



Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish & Wildlife Area

2022-2023
A Cass County
Star-Gazette Publication
In Cooperation with the
Illinois Department
of Natural Resources

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Monday - Friday

7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Unless otherwise posted on the door

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Informative Resources

Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources

<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov>

Hunter Windshield Card

<http://dnr.illinois.gov/windshieldcard/index.asp>

Jim Edgar Panther Creek

<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/Parks/Pages/JimEdgarPantherCreek.aspx>

Jim Edgar Panther Creek

Camping & Shelter Reservations

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Illinois State Police

<https://www.isp.state.il.us/>

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Welcome to Jim Edgar Panther Creek!

A big hello to everyone!!! It has been another great and successful year here at JEPC. I just want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for visiting our beautiful site. Like always, it has been a great pleasure to see all the returning faces as well as meeting all the new faces. I believe this year will be just as great as the years past. We continue, as a staff, to strive for greatness with all our programs here at JEPC. With all the hard work from our staff and volunteers, I believe we will exceed all our goals. During the past year, we have continued to maintain the site and make many improvements. We have been able to purchase a few new pieces of equipment that will help us in making these improvements. These improvements have been to the equestrian and hiking trails. Also, with this new equipment we have continued to clear invasive and woody species, both manually and chemically, from our native prairies and hunting areas. New for this year, is the reservation system for our campgrounds and shelters. To make reservations you need to visit Camp.exploremoreil.com or call 866-719-6550. I hope the public will continue to take advantage of the many opportunities offered here at the site. We are well-known for hunting, fishing, camping, hiking and horseback riding, but we provide so much more. The site offers opportunities to kayak, canoe, picnic, archery shooting, trap shooting, dog training, and snowmobiling. We have an exceptional site that continues to attract many visitors each year. Our goal is to offer a great place for the public to enjoy the outdoors. We are a multi-use site and offer multiple opportunities. Whatever your outdoor interest is, please contact us. We are honored to continue to accommodate the many different user groups and to help enhance your visit to this beautiful site.

Hope to see you soon,

Nate Goetten
Site Superintendent



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History & Location Information



History

Settled and farmed by the mid-1800s, the contiguous farmsteads that composed Jim Edgar Panther Creek were purchased from 1968-1974 by Commonwealth Edison for development of a coal-fired, electric-power generating plant and a 5,000-acre cooling lake. The company named the 16,550-acre tract "Site M" for nearby Menard County, where coal to fuel the power plant was to be mined. Commonwealth Edison leased about half of the acreage for cropland, and through a cooperative agreement with the IDNR also provided limited upland and forest game hunting. Through the years, hunters applying for permits to the area became well-acquainted with the Site M name. Commonwealth Edison abandoned its plans to build a power plant at Site M in the 1980s. By virtue of its size and location, Site M became an unparalleled opportunity for the IDNR to address critical conservation needs and meet outdoor recreation demands. With funds specifically designated for conservation purposes, the State of Illinois added the acreage to the public trust in June 1993, making Site M the largest tract ever acquired by the IDNR at that time.

Effective January 1, 2001, Panther Creek Conservation Area was absorbed into JEPC in an effort to avoid confusion and simplify site regulations. This brings the total acres of JEPC to 16,550. Panther Creek CA is now known as the West Open Unit.

Conservation Efforts

Forests, confined primarily to steep terrain, cover 6,000 acres of JEPC. Common hardwood species include American elm, black walnut, black cherry and several types of oaks, including white, black and bur. Because the timberland was affected by extensive logging and grazing



through the years, the Department is managing this area to enhance its forest wildlife habitat. Scattered pockets of wetlands at JEPC are associated with upland depressions, farm ponds and drainage ways. Common plants in these areas include long-leaved and horned pondweed, duckweed, rice cutgrass, reed canary grass and bulrush, as well as black willow. A severely degraded segment of Cox and Panther creeks, near their confluence in the northwestern portion of the site, has undergone stream bank stabilization and is part of a model watershed project to improve the Illinois River system. Because agriculture on a lease basis is an integral management component for conservation and fiscal purposes, about 4,200 acre of JEPC are leased as cropland to farmers using conservation-oriented agricultural practices. Two man-made wetlands were constructed in 1999 as part of the road construction project. Since 1993, when the state began to manage the area, 1,200 acres of native grass, 820 acres of cool season grass, 180 acres of habitat strips, and 105 acres of trees have been planted in land that once was agriculture fields or pasture. An additional 670 acres have been idled and allowed to move towards forest through natural succession.

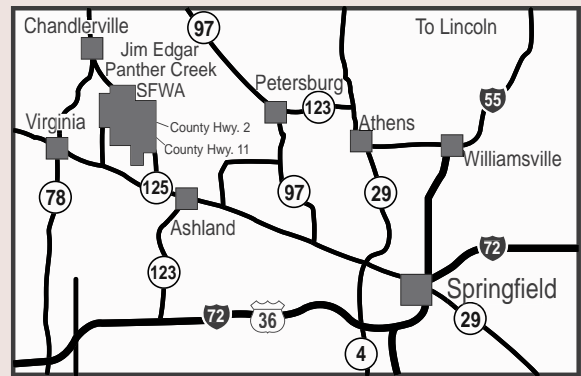
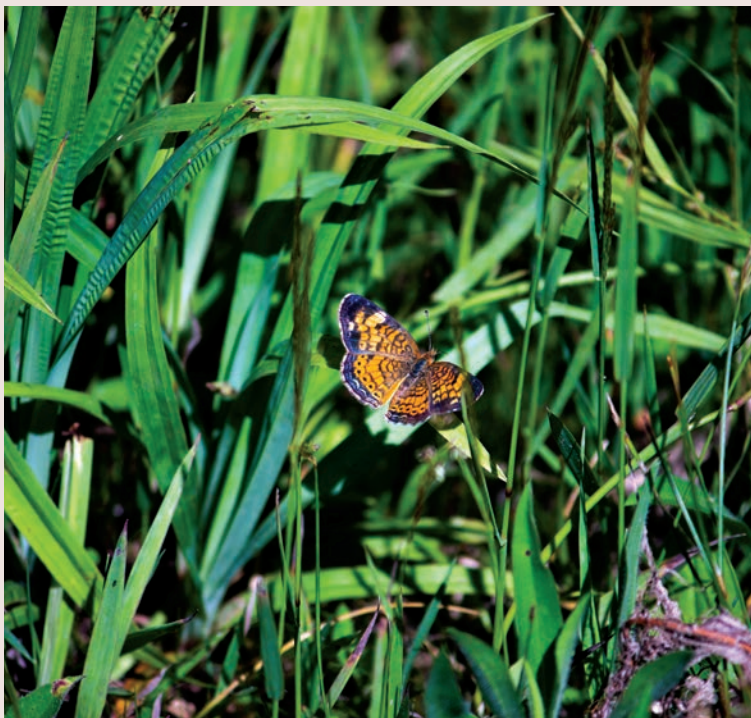


