



2009 SWG Grant Application System

Project Title:

Applicant Information

Applicant (Grantee if awarded)	
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Project Information

Project Title: Healthy forests, woodlands and waters in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Basins

Project Description
 This project will provide funding for 2 professional foresters who will assist private landowners implementing forestry related USDA and IDNR cost-share programs in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Watersheds.

Type of Project

Implementation Planning
 (Match Rates Implementation: 50% Federal : 50% Non-Federal | 75% Federal : 25% Non-Federal)

Dollars Requested			
Dollars Requested	Total Federal	Total Non-Federal	Total Cost of Project
1st Year Funding	66,500	66,500	133,000
2nd Year Funding	66,500	66,500	133,000
3rd Year Funding	66,500	66,500	133,000
Totals:	199,500	199,500	399,000

Need: (3000 characters)

The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) identifies a number of issues impacting the quality of

Illinois forests. These impacts affect Illinois' water quality and wildlife species dependent on a healthy forest ecosystem. Among these issues are a general decline in forest quality, lack of professional forestry assistance on private lands, invasion by non-native invasive plants, and forest fragmentation. The Forest Campaign of the IWAP (Section III. E. pages 66-70) identifies 7 key actions to combat these problems. Action 1 calls for maintaining and enhancing existing forest habitats using natural disturbances and sustainable forestry practices. Action 2 notes that increases in statewide forest acreage should emphasize restoring floodplains and riparian corridors. Action 3 identifies the importance of programs that assist private forest owners in managing forest resources and again notes the importance of riparian forests for their numerous environmental benefits. Action 4 focuses on the need for technical assistance and other educational resources. The IWAP Management Guidelines for forest, open woodland, savanna and barren in the Southern Till Plain Natural Division (Section IV. K. page 205) calls for restoration and management of riparian wetlands and bottomland forests to increase ecological connectivity and decrease fragmentation of patches larger than 500 acres. To meet wildlife objectives in this natural division, a net increase of 65,000 acres of forest and 75,000 acres of woodland/savanna/barrens is needed.

Several federal and state cost share programs are currently available to landowners to restore floodplain forests and riparian corridors, implement sustainable forestry practices, and receive professional forestry assistance. Specifically, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) presents a unique opportunity to restore and protect 100,000 acres of floodplain corridors in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River watersheds over the next 3 years. The IDNR's Forestry Development Act assists private landowners in managing their forests, both through technical assistance and cost share from the Forestry Fund. The program currently has 11,124 participants accounting for 592,386 acres of which 35% are located in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Watersheds. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) offers cost share for sustainable forestry practices to landowners with an approved forest management plan. The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) offers NGO's the opportunity to focus EQIP funds for approved practices in specific areas with reduced competition and in some cases, better cost share rates. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) intends to apply for a CCPI to focus EQIP dollars on forestry improvements in the Kaskaskia River watershed to increase forest management capabilities and reduce the impact of lost FDA funds by recent legislative sweeps of the state Forestry Fund.

With agriculture being the predominant land use in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Basins, the opportunity for restoring and managing forested habitats in these watersheds using USDA cost-share programs is excellent. However, the Upper Kaskaskia and Lower Illinois River regions severely lack IDNR district forester staff. Without professional forestry assistance and a well-organized approach to servicing interested landowners, the opportunity to maximize conservation programs in these watersheds will be lost. By filling this void in technical assistance, promoting available programs on a local level and ensuring the best restoration and management practices are implemented in the appropriate places on the landscape, the proposed NWTF forester positions will be critical to achieving the objectives of the IWAP.

Objectives: (3000 characters)

1) Increase forested acres in floodplains and riparian corridors of the lower Illinois and upper Kaskaskia Rivers and their tributaries. 2) Improve quality of private forest land in the following counties of the Upper Kaskaskia River Watershed: Fayette, Shelby, Bond, Marion, and Effingham. 3) Improve quality of private forest land in the following counties of the Lower

Illinois River Watershed: Bureau, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, Putnam, Woodford, Peoria, and Tazewell. 4) Maximize forestry benefits of CREP, EQIP and FDA in entire Illinois and Kaskaskia River Basins by providing expert assistance to interested landowners. 5) Reduce forest fragmentation along riparian corridors of the Kaskaskia and Illinois River Watersheds.

