



# SUCCESS STORIES

REPORTING EXAMPLES OF OUR PROGRESS IN CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR RECREATION AND TOURISM ON THE SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST

*Partners discuss tourism opportunities in Southern Illinois.*

**May 29, 2012**

An exciting new pilot program is underway in Southern Illinois. Non-profit group Friends of the Shawnee National Forest (NF) seeks to engage the community in dialogue on building sustainable recreation and tourism initiatives. It's being conducted through a partnership with the University of Illinois Extension.

The program started in February with four community engagement meetings held in Anna, Murphysboro, Golconda, and Harrisburg. Local community leaders came out to discuss outdoor recreation and tourism in natural settings, and how they impact sustainability. Several employees from the Shawnee NF attended the meeting as well. They had lively discussions on values, opportunities, barriers, and ideas for change. Three areas of common interest were:

- 1) Increased marketing and community access to forest resources (of all ownerships)
- 2) Education as a key to long term sustainability
- 3) Aligning current assets of outdoor recreation to capability and demand within the context of contributing to sustainability of the environment, community and economy.

The next steps are to reconvene around common interests and develop a strategy focused on sustainability.

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Click here for more about the Shawnee National Forest <http://www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee>.