Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Summary Information
03/11/26

	Data Field	
1.	Awarding Agency Name:	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
2.	Agency Contact:	Susan Duke Grant Administrator One Natural Resources Way Springfield, IL 62702 Susan.duke@illinois.gov (217) 785-4416
3.	Announcement Type:	X Initial announcement □ Modification of a previous announcement
4.	Type of Assistance Instrument:	Illinois Habitat Fund Grant
5.	Funding Opportunity Number:	FY2027 Illinois Habitat Fund
6.	Funding Opportunity Title:	Special Wildlife Funds Habitat Fund
7.	CSFA Number:	422-20-1090
8.	CSFA Popular Name:	Habitat Fund
9.	CFDA Number(s):	n/a
10.	Anticipated Number of Awards:	unknown
11.	Estimated Total Program Funding:	**Est. $ 500,000**
12.	Award Range	$ 10,000 - $300,000
13.	Source of Funding:	□ Federal or Federal pass-through X State □ Private / other funding
14.	Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement:	□ Yes X No
15.	Indirect Costs Allowed Restrictions on Indirect Costs	X Yes □ No □ Yes □ No If yes, provide the citation governing the restriction:
16.	Posted Dates:	July 1, 2026 to August 1, 2026
17.	Closing Date for Applications:	August 1, 2026 5:00 pm
18.	Technical Assistance Session: For any technical assistance call or email susan.duke@illinois.gov 217-785-4416	Session Offered: □ Yes X No Session Mandatory: □ Yes X No Specify date and time Provide link to registration, if applicable

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Program Description

The Illinois Habitat Fund provides grants to appropriate not-for-profit organizations and to governmental entities for projects designated exclusively for the preservation and maintenance of high-quality habitat lands. This Fund is part of the Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program. Grants through the Illinois Habitat Fund are competitive and are evaluated for their merit.

These funds are provided through the purchase of Illinois Habitat Stamps. Projects that help meet the targeted goals of the Forest and Woodland, Farmland and Prairie, or Wetland Campaigns delineated in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan Implementation Guide, that offer reasonable costs, that list methods that are feasible and appropriate, and offer public access tend to receive higher scores.

Grant funding through this Fund supports activities and programs undertaken by land managers to preserve, protect, acquire, manage, and maintain high quality habitat for future generations. Goals include improving habitat quality and connectivity. Habitat can be characterized by such parameters as type, native diversity, size, structure, scarcity, and location. Connectivity is defined as linkage with neighboring habitat, whether existing or potential. Illinois' habitat includes all wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands, natural or altered, that support or have the potential to support populations of wild animals in any or all phases of their life cycles. See 520 ILCS 25/10 for full text of the Habitat Endowment Act.

Grant Program Administration: The Office of Grant Management and Assistance with technical support from the Division of Wildlife Resources administers four special grant programs that are funded by Illinois sportsmen through the purchase of Habitat Stamps and Migratory Waterfowl Stamps. These are the Illinois Habitat Fund (the program described in this NOFO), the State Pheasant Fund, the State Furbearer Fund, and the State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp Fund. https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/grants/Pages/Special-Wildlife-Funds-Grant-Program.aspx

These Funds are governed by Administrative Rule set forth in 17 Ill. Adm. Code 3060. The Grantee agrees and understands that the grant shall be administered pursuant to the Administrative Rule and shall comply with these terms and conditions. See Section H. for full text of the Administrative Rule.

Examples of Awarded Habitat Grants

FY24 Awards
https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/grants/documents/Habitat%20Fund%20Advisory%20Committee%20Approval%20FY2024%20Grants.pdf

FY23 Awards
https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/documents/directors-habitat-stamp-memo-fy23.pdf

FY22 Awards
https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/documents/directors-habitat-stamp-memo-fy22.pdf

FY21 Awards
https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/documents/directors-habitat-stamp-memo-fy21.pdf

B. Funding Information

This Notice of Funding Opportunity is for grant awards that utilize only State appropriated funds from the Illinois Habitat Fund. Obligations of the State will cease immediately without penalty of further payment being required if in any fiscal year the Illinois General Assembly fails to appropriate or otherwise make available sufficient funds for this award. No federal funds are included in this grant program.

The Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act (30 ILCS 705/5) limits the grant period for grants with advance payments to a maximum of twenty-four (24) months. The term begins on the date of the DNR Director's signature. All work must be completed within the grant term. All grant funds must be expended by the grantee within 2 years of receipt of such funds.

Any funds not expended or legally obligated at the completion of the project or at the end of the grant agreement, whichever is earlier, must be returned to the DNR within 45 days to be deposited in the Illinois Habitat Fund.

Funding is available for new projects as well as proposals that continue, supplement, or expand existing projects. New projects and continuing projects are given equal consideration.

