

Conservation 2000 12-Year Report

C2000 12-Year Report 1996-2007

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On the cover:

Main picture - Lyman Woods, Dupage Co.,
Dupage River Coalition Ecosystem
Partnership

Top Inset - Upper Des Plaines Ecosystem
Partnership Annual Meeting,
touring Bill Kurtis' prairie,
Mettawa, Lake County

Middle Inset - prairie flowers

Bottom Inset - 2nd longest boardwalk in
Illinois (950 ft), Heron County
Park, Vermillion Ecosystem
Partnership



Black-eyed Susans

Conservation 2000 -Twelve Year Report-

It's hard to believe it has been twelve years since the Conservation 2000 (C2000) Program was first developed. And, what an outstanding list of accomplishments we have made over the past several years. What was to be a six-year program was extended an additional eight years to continue the C2000 program until 2009. Because of its unique approach to protecting and restoring Illinois natural resources on non-state owned lands, HB1780 was passed earlier this year without a dissenting vote to continue the program until the year 2021 under the new name, Partners for Conservation. Governor Blagojevich signed the bill on August 14, 2007.

The success of IDNR's C2000 program can be directly attributed to the many partners who participate in the public involvement processes to preserve the natural resources of Illinois through ecosystem-based management. Our partners, both private and public, work very hard to develop and implement protection and enhancement strategies that match each ecosystem's needs. The C2000 Ecosystems Program is focused on non-state owned land, which encompasses about 95% of the state. Protection of a landscape this large requires broad involvement from private landowners, community interests groups and the State, working in a collaborative role, to promote conservation efforts.

To date, 41 Ecosystem Partnerships cover 86% of the state and represent 98% of the state's population. These coalitions of local stakehold-

ers are united by a common interest in protecting the natural resources of their watershed. The program is unique in that anyone can volunteer to be a member of an Ecosystem Partnership. By being a designated Partnership, C2000 provides financial and technical support to assist in addressing local watershed concerns.

The largest component of the C2000 program is the Ecosystem Project Grants. These grants are awarded annually in the following categories: Habitat, Land Acquisition, Research, Outreach, Planning, and Resource Economics. Since its inception twelve years ago, C2000 has awarded \$35,784,713 in grants and recipients leveraged an additional \$33,969,272 in matched funds for a total of \$69,753,985 in ecosystem-based management projects throughout the state.

I am very excited about continuing the Ecosystems Program through Partners for Conservation. We will continue to focus ecosystem restoration on non-state owned lands and strengthen our partnerships with not-for-profit organizations, individuals, and businesses, as well as state, federal and local units of government and others. We will work harder to leverage matching federal dollars to get the most out of the state dollars for our environment. We have much to be proud of and we look forward to tremendous opportunities to benefit our state's natural resources in the future.

- Tammy Watson, C2000 Ecosystems Program Manager

Ecosystems Program

Mission

To monitor, maintain, enhance and restore the biodiversity and ecological conditions of Illinois' landscapes through local partnerships.

Purpose

The purpose of the Ecosystems Program is to integrate the interests and participation of local communities and private, public and corporate landowners to enhance and protect watersheds through ecosystem-based management. The Ecosystems Program is funded through Conservation 2000 (C2000), a comprehensive long-term approach to protecting and managing Illinois' natural resources through partnerships with grass-roots stakeholders. The Ecosystems Program is a voluntary, broad-based incentive program.



“From restoring prairie grasses and stabilizing streambanks to developing educational programs that benefit thousands of students, the projects supported by these grants will have long term benefits for the wildlife, plants and watershed resources in all parts of Illinois. The C2000 grant program helps local citizens and organizations improve environmental quality and the quality of life in their communities.”

- Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

C2000 Ecosystems Program

The State of Illinois faces many challenges in its effort to manage its natural resources. Illinois can support everything from forest, to prairie, to cypress swamp, yet, most of Illinois is highly modified from its natural state. Estimates are that less than 0.1% of the State's land supports high quality natural habitats. Human development has resulted in habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, urban and rural pollution, and other threats that continue to stress our environment. The focus of traditional natural resource management has been on habitat protection and enhancement on state-owned land and managed areas, which only account for less than 5% of the state. In order to develop a long term approach to enhancing and protecting the greater portion of Illinois, the Ecosystems Program had to look at making changes on the local level.

A major component of the Ecosystems Program is competitive grants that have been awarded annually in the following categories:

- Habitat
- Land Acquisition or Conservation Easement
- Outreach and Education
- Planning
- Research
- Resource Economics

The Ecosystems Program is a voluntary, broad-based incentive program.

