



## 2011 Awards Honor Individuals and Organizations for Outstanding Volunteer Service

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources honored Outstanding Volunteers of the Year with plaques presented by IDNR Director, Marc Miller during a ceremony in Conservation World at the Illinois State Fair Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup>.

“Our volunteers are doing great work by helping at state parks, and with our other programs such as nature preserve restoration, the urban fishing program, and safety education just to name a few. This recognition ceremony is one way we can thank them for the valuable service and expertise they provide to us and to the people of the State of Illinois,” said Director Miller.

The following received Awards at the Fair:



- **PHILLIP COLBURN** of *Springfield* is a Junior at Springfield High School and is this year's *Outstanding Student Volunteer of the Year*. Phil has volunteered for the *Illinois State Museum* for three years. He has worked as an assistant in the Zoology Section; a *Changes* docent and a *Play Museum* volunteer. He is on the Special Events team and also helps with *Super Saturdays*. Phil is eager to assist and help wherever needed, with the Museum's educators actually asking for him by name when they need a volunteer to help with a special task.



- **JOANETT (JO) FLEMING** of *Morris* is being honored for her dedication and devotion to *Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area* for over two decades. She began volunteering in 1985 when she joined Goose Lake Prairie Partners and has served as Editor, Treasurer, President and as a member of every committee within the group. Her vision and passion to share the past with others led to the creation of the Cabin Festival in 1986 and the Prairie Day Festival in 1997. With Jo's dedication, the festival has continued each year since and has become a very successful educational and entertaining event.



- **JERRY and KIM KUCHENBROD** of *Armstrong* are two of our most accomplished coaches in the NASP Archery in the Schools Program. The schools they coached brought 9 state titles and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place world finish, with 2 female state champions and 2 male state champions. We are going to miss them as they step down as head coaches and turn the program over to their team of assistants. They have laid a solid foundation for the program to continue to grow at Illinois Armstrong Grade School and High School. We look forward to continue working with Jerry and Kim as they will continue to be actively involved in other levels of the Program.



- **THE MARSHALL WOOD DUCK ALLIANCE** of *Toluca* was organized in memory of **Tom Rosen**. Tom was a lifetime waterfowl hunter at *Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area* and died of a heart attack while hunting ducks last fall. The members of the group designed 35 wood duck boxes for nesting to be completely predator proof. They purchased all of the materials through a fund that was set up by Tom's son, Joe Rosen. The group will be maintaining these nesting boxes and have plans to construct additional boxes to promote greater numbers of wood ducks in the area.



- **THE OREGON TRAIL DAYS COMMITTEE**, of *Oregon* has done an excellent job of recruiting volunteers and businesses from the community to assist and plan the Oregon Trail Days Festival. The goal of the Committee is to raise funds to help pay for the renovation of the 100 year old 48 foot Indian statute which pays tribute to Native Americans at *Lowden State Park*. A big attraction of the festival is the village of painted tipis. The first festival was held in 2010 and drew 6,000 attendees with 23 tipis on display. The Committee has also held benefit dinners, auctions and raffles to help raise funds and will continue the very successful Oregon Trail Days Festival for many years.



- **KURT and JANET PLYMIRE**, of *Streator*, together, have volunteered over 4100 hours at *Starved Rock State Park* Visitor Center on weekends during the past several years. The dedication of Kurt and Janet to be available almost every weekend to assist the visitors is indispensable to IDNR. They are knowledgeable and very willing to share the parks features with people from all over the world. Kurt also assists with the *Bald Eagle Appreciation* events by bringing his personal spotting scope to the top of Starved Rock to share the spectacular viewing of Bald Eagles with visitors.



- **THE SALT CREEK GREENWAY ASSOCIATION**, of *Leland* is a watershed-focused organization that has taken an active role in restoring *Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve* which is located within the Greenway. This group completed 375 hours in 2010 by sponsoring a *Restoration Blitz*, two *Pump Up the Prairie* workdays, an *Exelon Employee Workday* and a *National Public Lands Day* event. They have already completed two *Pump Up the Prairie* days in 2011 and have made preparations to chip and haul away invasive brush during a winter workday. The outlook of *Wolf Road Prairie* has become very positive from this active and passionate volunteer group.



- **NICHOLAS (NICK) TURNER**, of *Springfield* has been volunteering for the *Illinois State Museum* for 2 ½ years, while working full-time in construction. His dedication and reliability sets him apart, so much so, he walked through a blizzard one time to make his volunteer shift. He has worked in the Museum's *A Place for Discovery* and the new *Play Museum*. He is the go to person for the intern who plans each *Super Saturday* Program, which makes this program a success. Nick has an easy rapport with visitors, and is a natural born teacher and communicator.



- **FLORENCE (FLO) WOJCIECHOWSKI**, of *LaSalle*, **TOM WILLIAMS**, and the late **AMY WILLIAMS** of *Ottawa* is a family of Volunteers who have contributed over 3500 hours in the last 7 years. Flo is an outstanding volunteer in the *Starved Rock State Park* Visitor Center and can be counted on every Tuesday. She has 2,118 hours through 2010 and over 100 hours thus far in 2011 and will do whatever it takes to help. **AMY WILLIAMS** is Flo's daughter who was responsible for getting her mother interested in volunteering at the Visitor Center. Amy volunteered for many years but unfortunately, died of cancer in 2007. Amy was always ready and willing to volunteer whenever needed and is missed very much. **TOM WILLIAMS** has stepped forward after Amy's death to take over his wife's time slot. He has become indispensable because of his vast knowledge of the Park. He has also utilized his photography skills by photographing the canyons, waterfalls, birds and flowers of *Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Park*. He has contributed over 1500 hours of volunteer service in the past 3 years.

*The following two Outstanding Volunteers of the Year were not able to attend the Ceremony and were given their awards in their Hometown:*



- **DAVID HOLMAN** of *Grayslake* has assisted the *Illinois Nature Preserve Commission* and the *Division of Natural Heritage* with the precise mapping and boundary issues of dedicated Nature Preserves and registered Land and Water Reserves. David recognized the need for this high quality data and was doing this work on his own before he began providing this essential information to the IDNR for the past 3 years. To date, David has mapped over 375 Nature Preserves and Land and Water Reserve parcels. He troubleshoots problematic legal descriptions and documents, identifies issues and suggests possible actions. David expresses a desire to give back to those who are preserving important areas and IDNR is fortunate to have him as a Volunteer.



- **KERRY JONES** of *Harrisburg* is a Master Safety Education Instructor. He has helped to certify approximately 2,834 hunter safety students in the past 31 years in the counties of Saline and Williamson. Kerry and his team of instructors are always ready to assist the Safety Education Program whenever their schedules allow, recently adding the Saline/Gallatin County Farm Bureaus course to their busy schedule. Kerry truly cares about the knowledge and experience that students receive. He also provides live fire at his annual classes to provide firsthand experience to his students.