Natural Heritage

An outstanding example of the original loess hill prairies of central Illinois is JEPC's Cox Creek Hill Prairie Natural Area. The 175-acre site encompasses remnants of scattered hill prairies composed of loess (windblown silt), which occur within forest openings on steep terrain where soils are droughty and well-drained. Among the plant species found on loess hill prairies are little blue-stem, side-oats grama, fringed puccoon, wild petunia and prairie dock. Several rare Illinois plant species grow here.

The small white lady's-slipper orchid has state-endangered status, while four other plants are listed as state-threatened species: savanna blazing star, pale false foxglove, large-seeded mercury and Hill's thistle.

Surveys have identified 87 species of breeding birds here as well. Among the notable residents are eastern bluebird, orchard oriole and lark sparrow, plus 11 warbler species, five types of woodpecker and three species of owl. Loggerhead shrikes, a threatened species in Illinois, have been observed at the site, as have endangered northern harriers and red-shouldered hawks.



Accessibility

Parking lots are oil and chipped, and there are accessible parking spaces at the office, check station, both campgrounds, group campgrounds, all three lakes, yield trial barn and day use area. All parking spots are connected to concrete sidewalks. There is a wheelchair ramp at the park office. Motorized devices are only allowed with prior approval from park superintendent.

Boat ramps and fishing piers are available and located at Prairie Lake Day Use Area and Gridley Lake Day Use Area. Fishing piers are made of wood and can be slippery if wet or icy, and are approximately 100' from the parking lot. Prairie Lake is located 1 mile West of our main entrance on the South side of County Highway 11. Gridley Lake is located on Gridley Road, 4.5 miles South of the main office.

Restroom facilities are available throughout the park. The majority are located in our 2 campgrounds. Prairie Lake Campground is located on County Highway 11 just 1/4 mile South of main office. Questing Hills Campground is located on Questing Hills Road, just off County Highway 2, 6.5 miles North of main entrance.

Shower Houses are also available and centrally located at each campground.

Campsites and cabins are available throughout the site.

There are three accessible campsites at Questing Hills Campground, and three campsites and two cabins at Prairie Lake Campground.

Service animals are welcome, and water hydrants are available throughout the park




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Visitor Safety Guidelines



Tips on Ticks



Deer Tick



Brown Dog Tick



Lone Star Tick



American Dog Tick

•Preventing Ticks

Wear light colored clothing so you can easily see ticks. Use bug repellent that contains 20% or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin. Walk in the center of the trails. Treat clothing with product containing permethrin (DO NOT APPLY TO SKIN).

•Checking for Ticks

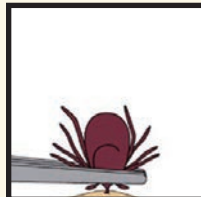
Always check your clothes, hair and body after being outdoors; Shower to wash any ticks off your body; Wash & dry clothes to remove ticks.

•Removing Ticks

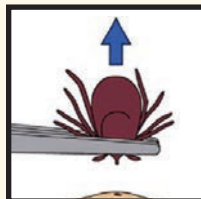
If you find a tick attached to your skin, grasp it with tweezers as close to the skin as you can. Pull up on the tick with steady pressure. DO NOT SQUEEZE! Wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water. Dispose of the tick by sticking it to a piece of tape and placing in trash or by flushing it in the toilet.

•Extra Notes

Remove ticks as soon as possible. If a tick's mouthparts remain in the skin, leave them alone. In most cases, they will fall out in a few days. DON'T use nail polish, petroleum jelly, or shot match to make the tick detach. If you develop a fever or rash (usually shaped like a bull's-eye) within several weeks of removing a tick, see your doctor. Be sure to tell the doctor when the bite occurred, and where you most likely acquired the tick. For more info visit www.cdc.gov/ticks.



Use tweezers to remove a tick from your skin.



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217-243-3381

www.cassvet.com
casspet@casscomm.com

Helpful Hiking Tips

Bring adequate supplies

Even hikers going on relatively brief hikes should pack supplies so they're safe. Pack supplies such as a compass, a map of the trails you'll be traversing, some basic first aid materials (band-aids, gauze, an anti-biotic ointment, etc.), extra water, and extra food. Such supplies may be precautionary, but they're potentially invaluable in cases of emergency.

Hike in the Sunlight Hours

Hiking during the day allows hikers to take in nature at its sun-soaked best while reducing their risk of getting lost especially since site employees may not be accessible overnight. Some trails may also be home to nocturnal animals that can become startled and aggressive toward humans. When hiking, be sure to turn back at a time of day that ensures you can return to your vehicle in daylight.

Let Someone

Know Your Plans

All hikers, but especially those hiking alone, should let loved ones know exactly when and where they're

going hiking. It is can make it easier for site employees or rescue teams to find you if you get lost. You should also leave a note in the glove compartment of your vehicle explaining where you plan to hike.

Know the forecast.

Weather can change in an instant, so before heading out, hikers should check the local forecast and make any necessary adjustments to stay safe. Be sure to include a rain jacket, sunscreen, ballcap, and warm clothing among your supplies to account for unexpected inclement weather. Shorten hiking excursions if storms are in the forecast.

Stay within your abilities.

Some people may consider hiking a leisure activity, but many trails can be physically challenging. Hikers should stay within their capabilities and steer clear of trails they do not feel like they can traverse safely. Stop by the park's visitor's center prior to beginning a hike so you can get a list of trails and identify which ones are best suited to your abilities.

Bike Safety Basics

Make sure you are visible

Bike riders should be dressed in bright clothing so they can be seen. Make sure to equip your bike with a horn, bell and bright headlight.

Get the right fit

A well-fitting bicycle helmet is a must, and should be worn every time a bike is ridden. The bike should fit you as well. Too big of a bike can be difficult to control. Carry items in a backpack or strapped to the back of the bike so belongings do not become obstacles.

