

IDNR Announces Grants Supporting Natural Areas Stewardship

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SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced eight grants totaling \$456,000 to land trusts in Illinois to support stewardship on land protected by Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) programs. The grants are the first awards from the Illinois Natural Areas Stewardship Grant Program.

Eligible applicants under the grant program are Conservation Land Trusts exempt from taxation under Section 501 (c) (3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code and whose originating documents include in their purposes the restoration and stewardship of land for conservation purposes.

The goal of the grant program is to increase the delivery of much-needed stewardship activities to natural areas permanently protected within the INPC system. Stewardship needs on natural areas throughout the state have continued to outpace the ability to deliver these services by individuals, volunteers, organizations, and government agencies. This grant program is designed to fund projects that increase the stewardship capacity of Conservation Land Trusts by providing staff and equipment for these activities.

“I’m excited to see this program moving forward and providing grants to help protect our natural areas so that people can continue to enjoy them for generations to come,” **said State Senator Jason Barickman (R-Bloomington)**, the sponsor of legislation that funded the program. “Our nature preserves and parks provide amazing opportunities for healthy recreation and education.”

State Rep. Tom Bennett (R-Pontiac) also was a sponsor of the legislation.

“These grants will provide much-needed resources to areas that have been severely underfunded for years. Maintaining the quality of our natural resources is a priority and important to all of us,” he said. “I am glad to see this much-needed relief go to the communities who need it.”

Funding for the grant program is derived from a portion of the Illinois Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. The fund must be used by the IDNR for the acquisition and stewardship of natural areas, including habitats for endangered and threatened species (Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Act, 525 ILCS 35/14).

More information about the grant program can be found on the IDNR website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/grants/Pages/StewardshipGrants.aspx>.

Land Trusts receiving grants, Illinois Nature Preserves and/or Land and Water Reserves included in the grants, and planned stewardship activities supported by the grant funds are listed below.

Land Conservation Foundation - \$20,000

Control of invasive species at Mettler Woods Nature Preserve and Charlotte and Dan Brady Woods Nature Preserve in Champaign and DeWitt counties.

The Nature Conservancy - \$55,786.92

Equipment for installing prescribed fire breaks and invasive species control at Carl N. Becker Nature Preserve, Pembroke Savanna Nature Preserve, Hopkins Park Nature Preserve, Tallmadge Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Mskoda Land and Water Reserve, and Guiding Star Savanna Nature Preserve in Kankakee County.

Prairie Hills Resource Conservation & Development - \$50,879.02

Natural areas management equipment, prescribed burn support, and invasive species control at Nenawakwa Land and Water Reserve, Thistle Hills Land and Water Reserve, Stony Hills Nature Preserve, and Jamar Haven Land and Water Reserve in Hancock and McDonough counties.

Illinois Audubon Society - \$60,000

Invasive species control at Round Pond Nature Preserve in Pope County.

The Conservation Foundation - \$82,500

Prescribed burns and canopy thinning at Dayton Bluffs Land and Water Reserve and O'Hara Woods Nature Preserve in LaSalle and Will counties.

Grand Prairie Friends - \$71,534.10

Equipment, prescribed burn support, and herbicide for invasive species control at Warbler Bottoms North Land and Water Reserve, Warbler Landing Land and Water Reserve, Warbler Woods North Land and Water Reserve, Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve, and Warbler Woods Nature Preserve in Coles County.

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County - \$60,295.80

Equipment, prescribed burn support, and herbicide for invasive species control at Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve (and Westwood Park buffer), Irish Oaks Savanna Nature Preserve, Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, and Spring Hollow Buffer (Boone Creek Fen Nature Preserve) in McHenry County.

Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation - \$55,000

Prescribed burn support, invasive species control, forest improvements, tree planting, and removal of woody species at Apple River Canyon Nature Preserve and Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve in Jo Daviess County.