FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 6, 2018

*Media Advisory*
Saturday, June 9, 2018

Sportsmen, Advocates Applaud Increased Public Access Funding in New Farm Bill

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – U.S. Representative Rodney Davis and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Wayne Rosenthal will join local sportsmen, landowners, and conservation advocates to celebrate a proposed boost to a public hunting and fishing access program in the next Farm Bill during a program on Saturday, June 9 at 9:00 a.m. in the Conservation World Amphitheater area at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield.

Congress is currently considering the 2018 Farm Bill, which is the largest federal source of private land conservation funding. The Farm Bill legislation – the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 – includes a major priority for sportsmen and women: an increase in funding for the Voluntary Public Access Program.

The Voluntary Public Access Program is a federal grant program that helps connect local hunters and anglers with public access to private land in Illinois through the IDNR’s Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). In Illinois, the outdoor recreation economy accounts for $25.8 billion in consumer spending, and is largely reliant upon outdoorsmen and women having access to places to hike, hunt, and fish. To date, the IRAP has received three grant awards through the federal access program totaling $3.3 million, and has opened up more than 18,500 acres of private land to the public for recreational use.

On Saturday, local officials and sportsmen will share how they have benefited from the federal access program and IRAP, and Congressman Davis will discuss how an increase in funding for voluntary public access through the Farm Bill could help Illinois expand this successful program and grow the local outdoor recreation economy.

WHO: Wayne Rosenthal, Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Zane Zaubi, Macoupin and Menard County landowner
David Allen, youth hunter and IRAP participant
Congressman Rodney Davis, U.S. House of Representatives
Ivan Dozier, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist for Illinois
WHEN: Saturday, June 9 at 9:00 a.m.
WHERE: Conservation World Amphitheater at the Illinois State Fairgrounds
        One Natural Resources Way
        Springfield, IL 62702

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