Go the Safe Way

Cyclists should ride in the same direction as traffic on the far right-hand side. Cars should remain alert of cyclists sharing the road and give wide clearance when possible. Safe Kids suggest using hand signals to alert others to your plans. Cyclists can extend the left arm out for a left turn; make a 90-degree angle with the left arm to indicate a right turn. Putting the left arm down with the palm facing backward indicates stopping or slowing. Cycling safety is important as temperatures rise and more cyclists are on the road.



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The Trails



Biking

JEPC offers a 17-mile off-road biking trail, as well as a 9-mile paved biking trail. The off-road biking trail is located around Prairie Lake. Trails are closed until 1:00 p.m. during all turkey seasons and closed sunrise to sunset during the 7-day deer firearm season. The rolling scenic trail traverses forests and grasslands and has many overlooks along the lake.



Hiking

Off-trail hiking is available from parking areas positioned off public roads throughout the site. Because unmarked, open wells may exist in the area, caution must be used by individuals visiting JEPC. In addition to off-trail hiking, JEPC offers a 3-mile hiking trail around Gridley Lake and a 7-mile hiking trail around Drake Lake. A 17-mile hiking and mountain bike trail is around Prairie Lake. Twenty-six miles of equestrian trails in 3 loops are available to hikers and bikers with a reminder to yield to horseback riders. These trails have a lot of elevation changes.



Horseback Riding

A 22-car/trailer parking lot, along with a 26-mile trail, are located in the northwest corner of JEPC on Questing Hills Road just off County Highway 2. The site has an equestrian campground at Questing Hills, with 51 electric sites. A south access to the equestrian trail is found at Q-4 parking lot situated between the 9-mile north loop trail and the southern 11- and 6-mile loops. The trails are open year round with the following exceptions; trails are closed until 1:00 p.m. during all turkey seasons, closed sunrise to sunset during the 7-day firearm season and closed on Tuesdays and Saturdays during the upland game season. Call the park office before arrival to check for weather related closures.

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Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish & Wildlife Area

Governor's Trail

TRAIL DESCRIPTION:

- Trail Length: 26.0 miles.
Red: 9.0 miles.
Yellow: 11 miles.
Orange: 6 miles.
- Difficulty: Moderate-Difficult.
- Scenic Overlooks: 14.

KEY:

- YOU ARE HERE
-  forest
-  grassland
-  cropland
-  Governor's Trail
-  trail shortcut
-  trail mile markers
-  scenic overlook
-  bike trail
-  site boundary
-  road
-  contour line=20 ft interval
-  creek
-  intermittent stream
-  pond
-  toilet
-  water
-  shelter
-  bridge
-  low water crossing
-  parking lot

SITE INFORMATION

Emergency:

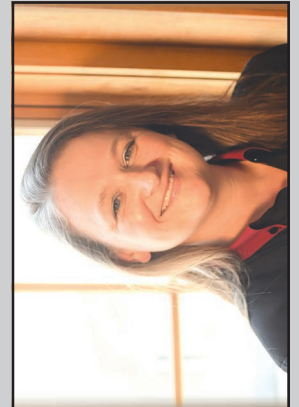
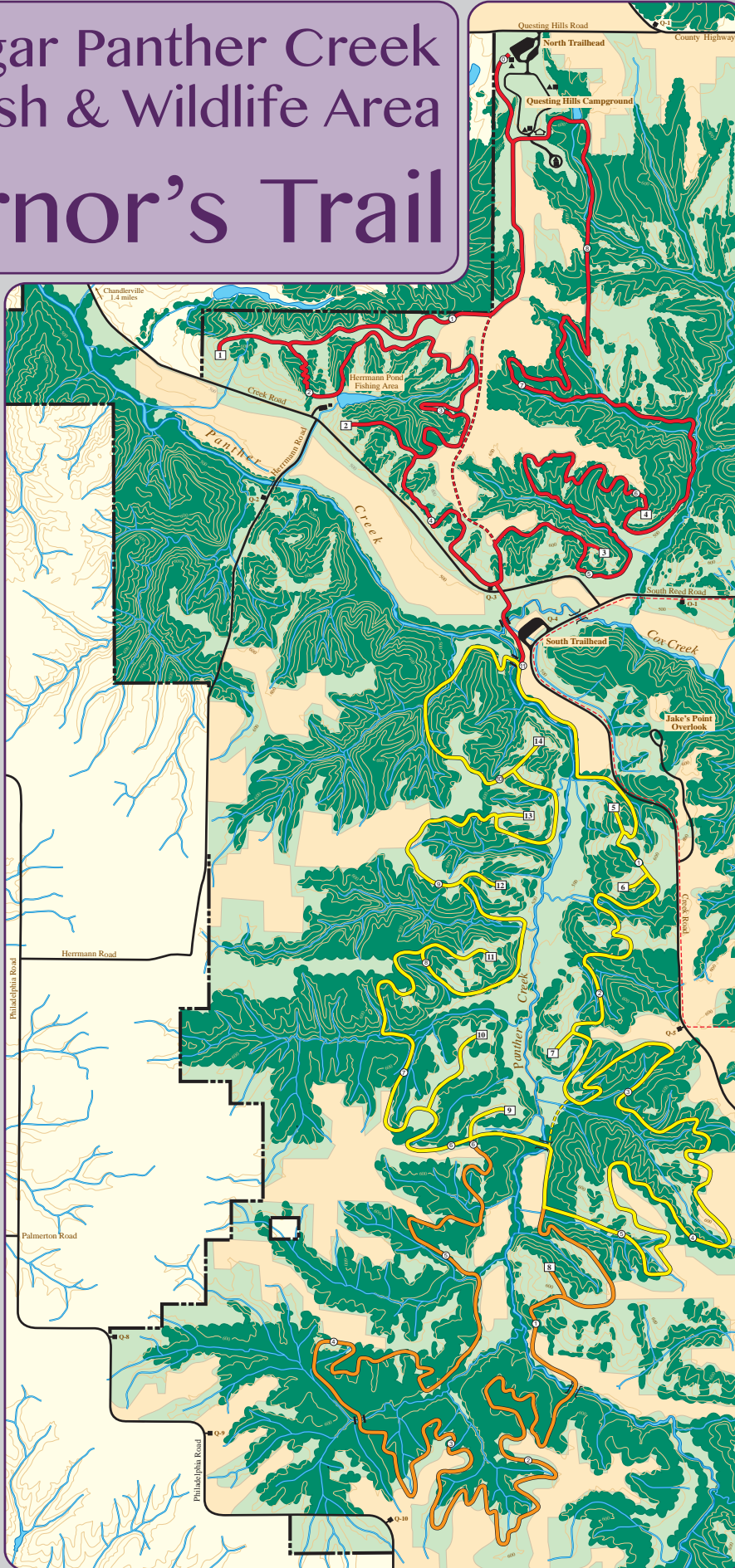
- Phone site office at 217/452-7741, or phone 911. Give on-site Location.
- For additional information contact site office: 10149 County Highway 11, Chanderville, IL 62627, or phone 217/452-7741.

