



MAJESTIC FALL COLORS: Leaves turn to attract thousands on road stretch from Alton to Grafton

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GRAFTON - Some rain may have dampened the outburst of fall colors slightly, but **Scott Isringhausen**, a long-time specialist for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) at **Pere Marquette State Park**, said the peak viewing is near.

“We are getting pretty close to peak this weekend or early next weekend,” Isringhausen said. “It looks beautiful how pretty it truly is. The next three or four days could be our peak depending if we get wind or rain. I tell people that the drive between Alton and Grafton when the leaves are changing is a pretty special place. I think it is as good as any place in the country to view fall colors.”

The Pere Marquette State Park campground area is nearly full going into the weekend, Isringhausen said and that should continue next weekend.

“I tell people typically a good time to come and see fall colors is between Oct. 20 and Oct. 25,” Isringhausen said. “One of the best places in the park is the Twin Mounds area.”

At one time years and years ago, the Mississippi River bluffs from **Alton to Grafton** was mostly prairie land, Isringhausen said. However, through time when burning stopped on the bluffs, the sugar maple trees blossomed. Now, many of the trees are sugar maples, he added.

“People come from all over the United States to see the fall colors here,” he said. “These two weeks at this time of year are by far the busiest at the park. The majority of people come from **Springfield, St. Louis and Chicago** area, but they come from all over.”

The sugar maple trees come alive this time of year with brilliant red, golden and yellow colors, the IDNR employee said.

Trees are bright and brilliant red, and blue, golden and yellow too.

The Great River Road from Alton to Grafton and near Pere Marquette State Park are Isringhausen’s favorite places to view fall colors. He also recommended the area as motorists go into Brussels and on past the park to Hardin and Calhoun County. The Lewis and Clark Tower in Hartford is another location he recommended.

Isringhausen said if the rainfall hits the area with some winds, the leaves will start to fall, so he recommends that people get out as soon as they can to see the majestic color of the bluffs.

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