Disbursements: The disbursement of funds will be made after the final execution of the grant, and upon submission by the grantee of a written request for payment on the Request for Reimbursement form provided by DNR. Requests for reimbursement can be made on a quarterly or annual basis. All payments shall be based upon documentation of project expenditures as submitted by the grantee, as provided below:

1. All billings shall be submitted within ninety (90) days following the end of a project period or date of project completion. Failure to do so may render the grantee ineligible to receive payments under the current award or make them ineligible for future awards.

2. Project costs for which reimbursement is sought cannot be incurred by the grantee prior to the effective date of the agreement, unless otherwise authorized by the DNR. Costs incurred prior to DNR approval are ineligible for grant assistance. If purchase is initiated and documented by a written purchase order or invoice prior to the end of the term of the grant agreement and payment is made within 30 - 60 days, the expense may be allowable.

3. Final payment will not be processed until the Final Report and Request for Reimbursement are received and approved by the DNR. All local match (if any) will be paid by the grantee who will provide documentation whenever making quarterly reports or requests for reimbursement.

C. Eligibility Information

Eligible recipients are limited to any appropriate not-for-profit organization or government agency that has the expertise, equipment, and permission from the landowner (if applicable) to develop and/or manage habitat. "Appropriate Not-For-Profit Organization" means a not-for-profit corporation that is organized pursuant to the General Not For Profit Corporation Act of 1986 [805 ILCS 105], is in good standing as a not-for-profit corporation and is authorized to conduct affairs in Illinois with one of its purposes as stated in its Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws being the support, development, conservation or management of habitat for future generations, or wildlife rehabilitation.

Grant Pre-qualification: All grantees are required to register with the State of Illinois, complete a prequalification process, and be determined "qualified." Registration and prequalification must be completed in the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/

During pre-qualification, Dun and Bradstreet verifications are performed including a check of Debarred and Suspended status and good standing with the Secretary of State. If applicable, the entity will be notified that it is ineligible for award and if corrective action is needed to become eligible for a grant award.

Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM): Each applicant is required to have a valid DUNS/UEI number and be registered in SAM before submission of their application.

Important: Your entity DUNS/UEI account at SAMS.gov must be set to the PUBLIC setting, not the Private setting, or the GATA portal will not "find" your account, and the GATA portal will not allow you to proceed to the Amplifund application page. It must also be current and not expired on the SAMS.gov page, as your entity has to update your SAMS.gov account from time to time.

An applicant is exempt only if the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) 2 CFR § 25.110(d) or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d).

If an applicant is not registered in SAM, this link provides a connection for free SAM registration: https://sam.gov/content/home

An applicant must continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information while it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. The State awarding agency may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the State awarding agency is ready to make an State award, the State awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal pass-through or State award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal pass-through or State award to another applicant.

If an applicant does not have a DUNS/UEI number, this link provides a connection for a free DUNS number: https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

Kinds of Projects Eligible for Grants are limited to those seeking to preserve, protect, acquire or manage habitat (all wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands, natural or altered) in Illinois that have the potential to support populations of wildlife in any or all phases of their life cycles. Examples of past funded projects include purchase of native grass and forb seed, herbicide, and purchase of habitat management equipment such as controlled burn tools, seeders, sprayers, native grass drills and land purchases.

Kinds of Projects Ineligible for Grants include education projects and the purchase or lease of a vehicle such as a truck. UTVs and side by sides will be considered for funding as equipment. Food plots are not funded as standalone projects.

Cost Sharing or Matching is not required for award of these grants. However, providing cost share can improve the competitiveness of a project. See Section E below.

Indirect Cost Rate: To charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant organization must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRAs:

a) Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. Illinois will accept the federally negotiated rate. The organization must provide a copy of the federally NICRA.
b) State Negotiated Rate. The organization must negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have Federally Negotiated Rate or elect to use the De Minimis Rate. The indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted to the State of Illinois within 90 days of the notice of award.
c) De Minimis Rate. An organization that does not have a current Federally Negotiated Rate may elect a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the de minimis rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDC annually in order to accept the de minimis rate.

D. Application and Submission Information

Apply Online at this link:

https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/1c2c603c-c673-444e-b642-6d6a1f569266

If you need any assistance with the application forms or the process, call or email Susan.Duke@illinois.gov 217-785-4416. If you need assistance with accessing or uploading grant forms in the Amplifund portal, go to: support@il-amplifund.zendesk.com

Amplifund **online training sessions** are optional and available for Amplifund grant applicants and recipients or anyone who needs to refresh their skills. You must register to attend or participate. Here is the link: Upcoming Live Trainings – Illinois Grant Management Support (zendesk.com)

Supplemental Documents to be Submitted
The following are required.