Rules:

- Groups of 25 or more must register at the site office.
- One responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- All pets must be leashed.

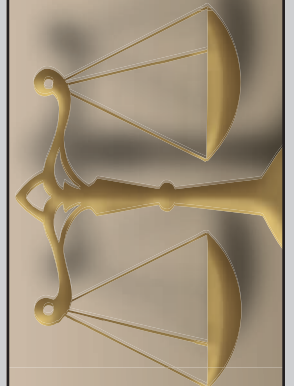
Thank You:

- Thank you. We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.



THE LAW OFFICE OF CARRIE MAGERL

114 E. Second Street, Beardstown, IL
 (217) 323-3305
cmagerl@magerllaw.com

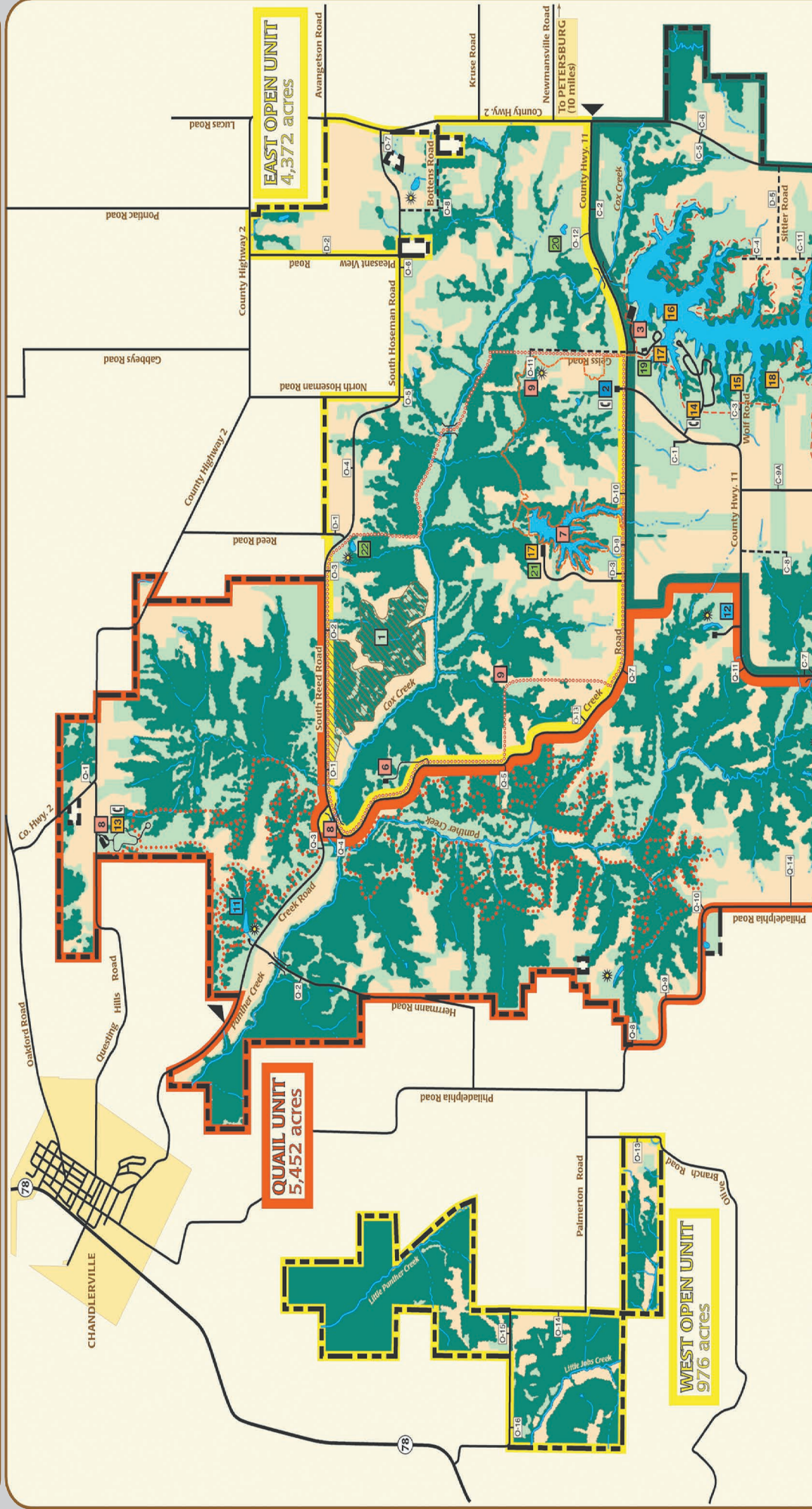


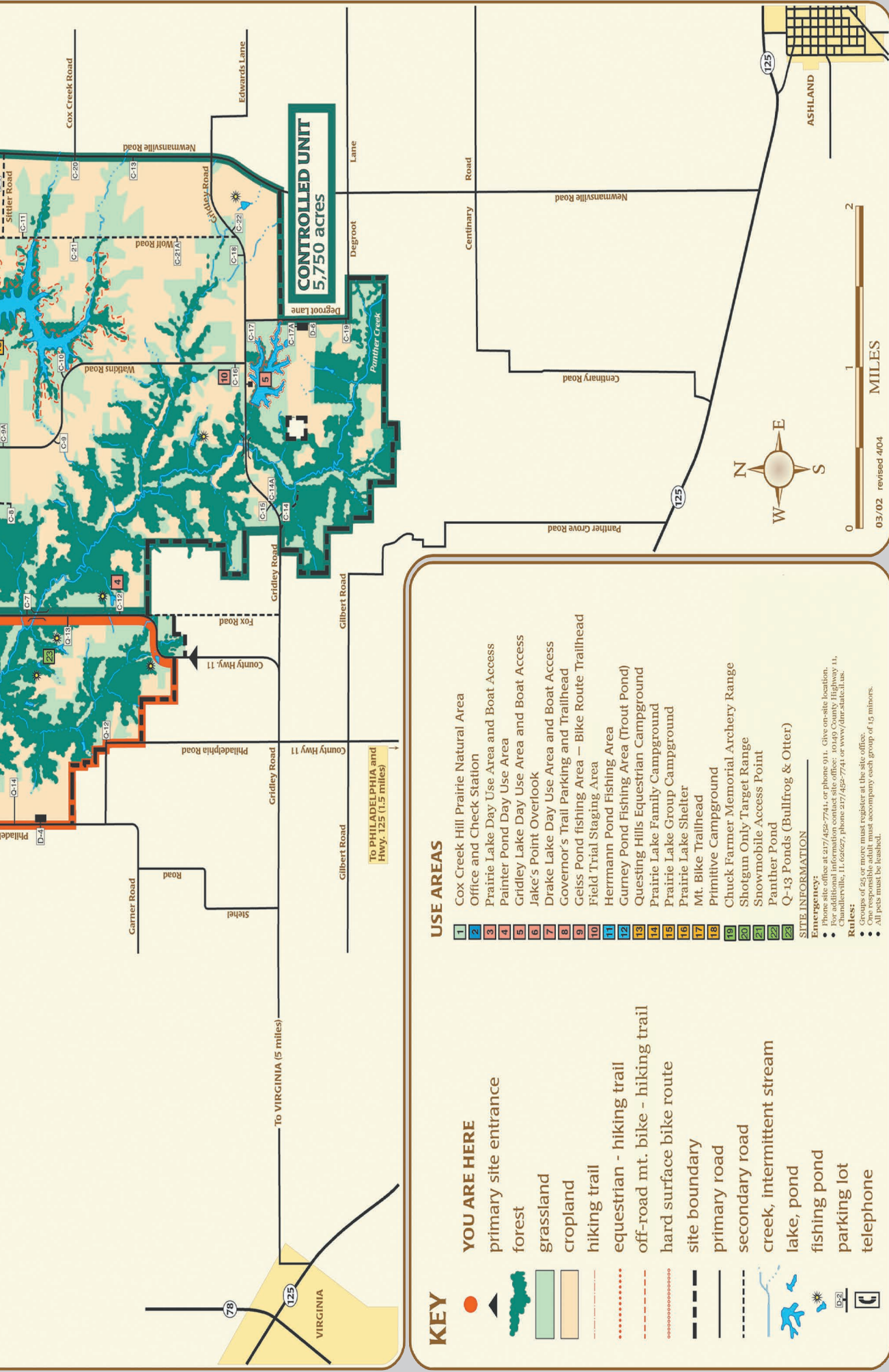


