



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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11 organizations receive Natural Areas Stewardship Grants from IDNR

SPRINGFIELD – Eleven grants totaling nearly \$750,000 have been awarded to Illinois land trusts to support stewardship on land protected by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources announced.

The goal of the Natural Areas Stewardship Grant program is to increase the delivery of much needed stewardship activities to natural areas that are permanently protected within the nature preserves system. Stewardship needs on natural areas throughout Illinois 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 address this deficiency by increasing the stewardship capacity of conservation land trusts through grants that will expand their staff and equipment for these activities. Land trusts receiving 2023 grants and their stewardship action are:

Grand Prairie Friends, \$92,817.88 for work in Coles County. Purchase a truck and support staff time to perform ecological restoration through prescribed fire implementation and invasive species removal at Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve, Warbler Woods North Land and Water Reserve, Warbler Woods Nature Preserve, Warbler Bottoms North Land and Water Reserve, Warbler Bluff Land and Water Reserve, and Warbler Landing Land and Water Reserve.

Illinois Audubon Society, \$52,000 for work in Lee County. Enlist contractual services to perform ecological restoration through invasive species removal at Gremel Nature Preserve.

Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, \$76,000 for work in Jo Daviess and Carroll counties. Purchase a truck to support efficient and effective performance of ecological restoration at Rutherford Refuge at Twin Bridges Nature Preserve, Casper Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve, Sentinel Nature Preserve, Hanover Bluff Nature Preserve, Apple River Canyon Nature Preserve, and Rall Woods Land and Water Reserve.

Lake Forest Open Lands, \$67,609.12 for work in Lake County. Enlist contractual services, purchase equipment, and support chainsaw training to perform ecological restoration through prescribed fire implementation and invasive species removal at Middlefork Savanna Nature Preserve and Skokie River Nature Preserve.

ParkLands Foundation, \$41,984.06 for work in McLean and Woodford counties. Enlist contractual services and support staff to perform ecological restoration through prescribed fire implementation and invasive species

removal at Merwin Savanna Nature Preserve, Weston Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve, Ridgetop Hill Prairie Nature Preserve and Chinquapin Bluffs Land and Water Reserve.

Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, \$89,784.68 for work in McDonough and Hancock counties. Purchase equipment and supplies and support staff time to perform ecological restoration through prescribed fire implementation and invasive species removal at Nenawakwa Land and Water Reserve, Thistle Hills Land and Water Reserve, Stony Hills Nature Preserve, Jamar Haven Land and Water Reserve, and Short Fork Seep Nature Preserve.

The Conservation Foundation, \$51,282 for work in LaSalle County. Enlist contractual services, purchase equipment, and support staff to perform ecological restoration through prescribed fire implementation and invasive species removal at Dayton Bluffs Land and Water Reserve.

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, \$61,991.40, for work in McHenry County. Enlist contractual services, purchase equipment, and support staff to perform ecological restoration through prescribed fire implementation and invasive species removal at Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve, and Irish Oaks Savanna Nature Preserve.

The Nature Conservancy, Kankakee Sands, \$81,091.00 for work in Kankakee County. Purchase a skid steer to support efficient and effective performance of ecological restoration at Pembroke Savanna Nature Preserve, Hopkins Park Nature Preserve, Tallmadge Sand Forest Land and Water Reserve, Mskoda Land and Water Reserve, and Guiding Star Savanna Land and Water Reserve.

The Nature Conservancy, Nachusa, \$54,327 for work in Lee and Ogle counties. Purchase a knife-style brush mower attachment for a skid steer to thin invasive woody plants at Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve and Nachusa Grasslands Land and Water Reserve.

The Nature Institute, \$78,500 for work in Madison County. Hire staff and purchase equipment to support ecological restoration through prescribed fire implementation and invasive species removal at John M. Olin Nature Preserve and Mississippi Sanctuary Nature Preserve.

Funding for IDNR's Natural Area Stewardship 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).

Eligible applicants under the grant program are conservation land trusts exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code whose originating documents include in the purpose of restoration, stewardship, or conservation of land for the preservation of native plants or animals, biotic communities, geologic formations, or archaeological sites of significance.

For more information, visit <https://dnr.illinois.gov/grants/stewardshipgrants.html>.

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