

1 AN ACT concerning conservation.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Youth  
5 and Young Adult Conservation Education Act.

6 Section 5. Declaration of intent. The General Assembly  
7 finds that youth, representing all segments of society,  
8 benefit from education and employment in the healthful outdoor  
9 atmosphere of the State's park systems, recreational  
10 facilities, and other public land and water areas and, through  
11 those education and employment opportunities, will develop,  
12 enhance, and maintain the natural resources of the State of  
13 Illinois while gaining an understanding and appreciation of  
14 the State's environment and heritage. The General Assembly,  
15 therefore, creates this Act to establish the Youth and Young  
16 Adult Conservation and Education Pilot Program to provide  
17 education and employment opportunities for the youth and young  
18 adults of this State to further the development and  
19 maintenance of the natural resources by Illinois' youth and,  
20 in so doing, to prepare them for the responsibility of  
21 maintaining and managing these resources.

22 Section 10. Definitions.

1           As used in this Act, unless the context otherwise  
2 requires:

3           "Department" means the Department of Natural Resources.

4           "Program" means the Youth and Young Adult Conservation and  
5 Education Pilot Program created by this Act.

6           Section 15. Cooperation. The Department shall have the  
7 full cooperation of the Illinois State Board of Education, the  
8 Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois  
9 State Job Coordinating Council created by the Federal Job  
10 Training Partnership Act (Public Law 97-300), and the  
11 Department of Employment Security in carrying out the purposes  
12 of this Act.

13           Section 20. Funding. Funding for the Program shall be from  
14 any State or federal funds or grants or other funding received  
15 by the Department. The Program is subject to appropriation by  
16 the General Assembly.

17           Section 25. Youth and Young Adult Conservation and  
18 Education Pilot Program.

19           (a) Subject to appropriation, the Department shall  
20 administer the Program. The Program may consist of any of the  
21 following:

22                 (1) allocation of grants to units of local government  
23                 or non-profit entities to provide conservation education

1 and employment opportunities for youth and young adults of  
2 this State;

3 (2) development and implementation of conservation  
4 education or job training programs; and

5 (3) internship opportunities with the Department for  
6 youth and young adults of this State.

7 (b) The Program's education and employment opportunities  
8 shall be limited to citizens of this State who at the time of  
9 enrollment in the Program are 15 through 25 years of age.  
10 Grants under this Act are limited to units of local government  
11 and non-profit entities that are located in the State of  
12 Illinois and that provide conservation education and  
13 employment opportunities for youth and young adults of this  
14 State.

15 (c) The Department shall designate suitable grant  
16 opportunities, projects, internships, and educational  
17 curriculum for the purposes of this Act.

18 Grants, projects, internships, and curriculum so  
19 designated by the Department shall be for the purpose of: (1)  
20 development, enhancement, and maintenance of the natural  
21 resources of the State of Illinois, and offering related  
22 educational opportunities; (2) environmental stewardship and  
23 civic responsibility; (3) enhancement of public lands owned or  
24 leased by the Department or developing and enhancing projects  
25 or initiatives undertaken in whole or part by the Department;  
26 or (4) any combination of the purposes described in items (1)

1 through (3). Such projects, internships and curriculum shall  
2 include improving the habitat of fauna and flora; improving  
3 utilization of conservation or recreation facilities and lands  
4 by the public; improving water quality; and any other project  
5 deemed by the Department to improve the environmental,  
6 economic, and recreational quality of the State's natural  
7 resources.

8 All projects and internships designated by the Department  
9 shall be within a reasonable commuting time for each  
10 participant. In no circumstance shall interns be required to  
11 spend more than 1 1/2 hours of commuting time to a project or a  
12 designated area, but an intern may agree to spend more than 1  
13 1/2 hours of commuting time to a project or a designated area.

14 (c) Interns shall receive at least the standard minimum  
15 wage as set by the State of Illinois, when applicable, and  
16 shall work normal working hours as determined by the  
17 Department. The interns shall not be classified as employees  
18 of the State for purposes of contributions to the State  
19 Employees' Retirement System of Illinois or any other public  
20 employment retirement system of the State.

21 (d) The Department may enter into contracts,  
22 intergovernmental agreements, grants, cooperative agreements,  
23 memoranda of understanding, or other instruments as necessary  
24 to implement the Program.

25 (e) The Department shall adopt administrative rules  
26 pertaining to implementation, standards, criteria, and

1 administration of the Program.

2 Section 90. Repeal. This Act is repealed on June 30, 2029.