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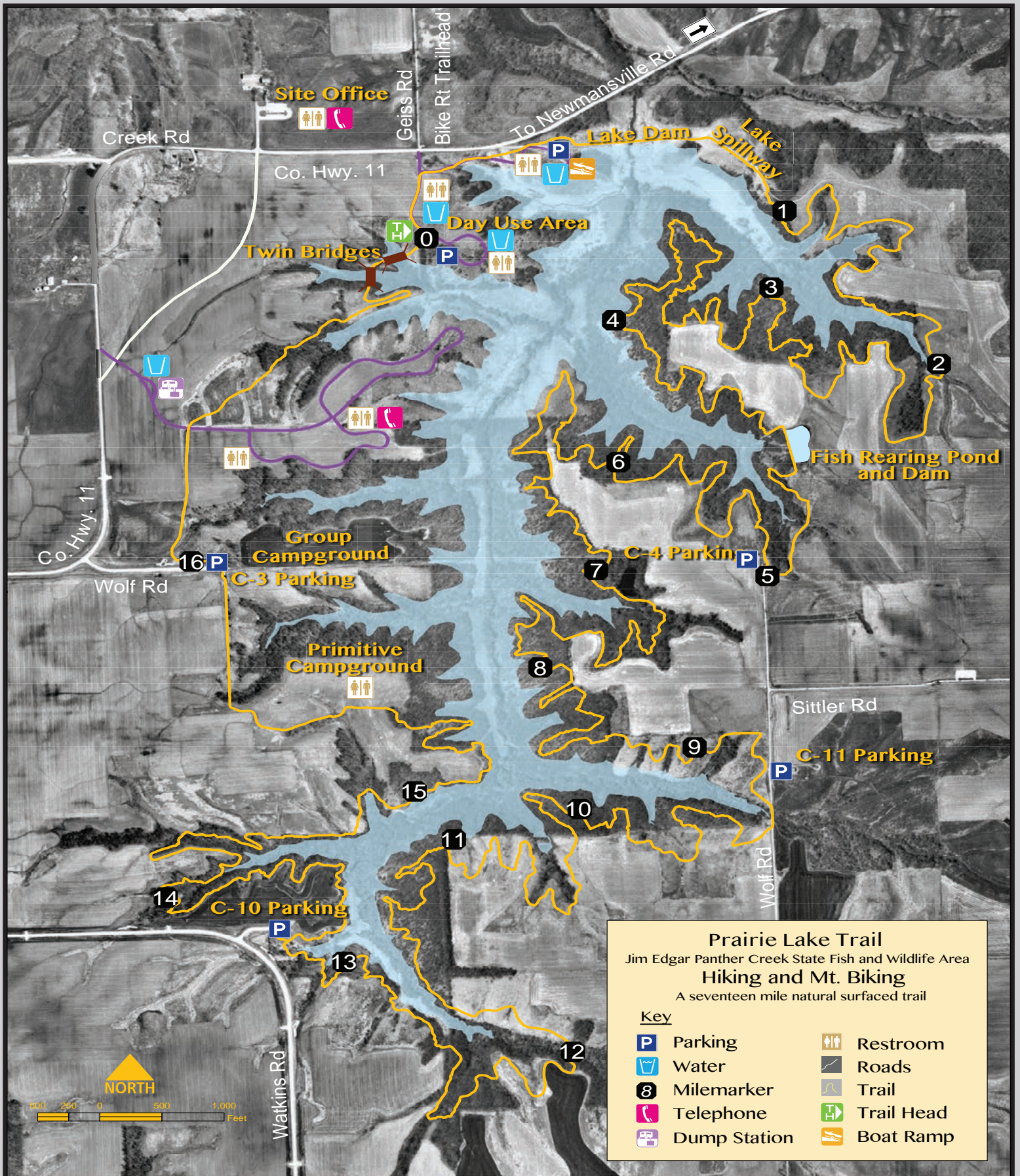
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Hunting Grounds

Hunting Rules

The Sportsman's Digest is provided to ensure that regulations governing the use of our wildlife resources are available and understood. In addition, it is useful in acquainting visitors with common species and habitats in this area. Please check the specific regulations for species and program information.

