



Illinois DNR

2009 SWG Grant Application System

Project Title: Southeastern Illinois Prescribed Burn Initiative #2

Applicant Information																							
Applicant (Grantee if awarded)																							
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Project Information																							
Project Title:	Southeastern Illinois Prescribed Burn Initiative #2																						
Project Description	Continued support of the Southeastern Illinois Prescribed Burn Association (SIPBA) project.																						
Type of Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Planning																						
(Match Rates Implementation: 50% Federal : 50% Non-Federal 75% Federal : 25% Non-Federal)																							
Dollars Requested	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Dollars Requested</th> <th>Total Federal</th> <th>Total Non-Federal</th> <th>Total Cost of Project</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1st Year Funding</td> <td>\$45,363</td> <td>\$45,363</td> <td>\$90,726</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd Year Funding</td> <td>\$45,364</td> <td>\$45,364</td> <td>\$90,728</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3rd Year Funding</td> <td>\$45,364</td> <td>\$45,364</td> <td>\$90,728</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totals:</td> <td>\$136,091</td> <td>\$136,091</td> <td>\$272,182</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Dollars Requested	Total Federal	Total Non-Federal	Total Cost of Project	1st Year Funding	\$45,363	\$45,363	\$90,726	2nd Year Funding	\$45,364	\$45,364	\$90,728	3rd Year Funding	\$45,364	\$45,364	\$90,728	Totals:	\$136,091	\$136,091	\$272,182
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We propose to initiate this grant as our existing SWG grant period ends in March of 2011.																							

Need: (3000 characters)

According to the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (Plan), the proposed project area contains the most significant upland forest for the Species in Greatest Need of Conservation in Illinois. It also contains significant areas of southern flatwoods, open woodland, barrens, shrub/successional habitat and prairie restoration areas. The Plan goals can be achieved if habitats are maintained and enhanced over time.

Alteration of natural disturbance processes, particularly the suppression of fire, has contributed to the changing composition of forested habitats, resulting in an increase in maple, other mesophytic trees and closed forest types - and a corresponding decrease in oak-hickory dominance and open forest types. Many of the woodlands and barrens have lost their open savanna-like structure and diverse ground cover species due to encroaching woody vegetation. Shrub-successional habitat has been lost and closed forest conditions have developed, threatening the species of concern that depend on these communities.

Prescribed burning provides a benefit when done on cool season grass, warm season grass, old fields, brushy areas or wooded areas. The important plant seeds scarified by the heat will germinate much better on the burned-over habitat, while the new sprouts will furnish insects in spring and summer. Burning also releases the minerals tied up in vegetation and stimulates the building of nitrogen in the soil. Without fire, hardwood sprouts and other trees soon shade out more desirable grasses and forbs. Burning controls the unwanted plants, stimulates food-producing plants, and maintains an open stand.

Resource managers widely recognize fire as an essential tool for maintaining disturbance dependent habitats. In fact, the call for reintegrating fire into natural communities has dramatically increased in recent years. However, many private landowners do not have the labor, equipment and expertise necessary to plan and complete burns in a safe, effective manner. Natural resource agencies have limited resources available to assist these landowners in planning and executing prescribed burns. Many areas that need to be burned are not being treated, and others are being burned by untrained landowners who are either unaware of or unwilling to wait for assistance. Without proper planning and assistance, prescribed burning can easily get out of control, or it may burn in such a manner that diminishes habitat for the species in greatest need of conservation.

A need that will be addressed during this project is the evaluation of how well the application of fire, as it is currently planned and implemented, achieves the resource management objectives in the region, and thereby the goals of the Wildlife Action Plan. To date, the effectiveness of prescribed burning has not been well documented by research specific to this region. The information learned is needed to justify continuing efforts and refine future management recommendations.

Objectives: (3000 characters)

1. Provide funding to support contracts for a part time Prescribed Burn Coordinator (PBC) and three part-time Crew Coordinators (CC) who will provide planning, organization and coordination of burn projects. This project also supports a fourth CC that is paid by IDNR. Maintain and replace SIPBA equipment and supplies purchased through previous grants as needed.
2. Burn about 1000 acres per year for the length of the grant. Over the three years, at least 2,000 acres of state land will be contained within burn units.
3. Provide prescribed fire training applicable for safe and effective fire management activities. It is the intent of the Southeastern Illinois Prescribed Burn Association (SIPBA) to have trained members, volunteers and landowners working on a prescribed fire, for both safety and liability reasons.
4. Monitor the effectiveness of prescribed burning, forest stand improvement and related practices to improve the quality and precision of recommendations for achieving land management objectives. A database will be developed and interpreted to assess the values of the prescribed burning program for maintenance of oak-dominated habitat types.

Approach: (3000 characters)

- 1) The proposed grant will support a part-time PBC and four part-time CCs for a three-year period. The PBC organizes meetings, coordinates training, maintains records, develops burn plans, works with landowners to implement burns, develops and maintains support of partners, and develops grant proposals. SIPBA maintains four covered equipment trailers that are each assigned to a CC. The CCs maintain the equipment, help landowners prepare for burns and ensure that adequate equipment and labor is present for each burn. A trained labor pool has been developed. SIPBA membership dues and other income are sufficient for routine equipment maintenance and a basic training program.
- 2) A qualified burn boss is required to be on each prescribed burn. Proof of liability insurance is provided prior to execution of the burn. The PBC or other qualified person meets the member on his land and prepares a burn plan for the property. Landowners prepare their own control lines. The PBC and CCs work with members to provide enough qualified crew members to insure a safe and effective burn. The CC assigned to each burn provides all necessary equipment. Volunteers and their equipment will be used to help prepare control lines and implement the burns.
- 3) Volunteers attend training, and informational meetings to facilitate a safe and effective burning program. The SIPBA is an active partner with local, federal and state agencies to provide training opportunities. This training includes the skills and tactics associated with fire management to provide the student with prescribed fire behavior knowledge applicable for safe and effective fire management activities.
- 4) Monitoring the effectiveness of prescribed burning and related activities will determine whether program objectives are being met. Records for treated areas and, where possible, untreated control sites, will be developed and maintained by IDNR and SIU. Site and vegetation characteristics will be monitored to serve as a baseline for subsequent post-treatment evaluations. Special attention will be paid to the impacts of treatments on the health and regeneration of keystone tree species, wildlife habitat values, and status of invasive exotic plant species.

