: 1,438,000



All numbers are rounded and from various inventory data.

Sources:

Federal and State information is from websites, land and water report, and direct communications with site managers.

County, Park District, and Municipal information is from the *2008 Illinois Community Recreation Facilities and ParkLands Inventory*, with estimated statewide totals.

Schools, Non-Profit, and Private information is from the 1994 Illinois Recreation Facilities Inventory report.

and facilities compared to other states. While a low per capita supply is most notable in urban areas, even rural areas can have limited outdoor recreation opportunities and a low per capita supply. Because of this low per capita supply, acquiring land and developing facilities for outdoor recreation continues to be a high priority.

Assessing Illinois' Supply of Outdoor Recreation Lands and Facilities












An assessment of the supply of outdoor recreation lands and facilities is basic to the SCORP. States historically have strived to complete ambitious, comprehensive statewide inventories of all outdoor recreation lands and facilities, to provide the most complete supply information

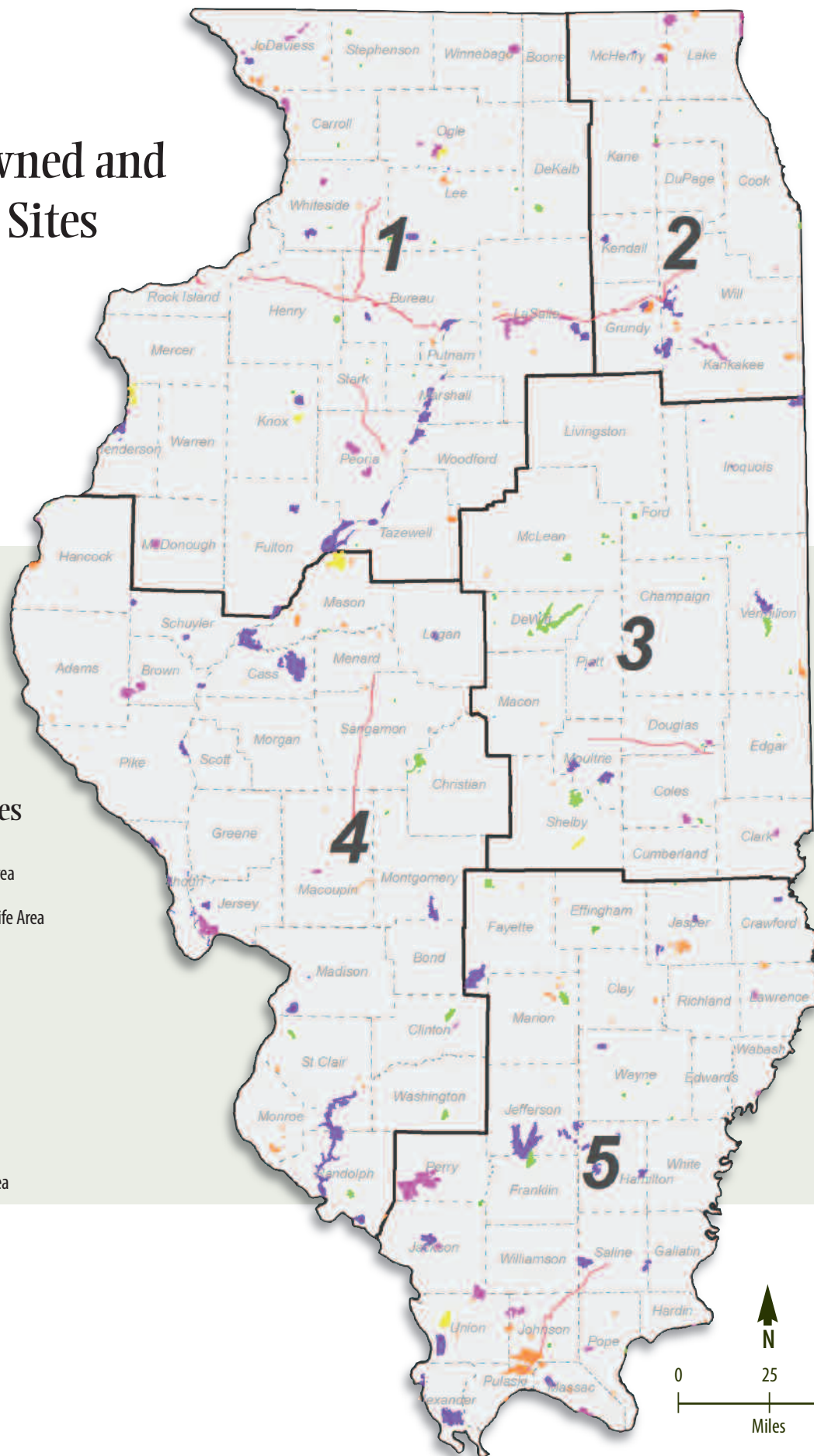
1980's and 1990's, inventorying techniques were expanded to new outdoor recreation providers and became more sophisticated. Today, more targeted data collection has proven most useful and cost-effective in inventorying and assessing supply.

The Illinois Recreation Facilities Inventory (IRFI) has been the statewide measure of supply since the mid-1980's. There have been IRFI updates and phases to add geographic information system (GIS) capability, which was accomplished for selected areas of the state. Outdoor recreation acreage was updated for federal, state, and county management categories for the 2003-2008 SCORP. But even with these more recent updates and phases, the last complete statewide inventory of Illinois' outdoor recreation lands and facilities was completed in 1994.

