

# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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JB Pritzker, Governor  
Colleen Callahan, Director

To: Colleen Callahan, Director  
From: Mike Wefer, Chair, Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee  
Date: October 15, 2021  
Subject: Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee Action

The Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee held their annual meeting on October 6, 2021. The Committee's responsibility is to review and recommend the allocation of funds in the Illinois Habitat Fund.

### Committee Business Recommendations

The Committee voted to recommend that the Department host a special Committee meeting within 6 months to work through some recurring issues including:

- Allowing the funding of UTVs
- Hunting access as a ranking criteria
- Funding land acquisition by non-DNR entities
- Clarification of the rules governing cash advances under GATA
- Explanation of payment delays to grantees

I wholeheartedly endorse the recommendation for the special meeting and am happy to discuss if you would like.

### Summary of Funding Recommendations

Grants to governmental and not-for-profits for Habitat Projects	\$ 446,566.00
Designated for IDNR Land Acquisition	\$ 53,434.00

**Total October FY2022 Committee Recommended Funding** \$ 500,000.00

Funds available were unexpectedly low this year. The IDNR did not request any Habitat funds in hopes that more external grants could be funded.

The Committee recommended funding the six highest scoring grant applications.

- \$ 50,000 Ducks Unlimited – Copperas Creek Wetland enhancement for replacement of failed outdated water control structures.
- \$ 70,400 Quail and Upland Game Alliance – Woody Succession Program – a program that offers landowners assistance with removing woody succession and brushy areas to improve bird habitat.

\$ 85,000 Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever – Chapter habitat projects assisting landowners with brush management, prescribed burns, invasives removal, native plantings and pollinator plants.

\$ 36,630 McHenry County Conservation District – Preservation and restoration efforts at Pleasant Valley Conservation Area, establishing high diversity prairie, adding additional acres of oak savanna and grazing grasslands for bison. Includes the purchase of a flac-vac seed harvester to process 1,330lbs of native seeds gathered by the habitat teams.

\$115,120 Shawnee Resource Conservation District – An open canopy project that assists landowners with forest stand improvement, invasives removal and control and prescribed burns on forested oak ecosystems.

\$174,416 Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever – Support for the Illinois Rexreational Access Program. Habitat Strike Team, conducting habitat work on private lands enrolled in IRAP that provides semi-controlled public access on sites throughout west central Illinois.

Grant Number	County	Grantee Name	Project Description	Total Funds Requested	Other State Funding	Matching Funds	%	Total Project Cost	Partner Organizations
22-001H	Fulton	Ducks Unlimited	Rice Lake SFWA Copperas Creek wetland enhancement for replacement of failed outdated water control structures, and install new water level management infrastructure for maintaining annual moist-soil plant production duck areas.	\$50,000.00		\$100,000.00	67%	\$150,000.00	North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant
22-003H	Statewide	Quail and Upland Game Alliance	Woody Succession Program - a program that offers landowners assistance with removing woody succession and brushy areas to improve bird habitat.	\$70,400.00		\$32,000.00	31%	\$102,400.00	Landowners
22-008H	Statewide	Pheasants Forever	Chapter Habitat projects assisting landowners with brush mgmt, Rx Burn, Invasives Removal, Timber stand Improvement, native plantings, pollinator plants.	\$85,000.00		\$34,000.00	29%	\$119,000.00	PF Chapters
22-009H	McHenry	McHenry County Conservation District	Preservation and restoration efforts at Pleasant Valley Conservation Area, establishing an additional 90 acres of high diversity prairie habitat, an additional 50 acres of oak savanna and 33 acres of grassland will be enhanced with seeding. This conservation area has a grazing lease with Ruhter Bison to sustain a bison herd on certain mgmt units (parcels). Equipment purchased would be a flac-vac seed harvester to process native seeds gathered by the habitat teams, estimated at least 1,330 pounds of native seeds processed.	\$36,630.00		\$285,782.33	89%	\$322,412.33	Ruhter Bison, USFWS, Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge
22-010H	Alexander, Gallatin, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union and Williamson	Shawnee RC&D	Restoration of landowner sites of forested woodlands with forest stand improvement, invasives removal and control, and Rx Burns. Hunting is expected to occur on most of these forested sites. Opening the forest canopy by removal of encroaching beech and maple saplings is critical to mainting the diversity of herbaceous woodland plant species, allowing oak regeneration and healthy oak ecosystems.	\$115,120.00		\$100,000.00	46%	\$215,120.00	USFS, IDNR, River to River Coop Weed mgmt, SIPBA, NWTF, Landowners
22-014H	West Central Illinois	Pheasants Forever	Currently, Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) Habitat Strike Team (HST) conducts work on private lands enrolled in IRAP that provides semi-controlled public access on sites throughout west central Illinois. (PF&QF) is requesting funds to continue support for 3 existing positions of the HST and continue the HST Team's impact on private and public lands. <i>Personnel funded under Grant 21-010H \$200,000 included support for Personnel (1 Team Leader, 3 Technicians).</i>	\$174,416.00		\$49,179.00	22%	\$223,595.00	IDNR IRAP