1. **W-9:** All applicants must complete and provide the **latest W-9 version** as found at www.IRS.gov. The Illinois Comptroller, who issues all State payments, will not accept earlier versions.
2. **IRS Determination Letter:** Not-for-profit applicants that have not done business with the State of Illinois in the last 3 years or have reorganized since last doing business with the State must provide a copy of their **IRS Determination Letter** that declares the entity's legal status as determined by the IRS, e.g. tax-exempt, governmental, partnership, type of corporation, or type of Limited Liability Company. This letter is not the FEIN assignment letter, but is among the original legal/tax documents for an entity.

Additional Project Specific Documents
The following project information is also required, if available

1. **Project Site Map**
2. **Project Location Map:** County Plat Map, USGS map or aerial photo of project site
3. Price quote(s) for equipment purchase with value of $5,000 or more

There is also a helpful document on how to write a grant proposal narrative on the DNR website. https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/grants/Documents/HowToWriteGrantProposal.pdf

Application Attachments must include

1) **Project Area Map**
2) **W-9:** All applicants must complete and provide the **latest W-9 version** as found at www.IRS.gov. The Illinois Comptroller, who issues all State payments, will not accept earlier versions.
3) **IRS Determination Letter:** Not-for-profit applicants that have not done business with the State of Illinois in the last 3 years, or have reorganized since last doing business with the State must provide a copy of their **IRS Determination Letter** which declares the entity's legal status as determined by the IRS, e.g. tax-exempt, governmental, partnership, type of corporation, or type of Limited Liability Company. This letter is not the FEIN assignment letter, but is among the original legal/tax documents for an entity.
4) **Plat Map(s) and Contracts (Optional):** If the project will be completed with cooperators, a plat map showing each property to be developed and a copy of a farm program contract for each committed cooperator involved in the project or estimated acreage. Committed cooperators will be given priority over estimated acreage.

To contact DNR use the following means:

By US Mail: Department of Natural Resources
Office of Grant Management and Assistance
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

By e-mail: susan.duke@illinois.gov

By phone: Susan Duke (217) 785-4416, the main OGMA Grant number is 217-782-7481, or you can also call 217-785-3884.

Application Format: The Application and Budget forms will be online at the Amplifund portal. All project descriptions, proposals, pictures, charts, tables and maps on separate sheets must be included with the application and can be attached as supplemental documents in the Amplifund portal.

Application Submission: The applicant must provide all information requested in the application package online. You may submit more than one application, such as an application submitted for each proposed project if applicable. **The application deadline is 5:00 p.m. August 1st, 2026.**

Submitting an incomplete application does not extend the application deadline date. Applications must be finalized and submitted on or before the deadline date on the Amplifund portal. It is recommended that you start your application early, as you can save it online and come in and complete additional parts as needed, until it is ready for the Submit button.

Signers of these grant documents must be authorized by their organization to enter into formal contracts.

Intent to Award: Following a decision of intent to award, DNR is required to conduct a financial and administrative risk assessment of the applicant. Additional information may be required at that time from the successful applicant. For the applicant to remain eligible for the award, they must provide the requested information within 30 days after notification of intent to award.

E. Application Review Information

Review and Selection Process: All applications received on time and containing the information required by the application packet online will be reviewed by Department staff and will be forwarded to the Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee for evaluation and recommendation to the DNR Director, who makes the final decision on awards. Committee members with ties to an applicant entity are not allowed to vote or score that entity's application.

Applications Evaluation: The Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee will review applications according to the following criteria: completed application, past grant performance of the applicant, eligibility, feasibility, adverse impacts, quality of the proposed habitat, priority for the Department, the applicant's cost-share match, and the applicant's plan for general public access to and/or use of the proposed habitat development or equipment purchase. The application must provide an activity timeline on how the project's goals will be attained.

The Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee will forward to the Director all applications and the prioritized list of all projects deemed to be consistent with the purposes of the Habitat Fund. The Director will determine which grants will be awarded after considering the recommendations of the advisory committee. All applicants will be notified of the Director's decision.