IDNR Owned and Managed Sites

IDNR Properties

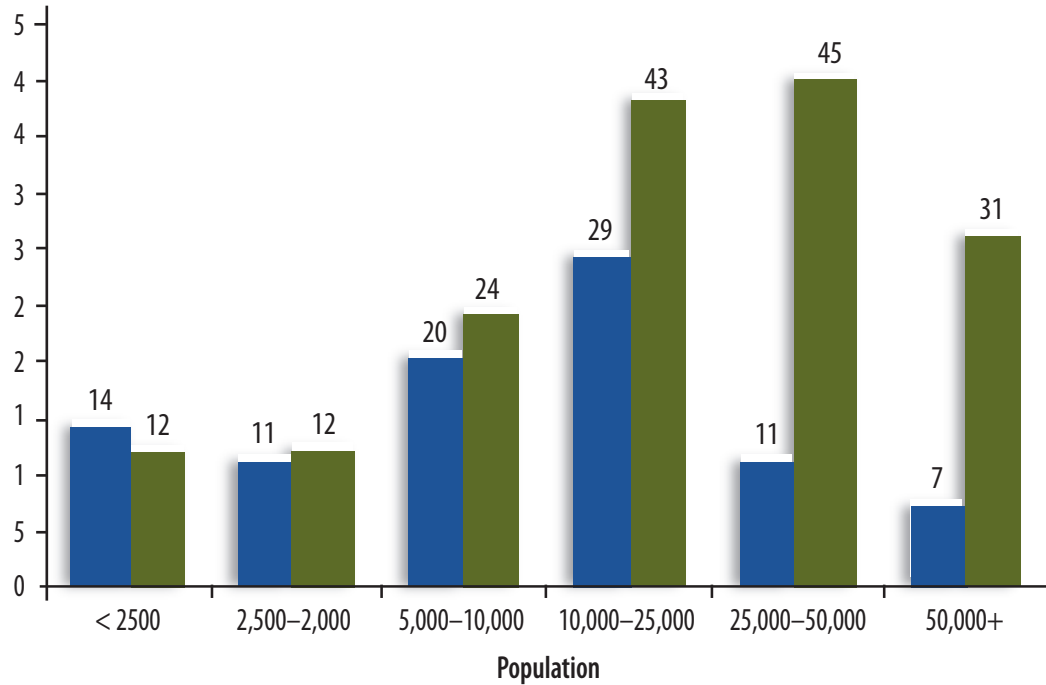
-  State Boat Access Area
-  State Fish and Wildlife Area
-  State Forest
-  State Habitat Area
-  State Memorial
-  State Natural Area
-  State Park
-  State Recreation Area
-  State Trail
-  IDNR Regions
-  County Boundaries



April 2009

Figure 2.

Number of City/Village Departments and Park Districts based on Community Populations



Source: 2008 Illinois Community Recreation Facilities & Park Lands Inventory

Table 2.

Community Outdoor Recreation Lands

	County	City/Village	Park District	Totals
Number of Park Sites	455	1,017	4,187	5,659
Total Acres	213,131	20,728	87,668	321,527
Natural Area Acres	135,881	4,076	21,525	161,482
Golf Course Acres	3,046	1,892	10,746	15,684

Source: Table is based on responses to the 2008 Illinois Community Recreation Facilities & Park Lands Inventory

The 2008 Illinois Community Recreation Facilities & Park Lands Inventory

The 2008 Illinois Community Recreation Facilities & Park Lands Inventory, a partnership between the University of Illinois Office of Recreation and Park Resources (ORPR) and DNR, is a compilation of data for fifteen “core” facilities available in community parks and most often included in LWCF and OSLAD grant applications. County forest preserve and conservation districts, park districts, and municipal recreation departments are included in the inventory.

This community-focused inventory provides baseline data to assess the state’s “average” supply, on a per capita basis, and is used by DNR as a measure of outdoor recreation need in the evaluation of LWCF and OSLAD grant applications.

A discussion of the per capita supply of Illinois outdoor recreation lands and facilities can be found on page 26-27.

Local agencies provide parks, open lands, and facilities that are integral to their communities, whether large or small. Community parks serve the needs of many people in many ways: they are places for fun, relaxation, sports, outdoor activities, and nature. The 2008 community inventory presents an important compilation of information about Illinois’ diverse community parks.

Statewide Totals

City/Village and Park District agencies included in the inventory serve 74% of Illinois’ population. A statewide total for all community lands is estimated to be more than 146,000 acres. An updated statewide total for county lands is 216,000 acres.

Table 3.
Community Outdoor Recreation Facilities

	County	City/Village	Park District	Totals
Water-Based Facilities				
Fishing Piers/Docks	88	89	301	478
Outdoor Swimming Pools/Aquatic Centers	3	44	226	273
Spray Grounds	1	17	262	280
Trails				
Total Trail Miles	1,180	457	1,100	2,737
Paved bike trails, miles	300	278	732	1,310
Nature/Interpretive trails, miles	298	228	295	821
Sports Courts, Fields, & Courses				
Basketball Courts	5	280	2,107	2,392
Baseball Fields	11	465	1,972	2,448
Softball Fields	18	260	1,101	1,379
Combined Ballfields	29	725	3,073	3,827
Skate Parks	1	49	107	157
Soccer Fields	2	335	1,364	1,701
Football Fields	0	63	459	522
18-Hole Golf Courses	22	17	61	100
9-Hole Golf Courses	5	9	41	55
Frisbee Golf Courses	0	16	61	77
Day Use Facilities				
Picnic Shelters	415	496	1,471	2,382
Playgrounds	50	670	3,183	3,903
Dog Parks	15	10	61	86

Table is based on responses to the 2008 Illinois Community Recreation Facilities & Park Lands Inventory



Chapter Five: Outdoor Recreation Demand in Illinois

People seek many different types of outdoor recreation experiences. Outdoor recreation agencies respond to this demand by providing a variety of opportunities, in assorted outdoor settings.

Outdoor recreation participation surveys — collecting, compiling, and analyzing survey data — provide valuable findings and conclusions about outdoor recreation demand. The **2008 Illinois Outdoor Recreation Survey** provides a snapshot of the attitudes toward and participation in selected outdoor activities in the state. Conducted by the Western Survey Research Center, Western Illinois University, for DNR, the survey included two random sample surveys of Illinois residents. Over 1,500 Illinois residents, both urban and rural, filled out a written survey, providing opinions about topics related to outdoor recreation in general and their participation in over 30 outdoor activities. A second follow-up survey asked 385 respondents to tell more about their outdoor activities.

Findings from the survey show that most Illinois residents participate in some outdoor activities and most believe that outdoor activities are important and should be available in the state, even if they do not participate in them.

