

County Conservation Board Directors:

On November 13, 2018, HF 631 passed its final approval at the Administrative Rules Committee. This bill allows the Natural Resource Commission to set license fees for hunting, fishing and trapping. The Wildlife Habitat Stamp was subsequently increased on December 15, 2018. HF631 explicitly states that increases in the Wildlife Habitat Stamp cannot be used for land acquisition.

During the upcoming November Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund grant application deadline, we will be making \$80,000 available for Wildlife Habitat Development projects. The project review and selection committee will utilize the existing rating system for ranking and selecting Habitat Development projects which considers Wildlife Habitat Needs, Potential Habitat Quality, Cost-Effectiveness, and Wildlife Species Diversity. Utilizing this rating system, it is anticipated that habitat restoration projects, as defined below, will receive highest scores, followed by habitat enhancement projects, and then other habitat creation projects. Habitat management, or maintenance, activities are not eligible except as necessary to ensure successful establishment of restoration and enhancement projects.

Restoration – Wetland, grassland, or woodland habitat composed of native species on suitable site thought to historically have supported the vegetative community proposed for restoration.

Enhancement – A habitat improvement project that will result in a substantive change in quality of wildlife habitat and/or future management capability that will also produce significant improvements for wildlife.

Proposed habitat development projects should include a schedule for implementation which will optimize the probability for successful establishment. The proposed timeline will be used to establish “timely commencement of projects” provisions in grant agreements.

Proposed habitat development projects should also include a management history for the site as well as a long term management plan demonstrating intent and capacity for maintaining the restored or enhanced habitat for the expected life of the project. Lands must be controlled by the County Conservation Board, and open to public hunting, through fee title ownership, easement, lease, or management agreement.

Minimum grant request allowed is \$3,000 (\$4,000 minimum total project cost). Requests to purchase equipment will not be approved. Donated labor, materials, and equipment use, and force account labor and equipment use are not eligible for cost-sharing assistance. (Force account means the agency’s own labor and equipment use). Please refer to the attached “Guidelines for Participation in the Wildlife Habitat Fund” for additional information.

Wildlife Habitat Stamp Review and Selection Committee:

Dan Heissel, Woodbury County Conservation Board

Al Finke, Black Hawk County Conservation Board

Craig VanOterloo, Lyon County Conservation Board

Robert Schwartz, Winnebago County Conservation Board

Todd Bishop, Iowa Department of Natural Resources