Evaluation Criteria: The Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee shall evaluate each application presented as follows:

1. **Biological Importance**
   - 25 = Assists with achieving the goals of the Illinois Statewide Wildlife Action Plan
   - 20 = Assists with achieving partial goals of the Illinois Statewide Wildlife Action Plan
   - 10 = Assists with development of habitat associated with general private land work
   - 5 = Provides minimal assistance with habitat development
   - 0 = No habitat development provided (Project Not Recommended for Funding)

2. **Geographical Reach**
   - 15 = Regional scope; natural division, game division, watershed
   - 10 = County or managed area
   - 5 = Individual Landowner

3. **Quality of Habitat Provided**
   - 15 = Provides high quality habitat for target wildlife species as prescribed by the Wildlife Action Plan
   - 10 = Provides moderate quality habitat that can address some of the needs of target wildlife species
   - 5 = Provides limited quality habitat that addresses only one of the target species' habitat needs
   - 0 = Inappropriate plant materials are used or promoted (Project Not Recommended for Funding)

4. **Methodology and Project Cost (Feasibility)**
   - 15 = Proposed methodology is sound and project cost is economical
   - 10 = Proposed methodology is sound but project cost is average
   - 5 = Proposed methodology is sound but project cost is expensive
   - 0 = Proposed methodology is not sound (Project Not Recommended for Funding)

5. **Match and Partners**
   - 15 = 50% or more match provided; or two or more partners participating
   - 10 = 25% or more match provided
   - 5 = less than 25% match provided
   - 0 = no match provided

6. **Public Access Provided**
   - 15 = Full public access provided
   - 10 = Limited public access provided or habitat used as a refuge
   - 5 = No public access allowed
   - 0 = Paid public access (Project Not Recommended for Funding)

Maximum Habitat Development & Management Score = 100

Equipment Proposals

1. **Equipment Need**
   - 35 = Equipment will be used by a habitat team for habitat development and/or management and will be used over broad areas or within Focus Areas or Conservation Opportunity Areas.

25 = Equipment is directly used for habitat development and/or management and is located in an area where equipment availability is limited.
20 = Equipment is directly used for habitat development and/or management and is located in an area where equipment with the same capability is available for timely use to conduct management.
10 = Equipment is indirectly used for habitat development and/or management and is located in an area where equipment with the same capability for timely use to conduct management is limited.
5 = Equipment is indirectly used for habitat development and/or management and is located in an area where equipment with the same capability is available for timely use to conduct management.
0 = Equipment is not involved with habitat development and/or management (Project Not Recommended for Funding).

2. Equipment Maintenance

15 = Equipment will be stored in a building sheltered from the elements
10 = Equipment will be stored under tarp or in an open shelter
5 = Plans for equipment storage are unknown but equipment will be protected
0 = Equipment will be stored without protection (Project Not Recommended for Funding)

3. Appropriateness of Equipment and Project Cost (Feasibility)

15 = Proposed equipment is appropriate and project cost is economical
10 = Proposed equipment is appropriate but project cost is average
5 = Proposed equipment is appropriate but project cost is expensive
0 = Proposed equipment is not appropriate (Project Not Recommended for Funding)

4. Match and Partners

15 = 50% or more match provided; or two or more partners participating
10 = 25% or more match provided
5 = less the 25% match provided
0 = no match provided

5. Public Access Provided

20 = Equipment will be used by a habitat team to provide habitat on private and public land
15 = Equipment will be provided to the public at no cost
10 = Equipment will be provided to the public at a reasonable cost
5 = Equipment will be limited to a group or site

Maximum Equipment Score = 100

Merit-Based Review Appeals Process

In compliance with GATA, applicants have the right to appeal the evaluation process but not the evaluation score. More information is available at:
http://ilga.gov/commission/JCAR/admincode/044/044070000D03500R.html

Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates: The Committee's recommendations are forwarded to the DNR Director, who usually makes their decisions shortly thereafter. Each applicant will be notified by letter and/or email of the Director's decision regarding their application.

F. Award Administration Information

State Award Notice: After the DNR Director has made their decision the successful applicant will be notified by email and/or letter of any final requirements before the grant can be awarded to them. Once all the final requirements have been completed, the Grant Agreement between DNR and the applicant will be electronically sent for the applicant to hand sign and return. Then the DNR Director will also sign. Once executed by the signature of the DNR director, an electronic copy will be sent to the applicant.

Only after the Grant Agreement has been signed by the Director can expenses be incurred for grant reimbursement. Any expenses incurred outside of the grant period (before or after) are at the applicant's risk and are not eligible either as match or for reimbursement related to the grant.

Performance Reporting: The grantee shall be required to provide reporting of its activities under this project quarterly. The DNR may withhold or suspend payment if the grantee fails to submit the required reports and/or may add a grantee to the statewide Stop Payment List (see: https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Documents/Resource%20Library/GCES.pdf) which may impact eligibility for future awards. The following reports are required under this Agreement, and the forms can be found on the Amplifund portal.

a) **Quarterly Progress Reports**: If the amount of grant funds awarded exceeds $25,000.00, the grantee is required to provide to the DNR quarterly progress reports that describe the progress of the project and expenditures of funds according to the budget line items as detailed in the approved Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance. The Quarterly Progress Report will be due as follows:

Period of Work	Quarterly Progress Report Due Before
January 1 – March 31	April 30
April 1 – June 30	July 31
July 1 – September 30	October 31
October 1 – December 31	January 31

b) **Annual or Final Report**: The grantee shall submit a written **Final Report** to the department no later than 30 days following the completion of the Project or the ending date of the grant agreement, whichever is earlier, in accordance with the applicable administrative rules. The Final Report shall include:

- Grant Agreement Number
- Grantee name, address and telephone number
- Time-frame of the report
- Name and telephone number or e-mail address of grantee representative completing the report
- Project objective as described in the application and grant agreement
- Completed Project description,
- Summary of the Project accomplishments (if applicable) as follows:

for habitat preserved, protected, acquired, managed or improved (list of wildlife and/or native plant resources [by species] that benefit from the Project and how they benefit; acres planted in cool season grasses, warm season grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, trees or other appropriate description, including whether the acres were new or replanted; acres sprayed or controlled through the use of herbicides; acres upon which controlled burns were undertaken; acres affected through woody vegetation and/or tree removal; acres planted, disked, mowed, sprayed, or burned; trees/shrubs planted or removed with equipment purchased through the grant; number of cooperators involved in the Project);

Total project expenditures itemized to include the following: name and address of vendor, item description identifying details (if applicable), quantity purchased, date item purchased;

Project expenditures paid by funds other than Special Wildlife Grant Funds;

Documentation to support the summarized report including a complete list of landowner names and full address (note if absentee owner), acreage location and acres affected by the project. Multiple conservation practices on the same acreage do not multiply the acreage. On habitat development projects where other governmental or private funding programs are involved, the grantee is required to provide detailed information including but not limited to the type of eligible conservation practice completed, the amount ($) of other cost sharing provided, the name of the cost share provider, and length of time committed to maintain the developed habitat area.

c) Equipment Use Report: If the grant is for the purchase of equipment, a similar written report of equipment usage shall be due to the DNR by December 31st in each of the first five years following the purchase of equipment. The **Equipment Use Report** shall include the following:

- Details on the Grant recipient:
    - Grant Agreement Number
    - Grantee name, address and telephone number
    - Time-frame of the report
- Details on the piece of equipment:
    - Equipment type, model number and serial number
    - Storage location address
    - Acre or odometer meter reading at the beginning and ending of the reporting period
    - Contact person name and telephone number
    - Rental rate charged and total fees collected for the use of the equipment
    - Description of any equipment maintenance and total expenditures for maintenance, supported by paid invoices
- Detailed information on the use of the equipment, including:

- Date equipment was used
- Location of equipment use, including county, township, range and section
- Landowner name and full address (note if absentee owner)

- Description of how equipment was used:

  - management practice completed (planting, disking, mowing, herbicide application, prescribed burn)
  - materials planted including the quantity and species planted and provide details of seed mix contents;
  - acres established, enhanced or otherwise affected and how. (Note when multiple practices are on the same acres.)

Failure to provide reports in a timely fashion shall render the grantee ineligible to receive payments under the current award and make them ineligible for future awards. Deadlines for reports may be extended for just cause when such requests are submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the deadline. All reports are to be delivered to:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Office of Grant Management
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271
Attn: Susan Duke

It is helpful to read the administrative rules for the grant program:

Habitat Program:
https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/017/017030600000300R.html

General Requirements:
https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/d9b44068-eefc-4c9a-adf8-16e42a9554a0

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

To contact DNR with questions related to this grant, please use the following means:

By US Mail: Department of Natural Resources
Office of Grant Management and Assistance
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

By e-mail: susan.duke@illinois.gov

By phone: Susan Duke 217-785-4416

By fax: (217) 785-2438

H. Other Information

More information can be found at DNR's website: https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/grants/Pages/default.aspx or search for "Grants" under the DNR A-Z tab.

The Administrative Rule for the Illinois Habitat Fund Grant program is as follows:

Section 3060.30 Illinois Habitat Fund Grant Program

a) Eligibility Requirements
   1) Eligible recipients are limited to managers of land.
   2) Eligible projects are limited to those seeking to preserve, protect, acquire or manage habitat in Illinois.