Hunting General

JEPC offers a wide variety of hunting programs, all requiring a site wind-shield card, while some require additional permits and/or fees and some with restricted areas. Please check the specific regulation for species and programs. At JEPC, sportsmen have an opportunity to hunt squirrel, dove, pheasant, rabbit, quail, woodcock, snipe, coyote, raccoon, opossum, striped skunk, red fox, gray fox, wild turkey, and deer as described. Site issued hunting permits are available online at dnr.illinois.gov; go to hunting Jim Edgar Panther Creek. Each hunter is required to have a permit. Non-toxic shot shells are required of hunters.

Water Fowl Program A limited water-fowl program will be offered Saturdays and Wednesdays, Nov. 5, 2022 – Jan. 15, 2023.

Squirrel hunting is by statewide season and hours. The use of either shotgun, .17 and .22 rimfire firearms, or muzzle-loading rifles is allowed. Hunters are required to obtain a wind-shield card online. The Quail Management Unit is closed to squirrel hunting beginning Nov. 1 until the end of the rabbit season. The Control Pheasant Unit is open to rabbit hunting only after the CPHP ends without a special permit. Please check reporting requirements for the site permit.



Dove hunting is Sept. 1-10. The number of dove hunters is restricted. The first five days' permits are issued from Springfield by completing a Dove Hunting application online. Days 6-10 - all spot allocations will be determined by a daily site drawing. Permit holders are required to check in by 10 a.m. the day of the hunt. Dove fields will be allocated by a daily drawing. Any remaining open spots will be filled by a daily lottery at

11 a.m. to fill the daily hunter quota. Hunting hours are from noon to 5 p.m. for days 1-5 and run noon to 6 p.m. for days 6-10. All hunters are required to wear a back patch provided at the time of check-in, and may hunt only the dove field assigned. Shooting must occur within 10 feet of a stake in the field. All hunters must check out after each day's hunt. Beginning Sept. 11 through the end of the statewide season and hours, hunters are required to obtain a free windshield card online before hunting. While hunting in the sun over fields, hunting is restricted to the field borders. Non-toxic shot size is restricted for all dove hunting to 6 steel or a ballistic equivalent size or smaller. From Nov. 1 until the end of the dove season the Quail Management Unit and the Controlled Hunting Management Units are closed to dove hunting, with the exception that hunters with "special permits" can harvest doves in season. Please check reporting requirements for site-issued permit.

Upland game hunting: Hunt-able species are pheasant, rabbit, quail, and woodcock. JEPC has been divided into four management units for the hunting of upland game. These units are the **West Open Unit, Quail**

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Management Unit, Control Management Unit, and the East Open Hunting Unit. The regulations for each unit are different and hunters must comply with specific unit regulations and be aware of the unit boundaries to ensure compliance with site regulations. All upland game hunters are required to wear a Blaze Orange or Solid Blaze Pink Hat and Vest



while hunting in all four management units. The **Quail Management Unit** is managed to optimize local population of quail, pheasant, and rabbit. To accomplish this goal it is important to reduce the hunting pressure on these local populations to avoid over-harvesting or pushing the game from habitat. Hunter quotas are limited to five parties of four (20 hunters total) each open hunting day. To regulate the number of hunters permitted to hunt in the unit, a special permit must be obtained. This permit may be obtained by completing a free Upland Game Hunters permit application. Permits will be issued for every Tuesday and Saturday in November, December and January. Applicants may only submit one application per season. Hunters may apply until

Aug. 30. A drawing will be held soon thereafter to issue permits. The **Controlled Hunting Unit** season dates are Nov. 5, 2022 through Jan. 15, 2023. The Controlled Program is closed on Mondays, Tuesdays and Christmas Day. The program is not offered on Nov. 18-20, 2022, and Dec. 1-5, 2022. A daily fee of \$30 for resident and \$35 for non-resident is charged for hunting in the controlled unit. Pheasants are released daily (Wednesday-Sunday) throughout the season to supplement wild populations. Reservations must be made to participate in the controlled pheasant area. The Department will begin accepting controlled pheasant hunt applications on Aug. 5 via the internet. Go to DNR.illinois.gov and click on the hunting icon. Then look for pheasant hunting application forms. There will be a drawing for standby hunters at 8:45 a.m. to fill the hunter quota for the day. All hunters will be issued a controlled area back patch which must be worn while hunting. All hunters must remain in their designated yield until 10 a.m. There will be one Youth Pheasant Hunt day Nov. 12, 2022. See Hunter Fact Sheet for details. Each youth participates with a supervising adult (there is no fee for this date). All youths need to be between the ages of 10 and 15 and must have completed the Hunter Safety Course. The **West Open and the East Open Hunting units** will follow state-wide seasons and hours for upland hunting. Hunters are required to obtain a free Wind

Shield Card on the IDNR website: www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/programs/windshieldcard/ before hunting. Hunting is allowed only in the area designated on the map as Open Unit. Please check reporting requirements for site issued permit.



Deer archery hunting: All statewide seasons and hours will be enforced. Hunters are required to obtain a free Windshield card online at the IDNR website: www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/programs/windshieldcard/ before hunting. Archery hunting is allowed in all four management units, except during Youth Firearm Deer season (Oct. 8, 9, 10, 2022) both Open units are closed to Archery hunting. Please check reporting requirements for site issued permit. Non-resident-archery deer hunters will be limited during portions of the 2022-2023 season at JEPC. IDNR will permit a limited number of non-resident archery hunters to hunt at JEPC during the following periods:
First season: Oct. 21 through Oct. 27.
Second season: Oct. 28 through Nov. 3.
Third season: Nov. 4 through Nov. 10.
Fourth season: Nov. 11 through Nov. 17.

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Deer firearm hunting: All statewide seasons and hours will be enforced. JEPC is designated as a Special Hunt Area on the deer firearm permit application form and a JEPC permit (issued from IDNR/Springfield) is required to hunt. Hunting is allowed in all four management units. Hunters receiving a JEPC Special Hunter Permit will be sent a Site Permit. Hunters must also go online and get a wind-shield card.