This grant will provide continued support for SIPBA, a creative partnership that has greatly enhanced and multiplied resources available to effectively implement prescribed burning at the level in which it is needed to maintain and restore native communities in Illinois. If the SIPBA approach is proven successful it could serve as a model for initiating similar organizations in other parts of the state.

The Southeastern IL Regional Planning & Development Commission will manage the grant for a 9% administrative fee.

Relationship to the Plan (3000 characters)

Relevant Action Items from the Wildlife Action Plan

Forests Campaign:

Action 1 – Maintain and enhance composition; Through the application of prescribed fire this project will maintain or restore open woodland habitats, promote oak-hickory regeneration, stimulate the germination and production of native ground-layer plants and help control invasive species.

Action 3 – Expand programs to assist private landowners; The equipment, training, planning and organization provided by SIPBA facilitate the expanded application of prescribed fire on private land.

Action 4 - Marketing, Technical Assistance and Demonstration; Experienced burners developed through training and actual burning will demonstrate safe and proper burning techniques and effects to member landowners. Existing demonstration areas and results of recent monitoring efforts will be utilized to educate landowners and the public on prescribed fire.

Action 6 - Fill Information gaps and develop improved actions; Monitoring data from this project and the previous SWG will provide crucial, local information to refine and improve management

recommendations. Member training will involve instructors from the Illinois Dept of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service and other agencies. Members will learn about beneficial effects of burning on their property and how they can further improve their forest land.

Action 7 – Restore and manage high quality communities. INAI sites will be given priority in scheduling burns. SIPBA provides a means of applying fire in these areas that did not exist previously.

Farmland and Prairie Campaign:

Action 2 - Use incentives and technical assistance to enhance habitat condition; SIPBA provides guidance in planning and executing prescribed fire.

Action 6 - Fill information gaps, develop improved actions. See above.

Land & Water Stewardship Campaign:

Action 1 - Improve private resource stewardship; Making prescribed burning more available to private landowners will improve forest stands and wildlife habitat quality on these lands.

Action 2 - Improve public resource stewardship; This program not only increases prescribed burning on private lands but also State owned public lands. Forest diversity, maintenance of open-lands, old fields, and threatened and endangered species habitat quality will all be improved with increased prescribed burning on these public lands.

Action 3 – Ecological and Environmental Education; Prescribed burning training sessions are put on every spring and fall. Topics include not only the “how-to” of prescribed burning but also forest management, ecosystem management, wildlife habitat management, native grass species management, threatened and endangered species management and non-native invasive species control as well.

Action 4 - Marketing, Technical Assistance, and Demonstration; The burn association not only does formal training but also public field days, conferences, and school activities.

Anticipated Outcomes and Benefits: (3000 characters)

The proposed project will add much needed resources to reach and assist more landowners in treating and enhancing disturbance dependent communities, thereby directly benefiting the Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. Funding will complete the initial establishment phase of the SIPBA and provide funds for essential equipment maintenance and replacement.

The SIPBA will have the funding stability it needs to become fully established and more self-sustaining. The part-time positions of Prescribed Burn Coordinator and four Crew Coordinators are crucial roles that bring organization and focus to bear on a major challenge facing natural resource managers. Far more progress can be made through this type of collaborative effort than by agency personnel alone. It is anticipated that at least 60 landowners who collectively control 12,000 acres will become members of the SIPBA within 3 years. The number of trained and experienced individuals available for prescribed burning will increase to at least 80.

The funds from this project will maintain the planning, organization and coordination functions that are essential to this prescribed burn program. Specifically, grant funds will allow SIPBA to continue to contract a part-time Prescribed Burn Coordinator and 3 part-time Crew Coordinators for 3 years.

Monitoring and evaluation efforts undertaken through this project will result in formal documentation of specific values provided by fire and related interventions. The findings will be used to improve the cost-effectiveness of the SIPBA approach and justify its continuation on a sustained basis. Immediate uses of this information will include number and location of acres impacted. Continued measurement will determine the extent to which treated areas are on a trajectory toward ecological health and stability, as well as production of high quality wildlife habitat.

It is anticipated that as oak regeneration becomes established and accumulates as a result of fire disturbance, the resilience of oak communities will be enhanced. Hard and soft mast production will increase over time, benefiting mast-dependent species. Declining bird species such as vesper sparrow, lark sparrow, Baltimore oriole, eastern kingbird and red headed woodpecker will benefit from the more open structure created in oak dominated communities and shrub-successional habitats. The increased sunlight, the mosaic of vegetation and soil surface conditions as well as increased prey populations should improve long term habitat conditions for the timber rattlesnake, as well. Conditions for bobwhite quail will be significantly enhanced, since the species is dependent on the types of openland and shrub-successional habitat that are perpetuated by periodic disturbance. And, quail can more easily find their preferred food sources with the leaf litter reduced or removed by fire.

Signature of Applicant:

Date:

Signature of department or unit head (if required):

Date:
