



Area Officials to Dedicate and Open Arlington Wetlands on Thursday

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On Thursday, Madison County Chairman Alan J. Dunstan and representatives of the HeartLands Conservancy, Collinsville Area Recreation District and the Illinois Environmental Protection (EPA) Agency will dedicate the Arlington Wetlands, a unique 83-acre tract of wetland in Pontoon Beach.

“One of the most significant characteristics of the Arlington Wetlands is the main body of water of the interpretive site is a ‘remnant oxbow,’ a small, curved lake that was at one time part of the Mississippi River,” Dunstan said. “The area is not conducive to development but it is extremely beneficial to wildlife and will be an important educational site.”

According to the HeartLands Conservancy, which will manage the site, the Arlington Wetlands also serves an important role in providing stormwater storage and clean water, in addition to serving as a protected habitat for wildlife.

One of the unique characteristics of the Arlington Wetlands, located at 84 Arlington Drive near the Arlington Greens Golf Course, is a floating boardwalk across open water that allows visitors access to areas that otherwise could not be explored and discover the beauty of the wetlands. The site also features a permeable parking lot that allows rainfall to move through the surface of the lot rather than run off, effectively removing pollutants that would otherwise be washed directly into lakes and streams.

The Arlington Wetlands offers the public a great opportunity to see some of the beauty that surrounds us but is often overlooked,” Dunstan added. “And it will help address some of the stormwater issues that we have experienced in that area.”

Funding for the project was provided in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funds are administered and distributed through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Other supporters of

the Arlington Wetlands include Phillips 66, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Grand Victoria Foundation, the Confluence and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The floating boardwalk was constructed by Hayes Contracting & Excavation of Collinsville. The permeable parking lot was constructed with products provided by the Midwest Products group.

The HeartLands Conservancy has served Southwestern Illinois since 1989. The not-for-profit organization works to balance the inevitable growth of the region with the responsibility to protect open spaces and natural resources for generations. Efforts are focused on conserving land, building greener communities, and engaging individuals and communities in our natural resources.

Additional information on the Heartlands Conservancy can be found at www.HeartLandsConservancy.org.