Most landowners want what is best for their land. In order to tackle our State's conservation challenges, we must partner with and assist non-state landowners at a grass roots level to preserve and restore our natural resources. The intent of the C2000 Ecosystems Program is to integrate the interests and participation of local communities and private, public and corporate landowners along with local, state, and federal governments. As these groups merge, Ecosystem Partnerships are designated. The partnerships' members play a vital role in developing plans and projects on a watershed scale with an ecosystem-based approach. The C2000 Program provides technical and financial support to the designated partnerships.

In 2004, the C2000 Program was nationally recognized.

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (NARC&DC) awarded the C2000 Ecosystems Program as the National Supporting Organization of the Year. The award was presented to Tom Flattery, Director of the Office of Realty and Environmental Planning, at the 5th annual NARC&DC Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C.

Grantee Spotlight

Natural Land Institute

Having a reliable source of grant funds from the C2000 Program has helped the Natural Land Institute (NLI) accomplish many of our conservation goals while working with private landowners to protect and restore natural habitat for wildlife. One of the first grants received helped leverage the acquisition of 688-acres of flood prone land on the Pecatonica and Rock Rivers, near Rockton. The land was restored to prairie, wetland and forest with the help of additional C2000 funds. Every dollar of State funds was matched with \$5 of federal and private grants, and more than 20,000 hours of volunteer labor. The Nygren Wetland Preserve has become a showcase of habitat restoration and cooperation with other agencies and groups, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, NRCS, IDNR, the Conservation Fund and Rockton Township.

Other C2000 grants enabled NLI to protect forested bluffs next to Hanover Bluff Nature Preserve in Jo Daviess Co., restore critical habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds, preserve rare plants and animals surviving from the last ice age along Waukarusa Creek in Carroll Co., and to work with private landowners along the Kishwaukee River in DeKalb Co. to create a greenway of protected forest. The Kishwaukee provides some of the best fishing in northern Illinois.

Money for research and strategic conservation planning is hard to come by, but C2000 grants to NLI allowed both the Sugar-Pecatonica Rivers and Kishwaukee River ecosystem partnerships to develop strategic plans for wildlife conservation along three of the most important rivers for fish, wildlife and recreation in northern Illinois. The Kishwaukee River plan has leveraged Illinois EPA funds to create three model watershed plans for the region, and is guiding development throughout the area.

“As a private conservation group we have come to rely on the C2000 Program to help us fulfill our mission of protecting and restoring natural land for people, plants and animals,” said Jerry Paulson, executive director of the Natural Land Institute. “It is one of the few grant programs available to private groups like ours for wildlife conservation in Illinois.”

The Natural Land Institute is a private, non-profit land conservation group, based in Rockford that has worked with landowners to protect and restore natural lands for people, plants and animals in northern Illinois for almost fifty years.

- Jerry Paulson, Executive Director, The Natural Land Institute

Grantee Spotlight

Illinois Audubon Society

From natural resource restoration and preservation to conservation education, the Illinois Audubon Society has consistently relied upon Conservation 2000 to achieve its mission. As a land trust, Conservation 2000 has supported Illinois Audubon to acquire land and enhance habitat vital for species protection.

Since its inception, Conservation 2000 has served as a public/private natural resources partnership model for the nation. With a great percentage of Illinois' natural landscape already lost to development, Conservation 2000's existence has protected thousands of Illinois acres, now and for generations to come.

Illinois Audubon applauds the numerous natural resource-based accomplishments brought about by C2000. As Illinois' oldest conservation organization, Illinois Audubon has never before experienced a natural resources partnership program as important and vital as Conservation 2000.

- Tom Clay, Executive Director, Illinois Audubon Society

Project Spotlight

Big Creek

The Big Creek Project under the IDNR C2000 grant program has been a huge success for the Union County Soil and Water Conservation District. Our goals in the beginning were to address the Big Creek Watershed plan. With the C2000 grant we were able to meet four objectives of the plan. It has helped our organization by not only addressing the problems of Big Creek (one watershed in our County), but helping us to set up a procedure that will benefit every watershed in the County. Because of this grant we have rewritten our long range plan for the County to include the concepts of the Big Creek Pilot C2000 grant.

The grant has also allowed us to bring in new partners to our work. This has proven to be a very beneficial result of the grant. We did not realize the expertise available that we were not utilizing. It has allowed the District to bring in additional funding that we would have otherwise not received. We have shown a \$2.12 return on the grant money that we have received. The District feels the greatest accomplishment resulting from the grant is our main goal of annual soil savings. We have shown greater soil savings during the years of the C2000 grant that at any other time in our history. To us, soil savings is a measure of improving water quality in Union County, which is our main goal.

