



# **IDNR announces 2018 Habitat Fund Project grants**

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced the approval of more than \$2.1 million in grants for 17 wildlife habitat projects through the Illinois Habitat Fund Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program.

The program provides for enhancing game and non-game wildlife habitat through projects developed by not-for-profit organizations and governmental entities. Funding for the Illinois Habitat Fund Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program comes from the sale of Habitat Stamps to sportsmen.

The Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee this fall approved \$2,160,000 in funding for the 17 projects, which are outlined below.

- **National Wild Turkey Federation** – A project to do habitat restoration work at Kincaid Lake, Little Cache River and Oakwood Bottoms in the Shawnee National Forest in partnership with U.S. Forest Service. \$50,000 in state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$99,913 in matching funds.
- **Pheasants and Quail Forever** – A project that funds a Wildlife Biologist position to provide consulting with local landowners in these counties: Jackson, Perry, Washington, Randolph, and Franklin with a focus on the Burning Star Quail Focus Area. \$190,813 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$20,000 in matching funds.
- **Quail and Upland Game Alliance** – A partnership project with the USDA to fund a one-time incentive payment to local landowners for their voluntary enrollment in the federal State Acres for Wildlife (SAFE) program as part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in these counties: Mercer, Henry, Bureau, Stark, Marshall, Knox, Warren, Henderson, McDonough, Fulton, Peoria, Sangamon, Coles, Cumberland, Jasper, Richland, Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Marion, Bond, Clinton, Washington, and Perry. \$99,000 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$30,000 in matching funds.

- **Pleasure Drive Peoria Park District** - The Peoria Park District (PPD) along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW), the Illinois River Valley Pheasants Forever (PF) chapter, and Illinois Farm Bureau are working to restore and enhance prairies and woodlands in Peoria County to improve habitat diversity for the federally endangered rusty-patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*, RPBB). In addition to the RPBB, this project will benefit the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) and other native pollinator species, grassland songbirds, forest dwelling bird species, and overall ecosystem health. This partnership was awarded \$60,945.10 in state Habitat funds to restore 43 acres of high diversity native prairie and enhance an additional 17.2 acres of existing prairie and woodland in Peoria County, with \$63,8230 in grantee matching funds.
- **Pheasants and Quail Forever** – A project designed for providing habitat restoration assistance for local landowners in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) affecting potentially 2,000 acres statewide. \$105,000 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$40,000 in matching funds.
- **Quail and Upland Game Alliance** – A project to fund a Habitat Specialist over several years to advise and consult with private landowners on habitat-friendly practices in a game bird habitat region of southern Illinois south of I-70. \$60,500 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$210,000 in matching funds.
- **Winnebago Forest Preserve** – The Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD) along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW), local Pheasants Forever (PF) and Trout Unlimited (TU) chapters, and Illinois Farm Bureau are working to restore and enhance prairies and woodlands in Winnebago County to improve habitat diversity for the federally endangered rusty-patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*, RPBB). In addition to the RPBB, these projects will benefit the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) and other native pollinator species, grassland songbirds, forest dwelling bird species, and overall ecosystem health. This is a project to restore 84.5 acres of high diversity native prairie and enhance an additional 299.5 acres of existing prairie and woodland in Winnebago County. Winnebago County has one of the highest concentrations of known RPBB populations in Illinois outside the Chicagoland collar counties. Grant project locations of these habitat restoration activities are at Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve, Severson Dells Forest Preserve, Stone Bridge Forest Preserve, Four Lakes Forest Preserve, and Kieselburg Forest Preserve. \$90,860 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$114,521.53 in matching funds.
- **Quail and Upland Game Alliance** – A project to fund Bonus Incentive Payments to local landowners for completing wildlife-friendly work on CPR and Non-CRP acreage in 20 Illinois counties that are game bird range areas. \$121,220 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$40,800 in matching funds.