b) Application Procedures
   1) Grant applications for funding assistance under this program shall be submitted to the Department at One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271, Attention: Office of Resource Conservation. The application deadline will be August 1. Application forms and instructions are available through the Department. Applications received after the application deadline will be returned to the applicant and not considered by the Department.
   2) Applications shall contain all of the following required information:
      A) the name and address of the applicant
      B) the name of a contact person
      C) a daytime telephone number and e-mail address (if available) for a contact person
      D) a comprehensive project description with justification, including:
         i) wildlife to benefit from the project
         ii) plan for implementation
         iii) map of project area
         iv) amount of habitat to be established or managed, including species to be planted or eliminated
         v) if with cooperators, plat map showing each property to be developed and a copy of a farm program contract for each committed cooperator involved in the project or estimated acreage. (Committed cooperators will be given priority over estimated acreage.)
      E) comprehensive plan for the operation and maintenance of the project, including supervision, estimated costs (including any and all fees) and storage location, if applicable
      F) a comprehensive funding/budget summary, including:
         i) actual cash contributions other than the grant amount
         ii) documented purchase price of equipment or commodities
      G) description of plan for general public access or use (or lack thereof)
      H) signature of the applicant or authorized individual for applicant

c) Project Evaluation and Procedures

1) All applications received on time and containing the information required by the application packet will be reviewed by Department staff. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant for completion and resubmittal. Submitting an incomplete application does not extend the application deadline beyond the designated deadline date. All complete, eligible and timely applications will be forwarded to the Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee.

2) The Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee shall evaluate each application presented to it according to criteria such as: past grant performance of the applicant, eligibility, feasibility, adverse impacts, quality of the proposed habitat, priority of the Department, the applicant's cost-share match and the applicant's plan for general public access to and/or use of the proposed habitat development or equipment purchase. The Committee shall provide to the Director all eligible applications and a prioritized list of recommended projects deemed to be consistent with the purposes of the Illinois Habitat Fund.

3) The Director shall make the determination of what grants shall be awarded after considering the recommendations of the Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee. Applicants shall be notified of the Director's decision.

(Source: Amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 19781, effective December 4, 2008)

Section 3060.80 General Requirements

a) Grant Compliance

1) Agreement

A) When a grant has been awarded, the grantee and the Director of the Department, or the Director's designee on behalf of the Department, shall execute an agreement. In order for the costs to be eligible for funding, the project must not be initiated and costs shall not be incurred prior to the time the Department approves the grant agreement. This grant shall not be used to reimburse an applicant for any costs incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement.

B) The agreement shall contain substantive provisions including, but not limited to, the following:

i) a recitation of legal authority pursuant to which the agreement is made

ii) an identification of the project scope and schedule and the work or services to be performed or conducted by the grantee

iii) an identification of the grant amount

iv) the condition and manner by which the Department shall pay the grant amount, subject at all times to annual appropriation by the General Assembly

v) the irrevocable promise by the grantee to pay the local match (if any) of the total project cost

vi) a promise by the grantee not to assign or transfer any of the rights, duties or obligations of the grantee without the written consent of the Department

vii) a promise by the grantee not to amend the agreement without the written consent of the Department; failure to do so will result in a cost disallowance; the project must be

completed by the completion date on the notice of grant award unless a written request for an extension is submitted no later than 30 days prior to the award completion date

viii) a covenant that the grantee shall expend the grant award and any accrued interest only for the purposes of the project as stated in the application and approved by the Department

ix) a covenant that the grantee shall refrain from entering into any written or oral agreement or understanding with any party that might be construed as an obligation of the State of Illinois or the Department for the payment of any funds under the Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program

2) Grant funds for projects approved through the Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program may be made available for expenditure by a grantee for a period no longer than 2 years, except where such grant funds are disbursed in reimbursement of costs previously incurred by the grantee.

3) Acknowledgment of Funding Source

A) The grantee shall give proper credit to the appropriate Special Wildlife Fund and coordinate with the Department on any publication, written document, news article, television and radio release, interview or personal presentation, if initiated by the grantee, which refers to the project.

B) The grantee shall post a sign, include a logo or affix a decal, if practical and applicable, crediting the applicable Special Wildlife Fund. Signs, logos and decals shall be supplied by the Department. The appropriate Advisory Committee will provide guidance to the grantee for posting of signs, logos and decals on projects awarded under its Special Wildlife Fund.

4) Reporting Requirements

A) A grantee shall provide a written Final Report to the Department no later than 30 days following the ending date of the agreement. The Final Report shall include all of the following required information:

i) project information including:
grant agreement number
grantee name, address and telephone number
time-frame of the report
name and telephone number or e-mail address of grantee representative completing the report

ii) project objective as described in the application and grant agreement

iii) completed project description

iv) summary of the project accomplishments involving habitat preserved, protected, acquired, managed or improved (if applicable) through the grant, including:
list of wildlife and/or native plant resources (by species) that benefitted from the project and how they benefitted
acres planted in cool season grasses, warm season grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, trees or other appropriate description, including whether the acres were new or

replanted acres acres sprayed or controlled through the use of herbicides acres upon which controlled burns were undertaken acres affected through woody vegetation and/or tree removal acres planted, disked, mowed, sprayed, or burned, or trees/shrubs planted or removed with equipment purchased through the grant
number of cooperators involved in the project