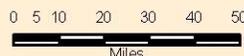
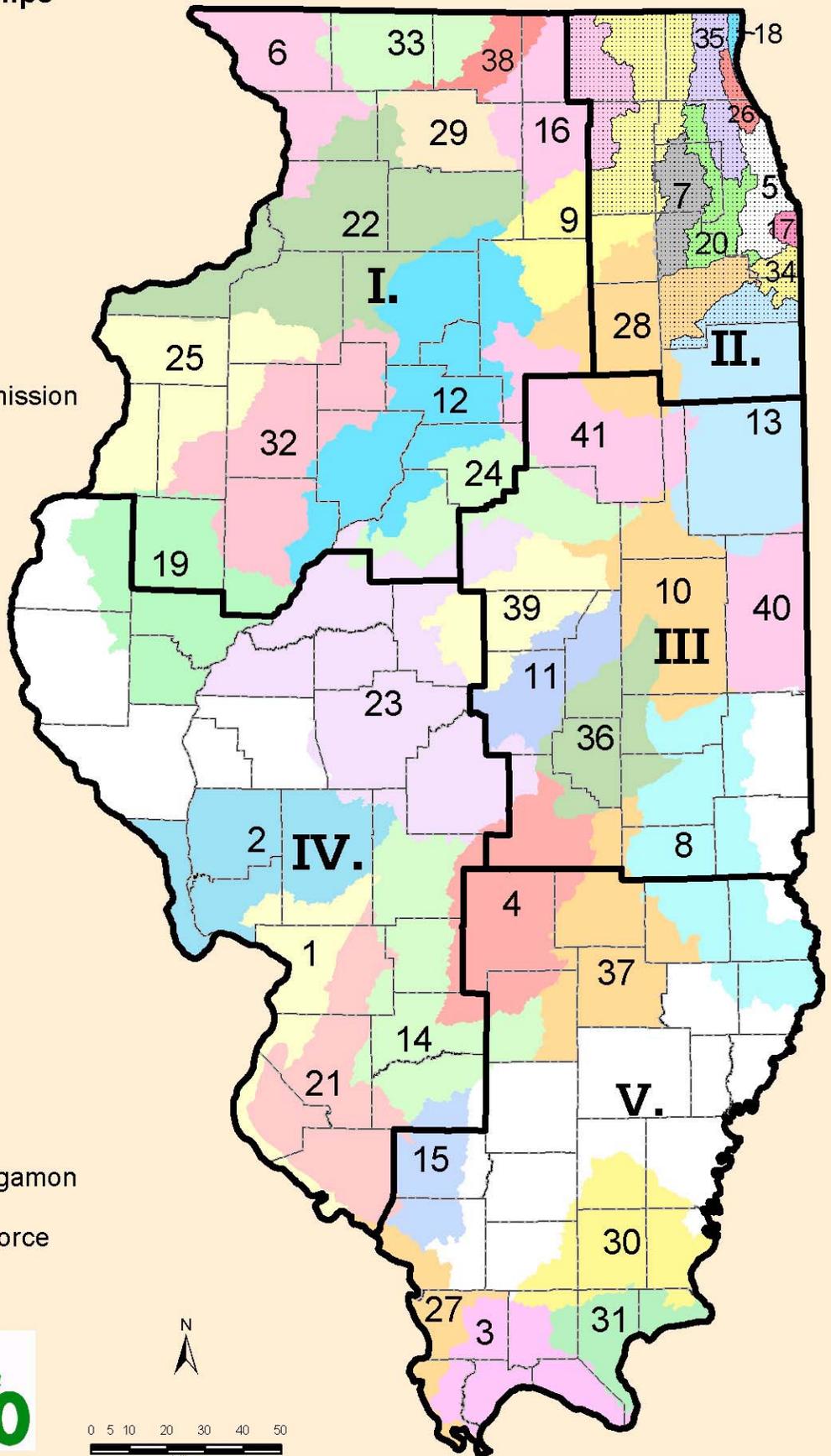
- Keith Livesay, Resource Conservationist, Union County SW CD

Conservation 2000 Ecosystem Partnerships

With DNR Administrative Regions

C2000 Ecosystem Partnerships

1. American Bottom
2. Big Rivers
3. Cache River
4. Carlyle Lake
5. Chicago Wilderness
6. Driftless Area
7. DuPage River Coalition
8. Embarras River
9. Fox River
10. Headwaters
11. Heart of the Sangamon
12. Illinois River Bluffs
13. Kankakee River Basin Commission
14. Kaskaskia River
15. Kinkaid Area Watershed
16. Kishwaukee River
17. Lake Calumet
18. Lake Michigan Watershed
19. La Moine River
20. Lower Des Plaines
21. Lower Kaskaskia
22. Lower Rock River
23. Lower Sangamon Valley
24. Mackinaw River
25. Mississippi Western Five
26. North Branch Chicago River
27. Ozark Hills
28. Prairie Parklands
29. Rock River
30. Saline Basin
31. Shawnee
32. Spoon River
33. Sugar-Pecatonica Rivers
34. Thorn Creek
35. Upper Des Plaines
36. Upper Kaskaskia
37. Upper Little Wabash
38. Upper Rock River
39. Upper Salt Creek of the Sangamon
40. Vermilion
41. Vermilion Watershed Task Force