Approach: (3000 characters)

NWTF will hire 2 professional foresters, one located in the Lower Illinois River watershed and one located in the Upper Kaskaskia River watershed. These positions will be full-time, term limited positions with benefits and will last 3 years from the date of hire. These individuals will potentially be housed in SWCD offices, centrally located in their respective regions. Working with the IDNR, NRCS, SWCD's and the NWTF regional biologist, these foresters will provide technical assistance to landowners, primarily through promoting and implementing CREP, EQIP and FDA cost share programs. Typical assistance will include conducting landowner consultations and eligibility evaluations, writing tree planting plans, writing FDA plans, and implementing FDA plans through sustainable forestry practices. Requested funding will pay 50% of the salary, benefits, travel and office supply expenses of these 2 full time foresters. The other 50% will be derived from state CREP funds. The foresters will report to the NWTF regional biologist, who will coordinate their duties assisting interested landowners and promoting the available conservation programs. Funding for the NWTF regional biologist will be derived from other sources, not related to this grant.

Relationship to the Plan (3000 characters)

This cooperative effort among IDNR, NRCS, SWCD's and NWTF is the first large scale attempt to implement the Forests Campaign of the IWAP. It is a multi-organizational effort to accomplish specific goals of the Campaign by identifying and utilizing the most relevant private land cost share programs currently available. This approach combines solid science with practical application and therefore, will maximize benefits to wildlife, water quality and landowners.

Anticipated Outcomes and Benefits:

(3000 characters)

Of the 4 statewide goals for forest habitat listed in Section III. C. page 46 of the IWAP, this project will contribute to accomplishing the first two. They are as follows: 1. Implement sustainable forestry practices, including timber stand improvement, prescribed fire, timber harvesting, and invasive species control to enhance oak-dominance and maintain understory diversity on 1 million acres of forest. 2. Increase statewide forest acreage by 350,000 acres, emphasizing restoration of floodplains and riparian corridors, increasing ecological connectivity among forests and other habitat patches, and reducing fragmentation of forests 500 acres and larger.

Wildlife associated with forest, woodland, shrubland and stream habitats in these regions are expected to benefit from the increase in forested acres, short term increase in early successional habitat, improved water quality, and improved quality of woodland and forest habitat. Long term benefits for neotropical migrant songbirds such as, Cerulean warbler, should occur due to less fragmented migration corridors. Short term benefits to early successional/shrubland species such as, Northern harrier, will be created by thousands of acres of new tree plantings. Upland forest improvements should provide long term benefits to shrub successional and woodland species such as red-headed woodpecker. Aquatic species, such as fresh water mussels, should also benefit as water quality improvements from reduced sedimentation and nutrient runoff are realized in the selected watersheds.

Additional benefits to IWAP emphasis game species such as wild turkey, American woodcock and Northern bobwhite should increase hunting opportunity. Finally, this project will deliver economic benefits to participating landowners, both through retiring marginal, frequently flooded cropland and through improving timber quality and production.

Following is a list of wildlife species in greatest need of conservation expected to benefit from this project.

Forest birds that will benefit from increased forest acres and reduced fragmentation: yellow-billed cuckoo, Pileated woodpecker, Acadian flycatcher, wood thrush, red-headed woodpecker, red-shouldered hawk, broad-winged hawk, Kentucky warbler, Chuck-will's widow, whip-poor-whill, brown creeper, black-billed cuckoo, Cerulean warbler, bald eagle, worm-eating warbler, Mississippi kite, prothonotary warbler and ovenbird.

Early successional birds that will use newly reforested areas (temporary benefit): Henslow's sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, short-eared owl, Swainson's hawk, Northern harrier, sedge wren, Northern bobwhite, bobolink, loggerhead shrike, Bewicks wren, dickcissel, brown thrasher, yellow-breasted chat, Bell's vireo, field sparrow, northern flicker, blue-winged warbler, American woodcock.

Marsh birds that will use newly reforested areas in or near ephemeral wetlands (temporary benefit): American bittern, great egret, least bittern, yellow-crowned night heron, black-crowned night heron, marsh wren and willow flycatcher.

Invertebrates that will benefit from improved water quality (Kaskaskia only): rock pocketbook, spike

Reptiles and Amphibians dependant on riparian forests and wetlands: Eastern narrowmouth toad (lower Kaskaskia watershed), crawfish frog, pickerel frog, wood frog, Blandings turtle, alligator snapping turtle, river cooter, ornate box turtle, smooth softshell, Kirtlands snake, timber rattlesnake, Northern copperbelly watersnake, smooth green snake, flathead snake, eastern massasauga.

Forest and woodland mammals: bobcat, least weasel, southeastern myotis, Indiana bat, golden mouse, marsh rice rat, gray fox.

Signature of Applicant:



Date: 2-5-2010

Signature of department or unit head (if required):

Date:



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