First season: Nov. 18 – 20, 2022. Second season: Dec. 1 – 4, 2022.

Youth Firearm

Deer Hunting: JEPC offers a limited youth firearm lottery season for Deer Oct. 8, 9, 10, 2022. For a chance at a permit you must submit a postcard to the site office with the youth's name, address, date of birth, phone number and customer ID number.

Muzzle Loader Deer: Allowed only in the two Open Units with a JEPC muzzle loader permit Dec. 9, 10, 11, 2022. Archery hunters are also allowed at this time. All hunters must wear blaze orange/blaze pink.

Wild Turkey hunting - spring shotgun: JEPC is designated as a Special Hunt Area on the Spring Wild Turkey Application form and a JEPC permit (issued from IDNR/Springfield) is required to hunt. State-wide seasons and hours will apply. Hunting is allowed in all four management units. Hunters receiving a JEPC Special Hunt permit will be

sent a Site Permit. Participants must go online to get a wind-shield card. Mushroom hunting will be allowed after 1 p.m.

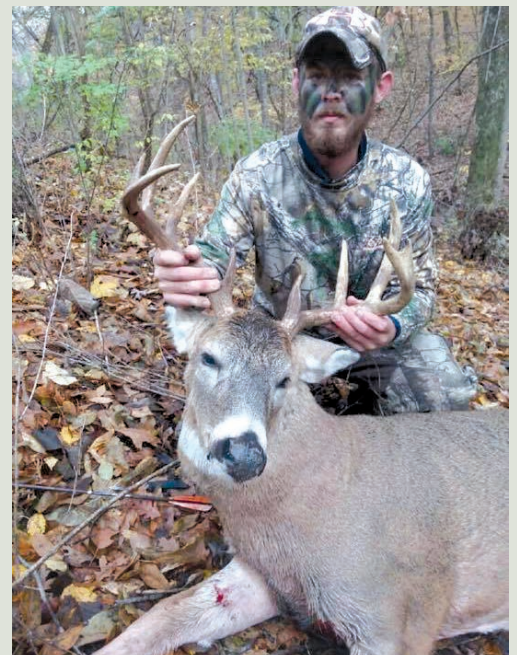
Wild Turkey Hunting - Fall Shotgun: JEPC is designated as a Special Hunt Area on the Fall Wild Turkey application form and a JEPC permit (issued from IDNR/Springfield) is required to hunt in all units. Hunters receiving a JEPC Special Hunt Permit must go online and get a windshield card. Please check the reporting requirements for the site issued permit.

Wild Turkey Hunting - Fall Archery: Hunters are required to obtain a free wind-shield card online at www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/programs/windshieldcard/ in addition to the Fall Archery Permit. State-wide season and hours apply. Hunting is allowed in all four management units. Please check reporting requirements for site issued permit.

Furbearer Hunting: Hunt-able species are raccoon, opossum, striped skunk, red fox, and coyote by state-wide seasons and hours. Hunters are required to obtain a free windshield card online before hunting. The use of .17 and .22 rimfire firearms is permitted from sunset to sunrise only during fox and raccoon season. Hunting is allowed in all four management units. Coyotes can only be hunted with dogs from Jan. 16 to April 1. Please check

reporting requirements for site-issued Windshield card. Furbearer trapping is allowed by special permit. The trapping drawing is held in October. Six trapper permits are drawn per year.

Reporting requirements for site issued Windshield Card: Windshield cards must be displayed in the windshield of vehicle while hunting. Also, the hunter must cut the bottom portion of the windshield card and carry on their person while afield. All hunters are required to record hunting and harvest data on the back side of the free site Windshield card as well as online. Failure to report the site Windshield card will result in forfeiture of next season's hunting rights at JEPC. Window permits may be obtained at: www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/programs/windshieldcard/.



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Hunters' Safety Protocols

Millions of hunters take to forests and fields every year. Seasoned hunters and novices alike can benefit from revisiting some safety procedures before their first outing this season.

Weather should be a consideration whenever people spend a significant amount of time outdoors. Hunters typically leave before dawn and arrive home after dusk. Hypothermia is a very real risk for hunters who may be out in snow or wet conditions. It's possible to get hypothermia by overdressing as well. Sweating and then being exposed to dropping temperatures puts people at risk for hypothermia. Hunters should dress in layers with moisture-wicking materials and a water-repellant outer layer. In addition, check the weather forecast before heading out as a last second precautionary measure.



Firearm safety is a critical component of safe hunting. Hunters use rifles, shotguns and other firearms. Each gun is different, so hunters need to familiarize themselves with new firearms before using them. The following are some additional firearm safety tips, courtesy of State Farm Insurance and Southern Land Exchange.

- ✓ Always treat a firearm as if it is loaded.
- ✓ Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- ✓ Only point at what you plan to shoot.
- ✓ Clearly identify your target and what is beyond it.
- ✓ Fire within the zone-of-fire, which is the 45-degree area directly in front of each hunter.
- ✓ Firearm chambers should be emptied when guns are not in use.
- ✓ Use appropriate ammunition.
- ✓ Never modify or alter the gun.
- ✓ Never cross a fence, jump a ditch or climb a tree with a loaded gun.
- ✓ Never rely on a gun's safety.

Additional safety tips

Hunters should always let others know where they will be when leaving in the morning. If something should happen, people back home can alert authorities if something goes awry. Always check equipment and maintain it properly. Equipment should include gear colored in hunter's orange. That extends to dogs if they are accompanying hunters on a trip. This makes hunters more visible to other hunters. Also, carry a first aid kit, a charged mobile phone or a satellite phone to maintain contact with others in case of emergencies.



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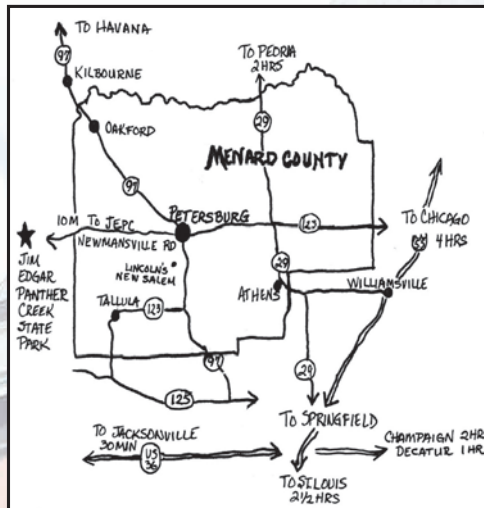
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Menard County has over 40 festivals and special events each year!