Ecosystem Partnership Spotlight

Fox River Ecosystem Partnership

The Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) was formed in 1996, and was one of the first Partnerships established under the IDNR's C2000 program. In 1998, FREP began a facilitated watershed planning process, which resulted in identifying 16 critical factors and 6 areas of concern. The final product was the *Integrated Management Plan for the Fox River Watershed in Illinois* that makes 37 recommendations for action. This plan has been the guiding document for FREP ever since, and was made possible by C2000 support. To date, over forty organizations have endorsed that Integrated Watershed Management Plan.



Fox River Ecosystem Partnership Watershed

FREP hosts bimonthly Noon Networks that provide information and networking opportunities to an average of 20-30 people at each meeting on a variety of topics. General partnership meetings with a guest speaker are held every other month, opposite the Noon Network meetings. The FREP membership is a diverse group of landowners, businesses, non-profit organizations, and agencies with over 80 members including individuals, educational institutions, local governments, non-profits, consultants, and others. Consistently hosting general meetings and noon networks each month, providing a membership newsletter, and maintaining a well-used web page would not be possible without C2000 support grants and other C2000 funding. This essential support from the C2000 program has enabled FREP to continue to grow and mature as a watershed-based organization that now serves as a model for other newer groups.

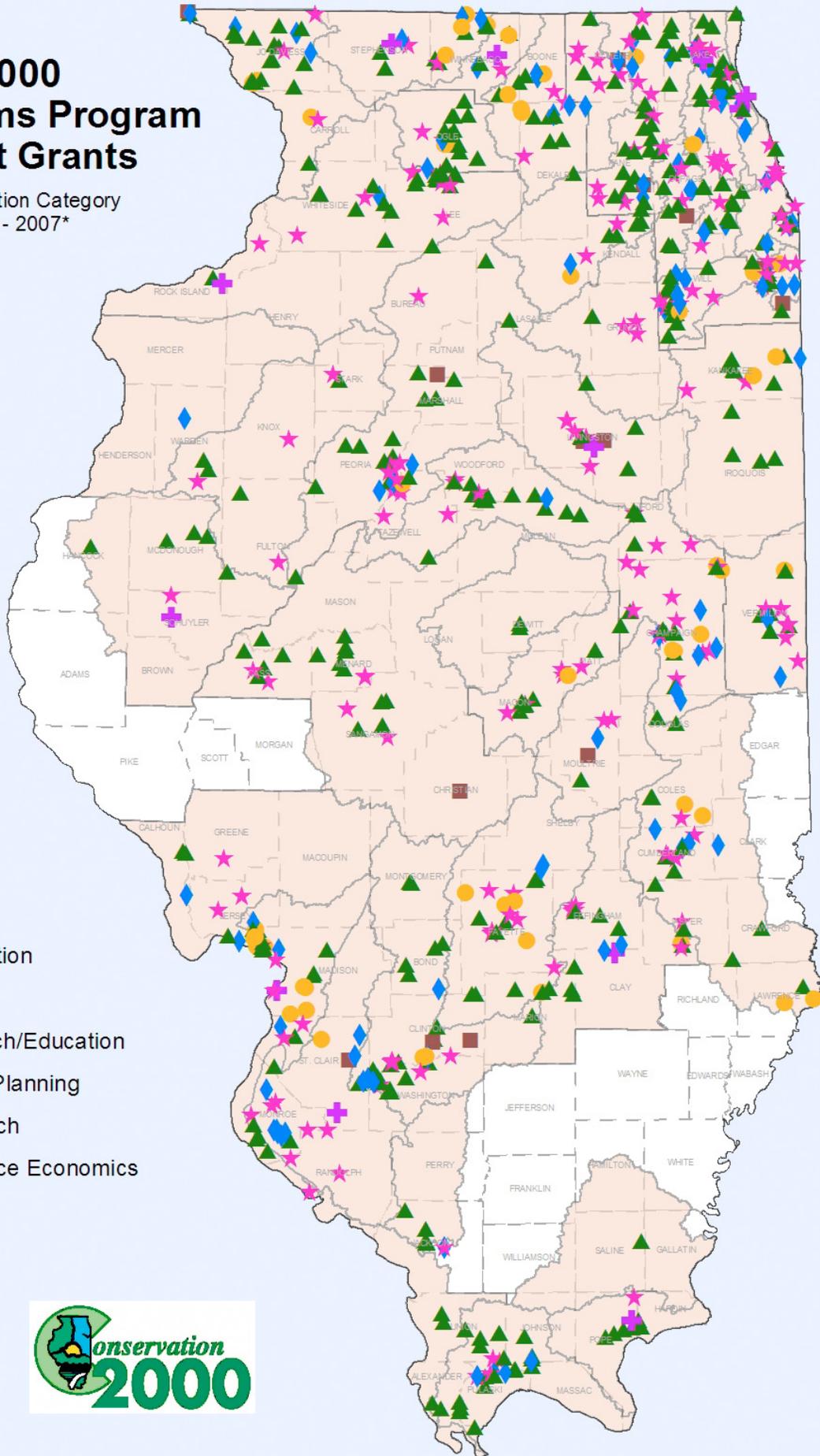
In addition, C2000 has provided more than \$2,339,664.59 in funding for 58 projects in the Fox River watershed, and \$2,061,730.40 in matching funds were leveraged by the partnership for a total of \$4,401,394.99 of funding for projects in the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership since 1996. IEPA has also used the C2000 partnership model, and FREP has secured \$4,274,694 in funding from the section 319 program (Clean Water Act) to fund 35 projects worth a total of \$6,934,378.