Findings

- Most respondents engaged in some outdoor activity in the last 12 months. Among those who did not, most indicated that they were either not physically able or did not have enough time.
 - Over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that outdoor recreation areas are important for health and fitness, that outdoor recreation areas should serve all people, and that community outdoor recreation areas are important for quality-of-life and promoting economic development.
 - The most popular outdoor activity among respondents was pleasure walking with 87% participating in the last year. Most respondents also participated in picnicking, observing wildlife/bird watching, swimming in a pool, and using a playground. The least popular activities include trapping, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and sailing.
 - Outdoor activities cited as most important (very or somewhat important) include pleasure walking, picnicking, using playgrounds, hiking, swimming (pools), and biking on trails.
 - The vast majority of respondents (over 97%) said that having fun and experiencing nature were very or somewhat important reasons for engaging in outdoor recreation. A significant portion (over 80%) also said that sharing nature with children, escaping daily routine, and exercising were important reasons for their participation in outdoor recreation.
 - Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated that state government was the most important provider of outdoor recreation needs, followed by local (31%), county (20%), federal (9%), and the private sector (6%).
 - Most residents reported being satisfied with outdoor recreation areas and facilities in Illinois. About one-third believe that these areas and facilities have become better in the last five years and almost half said that these areas have stayed the same.
 - Based upon the responses, 11,168,864 Illinois residents walked for pleasure last year. Other popular outdoor activities included observing wildlife/bird watching (7,480,182 residents) and running/jogging (4,228,488 residents). Bicycling on roads and fishing were also among the top five outdoor activities based on number of times they were done in the past year.
 - Less popular outdoor activities included trapping (6 median activity days) and cross country skiing (3 median activity days).
 - State parks and facilities were more likely to be utilized than other locations for the following activities: tent camping (64%), hiking (55%), motor boating (51%), RV camping (49%), canoeing/kayaking (48%), fishing (38%), and water skiing (38%). All other activities were most likely done near respondents' homes, private areas, city/county areas, or federal areas.
 - Over 80% of respondents indicated that they were very or somewhat satisfied with all outdoor recreation activities they did in the state in the last year. Satisfaction levels were highest for those engaging in sailing (100%); pleasure walking (99%), running/jogging (98%), canoeing/kayaking (97%), and golfing (97%).
- In terms of the sheer number of times each outdoor activity was done last year, the most popular activities include pleasure walking, observing wildlife, and running or jogging. The location for each of these outdoor activities varies by activity. Outdoor activities like camping, hiking, and motor boating tend to be done at state sites.

Most residents who participate in different outdoor activities are somewhat or very satisfied with their activities. Outdoor activities that received the highest satisfaction ratings include sailing, pleasure walking, and running or jogging.

These data show that most residents engage in some form of outdoor recreation and are satisfied with their outdoor recreational experiences. While most residents are satisfied, many believe that improving facilities and more programming would improve their experiences.

Table 4.
Importance of Outdoor Recreation Activities

Activity	Statewide (n= 1,566)		Urban (n= 1,211)		Rural (n= 275)	
	Very important	Somewhat important	Very important	Somewhat important	Very important	Somewhat important
Pleasure walking	79.8	17.1	81.8	15.1	73.2	24.9*
Picnicking	67.7	27.5	67.1	27.9	70.0	26.9
Use a playground	68.8	24.5	70.1	23.9	64.3	29.3
Hiking	61.3	31.4	63.1	30.4	57.1	33.9
Swimming-outdoor pool	59.3	32.9	60.9	31.8	54.1	38.2
Bicycling-trails	63.1	28.0	65.5	27.3	52.8	32.1*
Fishing	58.5	30.6	56.5	32.9	71.1	21.3*
Observing wildlife/Bird watching	51.8	36.7	51.7	37.3	57.1	32.8
Running/Jogging	58.7	29.7	61.1	28.4	47.5	36.9*
Softball/baseball	53.3	34.8	54.3	34.7	47.5	39.3*
Tent camping	48.3	39.4	47.2	40.7	54.6	34.1
Swimming-outdoor other	50.9	35.2	51.2	35.2	50.4	37.5
Canoeing	46.3	38.3	47.7	37.8	41.0	42.2
Outdoor basketball	45.7	38.1	46.5	38.2	42.4	39.5
Bicycling-roads	50.1	33.5	51.3	32.4	45.9	37.0
Soccer	46.3	37.0	48.2	36.5	37.2	41.7*
Tennis	44.0	39.3	45.6	39.0	35.7	42.7*
Golfing	45.8	35.5	47.1	34.3	43.1	40.3
Vehicle camping	39.0	41.0	37.0	42.0	50.4	35.1*
Motor boating	38.1	40.8	36.2	42.0	49.4	36.0*
Ice skating	35.6	43.2	37.4	43.7	27.9	42.2*
Equestrian (Horseback-riding)	36.2	42.6	36.0	42.9	37.9	42.7
Sailing	36.9	41.6	38.1	41.7	30.3	43.2*
Water skiing	32.3	42.6	31.1	43.5	38.1	40.6
Cross-country skiing	31.8	41.3	32.2	42.0	26.0	39.7*
In-line skating	30.3	42.2	31.4	42.6	24.6	42.4*
Hunting	34.4	30.3	29.3	31.6	57.9	23.1*
Snowmobiling	19.8	40.2	19.1	39.9	22.7	41.3
Off-road vehicle use	20.1	33.2	18.6	31.8	27.2	38.6*
Trapping	10.7	29.9	9.0	27.3	17.9	40.3*

* Indicates statistically significant differences between urban and rural counties ($p < .05$, Chi-Square Analysis)

Table 5.
Illinois Outdoor Recreation Participation, 2008

Activity	Percentage of Statewide respondents participating (n= 1,566)	Percentage of Urban respondents participating (n= 1,211)	Percentage of Rural respondents participating (n= 275)
Pleasure walking	86.9	88.0	84.4
Picnicking	67.9	68.0	66.7
Observing wildlife/Bird watching	58.2	56.3	67.6*
Swimming-outdoor pool	55.5	56.8	49.6
Use a playground	55.0	56.2	50.6
Hiking	47.4	48.3	46.6
Bicycling-roads	46.4	46.9	41.7
Fishing	45.4	42.8	58.4*
Swimming-outdoor other	40.6	41.8	35.8
Bicycling-trails	38.9	42.4	23.1*
Golfing	36.9	38.6	30.8*
Running/Jogging	32.9	35.0	22.1*
Softball/Baseball	32.4	32.9	29.3
Motor boating	30.7	29.0	38.3*
Tent camping	25.2	24.5	27.8
Canoeing/kayaking	22.8	24.6	14.8*
Outdoor basketball	22.4	22.1	22.5
Tennis	19.1	21.6	8.5*
Hunting	18.8	14.5	37.5*
Soccer	16.7	18.1	8.9*
Equestrian (Horseback-riding)	16.4	15.8	17.6
Vehicle camping	16.1	14.0	25.3*
Off-road vehicle use	15.5	12.4	28.8*
Ice skating	14.8	16.7	5.6*
Water skiing	12.7	12.9	12.0
In-line skating	9.9	11.4	3.4*
Sailing	9.4	10.8	2.2*
Cross-country skiing	7.6	7.9	4.7
Snowmobiling	7.3	7.1	8.2
Trapping	2.5	1.8	4.3*

* Indicates statistically significant differences between urban and rural counties ($p < .05$, Chi-Square Analysis)

Table 6.

