

State Wildlife Grant Program

State of Illinois

Grant Agreement

PROJECT NUMBER: T-35-P-1 ~~1~~ Amendment #1

TITLE: A Plan for the Recovery of the Endangered barn owl (*Tyto alba*) in Illinois.

This 06/09 revised Grant Agreement addresses only Segment 1 and includes amendments that accompany the following changes:

1. **A change in project manager from Joe Kath to Anne Mankowski.** Ms. Mankowski is the Director of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board (ESPB) and is employed by the Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois (INHS UIUC) via a contract funded with state funds by the IDNR. The IDNR will contract Ms. Mankowski as the Principal Investigator for the T-35-P-1 project, where she will oversee project management and reporting and will also hire an Academic Hourly (Dr. Jeff Walk) through the INHS UIUC to write the recovery plan. Ms. Mankowski will cost share up to 5% time from her ESPB contract toward the project management duties for the T-35-P-1 project; neither the T-35-P-1 contract, nor the IDNR, will provide additional funding to employ Ms. Mankowski on the T-35-P-1 project. Mr. Glen Kruse oversees the IDNR administration of Ms. Mankowski's ESPB contract and will also oversee the IDNR administration of the T-35-P-1 contract. The IDNR identified this as the best and most viable means of completing the project.
2. **A revised timeline for deliverables and project completion.** The original timeline for the project was from 03/01/07 – 02/28/10, with a final recovery plan being delivered on 02/28/10 and some follow-up reporting taking place until 09/30/10. This amendment requests the following extension: a final recovery plan will be delivered by 06/30/10 and barn owl box program implementation, monitoring and reporting will take place until 06/30/11. The extension is necessary to accommodate all delays to date on the project, as well as the administrative requirements of moving the project (and contract) to Ms. Mankowski under her INHS UIUC employment, the Academic Hourly hiring process, time for that staff to write the recovery plan, and time for IDNR staff to implement the nest box placement and monitoring portion of the plan.
3. **Website posting of a final recovery plan instead of printing hard copies.** The original proposal called for printing 100-200 copies of the final recovery plan. This amendment proposes to post the final document to the ESPB webpage on the IDNR website instead of printing hard copies. This will reduce project costs by eliminating printing needs and will reduce future costs to the IDNR to mail hard copies to requesting individuals.
4. **Budget.** The budget has been reworked as follows: Because of this amendment, the federal/state match will now be 50:50 for all Objectives; that is reflected in the new budget. There has also been a line-item realignment of federal funds to contractual (for the pass-through contract that will employ Ms. Mankowski and an Academic Hourly at the INHS UIUC) and revisions to the IDNR cost share allocation. The total grant amount has subsequently changed from \$35,750.00 (\$23,313.00 Fed; \$12,437.00 State) to \$46,626.00 (\$23,313.00 Fed; \$23,313.00 State).

OBJECTIVES:

1. **Status Assessment/Recovery Planning:** Preparation and completion of a formal statewide

(Illinois) recovery plan incorporating components of the draft recovery strategy for the barn owl previously prepared by various IDNR staff. A contractor will be hired to prepare this document and will be asked to use the IDNR plan for the recovery of the Greater Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*) as a template. The final product/recovery plan will ~~include production of 100-200 copies for distribution~~ be posted to the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board's webpage on the IDNR's website.

2. **Status Assessment**: Identify and document all known barn owl nesting attempts, observations, and reports in the last 10 years.
3. **Status Assessment**: Identify large grassland complexes, counties with significant amounts of CRP grasslands, large concentrations of pasture-lands, large reclaimed strip-mine lands, and other potential habitats in Illinois. Identify focus grassland areas where potential barn owl habitat currently exists.
4. **Recovery**: Implement a barn owl nest box program, concentrating on areas with known breeding pairs, areas with documented observations of barn owls and identified priority large grassland habitats.

APPROACH: In order to recover this species in Illinois and have a significant impact on its population in the Midwestern United States, ~~the main focus of the overall project will include:~~ a nest box placement and monitoring program; grassland conservation and restoration (including continued management/development of grassland reserves such as: Goose Lake Prairie, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, and the Des Plaines Conservation Area); development of working partnerships with farmers and rural landowners to learn and practice more sustainable land stewardship; and, public awareness and volunteerism. ~~will be the main focus/approach of this project.~~ This "big picture" approach can only benefit the long-term goals of restoring barn owls in Illinois and create important positive "spin-offs" for other grassland species and biodiversity in general.