5 to 10 digital images depicting the study species, project site, project activities or other aspects of the project

v) summary of the project accomplishments for the education of the general public (if applicable) through the grant, including:
list of wildlife and/or native plant resources (by species) that benefitted from the project and how they benefitted
specific audience affected
measurable outcomes achieved
list of products resulting from the project

vi) summary of the project research accomplishments (if applicable) resulting from the grant, including:
list of wildlife and/or native plant resources (by species) that benefitted from the research undertaken in the project and how they benefitted
how such research can be implemented to benefit the targeted wildlife and/or native plant resources

vii) total project expenditures itemized to include the following:
name and address of vendor
item description identifying details (if applicable) such as: make, model, serial number of any equipment or commodities purchased
brand name, seed species/mix
quantity purchased
date item purchased

viii) project expenditures paid by funds other than Special Wildlife Grant Funds

ix) documentation to support summarized report including a complete list of landowner names and full address (note if absentee owner), acreage location and acres affected by the project. Multiple conservation practices on the same acreage does not multiply the acreage

B) For multiple year projects, the Department may require the grantee to submit an Annual Progress Report for each year during which the project is active. The Annual Progress Report shall include the same information listed in subsection (a)(4)(A) for the Final Report as pertains to the current year.

C) Failure to provide the Final Report or Annual Progress Report as required in subsection (a)(4)(A) may render the grantee ineligible to receive payments under the current award or make them ineligible for future awards. Deadlines for reports may be extended for just cause when requests are submitted in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the deadline.

5) Financial Management

A) The grantee shall keep adequate records relating to its administration of a project, particularly relating to all incurred costs. All assets acquired through Special Wildlife Funds shall be accounted for. These records shall be available for audit by appropriate personnel of the Department and the State Auditor General. All records shall be retained in accordance with State laws.

B) Any funds (including any interest earned) not expended or legally obligated at the completion of the project or at the end of the agreement, whichever is earlier, shall be returned to the Department within 45 days to be deposited in the applicable Special Wildlife Fund. If the purchase is initiated and documented by a written purchase order or invoice prior to the end of the term of the agreement and payment is made within 60 days, the expense is allowable.

C) Interest earned on funds received as an advance payment shall become part of the project principal and may only be used for eligible activities.

D) Any expenditure that does not comply with the grant agreement shall be disallowed and shall be returned to the Department for deposit into the applicable Special Wildlife Fund.

6) Whenever a grantee violates this Part, it shall be ineligible for further assistance for a period of 2 years.

b) Equipment

1) Equipment that is eligible to be purchased with Special Wildlife Funds will be limited by the purpose of the particular grant program.

A) Illinois Habitat Fund Grant Program and State Pheasant Fund Grant Program
Equipment that specifically establishes, maintains or restores habitat, such as native grass drills, tree planters, seeders, sprayers, tillers, disks, mowers, tractors and burn equipment is eligible to be purchased with Special Wildlife Funds. Vehicles such as trucks, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), etc., are not eligible for Special Wildlife Funds.

B) State Furbearer Fund Grant Program
Equipment that specifically provides educational opportunities in an eligible project (see Section 3060.50(a)) is eligible to be purchased with Special Wildlife Funds.

C) State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp Fund Grant Program
Equipment that specifically develops, maintains or restores waterfowl propagation areas within the Dominion of Canada or the United States that specifically provide waterfowl for the Mississippi Flyway is eligible to be purchased with Special Wildlife Funds. Vehicles such as trucks, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), etc., are not eligible for Special Wildlife Funds.

D) Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund Grant Program
Equipment that specifically preserves, protects, perpetuates or enhances non-game wildlife and/or native plant resources through

research, management or education is eligible to be purchased with Special Wildlife Funds.

E) Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund Grant Program – Maintenance of Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities That Take Care of Threatened or Endangered Species
No equipment is eligible to be purchased with monies from the Maintenance of Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities That Take Care of Threatened or Endangered Species Fund.