Reasons for Engaging in Outdoor Recreation

Over eight out of ten respondents to the 2008 outdoor recreation survey felt that sharing nature with children, escaping their daily routines, and meeting health or exercise needs were important contributing factors to their decision to engage in outdoor activities. Just over half of the respondents (50.5%) felt that outdoor recreation was important in satisfying their need to seek new challenges and develop new skills.

Decision Making Factors	Percent Important – Very Important
To have fun	97.6
Experience nature/enjoy outdoors	97.1
Spend time with family/friends	92.0
Expose children to nature	89.3
To escape daily routine	88.4
Exercise/keep healthy	87.0
Seek new challenges/skills	50.5

Table 7.

Locations of Outdoor Recreation Activities

Activity	Near home	Private area	City/county area	State park	National park or area
Pleasure walking	70.9	3.7	18.0	7.4	—
Observing wildlife	45.3	6.3	25.8	18.4	4.2
Running/Jogging	64.1	7.8	21.4	6.8	—
Bicycling-roads	82.2	1.7	9.8	5.7	0.6
Fishing	20.3	24.3	13.6	38.4	3.4
Playground	33.1	3.3	56.9	5.5	1.1
Swimming-outdoor pool	42.9	27.4	29.1	0.6	—
Hiking	3.6	6.1	28.5	54.5	7.3
Bicycling-trails	16.8	3.2	56.0	22.4	1.6
Golf	9.9	57.0	32.2	0.8	—
Softball/Baseball	20.4	8.6	71.0	—	—
Motor boating	13.7	16.7	5.9	51.0	12.7
Picnicking	12.7	6.1	48.7	29.4	3.1
Hunting	15.6	55.8	3.9	23.4	1.3
Swimming-outdoor other	20.0	19.2	16.7	40.0	4.2
Of-road vehicle	54.9	33.3	2.0	5.9	3.9
Soccer	30.2	11.3	56.6	1.9	—
Outdoor basketball	60.3	4.8	33.3	1.6	—
Equestrian (Horseback-riding)	21.4	40.5	19.0	16.7	2.4
Canoeing/Kayaking	10.4	16.9	19.5	48.1	5.2
Water skiing	20.6	17.6	8.8	38.2	14.7
Vehicle camping	4.3	29.8	4.3	48.9	12.8
Snowmobile	30.0	25.0	15.0	30.0	—
Tennis	27.5	9.8	60.8	2.0	—
Tent camping	9.0	14.1	6.4	64.1	6.4
In-line skating	58.3	25.0	16.7	—	—
Ice skating	29.5	40.9	25.0	4.5	—
Sailing	13.3	6.7	20.0	26.7	33.3
Cross country skiing	11.1	7.4	59.3	22.2	—
Trapping	50.0	20.0	30.0	—	—

Potential Growth in Outdoor Recreation Activities

Nearly half (46.3%) of survey respondents indicated that there were outdoor recreation activities that they would either like to start doing or do more often. Pleasure walking, already the most popular outdoor activity in Illinois, also shows the greatest potential growth area in both urban and rural counties. Bicycle riding, both on roads and on trails, is the second most popular outdoor activity with growth potential cited by the respondents.

Fishing and hunting are two outdoor activities that also show potential growth, particularly in rural counties. Fishing and hunting rank first and second as outdoor activities that rural respondents state they would either like to start or participate in more often. Over half of the respondents (50.7%) indicated that if lands and facilities were more conveniently located, they might engage in outdoor activities more often.

Table 8.

Percentage Distribution of Top 10 Potential Growth Activities

Activity	Percentage Statewide	Percentage Urban Counties	Percentage Rural Counties
Pleasure walking	13.5	14.0	11.1
Bicycling	13.0	13.6	9.1
Fishing	11.1	9.7	19.4
Hiking	7.4	7.9	4.1
Camping	5.9	5.4	6.1
Golf	5.4	5.4	5.1
Canoeing/Kayaking	5.0	5.4	3.1
Hunting	4.4	3.0	11.2
Swimming	3.4	4.1	0.0
Equestrian (Horseback riding)	3.0	2.6	3.1

Improving Illinois Outdoor Recreation

Survey respondents indicated what could be done to improve outdoor recreation in the state. More than a third of residents (34.7%) said they believed that making better facilities and lands available to residents would be most helpful. An additional 24.4% indicated that more programs and services would help. Other responses included making outdoor recreation easier to access (9.5%), and increasing awareness of DNR services (7.6%).

Table 9.

Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction Levels with Outdoor Recreation Activity

Activity	Percent Somewhat or Very Satisfied with Activity	Activity	Percent Somewhat or Very Satisfied with Activity
Sailing	100.0	Playground	92.5
Pleasure walking	98.5	Tennis	92.0
Running/Jogging	98.0	Vehicle camping	91.8
Canoeing/Kayaking	97.2	Basketball	91.7
Golf	96.6	Waterskiing	91.7
Cross country skiing	96.0	Ice skating	91.2
Observing wildlife	95.9	Soccer	90.0
Bicycling-trails & on-roads	95.5	Fishing	89.7
Motor boating	95.3	Snowmobile	89.5
Picnicking	94.7	Tent camping	89.0
Swimming-outdoor pool	94.2	Hunting	84.4
Softball/Baseball	93.6	Swimming-outdoor other	83.7
Equestrian (Horsebackriding)	93.0	Off-road Vehicle	83.7
Hiking	92.9	Trapping	85.7
In-line skating	92.6	Bicycling-roads	80.7

Kids' Participation

Comparing respondents who reported that they had children under the age of 18 living with them and those who reported that they had no children revealed some differences and some similarities. The number one outdoor activity among both persons with and persons without children was pleasure walking. Rates of participation of people without children were next highest for picnicking, observing wildlife, swimming-outdoor pool and hiking. Rates of participation of people with children were highest, after pleasure walking, for using a playground, picnicking, swimming-outdoor pool, and bicycling. The largest significant difference in activity participation rates between both groups was found in using a playground, with respondents who had children at 78.8% and respondents without children at 42.0%. The least significant difference in activity participation rates between both groups is found within both trapping and observing wildlife/bird watching. Altogether, 2.6% of respondents without children and 2.4% of those with children reported that they had trapped within the last 12 months, and 58.2% of respondents without children and 58.6% of those with children also reported that they had participated in observing wildlife/bird watching within the past 12 months.

