

Wildlife, habitat, fishing, Smokey Bear highlight family fun at Conservation World during Illinois State Fair

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SPRINGFIELD, IL – Free activities for children and families will give Illinois State Fair visitors a chance to sample the great outdoors in Illinois at Conservation World at this year's state fair on Aug. 12-21 in Springfield.

Conservation World is a 30-acre park with grass, shade trees, and ponds located on the northwest corner of the Illinois State Fairgrounds. Conservation World is easily

accessible through a pedestrian gate near the Junior Livestock Building, and via a state fair tram stop next to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) headquarters.

“The tradition continues at Conservation World, with plenty to do for kids interested in spending time outdoors, and great ideas for families looking to spend time together,” said IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal.

Traditional free activities for youth at Conservation World include kids fishing clinics at the pond inside the Conservation World gate, with all bait and tackle provided; and, archery and BB gun practice ranges for youth that are hosted by IDNR shooting sports experts and safety education instructors and volunteers.

IDNR wildlife, fisheries and natural heritage staffs will host displays and answer questions about wildlife watching, fishing and hunting prospects, habitat enhancement projects, and programs that are available to assist private landowners. The IDNR Division of Education will help children learn about saving species, including monarch butterflies and pollinators.

State fair visitors can purchase Illinois fishing and hunting licenses and learn about the duties of a Conservation Police officer at the IDNR Law Enforcement tent, while the Division of Forest Resources invites families to keep an eye out for Smokey Bear while talking with foresters about trees and tree care. Experts from the Illinois Green Industry Association can answer questions on at-home habitats and landscaping from the IGIA gazebo at the center of Conservation World.

Daily fly fishing instruction and weekend Voyageur canoe rides are also free activities for all ages at Conservation World. Pick up the latest edition of the *Illinois State Parks* guide, and enter

to win an outdoor adventure package with purchase of a deer, turkey or morel lapel pin at the Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger Information Tent.

Food and drink vendors at Conservation World will include southern Illinois' famed 17th Street Barbeque, Vose corn dogs, ice cream, kettle corn, shaved ice, and homemade root beer.

Illinois State Fair admission includes free admission to Conservation World, which is open daily from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Aug. 12 through Aug. 21.