



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Pat Quinn, Governor
Marc Miller, Director

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Governor Quinn announces partnership with Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to expand public recreation in Fulton County

CANTON, IL –Illinois Governor Pat Quinn today announced a new partnership with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to expand public recreational access in Fulton County.

On behalf of Governor Quinn, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Marc Miller joined MWRD Commissioners, Senator Dave Koehler, and other local leaders today to announce a partnership that will allow the IDNR to manage a portion of MWRD's 14,000 acre property located nearly 40 miles southwest of Peoria for future hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. The agreement, once final, will not include the IDNR taking over camping leases currently held by Fulton County.

"When we have an opportunity like this to expand recreational opportunities in the state of Illinois, we must do everything we can to make that a reality and leave no child inside," Governor Quinn said. "This is a great example of taking previously mined land, restoring it, and making it available for use by people with diverse recreational interests."

MWRD purchased the property in 1970 to restore strip-mined land back to usable real estate. This project was successful and produced some of the best outdoor recreational property in the state. The property is home to abundant wildlife, including a healthy deer herd, wild turkey, quail and waterfowl.

"We are thrilled that Governor Quinn and IDNR have expressed interest in leasing this property so area residents and visitors from across the state have the opportunity to enjoy these natural surroundings," said MWRD Board of Commissioners President Kathleen Meany. "The District has been the guardian of this land for 40 years and is delighted to open this property up to the larger public."

While the site is ecologically diverse and ideal for outdoor recreation, much of it remains inaccessible to the public. The MWRD and IDNR are working together to identify the exact segments of the property that will eventually be opened to the public.

“One of Illinois’ best-kept secrets is that Fulton County has amazing lakes, rivers and other outdoor spaces. To people in Fulton County, it’s not a secret,” said State Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria). “I hope that this expanded public recreation area will not only be a great resource to local residents, but also bring outdoors enthusiasts to the area who will spend money and help support the local economy. I want to thank Governor Quinn and everyone else who helped make this vision a reality.”

Currently, local farmers plant crops on approximately 5,000 acres at the site, and Fulton County leases some of the property for outdoor recreational activities, including camping which will remain intact with the agreement.

“Fulton County offers some of the richest and most diverse open space in Illinois,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “Through this public access partnership, residents from throughout Illinois will be able to take advantage of newly opened acres and enjoy our outdoor heritage.”

The partnership will expand outdoor recreation opportunities in Fulton County, which is already a destination for many outdoors enthusiasts. The IDNR manages Banner Marsh, Rice Lake, and Anderson Lake State Fish and Wildlife Areas in Fulton County, each of which are popular hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, and camping destinations.

Additional information about state fish and wildlife areas can be found at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website at

<http://www.dnr.state.il.us/Lands/Landmgt/PARKS/R1/banner.htm>

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