Overall, respondents with children were more likely to participate in any given activity apart from hunting and trapping.



Chapter Six: Priorities for
Local Grant Programs

Assessing the supply of and demand for outdoor recreation in Illinois helps to establish SCORP priorities, which guide the use of LWCF and OSLAD grants. In addition, the state's natural resources, the relative availability of outdoor recreation lands and facilities, and the needs of different population groups are major considerations in setting SCORP priorities. Finally, public input helps to establish SCORP priorities.

The priorities listed below are not listed in any particular order. SCORP priorities are one set of criteria used in the grant evaluation process.

SCORP Priorities

Conservation of Natural Resources. Conservation of the state's significant natural resources, through acquisition, development, enhancement, management, and stewardship, continues to be the single-most important action to ensure a legacy of quality outdoor recreation opportunities for future generations of Illinoisans. Conservation of the state's natural resources is central to DNR's mission and vital for healthy people and communities.

Natural Areas, Wildlife Habitat, and Wetlands: Conserve, protect, and enhance lands and waters that have natural resource values, e.g., are identified in the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory; protect threatened or endangered species; are listed in the Illinois Wetlands Inventory.

Community Open Spaces: Protect local lands that have natural resource values and preserve open space.

Sustainable Natural Resources: Practice stewardship in using natural resources, where resources are being used at a rate greater than they are being replenished through natural processes.

Children in the Outdoors. Children today are less connected to nature and the outdoors than ever before. "Nature deficit disorder" has become widely recognized and is an issue for school curricula and conservation education and outreach. It is important that conservation education programs and facilities, such as nature centers and interpretative trails, be available and facilitate children's discovery of their natural heritage.

Conservation Education: Provide conservation education in the classroom and in outdoor programs and activities.

Interpretive Facilities: Provide interpretive facilities in parks and outdoor recreation areas that expand children's experiences in the outdoors and appreciation and understanding of the values of natural resources.

Greenways and Trails. Greenways — linear ribbons of open space — are effective means of preserving green spaces in urban and suburban areas, especially as development occurs at the urban fringe. Greenways often protect waterways and provide and connect wildlife habitat. Trails are linear recreation facilities that serve various purposes, including alternative transportation within and between communities.

Greenways: Protect green corridors that provide and connect open space.

Trails: Provide long-distance trails in new locations and connect and improve existing trails.

Revitalized Lands. Re-developing and adapting degraded and former industrial land for new conservation and outdoor recreational purposes can effectively transform "brownfields" or vacant urban land into new places for outdoor recreation. Reusing such lands revitalizes community spaces, helps to reduce the development and conversion of open space at the urban fringe, and provides new outdoor recreation opportunities, often in areas with a limited amount of undeveloped land, e.g., larger cities and older suburbs.

Adaptive Re-Use: Promote transforming brownfields and vacant urban land into new outdoor recreation lands and facilities.

Restoration: Revitalize and enhance existing land for conservation and outdoor recreation such as restoration of wetland habitat or development of new parks.

Water Resources. Rivers, streams, and lakes are important for many popular outdoor activities. Conservation and protection of water resources is necessary to maintain and expand water-based recreation.

Quality Water Resources: Protect and restore the state's water resources to improve their potential for water-based recreation.

Recreational Use: Acquire lands and develop facilities that expand and improve public recreational access to the state's rivers, streams, and lakes.

Special Populations. Outdoor recreation lands and facilities should serve all people regardless of physical ability, ethnicity, or income. The growing number of minority populations in the state and economically and recreationally disadvantaged communities must not be ignored.

Underserved populations: Provide outdoor recreation opportunities for special populations, specifically accessible facilities and programs.

High-need populations: Target assistance to communities that demonstrate a high level of economic hardship and a lack of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Healthy Communities. The growth of chronic diseases has brought national attention to the relationship between health and an active lifestyle. Communities can help their residents lead healthier lifestyles by providing close-to-home parks, trails, and outdoor recreation facilities.

Active spaces: Acquire and develop outdoor recreation lands and facilities close to where people live to help make regular physical activity a lifestyle.

Close-to-home: Improve the ease of accessing recreation lands and facilities where health-benefitting activities can occur regularly.

Interagency Cooperation and Coordination. Cooperation and coordination among outdoor recreation agencies and organizations to identify, plan, develop, and manage outdoor recreation lands and facilities results in improved and more cost-effective outdoor recreation.

Partnerships: Establish new partnerships that improve capabilities for providing outdoor recreation lands and facilities to meet community needs.

Expand cooperative planning: Integrate outdoor recreation planning into other types of plans such as comprehensive plans to better meet outdoor recreation needs.

Per Capita Supply

In addition to the priorities, the LWCF and OSLAD grant application evaluation process is guided by other criteria, including the per capita

Table 10.
County Outdoor Recreation Facilities in Illinois – 2008
Forest Preserve Districts, Conservation Districts,
and County Departments

County Recreation Facilities	Total	Per 1,000 Capita
I. Water-Based Facilities		
1 Fish Piers/Docks	88	0.0068
2 Aquatic Centers/ Pools	3	0.0002
3 Spray Grounds	1	0.0001
II. Trails		
1 Trails (Miles)	1,180.55	0.0915
2 Bike Trails (Miles)	300.55	0.0232
3 Nature Trails (Miles)	298.25	0.0231
III. Sports Facilities		
1 Basketball Courts	5	0.0003
2 Baseball Fields	11	0.0008
3 Softball Fields	18	0.00013
4 Skate Parks	1	0.0001
5 Soccer Fields	2	0.0001
6 Football Fields	—	—
7 18-Hole Golf Courses	22	0.0017
8 9-Hole Golf Courses	5	0.0003
9 Frisbee Golf Courses	—	—
IV. Day-Use Facilities		
1 Picnic Shelters	415	0.0321
2 Playgrounds	50	0.0038
3 Dog Parks	15	0.0011

All data is from the Community Recreation Facility and Park District Inventory March-July 2008, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and University of Illinois, Office of Recreation & Park Resources. U.S. Census Bureau 2008 population estimate for Illinois is 12,901,563.

supply of outdoor recreation lands and facilities, a measure of outdoor recreation need.

