



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 1, 2025

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May Newsbits from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is sharing the following upcoming events and noteworthy items for May.

May 1

Illinois History Day

Springfield | Sangamon County

The Illinois State Museum hosts [Illinois History Day](#) at the Bank of Springfield Center. Regional finalists will compete for a chance to go to the national competition in Washington D.C.

May 1

IDNR grant program applications open

Statewide

Applications for the Natural Areas Stewardship grant and the Illinois Endangered and Threatened Species Rehabilitation grant applications are accepted through June 14. Learn more [online](#).

May 2

Off-highway vehicle trail opens

Sahara Woods State Recreation Area

Harrisburg | Saline County

The long-awaited Sahara Woods State Recreation Area off-highway vehicle trail in southern Illinois will open for the 2025 season on Friday, May 2. The park offers nearly 30 miles of off-highway vehicle trails on reclaimed mine land for riders' enjoyment. The site features a new visitors center, restrooms, and paved parking. Riders can register [online](#) and learn more about the trails.

May 3

Waterfalls and wildflowers hike

Starved Rock State Park

Oglesby | La Salle County

Explore the wonderful trails, waterfalls, and wildflowers at one of Illinois' most popular parks. Learn more [online](#).

May 6

Earth Stewardship Day

Illinois State Fairgrounds

Springfield | Sangamon County

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Illinois Department of Agriculture welcome fourth-grade students to the Illinois State Fairgrounds for a day of presentations and hands-on conservation activities. Representatives of IDNR's divisions of fisheries, mines and minerals, and education,

along with Illinois Conservation Police and the Illinois State Museum, will host programming. Go [online](#) for additional information.

May 6

Fall turkey firearm lottery opens

Statewide

Lottery applications for the fall turkey firearm season will be accepted May 6 through July 7 for Illinois residents.

Go [online](#) to submit an application or for additional information.

May 10-11

Departure event

Lewis and Clark State Historic Site

Hartford | Madison County

Reenactors, historic artisans, and more will commemorate the 1804 departure of explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. [Go online](#) for additional details.

May 12

An afternoon with Thomas Jefferson

Illinois State Museum

Springfield | Sangamon County

This lunch and learn style program with a Thomas Jefferson reenactor present his time during the American Revolution, his thoughts on being president, and his hopes for the “western lands” of Illinois. [Go online](#) for additional details.

May 14

Electric outdoor equipment workshop

Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area

Kewanee | Henry County

Join IDNR and representatives from the Illinois Smart Energy Design Assistance Center at Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area, 28616 Sauk Trail Road near Kewanee, from 10 a.m. to noon to learn more about electric outdoor equipment for both commercial and residential purposes. Workshop features discussion and hands-on demonstrations. Electric equipment available will include commercial and residential lawn mowers, weed trimmers, chainsaws, leaf blowers and more. Event is free and open to the public, but [registration is required online](#).

May 15

IDNR urban and community forestry grant opens

Statewide

Applications for urban and community forestry grants will be accepted May 15 through June 30. This grant helps local governments with the development of urban and community forests. Learn more [online](#).

May 17

Landscaping with native plants

Giant City State Park

Makanda | Jackson County

This presentation will introduce ideas for designing a landscaping plan that features Illinois native plants that nurture and feed native species. Learn more [online](#).

May 17

Family day at the David Davis Mansion

Bloomington | McLean County

Enjoy games, art, music, nature projects, treats, and more beginning at noon. Learn more [online](#).

May 17**Art in Bloom: Watercolors****Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site**

Springfield | Sangamon County

Enjoy a peaceful afternoon of artistry in a truly historic setting. Materials will be provided. Just bring your creativity and love for color. Learn more on [Facebook](#).

May 17-23**National Boater Safety Week**

Statewide

The annual weeklong observance reminds boaters to brush up on boater safety skills and prepare for the boating season. Learn more about boater safety [online](#).

Now open**Illinois Caverns State Natural Area**

Waterloo | Monroe County

Explore spectacular cave formations including stalactites, stalagmites, and flowstone. Find out more [online](#), including rules and the permit that's required to explore the cave. Visit IDNR's [YouTube channel](#) for a recent video of what conditions are inside the cave.

Throughout May**Safety education courses**

Statewide

IDNR offers hunter field days and hunter and boating safety courses. Visit the safety education class schedule [online](#) for all upcoming safety education courses.

Throughout May**ENTICE teacher education courses**

Statewide

IDNR offers teachers courses for continuing education credits covering a variety of nature and conservation topics, such as birds, pollinators, and other topics. In May, classes will be offered in Yorkville, Glenview, and Alton. View the full schedule and register [online](#).

Follow IDNR on [Facebook](#) and its [online calendar](#) of events for further information.

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