

# Eastern Illini member/owner spotlight

## Middle Fork River Forest Reserve Penfield, Illinois



Middle Fork River Forest Preserve contains over 1,700 acres composed of old hardwood timber, reforested lowlands, grassy meadows, and in-progress prairie restorations. Rich in trails, Middle Fork contains one of the region's premier Waterfowl Management Areas, and it is also home to a favorite camping area, the Harry L. Swartz Campground.

This site offers a swim beach, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, picnicking, building rentals and programs. About four miles of the Middle Fork River run through the preserve. The site includes three ponds: Willow Pond (4 acres); Cypress Pond (2.7 acres) and Emerald Pond (3.2 acres).

Middle Fork River Forest Preserve opens at 7 a.m. year-round, weather-permitting. From May through October, the preserve closes at 9 p.m., and from November through April, the closing time is 6 p.m.

Harry L. Swartz Campground consists of 65 campsites that can accommodate individuals as well as larger groups. Fifty-three of the sites have electricity. Each campsite is a quiet retreat shaded by large oak, hickory and hackberry trees. All sites are close to the swim beach and other facilities. Campsites are available per night on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations are allowed for stays of at least three consecutive nights.

The Waterfowl Management Area offers more than 130 acres of prime nesting habitat for migratory waterfowl. An easily-accessible viewing platform allows visitors the opportunity to observe a wetland teeming with life.

Middle Fork also offers more than seven miles of trails, and other activities like naturalist programs and a Fitness in the Forest training program.

Find out more about these programs and the preserve at [www.ccfpd.org](http://www.ccfpd.org) or call them at 217-568-7362.