



Illinois Forestry Development Council

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Restoring the Mighty Oak in Illinois

Carbondale, IL - For those forest landowners whose forest land is in 37 designated counties (see map), there currently is an opportunity to complete some badly needed oak restoration work. “The Oak-Hickory forest type has been degraded over the last fifty years,” according to Dr. Jim Zaczek, Chair of the Illinois Forestry Development Council (IFDC). The 29-member state forestry council, whose task it is to evaluate the Illinois Forest Resource, reports their findings to the Illinois State Legislature. Zaczek said, “The council took the track of working with twelve other forestry groups and agencies and applied through the United State Department of Agriculture’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The IFDC, as the lead, secured \$2 million to fund 5 forest management practices over the next five years, to improve the Oak-Hickory habitat.” Those specific practices, included in a Forest Management Plan, include:

- ~Forest Stand Improvement
- ~Brush Management
- ~Herbaceous Weed Control
- ~Prescribed Burning
- ~Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
- ~Tree/Shrub Establishment

“The decline in oak regeneration is the result of fire suppression, impacts of invasive herbs, shrubs, vines, and trees. We’ve seen a lack of applied management strategies to address soil health, water quality and soil erosion issues on private forest land. The plans are out there but we need to see those plans put into place,” says IFDC Director Bill Gradle.

Both Zaczek and Gradle are certain this project can impact Illinois forest land in a positive way because all applicants for the special funds compete with others who seek the same funds. “So forestry plans are ranked against other forestry plans,” adds Gradle. This RCPP project leverages funds and services from USDA with those of several organizations, including Southern Illinois University, U of I Extension Forestry, US Forest Service, IL Department of Natural Resources, The Morton Arboretum, and the Illinois Forestry Association.

To take advantage of this special opportunity, interested owners of forest land should submit an application to their local USDA Service Center by the cutoff dates of January 20 and March 17, 2017. You are reminded that those interested in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) can submit an application to their local Service Center office at any time throughout the year. Sign up today or visit your local USDA Service Center.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program 2016 Proposal

*Improving Oak/Hickory
Forestland Health in Illinois.*

Legend

Proposed Targeted Areas

- NORTHWEST AREA
- LOWER ILLINOIS RIVER AREA
- WABASH RIVER AREA
- RIVER TO RIVER AREA



0 15 30 60 Miles

July 2015