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Illinois DNR

April 14, 2008

SWG Grant Application System

| Applicant(Grantee if awarded) | |
|-------------------------------|--|
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| PROJECT TITLE - Pilot Habitat Initiative for Illinois Mud Turtles and Chorus Frogs |
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| Project Description |
| The Wildlife Action Plan lists Illinois mud turtles and Illinois chorus frogs as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. We will restore wetland and grassland habitats at Clear Creek Wetland State Natural Area (Cass County) to create a relatively large (138 acres) management unit for these species. We will also conduct a pilot program to provide habitat on private lands using practices like wetland restoration, removal of invasive woody vegetation, and establishment of native grasses. |
| Type of Project |
| Implementation |

| (Match Rates Implementation: 50% Federal : 50% Non-Federal 75% Federal : 25% Non-Federal) | | | |
|---|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Dollars Requested | Total Federal | Total Non-Federal | Total Cost of Project |
| 1st Year Funding | 10000 | 20000 | 30000 |
| 2nd Year Funding | 10000 | 0 | 10000 |
| 3rd Year Funding | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals: | 20000 | 20000 | 40000 |

| Need: |
|---|
| The Wildlife Action Plan lists Illinois mud turtles and Illinois chorus frogs as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. Agricultural practices in areas inhabited by these species have reduced the amount |

and quality of their habitats. This project will help to meet a goal of the Farmland and Prairie Campaign by restoring wetlands and accompanying upland sand prairie habitat.

Objectives:

1) Restore wetland (~1 acre) and prairie (~50 acres) habitats at Clear Creek Wetland State Natural Area. 2) Restore 5 acres of wetland and prairie habitats on private lands (5-10 sites).

Approach:

The Illinois Department of Transportation purchased ~62 acres as mitigation for expansion of Route 67 through habitats occupied by Illinois mud turtles and chorus frogs. In 2005, this property (Clear Creek Wetland State Natural Area) was transferred to IDNR along with \$20,000 for habitat improvements. Using this money, which has already been appropriated and serves as a state match, we will hire a contractor to create an open-water area, remove invasive woody vegetation, and establish native grasses and forbs at Clear Creek Wetland SNA. Studies supported by State Wildlife Grants identified locations where Illinois chorus frogs occur (T-42-D) and evaluated approaches for restoration of their habitat (T-45-D). Most (>90%) sites with existing populations are on private lands. Surveys revealed that many of the small (1/4–1/2-acre), ephemeral wetlands used for breeding and development of tadpoles had been degraded by sedimentation, intermittent farming, and encroachment of woody vegetation. Many of the sites also lacked permanent grasslands used for estivation (Illinois chorus frogs spend most of the year resting underground). We will restore 5 acres of wetland and prairie habitats on private lands (5-10 sites).

Relationship To Plan:

The Wildlife Action Plan lists Illinois mud turtles and Illinois chorus frogs as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. This project will help to achieve a specific goal of the Farmland and Prairie Campaign [restore and manage at least 6 areas (of 300-500 acres each) of ephemeral wetlands and accompanying upland sand prairie habitat in the inland sand areas]. This project is an important transition from planning (e.g., SWG projects T-42-D & T-45-D) to implementation.

Anticipated Outcomes and Benefits:

This project will provide a relatively large (138 acres) complex of suitable habitat for Illinois mud turtles and chorus frogs. This complex will consist of 3 contiguous properties with management agreements or state ownership [both species occur at Charles “Chinee” Colvin Sand Prairie LWR (38 acres); wetland restoration is underway at Illinois River Sand Areas LWR (38 acres); additional habitat will be created at Clear Creek Wetland SNA (~1-acre breeding pond and improvements to ~50 acres of sand prairie)]. Successful conservation strategies for these species must include a private lands component because this is where most populations occur. We will conduct a pilot program to create and enhance habitat on private land (~5 acres at 5-10 sites). This pilot will help us to determine if a more aggressive conservation effort is warranted (based on landowner interest and participation).

Signature of Principal Investigator:

Date:

Signature of department or unit head (if required):

Date:



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