



Illinois EPA Awards Nearly \$862,000 To Heartlands Conservancy For Water Quality Protection Within The Indian Creek

June 14 2022 9:22 AM



BELLEVILLE – HeartLands Conservancy, an environmental non-profit serving southwestern Illinois, applied for the Section 319(h) grant in partnership with Madison

County. The total project cost is around \$1.57 million, with Illinois EPA providing 55 percent or \$831,847 in grant funds and local landowners and partners (HeartLands Conservancy and Madison County Stormwater Management) providing 45 percent, or \$710,441 in match.

Steven Brendel, Stormwater Coordinator from Madison County Stormwater Management, said that the IEPA's 319 grant is the ultimate collaboration for individuals to be invested in projects that directly impact them.

John O'Donnell, Water Program Manager with HeartLands Conservancy, said that local landowners, farmers, residents, and municipalities are crucial to the successful implementation of the locally developed Indian-Cahokia Creek Watershed Plan (October 2018).

"Having local stakeholders identify water quality and flooding issues was vital to the development of the Indian-Cahokia Creek Watershed Plan," John said. "Now, we are excited to take this plan and execute some best management practices to help solve the issues identified by the community."

The grant is an important first step toward voluntary implementation of the Indian-Cahokia Creek Watershed Plan. The plan's purpose is to address stormwater and nonpoint source (NPS) pollution issues in the watershed that drains Indian and Cahokia creeks in Madison and Macoupin Counties. NPS pollution occurs when runoff from rain and snowmelt carries pollutants into waterways such as streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and even groundwater.

Funding from this grant will also assist one of the large residential lakes, Dunlap Lake in Edwardsville, to better capture sediment before it enters the lake. Andrew Reznack, President of Dunlap Lake Properties Owners Association shared his thoughts on the grant, "The Dunlap Lake Properties Owners Association engaged with Heartland Conservancy 2 years ago to assist in long-term planning for our community. Part of this effort included the submittal of a grant application offered by the IEPA. Heartland Conservancy was instrumental in our ability to gain access to funds offered by this grant. We could not be happier. We will be using this portion of the grant allocated to the Dunlap Community to support lake health and shoreline stabilization. We are excited to see the positive impacts this will have on not just our lake but watershed across the surrounding communities."

The Section 319(h) Grant Program is a competitive financial assistance grant program established to help control NPS pollution. Federal funds are designated to the Illinois EPA under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. The funds are then used to support state NPS management programs.

The Indian Creek-Cahokia Creek watershed includes all or parts of the following municipalities: Bethalto, Bunker Hill, Dorchester, Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana, Staunton, Wilsonville, Wood River, and Worden.

The project will assist local landowners to voluntarily implement stormwater projects, called best management practices (BMPs), in the watershed to reduce nonpoint source pollution, soil erosion, and nutrient and sediment loadings to improve water quality. HeartLands Conservancy will launch a sign-up period in the late Spring or early Summer for landowners and government entities.

Some of the practices eligible for cost-share assistance include:

- Grassed waterways
- Ponds
- Water and sediment control basins
- Wetland restoration
- Shoreline stabilization
- Stream channel stabilization
- Streambank stabilization
- Bioswales
- Cover crops

The local watershed management plan is a part of the Madison County Stormwater Management Plan, the overall framework for stormwater management in the county, which guides regulations, identifies flood and water quality problems, establishes best management practices, and prioritizes work to be done. Contact John O'Donnell at HeartLands Conservancy to learn more or to sign-up for the cost-share program.

For information and updates on this project visit <https://heartlandsconservancy.org/water/INDIAN-CAHOKIA-CREEK-WATERSHED/>

For additional information on Illinois' Nonpoint Source Management Program and the 319(h) Grant Program, please visit: <https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/water-quality/watershed-management/nonpoint-sources/Pages/default.aspx>.