- Karen Miller, President of FREP

Please visit the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership's website for a list of upcoming events and more information at <http://www.foxriverecosystem.org/>

C2000 Ecosystems Program Project Grants

By Application Category
1996 - 2007*



Category

- Acquisition
- ▲ Habitat
- ★ Outreach/Education
- + Vision Planning
- ◆ Research
- Resource Economics



* No grants were awarded in 2005, 2 rounds of grants were awarded in 2006.

C2000 Grantees

Abbott Laboratories
Alice Henry
Alliance for the Great Lakes
American Bottom Conservancy
American Farmland Trust
Amoco Chemicals Co.
APH Inc
Apple Canyon Lake Prop. Own. Assn.
Apple River Fort Historic Found., Inc.
Ballard Nature Center
Beecher High School
Belvidere Park District
Bi-State Airport Authority
Board of Trustees of Eastern IL Univ.
Board of Trustees of the Univ. of IL
Bond Co. SWCD
Boone Co. SWCD
Boone Creek Watershed Alliance
Bourbonnais Township Park District
Brian Baker
Bureau Co. SWCD
Byron Forest Preserve District
Calhoun High School
Campton Township
Casey-Westfield School District C-4
Cass Co. SWCD
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Champaign Co. Farm Bureau
Champaign Co. FPD
Champaign Co. SWCD
Channahon Park District
Charles Perdue Museum Assn.
Cherry Valley Public Library District
Chicago Academy of Sciences
Chicago Botanic Garden
Chicago Park District
Chicago State Univ.
Chicago Wilderness
Christian Co. SWCD
City of Charleston
City of Chicago, Dept. of Environment
City of East Dubuque
City of Elgin
City of Greenville
City of Hillsboro
City of Kankakee
City of Lake Forest
City of Litchfield
City of Marengo
City of Moline
City of Springfield
City of Virginia
City of Washington
City of Wilmington
Collinsville Area Recreation District
Comm. & Econ. Develop. Assn. of Cook Co., Inc.
Concerned Citizens for Coon Creek Conservation Research Institute
Cornell Univ.
Corporation for Open Lands
Country Club Meadows Home. Assn.
Crawford Co. SWCD
Cumberland Co. SWCD
Curtis A. Hummert
Dale Brockmann
Dan K. Sawicki
Danny Wolf d/b/a Wolf Farms
Deerfield High School
DeKalb Co. FPD
DeWitt Co. SWCD
Dixon Park District
Douglas Co. SWCD
Douglas-Hart Nature Center
Downers Grove Park District
Ducks Unlimited Inc.
Dundee Township Park District
DuPage Co.
Ecological Services
Effingham Co. SWCD
Embarras River Mgmt. Assn.
Eric Bollinger
Erie Community Unit School
Eureka Public Library District
Farmington Central CUSD #265
Fayette Co. SWCD
Field Museum of Natural History
Flagg Rochelle Comm. Park Dist.
Fondulac Park District
Ford Co. SWCD
Forest Preserve District of Cook Co.
Forest Preserve District of DuPage Co.
Forest Preserve District of Kane Co.
Forest Preserve District of Will Co.
Fox River Ecosystem Partnership
Fox Valley Land Foundation
Fox Valley Park District
Franklin Grove Crk & Preserv. Comm.
Franklin Grove Fire Dept.
Friends of the Cache River
Friends of the Chicago River
Friends of the Fox River
Friends of the Sangamon Valley
Fulton Co. SWCD
Galena Territory Assn.
Geneva Park District
Geographies Ltd.
George P. Irwin Conserv. Ed. Station
Gerald A. Middendorf
Girl Scouts - Rock River Valley
Goose Lake Gobblers NWTF
Governors State Univ.
Graymont Cooperative Assn.
Great Rivers Land Preserv. Assn., Inc.
Greater Egypt Reg. Plan. & Develop. Commission
Greenville College
Gretchen Bonfert d/b/a Green Strategies
Grundy Co. SWCD
Halfwassen and Associates, Inc.
Hancock Co. SWCD
Heather Hendrix-Mital
Hofmann Dam River Rats
Hult Health Education Center
Humiston Woods Nature Center, Inc.
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor Civic Center Authority
IL Assn. of Regional Councils
IL Audubon Society
IL Institute of Technology
IL Native Plant Soc., Irene Cull Chap.
IL River Soil Conservation Task Force
IL State Museum Society
Interstate RC&D
Iroquois Co. SWCD
Jackson Co. SWCD
James J. McGuire
Jasper Co. SWCD
Jeannine Langoussis d/b/a Sugar Prairie Wildlife Corridor
Jersey Co. SWCD
Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation
Jo Daviess Co. Natural Area Guardians
Jo Daviess Co. SWCD
John W. Kenney
Joliet Junior College
Joseph B. Ritter
Julie Elzanati
Kane Co. Environmental Mgmt. Depart.
Kane-DuPage SWCD
Kankakee Co. SWCD
Kankakee River Conservancy
Kankakee River Valley Forest PD
Kendall Co. FPD
Kingsbury Park District
Kinkaid Area Watershed Project
Kinkaid-Reed's Creek Conserv. Dist.
Knox Co. SWCD
Lake Co. FPD
Lake Co. Stormwater Mgmt. Comm.
Lake Forest Open Lands Assn.
Land Conservancy of Lake Co., Inc.