- Pheasants and Quail Forever – A project designed for funding Farm Bill biologist positions providing consultative habitat restoration assistance for local landowners in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) affecting potentially 20,000 acres in these counties: Rock Island, Henry, Mercer, Henderson, Warren, Knox, McLean, Livingston, DeWitt, Peoria, Woodford, Tazewell, Ford, Iroquois, Champaign, Vermillion, Douglas, Moultrie, Shelby, Coles, Cumberland, Effingham, Jasper, Clay, Marion, Jefferson, Richland, Wayne, Hamilton, Lawrence, Edwards, Wabash and White. \$180,000 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$540,000 in matching funds.
- Quail and Upland Game Alliance – A project to fund habitat restoration work to set back woody succession adjacent to grasslands in the Grand Prairie and Southern Till plains of Illinois on both public and private lands. \$28,908 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$9,720 in matching funds.
- Winnebago Forest Preserve – A project to create Ferguson Prairie Pothole, a 1.3-acre seasonal pond attractive to waterfowl near the parking trailhead at the Calvin and Sophia Ferguson Forest Preserve, a 529-acre property with 1.9 miles of Sugar River shoreline at the confluence with the Pecatonica River. A wetland reserve easement for 457 acres of the site is held by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS). According to local bird enthusiasts, the site is a major migratory bird stopover. The project goals are to create the wetland habitat close to parking for public enjoyment and exposure, especially for those with limited mobility, and to raise awareness and education of wetlands. \$10,880 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$11,585 in matching funds.
- Pheasants and Quail Forever – A project of buying habitat restoration equipment for volunteer chapters with habitat restoration workers in Winnebago, Stephenson, Brown, Piatt, Ford, McDonough, Kane, Coles, Cumberland, and Macon counties. \$98,839 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$47,110 in matching funds.
- Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) Braidwood Sands Area – This project will fund non-native invasive species control on 1,063 acres of the Braidwood Sands Area. The project reduces sassafras and oak tree and grub density in the savanna and removal of unwanted native trees from mesic prairie areas, removing excessive native shrubs from wet prairie/sedge meadow and marsh, and converts agricultural fields to prairie. The project proposes to over-seed prairie recreations with local seed and perform butterfly surveys on Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve, Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve, Kankakee Sands Forest Preserve and Wilmington Shrub Prairie State Nature Preserve. \$112,200 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$244,850 in matching funds.
- Pheasants and Quail Forever – A project of habitat restoration of seasonal wetlands in Northeast Illinois to improve wildlife habitat diversity, water quality and flood protection in 20 wetland basins and 100 acres in these counties: Ford, Iroquois,

Champaign, Livingston, Kankakee, and Will. \$195,305.25 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$120,824 in matching funds.

- Quail and Upland Game Alliance – A project to buy a prescribed burn wildland fire water pump for assisting crews with prescribed burn areas in Logan County. \$5,924 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$1,609 in matching funds.
- Pheasants and Quail Forever – A partnership project with the IDNR for funding a five-person mobile Habitat Strike Team work crew for habitat restoration projects in west central Illinois. \$695,942.59 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$649,000 in matching funds.
- Pheasants and Quail Forever – a partnership project with the IDNR for funding the equipment and hauling trailer for a five-person mobile Habitat Strike Team work crew for habitat restoration projects in west central Illinois. \$46,799.59 of state Habitat funds were awarded, with the grantee providing \$5,000 in matching funds.

The grants through the Illinois Habitat Fund Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program are competitive and are evaluated for their merit. Eligible recipients are limited to any appropriate not-for-profit organization or government agency that has the expertise, equipment and permission from the landowner (if applicable) to develop and/or manage wildlife habitat. “Appropriate Not-For-Profit Organization” means a not-for-profit corporation that is organized pursuant to the General Not For Profit Corporation Act of 1986 , is in good standing as a not-for-profit corporation and is authorized to conduct affairs in Illinois with one of its purposes as stated in its Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws being the support, development, conservation or management of habitat for future generations, or wildlife rehabilitation.

Applications for the next round of grants through the Illinois Habitat Fund Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program will be accepted beginning on January 1, 2019. Check the IDNR webpage at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/grants/Pages/Special-Wildlife-Funds-Grant-Program.aspx> for more information.