2) Grantees will be responsible for the maintenance of any equipment purchased through the Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program.
3) Equipment is to be kept safe and secure by the grantee.
4) Equipment for habitat establishment, maintenance or restoration is to be available for use by the general public.
5) The grantee may charge a fee for the use of habitat establishment, maintenance or restoration equipment. Rental fees shall not exceed $3/acre for habitat development equipment such as native grass drills, tree planters, seeders, sprayers, tillers, disks, mowers, tractors or other planting equipment purchased with Special Wildlife Funds. Rental fees shall be disclosed with the application for funding assistance in purchasing the equipment. All monies collected as rental fees shall be used solely to maintain the equipment for which they are charged. The rental fees charged and received by the grantee shall also be disclosed on the reporting of the use of that equipment. No other fees beyond a rental fee may be charged by the grantee for use of the equipment.
6) The grantee shall submit an Equipment Use Report on the use of all equipment purchased with Special Wildlife Funds. The Equipment Use Report shall include all of the following required information:
   A) Details on the grant recipient including:
      i) name and address of the grantee
      ii) number of the grant agreement under which the equipment was purchased
      iii) name and telephone number or e-mail address of the person completing the report
      iv) time period covered by the Equipment Use Report
   B) Details on the piece of equipment including:
      i) equipment type, model number and serial number
      ii) storage location address
      iii) acre or odometer meter reading at the beginning and ending of the reporting period
      iv) contact person name and telephone number
      v) rental rate charged and total fees collected for the use of the equipment
      vi) description of any equipment maintenance and total expenditures for maintenance, supported by paid invoices
   C) Detailed information on the use of the equipment, including:
      i) date equipment was used
      ii) location of equipment use, including county, township, range and section
      iii) landowner name and full address (note if absentee owner)
      iv) description of how equipment was used, including:

- management practice completed (planting, disking, mowing, herbicide application, prescribed burn)
- for planting practices, the number of acres planted in cool season grasses, warm season grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs or trees, or other appropriate description, including whether the acres were new or replanted acres
- acres established, enhanced, or otherwise affected and how affected (note when multiple practices are on the same acres)

7) The Equipment Use Report shall be submitted by December 31 during each of the first 5 years following the project award. The Equipment Use Report shall suffice as the Annual Progress Report required in subsection (a)(4)(B) if the equipment purchase was the only aspect of the project.

8) Equipment purchased shall become the property and the responsibility of the grantee unless specified otherwise in the agreement.

9) Whenever it has been determined by the grantee and the Department that equipment acquired through the Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program is no longer needed for the project purpose, or that the grantee has other good cause, the equipment, with the approval of the Department, may be disposed of in accordance with one of the following methods:

A) Equipment may be transferred at no charge at any time with the approval of the Department to another governmental agency or not-for-profit organization to use in accordance with the original project purpose.

B) Equipment held more than 5 years may be retained, sold or otherwise disposed of with no further obligation to the Department.

C) When equipment is held less than 5 years and not transferred in accordance with subsection (b)(8)(A), the grantee shall forfeit its interest in the equipment and shall deliver the equipment to the Department.

c) Habitat Establishment, Maintenance or Restoration

1) On habitat establishment, maintenance or restoration projects in which other governmental or private funding programs are involved, the grantee is required to provide the following detailed information:

A) cooperator names and addresses and locations of the habitat affected (Township, Range, Section and County);

B) number of acres enhanced by the grant;

C) type of eligible conservation practice completed;

D) the funding amount of other cost sharing provided and the name of the cost share provider;

E) a copy of any farm program contract or other pertinent document identifying the amount of cost-share being provided; and

F) length of time committed to maintain the developed habitat area.

2) The grantee cannot charge fees for service or require membership to participate in the benefits of a project funded through Special Wildlife Fund grants except as specifically authorized by this Part.

3) Habitat establishment, maintenance or restoration projects are to identify the general plant species to be planted, such as cool season grasses, warm season grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs or trees, or other appropriate description.

d) Inspection and Auditing of Projects

1) The Department shall be authorized to enter and cross properties affected by the Special Wildlife Funds grant program to inspect progress and monitor grantee compliance, in accordance with the authorities granted it through the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois [20 ILCS 805/805-530].

2) The Department shall develop a standardized inspection report for use by Department personnel when inspecting any project site. The inspection report shall become part of the public record.

(Source: Amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 19781, effective December 4, 2008)

The statutory guidance on the use of the Illinois Habitat Fund is:

520 ILCS 25/10 “It is the purpose of this Act to provide a stable and supplemental source of money to support activities and programs undertaken by the Department or other managers of land to preserve, protect, acquire, and manage habitat for future generations. Habitat quality is measured by such parameters as type, native diversity, size, structure, scarcity, and location. Linkage with neighboring habitat, whether existing or potential, is another important consideration. Illinois’ habitat includes all wetlands, woodlands, grasslands and agricultural lands, natural or altered, that support or have the potential to support populations of wild animals in any or all phases of their life cycles.”

520 ILCS 25/15 (a) “There is established in the State treasury a special fund entitled the Illinois Habitat Fund. The moneys in this fund shall be used, pursuant to appropriation, exclusively by the Department (of Natural Resources) for the preservation and maintenance of high quality habitat lands….”

The State of Illinois is not obligated to make any award of the Illinois Habitat Funds as a result of this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Only the Director of Natural Resources makes the determination of what grants shall be awarded after considering the recommendations of the Habitat Advisory Committee. Grant applicants are not authorized to proceed on their projects until the Director has signed the Grant Agreement.