The Committee recommended not funding nine applications.

These eight grant proposals were scored lower, and there were insufficient funds leftover once the highest scoring proposals receive funding.

\$ 67,010 Quail and Upland Game Alliance – Habitat BONUS Program – Offers landowners bonus payments for completing wildlife friendly management work on both CRP and Non-CRP acreage.

- \$ 66,387 Quail and Upland Game Alliance – SAFE Incentive Program – Offers landowners an incentive payment of \$100 per acre for signing up acreage for the USDA SAFE program.
- \$ 125,000 Champaign County Forest Preserve – Land acquisition of 105 acres of watershed floodplain and a forested area contiguous with the St. Joseph Wetland (CCSWCD) and the Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT).
- \$ 20,000 City of Rock Island – Restoration of ten acres to pollinator meadows.
- \$ 100,000 Kane County Forest Preserve – Enhance wetland quality within a large marsh and restore wetland associated upland habitat at Pingree Grove Forest Preserve.
- \$ 300,000 DuPage County Forest Preserve – Contractual Restoration of Herrick Lake Forest Preserve, activities were to include invasives removal, prescribed burns and native plant seeding.
- \$ 65,935 Pollinator Partnership – A project to provide support for personnel and costs associated with a project in north eastern Illinois where volunteers gather native plant seed and the IDNR Mason State Tree Nursery assists with seed cleaning and grow-out of native plant plugs for distribution for re-planting in natural areas.
- \$ 145,232 Heartlands Conservancy – A project to provide support for Land Stewardship Manager to assist the Conservation Manager to improve habitat on public and private lands, working to improve habitat on various public lands and provide technical assistance to landowners, and leading volunteer stewardship activities on public lands.