LaSalle Co. SWCD
Lawrence Co. SWCD
Lee Co. SWCD
Lee Co. SWCD
Leslee S. and Darla J. Combs
Lewis & Clark Community College
Liberty Prairie Conservancy
Liberty Prairie Foundation
Lincoln Heritage RC&D
Livingston Co. SWCD
Livingston Service Company d/b/a Evergreen FS, Inc.
Loch Lomond Property Assn.
Long Grove Park District
Lower Sangamon Valley Partnership
Mackinaw River Watershed
Macon Co. Conservation District
Macon Co. SWCD
Madison Co.
Maran Associates Inc.
Marion Co. SWCD
Mark L. Cagnoni
Marshall-Putnam SWCD
Matthew Bretz
Maury Brucker
Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
Mazon River Watershed Planning
McCully Heritage Project
McHenry Co. Conservation District
McHenry Co. Conservation Foundation
McHenry Co. Defenders
McHenry Co. of IL
McHenry Co. SWCD
McLean Co. SWCD
Medinah Park District
Menard Co. SWCD
Metropolitan Family Service Camp Algonquin
Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance
Millikin Univ.
Monroe Co. SWCD
Mott Excavating, Inc.
Moultrie Co. Farm Bureau
Moultrie Co. SWCD
Mt. Carroll C.U.D. #304
Naperville Park District
Natural Land Institute
Neighborspace
New Bethel Church
Northeastern IL Planning Commission
Northeastern IL Univ.
Northern IL Anglers Assn.
Ogle Co.
Ogle Co. SWCD
Old Salem Chautauqua Assn.
Olympia Fields Park District
Open Lands Project
Oregon School District CUSD 220
Original Kaskaskia Area Wilderness
Oswegoland Park District
Otter Lake Water Commission
Ozark Underground Lab Inc
Park District of Highland Park
ParkLands Foundation
Parrish Hill Prairie Restoration
Paul Bartlett
Pecatonica Prairie Path, Inc.
Peoria Co.
Peoria Co. SWCD
Peoria Park District
Pheasants Forever Inc.
Piatt Co. SWCD
Pope-Hardin SWCD
Prairie Hills RC&D
Prairie Lands Foundation
Prairie Preservation Society
Prairie Rivers Network
Prairie Rivers RC&D
Pulaski-Alexander SWCD
Ramsey Community Unit Schools
Randolph Co. SWCD
Richard Knebel
Riverdale Comm. Unit School Dist. 100
Rivershire Community Property Assn.
Robert Green
Robert Kuhn
Robert T. Schneider
Rock Island SWCD
Rockford Park District
Roscoe Township
Sally Baumgardner
Salt Creek Watershed Network
Sand Bluff Bird Observatory
Sangamon Co. SWCD
Sanitary District of Decatur
Save the Prairie Society
Shawnee RC&D Area, Inc.
Shelby Co. SWCD
Sinkhole Plain Ecosystem Partnership
Society of the Divine Word
South Central IL Reg. Plan. & Develop. Commission
South Central Middle School
Southeast Environmental Task Force
Southeastern IL Reg. Plan. & Develop. Commission
Southern High School Board
Southern IL Univ.
Southwestern IL Reg. Plan. and Develop.
Southwestern IL RC&D, Inc.
Spoon River Eco Watershed Project
Springfield Park District
St Charles Park District
St. Clair Co. Greenspace Foundation
Stanley Heimann
Stark Co. SWCD
Ste. Marie Drainage & Levee District
Stephenson SWCD
Sterling Park District
Sterling/Rock Falls Family YMCA
The Conservation Foundation
The Conservation Fund
The Friends of the Depot
The Gramercy Park Foundation
The Land Conserv. of McHenry Co.
The Morton Arboretum
The Nature Conservancy
The Nature Institute
The Prairie Enthusiasts
Theodore Rund
Thomas A. Arnold
Thorn Creek Mgmt. Commission
Thorn Creek Nature Preserve Mgmt. Commission
Township of Libertyville
Tracy A. Taylor, Inc.
Trailnet
Trevor Toland
Tri-Co. Reg. Plan. Commission
Two Rivers RC&D
U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division
Union Co. SWCD
United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Univ. of IL
Univ. of St Francis
Upper Des Plaines River Ecosystem Partnership
Urbana Park District
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA National Finance Center d/b/a USDA Forest Service
V.I.T. Unit School District # 2
Valmeyer CU School District #3
Vandalia Community High School
Vermilion Co. Conservation District
Vermilion Co. SWCD
Village of Carol Stream
Village of Homer Glen
Village of Lincolnshire
Village of Matteson
Village of Oswego
Village of Park Forest
Village of Richmond
Village of Shiloh
Village of Shorewood
Vincennes Univ.
Wabash Valley RC&D
Walcamp Outdoor Ministries
Warren Co. SWCD
Washington Co. SWCD
Watershed Appreciation Through Education and Research
Watershed Nature Center Preserve
Waubonsee Community College
Wetlands Initiative
Whiteside Co. SWCD
Wild Ones Natural Landscapers
Wildlife Discovery Center
William M. Eyring
William Mueller
Will-South Cook Co. SWCD
Windstone Community Assn.
Winfield Public Schools #34
Winnebago Co. FPD
Winnebago Co. SWCD
Woodford Co. SWCD
Youth Conservation Corps, Inc.

