



Burning Star 5 Wetland Enhancement Project Grant Source: **North American Wetlands Conservation Act**

BACKGROUND

Southern Illinois has long been recognized for its important role as a migration corridor for waterfowl and shorebirds. In addition, active strip-mining during the 1980s in Jackson county has created thousands of acres of grassland and lake habitat ideally suited for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds and well as grassland nesting birds. Together, these landscape features have made Southern Illinois a nationally recognized waterfowl hotspot attracting people to recreate and wildlife managers to restore as much wildlife habitat as possible. The project property consists of 8,309 acres of which approximately 4000 acres are tillable, 2000 acres are mature forest, 500 acres are lakes, ponds, and wetlands, with the remainder being comprised of cool season grasses and tree plantings. The property has been reclaimed since the late 90's and has become a wildlife haven for a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, and grassland birds.

LOCATION

Illinois

ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED

The specific goals of this project is to convert 50 acres of poor quality cool season grass to idle, dense nesting cover featuring a mix of warm season grasses attractive to local nesting mallards, upland birds, and grassland nesting songbirds. Priority will be given to establishing warm season grasses at sites near existing wetlands or shallow lakes that already serve as brood habitat for local nesting mallards and, to a lesser extent, local nesting blue-winged teal.

The project will also enhance approximately 20 acres of shallow wetlands to improve spring habitat conditions for migrating ducks and shorebirds, and to provide pair bonding areas for local nesting waterfowl. This wetland enhancement will allow water levels to be manipulated with the installation of water control structure and pipe.

OBJECTIVES

Grassland conversion work:

- Areas will be sprayed twice to eliminate cool season grasses
- Prescribed burning will then be used to eliminate debris
- Warm season grass mix will then be drilled into areas
- The areas will then be mowed once the first growing season to help establish warm season grasses
- The property will then be burned periodically (every 3-5 years) in sections by the landowner or Illinois DNR to restrain woody growth.

Wetland conversion work:

- 20 acres of palustrine emergent wetlands will be enhanced with the installation of a water control structure and pipe.

PARTNERS

NWTF

Consol Energy

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

FUTURE PLANS

Project is just starting.

TIMEFRAME

Project Start Date: August 2007

Project End Date: December 2008