



IDNR Announces 2021 Habitat Fund Project Grants

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced the approval of \$958,096 in grants for seven 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.

The Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee approved \$958,096 in funding for the seven projects outlined below:

- Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) Braidwood Dunes, Savanna Nature Preserve, Sand Ridge Savanna NP and Kankakee Sands – This project will fund habitat restoration activities such as controlling nonnative invasive species to create large blocks of contiguous prairie and remnant savanna. Partner organizations are The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Commonwealth Edison. State Habitat funds totaling \$92,000 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$110,000 in matching funds.
- Quail and Upland Game Alliance – A project statewide on private landowner and state lands to help landowners complete wildlife friendly management work on both Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Non-CRP acreage. State Habitat funds totaling \$50,000 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$32,783.72 in matching funds. <http://quga.org/>
- Quail and Upland Game Alliance – A project to hire a Habitat Specialist that works on public and private lands with the landowner to establish and improve habitat for all upland game on their properties, including invasives removal, strip disking, strip spraying, prairie plantings including pollinator plants, inter-seeding, and prescribed

burns. State Habitat funds totaling \$44,000 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$95,340 in matching funds. <http://quga.org/>

- Pheasants Forever - A project to hire three fulltime positions for Farm Bill Biologists to provide conservation technical assistance for the restoration of improved habitat on state owned and private lands totaling approximately 20,000 acres of habitat restoration. This position will help manage existing projects in Marion, Clay, Jefferson, Hamilton, White, Wayne, Richland, Lawrence, Edwards, Wabash, Perry, Washington, Randolph, Jackson, Franklin, Gallatin, and Hardin counties, and seek out additional projects with landowners and resource professionals within the project area. State Habitat funds totaling \$102,096 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$306,288 in matching funds. <https://pheasantsforever.org/>

- National Great Rivers Research and Education Center Habitat Strike Team (NGRREC), East Alton, Lewis and Clark Community College - A project to support the equipment capacity and personnel capabilities of the NGRREC Habitat Strike Team to restore and improve habitat with stewardship management practices across 8,000 acres of the Great Rivers Confluence area within a 90-mile radius from East Alton. This habitat stewardship area has five state parks and three nature preserves. State Habitat funds totaling \$220,000 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$254,388 in matching funds, and \$224,973 in additional state funding. <http://www.ngrrrec.org/>

- Pheasants Forever - The 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. The HST provides assistance to landowners by writing prescribed burn and forestry plans and completes the following habitat practices: installation of firebreaks, conduct prescribed burns, conduct timber stand improvement, non-native invasive species removal, brush management, layout of grids for aerial spraying plots, improve existing wildlife cover, plant new acres into wildlife cover, assist with public promotion of IDNR's IRAP program that promotes hunting and fishing opportunities for the public while targeting first time hunters. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever (PF&QF) requested funds to continue the HST. State Habitat funds totaling \$200,000 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$25,000 in matching funds, and \$100,000 in additional state funding. <https://pheasantsforever.org/>

- IDNR will be using Habitat Funds to conduct aerial spraying of bush honeysuckle and some of the funds will be used to contract habitat work outside of Habitat Strike Team work areas. State Habitat funds totaling \$250,000 were awarded, with the department providing \$300,000 in matching funds.