Program Accomplishments

C2000 Ecosystems Program 1996 - 2007

Grants Awarded:

924 projects
\$35,784,713 in C2000 funds
\$33,969,272 in match

Types of Projects and C2000 Funding Percentage:

47% - Habitat	* 69,600 acres restored
27% - Acquisition	* 5,300 acres acquired
11% - Research	* 516,200 stream feet restored
11% - Outreach/Education	* 900,000 students/citizens educated
2% - Planning	* 3,700 sites monitored

Program Publications

The following publications can be found at
<http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/publications/>:

Conservation Incentive Programs brochure

Conservation Communicator Newsletter

eBook - Creating Habitats and Homes for
Illinois Wildlife

Current Map of the Ecosystem Partnerships

C2000 Program Report - Annual Update

Land Cover of Illinois 1999-2000

Regional Watershed Assessments

Find the following Best Management Prac-
tices guides and links at

<http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/bmp.htm>:

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission: *Nature
Preserve Management Guidelines*

Native Plant Information Network: *Native Plant
Guide*

Illinois Natural History Survey: *New Invaders
Watch List*

The Natural Resources Conservation Service:
*Technical guides and manuals for habitat prac-
tices in Illinois*

Other IDNR publications are available on-line at <http://dnr.state.il.us/publications>.

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy's mission is to protect habitat and that is done through a variety of means, including land acquisition, restoration of prairie and wetlands, scientific study of ecological practices, and planning to ensure the best available science is guiding that work. Like others doing natural resource conservation work, we can't do it alone. Partnerships and collaboration are the key to successful habitat protection. The Conservation 2000 program at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is an excellent partner and funding source for this kind of work. The expertise and funding provided through the C2000 program and the Department have allowed the Conservancy to leverage its expertise and private funds to accomplish our mission of the protection of biodiversity by protecting habitats.