While Chapter 4 summarizes the state’s general supply and the methodology of the 2008 community inventory, considering outdoor recreation supply on a per capita basis provides a meaningful measure of how well existing and proposed facilities meet the needs of the populations they serve. The state’s total supply of local outdoor recreation lands and facilities is compared to the total state population, revealing an average per capita figure for the state as a whole, e.g., acres of land per capita. Then the local agency area per capita supply, using the local agency’s supply and population served, is similarly calculated and compared to the statewide average. Local agency areas with a supply that falls below the statewide average are considered to have greater need. Local agency areas are the geographic areas served by community and county-based agencies. Investing LWCF and OSLAD funds in

under-supplied areas provides a better balance of outdoor recreation opportunities to all citizens throughout Illinois.

The average statewide supply of community outdoor recreation lands in Illinois is 11.35 acres per 1,000 population. This includes park district and municipal lands, which primarily serve community-based recreation needs.

The average statewide supply of regional resource-based outdoor recreation lands is 52.69 acres per 1,000 population. This includes county and state lands, which primarily conserve natural resources and provide resource-based recreation.

The per capita supply determinations are based on data collected by direct survey of local and county park and conservation agencies in 2008 and on the 2008 IDNR Land and Water Report.

Table 11.

Community Outdoor Recreation Facilities in Illinois – 2008 Park Districts & Municipal Departments

Community Recreation Facilities	Actual Collected Data	Estimated Statewide Total	Per 1,000 Capita
I. Water-Based Facilities			
1 Fish Piers/Docks	390	527	.0408
2 Aquatic Centers/Pools	270	365	.0282
3 Spray Grounds	279	377	.0292
II. Trails			
1 Trails (Miles)	1557	2104	.1630
2 Bike Trails (Miles)	1010	1365	.1058
3 Nature Trails (Miles)	523	707	.0547
III. Sports Facilities			
1 Basketball Courts	2387	3226	.2500
2 Baseball Fields	2437	3293	.2552
3 Softball Fields	1361	1839	.1425
4 Skate Parks	156	211	.0163
5 Soccer Fields	1699	2296	.1779
6 Football Fields	522	705	.0546
7 18-Hole Golf Courses	78	105	.0081
8 9-Hole Golf Courses	50	67	.0051
9 Frisbee Golf Courses	77	104	.0080
IV. Day-Use Facilities			
1 Picnic Shelters	1967	2658	.2060
2 Playgrounds	3853	5207	.4035
3 Dog Parks	71	96	.0074

All data is from the Community Recreation Facility and Park District Inventory March-July 2008, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and University of Illinois, Office of Recreation & Park Resources.

U.S. Census Bureau 2008 population estimate for Illinois is 12,901,563.

Park District and Municipal Department numbers have been estimated for a statewide total, based on the inventory's collected data for 74% of the state's population.



Chapter Seven: IDNR Outdoor Recreation
Grant-in-Aid Programs

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program and the state Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program are Illinois' general-purpose outdoor recreation grant programs. They have comparable objectives and they are administered jointly. DNR's other outdoor recreation grant programs are the Recreational Trails Program, including the Bicycle Path Grant Program, Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund, Off-Highway Vehicle Recreational Trails Program, Federal Recreational Trails Program, and Local Government Snowmobile Grant Program, and the Boat Access Development Grant Program.

DNR's local grant programs help to advance DNR's agency mission. Local partners play a critical role in the management, conservation, and protection of the state's natural and recreational resources, since they oversee more than 350,000 acres of lands managed for a wide variety of park, recreation, and conservation purposes. Local agencies also further the public's understanding and appreciation of the state's natural resources through conservation education facilities and programs.

Grant programs operate on a cost reimbursement basis for approved project elements and are available to any unit of local government or special taxing district with statutory authority to acquire, develop, and maintain lands for public parks. Some grants are also available to private, not-for-profit organizations.

Grants are provided on a competitive basis based upon written or electronic applications submitted to IDNR by published deadline dates. Grant manuals provide full information on each program. For more information contact DNR's Division of Grant Administration, 217/782-7481, <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/ocd/gaoutnew.htm>.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program

The federal LWCF program was the first outdoor recreation grant program in Illinois. It provides up to 50% funding for eligible project costs. Grant recipients range from small communities having less than 1,000 population to large metropolitan agencies serving hundreds of thousands of citizens. The Department's policy is to use federal LWCF funds for state and local land acquisition projects only. The maximum LWCF grant award for local acquisition projects is \$750,000, with the exception of the City of Chicago which has a \$2.3 million limit and Cook County which has a \$1.15 million limit. Local LWCF grant applications submitted to the Department are evaluated and prioritized through the Open Project Evaluation and Selection Process, using SCORP priorities and other evaluation criteria.

Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grant Program

The state OSLAD program is the largest outdoor recreation grant program in terms of overall annual funding and focuses on basic, close-to-home outdoor recreation, including land for parks and outdoor recreation facilities such as ball fields and playgrounds. It provides up to 50% funding for eligible project costs. Annual funding for the OSLAD program is generated from a portion of the state's real estate transfer tax. The OSLAD program also assists the renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities, since aging infrastructure has become a significant need in many communities. Grant applications may be submitted May 1 to July 1 of each year. OSLAD grant applications are also evaluated and prioritized through the Open Project Evaluation and Selection Process. Maximum grant funding for OSLAD land acquisition projects is the same as for LWCF. Development projects are limited to \$400,000.

