

Sparks Pond State Natural Area

Located between Forest City and Manito off the Manito Blacktop, the Sparks Pond SNA contains 386.57 acres. Of this, 170 acres are timber and 60 acres were farmed fields restored to prairie grass in the spring of 1996; an additional 155.87 acres of farm ground called the Rollo Prairie was acquired in 1999 and is being managed to promote prairie habitat. Approximately 30 acres are restricted and closed to hunting; two privately owned parcels are also posted and closed to hunting without landowner permission. The area has several wetlands, home for two state endangered or threatened species. Access to the area is via a gravel road approximately 2 mile north of Forest City on the Manito Blacktop; turn left at Edgewood Terrace Mobile Home Park (2250N). Follow the gravel road to the hunter parking lot. Limited hunting is allowed for archery deer, archery turkey and upland game only; see regulations listed below. There is no other hunting, trapping or fishing permitted.

Public notice of prescribed fire will be included on the IDNR "Closure Listing" seven days prior to burn ignition. Prior to ignition a horn will sound three times to notify any person within the burn unit they have 45 minutes to exit the area. A second horn will sound three times 15 minutes after the first, indicating 30 minutes to exit the area. In addition, notification to the public will be reflected in handouts, hunter fact sheets, hunter windshield card sign-up web page, Sand Ridge State Forest web page, and Sand Ridge telephone answering machine.

All archery deer and turkey hunters are required to have a free site hunter windshield card prior to hunting which can be obtained at <https://dnr.illinois.gov/windshieldcard/index.asp>. Harvest must be recorded on the same web page by February 15th of each year. Windshield cards must be posted and visible from outside of vehicle.

Hunters may apply for free upland game hunts at Sparks Pond SNA. Application forms can be obtained by going online <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/Pages/default.aspx> then click on the hunting/trapping icon. Applicants may receive only one hunting permit each year. A drawing is held in September at the Permit Office in Springfield to fill all available hunting dates. Additional information can be found on the web page or by contacting forest headquarters. Each hunter selected may bring up to 3 partners. Hunters must stay away from all places of residence at a distance of 100 yards.

Remember - Safe Hunting is No Accident!!!

For further information, contact Sand Ridge State Forest, P.O. Box 111, Forest City, IL 61532; phone (309) 597-2212 or go online at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

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