



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## HIDDEN SPRINGS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Harrisburg, IL, December 12, 2008 - The Hidden Springs Ranger District of the Shawnee National Forest will expand their list of volunteer opportunities to include an Adopt-a-Trail program. Previously, the majority of trails, trailheads and parking areas adopted had been on the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District (west side of the Forest). However, due to the expansion of the Shawnee National Forest' Volunteer Program, steps are now being taken to include a number of well-known and highly visited trails, trailheads, parking areas, interpretation sites and equestrian tie-up areas as adoptable on the Hidden Springs District. Some of these areas include Millstone Bluff Trail, Garden of the Gods Observation Trail, specific trails at Jackson Falls, Burden Falls Trailhead, Lusk Creek's Indian Kitchen and Circle B Trailheads.

A complete list of the trails and interactive maps of the available and adopted areas and trails will soon be available on the Shawnee National Forest website under the 'volunteering' link. Additional areas and trails may be added in the future. Suggestions and requests to volunteer at areas not listed will also be considered.

Specific volunteer duties for the Adopt-a-Trail Program will depend on the area. Those adopting trails will be asked to visit their trail at least twice a year to maintain the trail corridor by clearing brush off the trail, clearing out debris in water bars, steps and culverts and picking up trash along the trail. Duties for trailheads, parking areas, interpretative sites and equestrian tie-up areas will require the volunteer to visit at least twice a month due to the heavier use in these areas. These duties include picking up trash, emptying trash barrels and dropping trash at a



Forest Service dumpster (trash bags will be provided for this effort), monitoring the integrity of signage and sign boards and reporting any damage or vandalism in the area.

The support of volunteers in the Shawnee National Forest is greatly appreciated by Forest users and employees alike. Volunteers and their efforts greatly expand the Forest's capacity to care for the land and its resources.

Please contact Justin Dodson, Volunteer Coordinator, at 618-658-2111 for more information about the Adopt-a-Trail Program, to become a volunteer or report any hazards along the trails of the Hidden Springs Ranger District.

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