Recreational Trails Grant Programs

Bicycle Path Grant Program

The Bicycle Path Program assists with up to 50% of eligible project costs for the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of public, non-motorized bicycle paths and directly related support facilities. A portion of Illinois Vehicle Code fees annually funds the program. The program's main objective is the development of long distance bicycle paths and trails for safe and enjoyable use by the public. Grant applications may be submitted January 1 through March 1 of each year. Funding preference is given to projects that:

- Acquire land or long term/permanent easements for linear corridors;
- Propose development of a bicycle trail system, particularly long distance trails, connector trails linking several existing trails, or multiple use trails;
- Are identified in state, regional, or local, bikeway/trail plans and/or outdoor recreation plans, comprehensive plans, etc.;
- Propose quality bike path facilities readily accessible to major population centers or propose initial creation of bike path facilities in a high demand area;
- Have minimal adverse environmental and social impacts;
- Propose initial development of bicycle path facilities at the project site (trail renovation projects are a lower priority than new trail construction);
- Have scenic and outdoor recreation quality and offer a diversity of trail user experiences, user amenities, convenient access, connectivity to other public lands, compatibility with adjacent lands, or which resolve an existing trail user safety issue; and
- Have long term operations and maintenance capability clearly demonstrated by the local sponsor.

Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund

Funded from snowmobile registration fees, this program is not intended for local governments but for incorporated, private snowmobile clubs in Illinois. It provides up to 100 percent project funding. Clubs may develop and maintain snowmobile trails and related facilities on private land for public snowmobiling. Applications may be submitted March 1 – May 1 of each calendar year. Funding preference will be given to projects that:

- Promote long distance, integrated, intra- and inter-county trails rather than short, isolated trails;
- Promote trails linking public lands having existing snowmobile trails/facilities;
- Propose initial development of snowmobiling facilities in a county. Special consideration will also be given to those projects representing initial requests for funding assistance from a county;
- Have minimal adverse environmental and social impact; and
- Are located in areas (counties) of high demand as determined by the number of registered snowmobiles in the area.

Off-Highway Vehicle Recreational Trails Program

The Illinois Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) program, established by the Recreational Trails of Illinois Act, can provide up to 100% funding for eligible project costs to local units of government and private organizations for the acquisition and development of lands for public OHV areas and trails. The program is financed from OHV title fees and public access stickers (required to use grant-assisted areas). Applications may be submitted January 1 through March 1 of each year. Funding preference will be given to projects that:

- Propose long distance, integrated, intra- and inter- county trails or large scramble areas rather than short, isolated trails or small scramble areas;
- Propose initial development of OHV facilities. Special consideration will be given to those projects representing initial requests for funding assistance in a county;
- Promote multiple outdoor recreation use of the project site;
- Are located in areas (counties) of high demand as determined by population and the number of registered OHV's in the area;
- Have minimal adverse environmental and social impact; and
- Provide the most long term, stable management potential.

Recreational Trails Program

The federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was established by the National Recreational Trails Fund Act. It provides up to 80% in matching funds for eligible project costs to federal, state, and local units of government and private organizations for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of motorized and non-motorized trails open to the public. The National Recreational Trails Fund Act requires states to identify priorities for the RTP in their SCORP, or in a separate State Trails Plan. Illinois' priorities for the RTP are developed by DNR with input from the Illinois Greenways and Trails Council. The council is Illinois' RTP State Trails Advisory Board. Applications may be submitted January 1 to March 1 of each year. RTP grant applications are evaluated using the following priorities:

1. Project need

- Trail significance: Is the proposed trail project a segment of a national, state, regional or local trail? Special consideration is given

to trails that are segments of the American Discovery Trail or Grand Illinois Trail.

- Geographic distribution of the type of trail use: Are there existing trails that provide for the same trail use(s) as the proposed trail within the same county, area, or region? Special consideration is given to hiking, cross-country skiing, equestrian, mountain biking, and water trails.
- Population served: How many users will the proposed trail serve?

2. Project concept/quality

- Type of project: Is the proposal for new acquisition or development, environmental restoration or support facilities or amenities? Special consideration is given to new acquisition or development.
- Trail length.
- Diversity of trail uses.
- Scenic quality.
- Availability of support facilities or amenities.
- Project sponsor's ability to maintain the trail.

3. Environmental suitability: Is the proposed trail project appropriate for the corridor's land use, soils, etc.? Are there negative impacts on natural resources?

4. Local support.

5. Local financial contribution.

6. Overall program suitability: Is the RTP the most appropriate grant program, given IDNR's other grant programs?

7. Project sponsor's history with IDNR grant programs: What is the sponsor's past performance on grant projects? Does the sponsor maintain their existing facilities?

After project applications are selected for funding, DNR works in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Transportation in seeking approval and authorization from the Federal Highway Administration.

Local Government Snowmobile Grant Program

The Local Government Snowmobile program provides up to 50% funding for eligible projects costs for the construction and rehabilitation of trails and facilities for public snowmobiling, up to 90% funding for eligible project costs for the acquisition of linear trail corridors, and up to 100% funding for eligible project costs for the purchase of equipment to maintain or patrol snowmobile trails. The program is funded from snowmobile registration fees.

The program supports all activities which enhance public snowmobiling opportunities: trail acquisition, trail development, trail grooming, and equipment for local agency patrol. Applications may be submitted March 1-May 1 of each year. Funding preference is given to projects that:

- Propose linear trail development, especially well developed long distance trails, connector trails linking several existing trails, or multiple use trails;
- Are located in areas having adequate snow cover and exhibiting high demand as determined by the number of registered snowmobiles in the project service area;

- Propose high quality snowmobile facilities readily accessible to major population centers and highways in the state or propose initial establishment of snowmobile facilities in a high demand area;
- Have minimal adverse environmental and social effects;
- Propose initial development of snowmobile facilities at the project site; and
- Have documented support from the snowmobiling public.

Boat Access Area Development Grant Program

The program provides up to 100% funding for eligible project costs for the construction of boat access facilities and up to 90% assistance for eligible projects costs for land acquisition. The program's main purpose is to increase access to public waters by providing more public boat launching ramps, canoe access areas, and support facilities, including courtesy docks, parking, and lighting. The program also assists in water trail development by funding upstream put-in and downstream take-out facilities. Funds are derived from the marine Motor Fuel Tax and from boat and canoe registration fees. Applications may be submitted July 1 to September 1 each year. Funding preference is given to projects that:

- Are located on large bodies of water;
- Receive high use and serve high numbers of registered boaters;
- Demonstrate site suitability for the proposed uses; and
- Address various special considerations, e.g., local financial contribution, maintenance capability, no-fee public use.