Some of the major projects funded through C2000 and private dollars matching that funding include reforestation at Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Southern Illinois, wetland restoration along the Cache River and in the Rock River watershed, prairie restoration at Kankakee Sands, Nachusa Grasslands, Emiquon Preserve, Indian Boundary Prairies, and Chinquapin Bluffs along the Mackinaw River. Urban residential storm water projects have been installed in Peoria and best management practices have been studied along the Mackinaw River. Additional funding sources have allowed those studies to continue on the Mackinaw River and have been used to develop a portion of the Conservancy's farm bill platform.

The Conservancy's work funded by the Conservation 2000 program has been used to protect and conserve urban and rural habitat, allowed private landowners to install good conservation practices on their land, utilize innovative techniques to create wetlands, and leverage ecological and financial resources.

-Claudia Emken, Associate Director of Conservation Programs

Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.

The Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. participates in, and provides administrative support to, three ecosystem partnerships, American Bottom, Kaskaskia River, and Lower Kaskaskia. Over the past decade, the C2000 program has greatly enhanced our ability to bring groups together to identify projects, leverage federal, local and foundation awards, and create environmental educational opportunities within the region. The program has also promoted the concept of multiple partnerships working together, including the Kaskaskia Watershed Association and the Middle Mississippi River Partnership.

The C2000 program has significantly strengthened our organization, providing the capacity necessary to create several unique programs, including the "Southwestern Illinois GIS Resource Center", "The Land Conservancy", "SERVE" (Stewardship of Environmental Resources through Volunteer Efforts), and currently under development, the "Environmental Fund of Southwestern Illinois".

- Dave Eustis, Operations Manager, SWIRCD, Inc.

C2000 Components

“The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe around us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.” – Rachel Carson

Local Legacy

Illinois has a rich natural and cultural heritage. Whether historic sites, natural areas, rich farmland, or other prized resources, every county has treasures worth preserving for future generations. At the request of the Governor’s Office, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources implemented three pilot Legacy Projects. Legacy planning, as developed from these pilots, is not just about planning - it is about:

- analyzing plans and challenging basic intuitions and assumptions for strategic and efficient decision making.
- collaborating with local stakeholders to test those assumptions before committing to an actual investment strategy.
- incorporating resource valuation within the context of other planning efforts.

IDNR’s Conservation 2000 program has helped fund the three pilot Legacy Projects: McHenry County, Southwestern Illinois Resource (Legacy) Plan in Madison, Monroe, Randolph and St. Clair Counties, and the Peoria Region, including Tazwell and Woodford Counties. Note: a new Legacy Project is just getting underway in Will County. For more information on these legacy plans, please visit <http://www.learn.uiuc.edu/legacy/>.

Critical Trends Assessment Program (CTAP) measures

ecosystem conditions and trends across the state. CTAP scientists from the Natural History Survey collect ecosystem monitoring data from approximately **600** stream, forest, wetland and grassland sites, statistically selected to represent the range of ecosystem quality in Illinois. They measure ecological indicators such as the presence of threatened and endangered species, species richness, species diversity, and dominance of native vs. non-native species. These data provide a baseline from which we can compare regional and site-specific patterns and assess changes in ecological conditions. This information is vital to protecting, preserving and enhancing Illinois forests, wetlands, grasslands, and streams.

CTAP scientists have also monitored the quality of **50** of the most *pristine sites in the state*, selected from registered natural areas and nature preserves. Over the past several years, the CTAP team has completed an atlas of Illinois land cover, an inventory of resource rich areas, 30 regional watershed assessments, and several years of ecosystem monitoring. For more information about CTAP, please visit <http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/ctap/>.

In Closing...

The Conservation 2000 Program has exceeded the expectations of those who first advocated the program and those who helped to design and develop it. It has been recognized nationwide for its unique approach to natural resource management on a local level that supports voluntary, grass roots organizations working towards comprehensive ecosystem-based management. Enough cannot be said about all of the wonderful volunteers and partners who have made C2000 as successful as it is today.

As we look towards the future, Partners for Conservation will continue to take on the challenges of protecting, preserving and enhancing our natural ecosystems. Partners for Conservation will work even harder at engaging partners to work together, share knowledge, ideas and data to reach a common goal.

The Partners for Conservation Program will partner with state, federal and local governments along with non-governmental environmental organizations to assist landowners to implement conservation projects that protect and enhance wetlands, natural areas and wildlife habitat. By providing a mix of conservation programs with various funding sources we can implement conservation practices and maximize our effectiveness and cost-efficiency.

By partnering with, and fostering cooperation between, landowners and environmentalists, Partners for Conservation will provide technical assistance, project coordination, funding opportunities and other assistance in areas of great need for Illinois and its citizens.

The C2000 Program (soon to be Partners for Conservation) looks forward to a bright future of promoting ecosystem stewardship in Illinois.

- Tammy Watson, C2000 Ecosystems Program Manager

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