- Jim Edgar State Park is only 15 minutes from Petersburg with its great fishing lakes, kayaking, hiking, biking, hunting, bird watching and more.
- Hill Prairie Winery, West of Wise Winery and Hand of Fate Brewery provide a selection of great locally produced wines and beer, often with food and music.
- Shambole Golf Course and Country Hills Golf Course provide beautiful and challenging golf to the area.
- Indian Creek Farmstead is a year 'round destination for special events and, of course, pumpkin season. There are tours, food, festivals and a gift shop.
- The Sangamon River flows through the county and Petersburg, with fishing, parks, boating and nature.
- History fans will enjoy the restored village at Lincoln's New Salem and free tours at Long Nine Museum in Athens. Area cemeteries are the final resting place of some of the most famous people in history. Also, check out the Historic Marbold Farmstead in Greenview.
- Menard County is home to the popular Theatre in the Park, host to some great festivals throughout the year.
- Area towns are famous for antiques, the latest fashions at the boutiques and unique gift shops, along with great businesses, in Petersburg, Athens, Greenview, Oakford and Tallula.
- Enjoy all types of delicious cuisine at the wineries, breweries and area restaurants. Choose from American and authentic Mexican and Chinese dishes, smoked meats, diners on the square and down-home cooking.
- Fantastic accommodations are found throughout Petersburg, from RiverBank Lodge, with 24 rooms along with a restaurant and bar open 7 days a week, beautiful Air B&Bs like The Flat Air B&B on the square within walking distance of top spots, The Loft on the Square, Three Pines in a restored mansion overlooking town, Sheridan House, The Petersburg Place, The Inn at New Salem and local campgrounds.
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For more information, check out the website at www.VisitMenardCounty.com or our Facebook page.

Water Activities



Kayaking dos and don'ts

- ✓ DO choose the right boat. There are boats rated for kayak racing and those that are strictly for recreational purposes. Some boats are meant for calmer waters and others for waves and open seas.
- ✓ DON'T forget to check the weather forecast before heading out in the water. Storms can come up relatively quickly, and onshore winds can make it challenging to paddle back to shore.
- ✓ DO let someone know where you're going and how long you plan to be out on the water.
- ✓ DON'T touch or get too close to wildlife, as animals can be unpredictable and even dangerous.
- ✓ DO dress for the water temperature and not the weather outside. This helps ensure your health if you intentionally or accidentally enter the water.
- ✓ DON'T skip wearing a life jacket/buoyancy aid.
- ✓ DO expect to get wet, even if you do not fall in. Splash up will occur from paddles and some water will get in the boat regardless.
- ✓ DON'T forget to bring along some snacks and water.
- ✓ DO bring a fellow kayaker along. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned professional, bringing a friend along ensures someone can go for help if you're involved in an accident or suffer an injury.



Fishing, Boating, Canoeing
Sport fishing opportunities are available at Gridley Lake (25 acres), Prairie Lake (210 acres) and Drake Lake (35 acres). Several ponds within the site also have been renovated. Fish include largemouth bass, bluegill and green sunfish. In addition, Prairie Lake is stocked with muskie. Trolling motors are limited to Gridley and Drake Lakes. Prairie Lake has unlimited horsepower with a no-wake zone for the entire lake. Sail boats are allowed on Prairie Lake. Canoes/kayaks are allowed at all 3 lakes.



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217-440-8774(cell)

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info@beardstownil.org
btwnms2008@gmail.com

Camping & Outdoor Facilities



Camping

There are a variety of camping opportunities at JEPC. Prairie Lake Campground has 84 sites, 19 of which are full hookup sites with sewer drops and water. The other sites all have electricity.

There are also nine cabins located in the campground. The cabins are located on the shore of Prairie Lake. The cabins have two rooms with the back room containing two bunk beds. The front room has a double bed, drop down table and a couple of chairs. All beds are equipped with mattresses but you must bring your own bedding (no cooking, pets or smoking inside the cabins). A concrete patio outside each cabin has a grill/fire pit and table. All cabins have electricity, ceiling fans, and a 1000-watt heater. The site also has an equestrian campground, Questing Hills, with 51 electric sites. Prairie Lake campground has 18 AA sites that have sewer drops and water hookups at the sites and an additional 64 class A sites. A shower building is available. Group campsites are also available with shelters.



A Primitive Camping Area

These areas at Jim Edgar Panther Creek has seven three-sided shelters to camp near or in for a fee of \$6 per night. Campers must travel approximately a quarter mile from the nearest parking lot to access the shelters. Reservations for campsites, cabins, and picnic shelters may be made at Camp.exploremoreil.com or call 866-716-6550.



Picnicking

Sheltered picnic areas and restrooms are located at Prairie Lake (with replace), Gridley Lake, Drake Lake, Painter Pond, Geiss Pond, and the Prairie Lake day use area. Shelters can be reserved for a fee of \$50 or, if not reserved, they can be used on a first-come, first-serve basis. Groups of 20 or more must contact the office for a group use/activity permit. These areas may be reserved for a non-refundable fee through Camp.exploremoreil.com or call 866-716-6550.

Day Use

The park has shelters in the following day use areas: Prairie Lake (with replace) Gridley Lake, Geiss Pond, Painter Pond, and Drake Lake. These areas may be reserved for a \$50 non-refundable fee through Camp.exploremoreil.com™.



Ranges & Playgrounds

The Chuck Farmer Memorial Archery Range is conveniently located along Prairie Lake, with the shotgun range just down the road. Both ranges are open from dawn to dusk year round, except for during firearm deer season. The shotgun range is closed during IDNR Wingshooting Clinics, and is only for shotguns and targets. No slugs or rifles are allowed, only shot shells. There is also a Playground area in Prairie Lake across from the Archery Range and a Soccer field with goals farther down the road.



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- Beardstown Fall Fun Festival
September 23rd-25th
- Night Time Christmas Parade
November 26th
- New Year's Eve Ball
December 31st
- River Rat Golf Classic
February 25th
- Alumni Weekend
May 26th-28th
- Beardstown High School Graduation
May 28th
- Brown Bag Lunch in Art Zeck Park
June 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th
- 4th of July Celebration at Roy Roberts Park
July 4th
- Color Dash 5k Run
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- First Friday Shop Crawls
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