Grant Number	County	Grantee Name	Project Description	Total Funds Requested	Other State Funding	Matching Funds	%	Total Project Cost	Partner Organizations
22-002H	Statewide	Quail and Upland Game Alliance	BONUS PROGRAM - offers landowners bonus payments for completing wildlife friendly management work on both CRP and Non-CRP acreage.	\$67,010.00		\$20,480.00	23%	\$87,490.00	Landowners
22-004H	Statewide	Quail and Upland Game Alliance	Incentive Payment of \$100 per acre offered to Illinois Landowners signing up for the USDA SAFE Program on existing and expanded SAFE areas in the Illinois continuous CRP acreage areas, see map	\$66,387.20		\$20,118.00	23%	\$86,505.20	Landowners
22-005H	Champaign	Champaign County Forest Preserve	Land Acquisition of 105 acres of watershed floodplain and a forested area that include a wetland and large overstory oak and hickory trees. 36 acres currently in row crop production will be ecologically restored to native prairie after one year and enrolled in CRP. The site is contiguous with the St. Joseph Wetland (CCSWCD) and the Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT).	\$125,000.00	\$79,750.00	\$477,750.00	70%	\$682,500.00	Illinois Clean Energy Foundation, IDNR NRDA funds
22-006H	Rock Island	City of Rock Island	Restoration of ten acres to pollinator meadows.	\$20,000.00		\$10,000.00	33%	\$30,000.00	
22-007H	Kane	Kane County Forest Preserve	Enhance wetland quality within a large marsh and restore wetland associated upland habitat at Pingree Grove Forest Preserve.	\$100,000.00		\$250,000.00	71%	\$350,000.00	IDNR,USFWS, PFW, SWCD, Landowners
22-011H	Madison, St. Clair, Bond, Clinton, Washington, Monroe, Randolph, SW Illinois	Heartlands Conservancy	Hire a Land Stewardship Manager to assist the Conservation Manager to improve habitat on public and private lands, working to improve habitat on various public lands and provide technical assistance to landowners, and leading volunteer stewardship activities on public lands. Sites open to the public include Arlington Wetlands, Poag Sand Prairie, Kathleen Scanlon Natural Area, Clinton Hills Conservation Park, Brushy Lake Wetland Complex, Chouteau Island, William C Duda Woods. Activities will include removing invasive species and woody vegetation and Rx Burn.	\$145,232.00		\$239,052.80	62%	\$384,284.80	Illinois Clean Energy Foundation, Madison County, City of Edwardsville, Village of Swansea, U of I Extension Master Naturalists, SIUE
22-012H	DuPage	DuPage County Forest Preserve	Contractual restoration of Herrick Lake Forest Preserve, activities include invasives removal, Rx Burn, native plant seeding	\$300,000.00		\$1,325,000.00	82%	\$1,625,000.00	
22-013H	Northeastern Illinois, includes McHenry, Lake, Kane, DuPage, Cook, Boone, Will, Kane, Kendall, Grundy	Pollinator Partnership	The Pollinator partnership gathers native seed with a coordinated system of local volunteers grown in field production areas and gathered from native plant areas. These seeds are sent to the Illinois State Tree nursery for cleaning, processing and growing plant plugs to later distribute. They produce and distribute 20,000 local genotype live plug for plant species, produce 175-300 lbs of clean local genotype seed, restore 100 acres of high diversity native prairie and savannah habitat and enhancement of 2,000 acres of existing prairie, savannah, woodland edge and wetland edge habitat throughout northeastern Illinois. Grant money is to assist with the costs associated with plant production (at IL DNR Mason State Nursery) including grow-out materials and support for fulltime nursery production personnel; for part-time native seed collection personnel; and to assist with support for current full-time management staff.	\$65,935.28		\$72,450.00	52%	\$138,385.28	Cook County FP, Boone County Conservation District, USFS, IL State Nature Preserves, IDNR Mason State Tree Nursery, The Wetlands Initiative, Midcwin National Tallgrass Prairie, Great Lakes Audubon, Chicago Botanic Garden


A sharepoint server file is available of all grant application materials at:

<https://dnr.portal.illinois.gov/teams/orc/SpecialFunds/HabitatFund/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2Fteams%2Forc%2FSpecialFunds%2FHabitatFund%2FShared%20Documents%2F2022%20Habitat%20Fund%20Grant%20Applications&FolderCTID=0x0120008B6439D2647EDB48B0FCDO53124A12F6&View=%7BB2EE35D6%2D6E1C%2D4707%2DACD1%2DB691DA60B757%7D&InitialTabId=Ribbon%2EDocument&VisibilityContext=WSSTabPersistence>

For any review of the materials considered by the Committee as well as the grant proposals themselves. Any questions about the meeting materials or the grant proposals should be directed to Mike Wefer, IDNR Chair. Any technical questions about grant processes should be directed to Susan J. Duke IDNR Grant Administrator for the Illinois Habitat Fund.

Please indicate approval of the Office of Resource Conservation funding recommendations by signing below. Funds are currently available to award the recommended projects. Upon your decision staff of the Special Funds Section of the Office of Grant Management and Assistance will inform the Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee, grantees and IDNR staff of the intent on the use of FY2022 Habitat Funds.

**Office Recommendation**

  
Chris, Young Director  
Office of Resource Conservation

10/27/2021  
Date

APPROVE

DISAPPROVE

**Habitat Chair Recommendation**

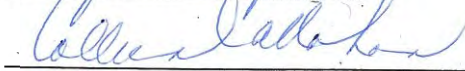
**Michael Wefer** Digitally signed by Michael Wefer  
Date: 2021.10.15 14:58:52 -05'00'  
Mike Wefer  
Office of Resource Conservation  
Chair of the Illinois Habitat Fund Committee

10/15/21  
Date

APPROVE

DISAPPROVE

**AGENCY DIRECTOR SIGN-OFF**

  
Colleen Callahan  
Director of Illinois Natural Resources

11-9-21  
Date

APPROVE

DISAPPROVE

