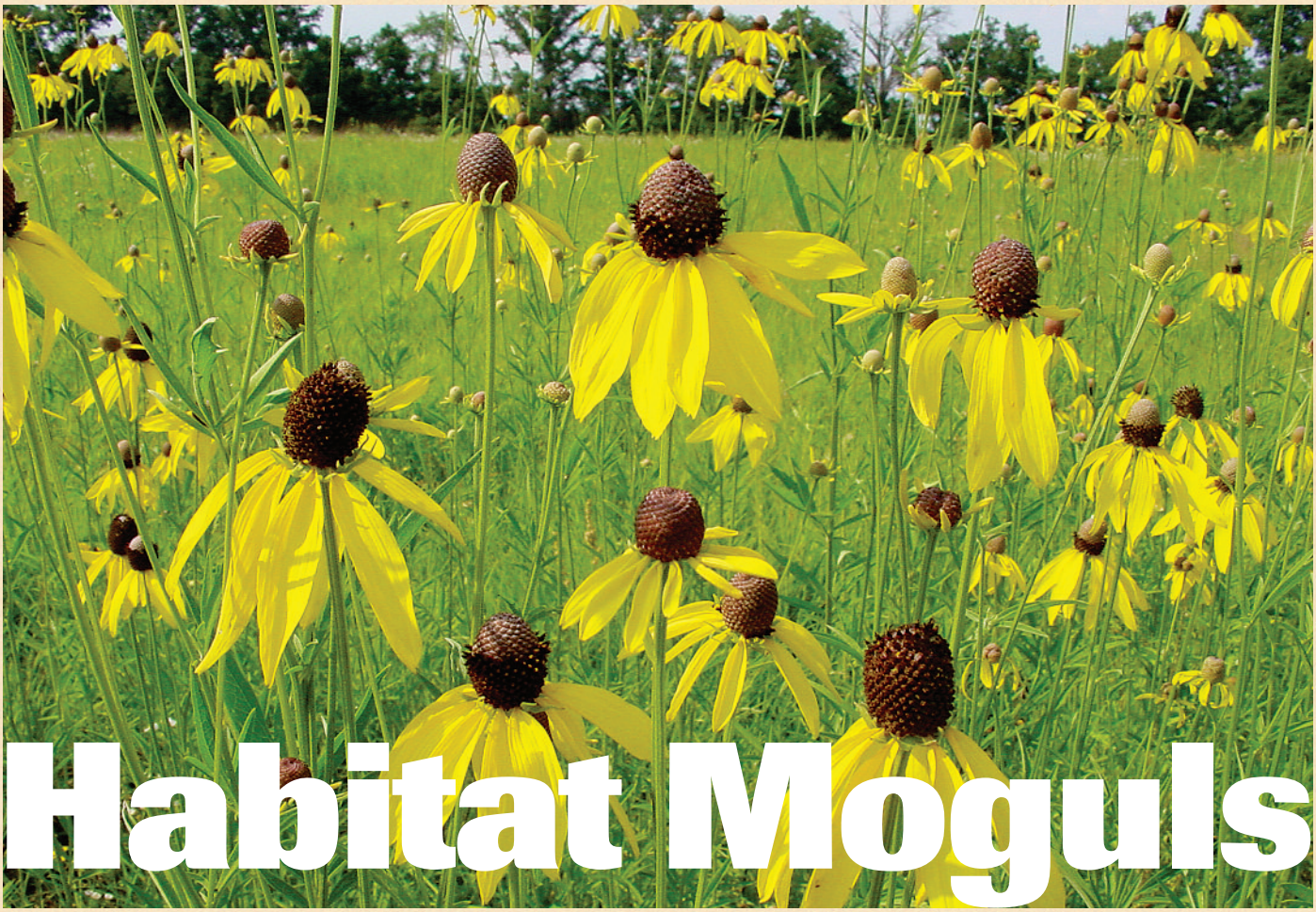
Five landowners are recognized for their efforts to create and enhance wildlife habitats.



Habitat Moguls

Story By Mike McCulley
Photos by Marty Kemper

A passion for conserving the land garners five Illinois landowners recognition as Wildlife Landowners of the Year.

The Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife Resources recently honored five landowners for their efforts to restore and develop wildlife habitat on their private properties.

"The Wildlife Landowner of the Year awards program is one of the ways we recognize some of the great efforts of private property owners who do extraordinary work in developing their property for wildlife," said DNR Acting Director Sam Flood. "The property owners recognized this year participate in our Acres for Wildlife program and have developed properties that showcase how land can be managed for the benefit of wildlife."

- Scott Schaeffer recognized Ogle County landowner **Robert Pope** for his personal commitment to create habitat and protect streams and hillsides from degradation.
- Continuing his father's dream to promote conservation and sound stewardship of our land,

water and wildlife resources is the motivation for the work by **Alex** and **Katie Ulrich**. The Ulrichs reside in Logan County and were nominated by Buck Cunningham.

- Randolph County residents **Jess** and **Jackie Cushman** were nominated by Brian Mahan for having taken habitats nearly barren of deer, turkey, rabbit and bobwhite to a showplace for area landowners.
- An interest in producing quality white-tailed bucks led **Steven Lachenmayr** to develop forest and upland wildlife habitat. The Crawford County landowner was nominated by Kevin Woods.
- Spurred by a decline in bobwhite numbers, Jackson County landowners **John** and **Roberta Edgar** converted fescue hillsides and odd corners to create quality nesting, wintering and brood-rearing habitat. Rich Whitton nominated the Edgars.

Utilizing a variety of conservation programs, including DNR's Acres for Wildlife, USDA's Conservation Reserve Program and assistance from private, not-for-profit conservation organizations, these landowners have seen a tremendous wildlife response to their efforts. Establishment of grasslands and brushpiles, shrub and tree plantings, construction of wetlands, forest stand improvement, exotic species control and prescribed burning are examples of various habitat practices employed.

Their efforts serve as a great example of a conservation land ethic and as a showcase to others. One common thread ties these landowners together—a passion for establishing and enhancing habitat for wildlife on their properties for themselves, their families and future generations.

Landowners interested in participating in DNR's Acres for Wildlife program can find more information at www.dnr.state.il.us/orc/wildliferesources/AFW.

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