The project management and recovery plan development of the Segment 1 portion of the project will be contracted to the Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (INHS UIUC) via work order under an existing IDNR master contract with the INHS UIUC. The IDNR contract management will be overseen by Mr. Glen Kruse, IDNR Division of Natural Heritage Chief, and will employ the services of Anne Mankowski, Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board Director as the Principal Investigator, and of Dr. Jeff Walk as an Academic Hourly responsible for development of the recovery plan. ~~Please note that the following Tasks (1-1910) will be implemented under Segment 1: as part of an overall Recovery Strategy:~~

SEGMENT 1

(Effective Dates: March 1, 2007 - ~~February 28, 2010~~ June 30, 2011)

Objective 1. Task is to hire an independent contractor to write a formal statewide recovery plan, incorporating components of the draft recovery strategy for the barn owl previously prepared by various IDNR staff. The contractor will be asked to use the IDNR plan for the recovery of the Greater Prairie Chicken as a template. The final product/recovery plan will include production of approximately 100-200 copies for distribution. The schedule for this Objective is March 1, 2007 through ~~February 28, 2010~~ June 30, 2010.

Objective 2. Identify and document all known barn owl nesting attempts, observations, and reports in the last 10 years. The schedule for this Objective is March 1, 2007 through ~~February 28, 2010~~ June 30, 2010.

Task 1. Utilizing the Natural Heritage database, National Audubon's spring and Christmas Bird Count data, and other various sources develop a database that will provide an accurate distribution map of breeding pairs and observed individuals in Illinois.

Task 2. Conduct site visits to all locations where barn owls have been observed within the past 10 years to document presence or absence. Documentation may include; observations of individuals, nesting birds, pellet groups, feathers, whitewash, or other evidence.

Task 3. Implement a public information request program to attempt to locate additional nesting pairs or individuals. Conduct follow-up of reliable reports.

Task 4. Utilizing available databases, surveys, site visits and other reports or sources, complete Objective 2 and develop a database.

Objective 3. Identify large grassland complexes, counties with significant amounts of CRP grasslands, large concentrations of pasture-lands, large reclaimed strip-mine lands, and other potential habitats in Illinois. Identify focus grassland areas where potential barn owl habitat currently exists. The schedule for this Objective is March 1, 2008 through ~~February 28, 2010~~ June 30, 2010.

Task 5. Identify focus areas, where potential barn owl habitats currently exists or could be developed.

Task 6. Utilizing available databases and published reports, complete Objective 3 and develop a database.

Objective 4. Implement a barn owl nest box program, concentrating on areas with known breeding pairs, areas with documented observations of barn owls and identified priority large grassland habitats. Progress on Objective 4 can only be made after Objective 2 and Objective 3 is met by completing Tasks 1 through 6. The schedule for this Objective is ~~March 1, 2009 thru February 28, 2011~~ July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

Task 7. Conduct a site visit to all known previous nest box locations to assess location and condition of the existing nest box.

Task 8. Implement a barn owl nest box program, concentrate the placement of nest boxes in areas with known breeding pairs, observed birds or in priority grassland areas with free standing structures.

Task 9. Implement a barn owl nest program on large grasslands where there are no structures available, utilizing free-standing nest box structures: available nest box designs may need to be modified.

Task 10. Monitor nest boxes 1-2 times per year to determine presence or absence and perform maintenance on nest boxes.

LOCATION: The sites for the project "A Plan for the Recovery of the Endangered barn owl (*Tyto alba*) in Illinois" is statewide on both public and private lands.

DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THE GRANT AGREEMENT:

The following documents are attached in support of this grant proposal.

- Grant Agreement (Standard Form 3-1552)
- Grant Agreement Budget
- Federal Aid Section 7 Evaluation form
- Illinois Clearinghouse Response per Federal Executive Order 12372
- NEPA Compliance Checklist
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Part E: Certifications Certification Regarding Lobbying