Open Project Selection Process

The Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) is the system DNR uses to evaluate and prioritize grant applications. Although created primarily for the LWCF and OSLAD programs, all outdoor recreation grant applications are evaluated through the OPSP or a similar systematic process. For the LWCF and OSLAD programs, only the OPSP criteria are used, while for the other DNR grant programs, the OPSP criteria and criteria specific to each program are used. Using the OPSP ensures an "open and fair" project selection process and assures that all eligible local grant applicants and the public are fully aware of the priorities and guidelines for DNR outdoor recreation grant programs.

The evaluation criteria are weighted and designed to make the selection of funded projects objective and responsive to statewide and local outdoor recreation priorities and needs. In general, the criteria relate directly to:

- The statewide outdoor recreation priorities specified in this SCORP.
- The need for outdoor recreation lands and/or facilities as identified through the SCORP, local outdoor recreation plans, and other local planning efforts.
- The overall quality of the proposed project as well as environmental and site suitability considerations.
- Administrative considerations including financial need, the operation and maintenance capabilities of the grant applicant, the special populations served, and the grant applicant's previous grant funding assistance through DNR.

SCORP Priorities

(See Chapter 6 for priorities discussion.)

- Conservation of Natural Resources
- Children in the Outdoors
- Greenways and Trails
- Revitalized Lands
- Water Resources
- Special Populations
- Healthy People and Communities
- Interagency Cooperation and Coordination

Local Planning Priorities

Other evaluation criteria assess a proposed project in terms of public support and priorities and needs identified in local plans or other public reports or processes.

Project Concept, Environmental and Site Feasibility

These criteria insure that projects provide high quality, environmentally appropriate outdoor recreation opportunities. Projects should:

- Be well designed.
- Provide diverse outdoor recreation appropriate for the site.
- Provide flood control benefits or use in flood plain open space (e.g., acquires flood plain land or provides flood-proof facilities in a flood plain).
- Be suited to site's topography, soils, and drainage.
- Be suited to adjacent land use.
- Be accessible.
- Provide appropriate support facilities and amenities.
- Incorporate energy conservation techniques.

Administrative Considerations Evaluation criteria also consider miscellaneous factors. These criteria reward projects that:

- Involve donation of land.
- Present a unique opportunity that has widespread public support.
- Represent initial development of a proposed park.
- Have sponsors that have received less than fair share of OSLAD, LWCF and other grant program funding.

Other evaluation criteria consist of administrative considerations of past performance, operation and maintenance capability, and/or the completeness of the application:

- The sponsor's past performance in completing DNR-assisted projects.
- The sponsor's ability to maintain the proposed park or facility.
- The sponsor's application and information response time.
- An unresolved violation regarding a previous grant to the sponsor (automatic application ineligibility).

A group of people are riding horses through a forest stream. The riders are seen from behind, moving away from the viewer. The stream is shallow and rocky, surrounded by dense green foliage and trees. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

Appendix: A Review of LWCF Over the Years

LWCF Illinois Apportionments 1965-2008

Over the past 44 years, Illinois has received over \$150 million in LWCF assistance for state and local parks and recreation projects.

Since the program's start in 1965, LWCF has continuously contributed to state and local efforts to acquire critical lands and develop a vast variety of outdoor recreation facilities.

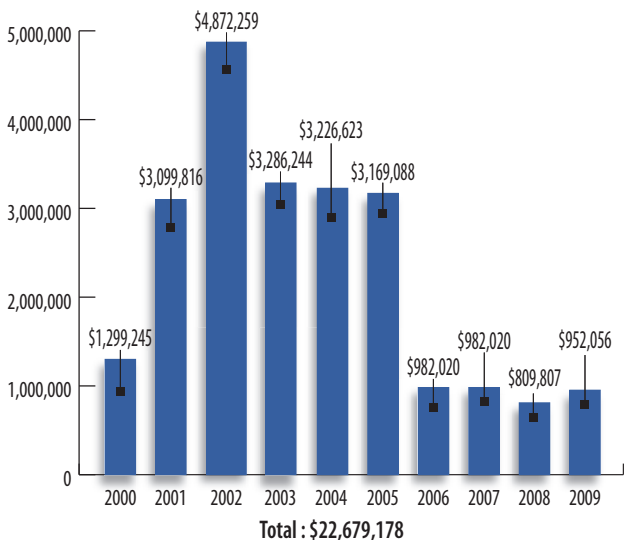
LWCF apportionments, by decade:

1960's: \$ 9.5 million | 1970's: 81.3 million | 1980's: 33.2 million
1990's 5.1 million | 2000's: 22.7 million

Figure 3.

Land & Water Conservation Fund in Illinois Fiscal Year 2000-2009

Acquisition of critical resource lands with LWCF funds



Active LWCF Projects

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a partnership among the National Park Service, states, and communities to support, enhance and create public parks for the benefit and use of all.

Two current projects exemplify the types of LWCF success stories over the years. Both are funding critical land acquisition in metropolitan areas of Illinois. Both preserve significant natural resources and open space in suburban fringe areas, where development is rapidly occurring and land conservation efforts face intense pressure.

In northeastern Illinois, Chicago metropolitan area: Kendall County Forest Preserve District Fox River Acquisition/Lee Property LWCF 17-00963

The Kendall County Forest Preserve District will acquire 233 acres south of Millbrook, Illinois. The property contains woods, seeps, wetlands and a one mile stretch of the Fox River. Scenic wooded river bluffs run the entire length of the site. Future development of the site includes restoration of the agricultural fields, hiking paths, a shelter, Fox River access and an entry road with parking.

In southwestern Illinois, St. Louis Metro East area: St. Clair County Engelmann Farm LWCF 17-00964.

St. Clair County will acquire 61 acres near Shiloh, Illinois, which will be developed as a public outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation area. Initial development will consist of converting the agricultural fields to native grasslands along with tree plantings, which will create a higher quality habitat. Subsequent development will include walking paths, a picnic shelter and an access road with parking.

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SCORP

