

**Update to the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force Joint Action Plan (2009-2010) August 2009
Appendices, Appendix 2, Key Activities and Needs of MOU States and Provinces**

ILLINOIS: OTHER HABITAT RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS WITH CARBON BENEFITS

Expansion of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program: Illinois has made \$61 Million in state funds available for CREP, which has leveraged more than \$350 Million in federal funds. Illinois has restored over 126,000 acres of floodplain and other environmentally sensitive cropland to native vegetation (grassland, forest and wetlands) through CREP in the Illinois River Basin. \$45 Million additional was appropriated in the 2010 Capital Budget for the Program over 3 years. Illinois expects to open to new enrollment in both the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Watersheds in calendar year 2010. The \$45 Million will allow the state to meet the required 20% program match and allow for enrollment of the remaining 105,000 acres allocated to Illinois under the CREP Agreement.

Formation of Private Lands and Watersheds Division: The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is consolidating a range of programs serving private landowners into a new Private Lands and Watersheds Division which will focus on developing conservation solutions, and providing greater efficiency and transparency. In a state where the vast majority of the land is in private hands, primarily agriculture, this move will help leverage federal funding opportunities for private landowners to increase habitat.

Success of Conservation Stewardship Program: This new program, which encourages landowners through reduced property taxes to protect environmental resources on unimproved lands, has proven highly successful, with 2,088 applications received to date to enroll 77,146 acres.

500th Nature Preserve System site: The Illinois Nature Preserve System protects the highest quality natural areas in the State (less than 0.1% of the original landscape remains). Through voluntary donations of easements by private and public landowners, property is given the strongest legal protection in perpetuity and managed in partnership with Nature Preserve Commission staff. In 2010 the Commission celebrated the protection of its 500th site. Total acreage protected is currently over 92,000 acres. The Commission, created by State legislation in 1963, has been recognized as a national and international model. Its members are appointed by the Governor.

Other REDD: Federal opportunities: Illinois is joining the federal Coastal Management Program to leverage resources for habitat preservation and restoration near the Great Lakes. Other federal opportunities being pursued include the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and others, with the potential for tens of millions of dollars. **Index of landscape integrity:** The Illinois Natural History Survey is conducting an inventory of large tracts of undeveloped land that includes forests and assessing a number of variables indicative of their ability to support native biodiversity, e.g., the ratio of forest edge to forest interior, distance from roads or other development, etc.

Climate Change Adaptation: The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has two efforts underway in climate change adaptation. These also serve to educate people about and increase support for climate change mitigation measures.

- A) Incorporate the threat of climate change and adaptation strategies into the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. This will be a key element of the revision of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan that is necessary in order to be eligible for federal funds under section 480 of the American Climate and Security Act (HR 2454). The proposed work objectives are:
 - 1. Conduct a Climate Vulnerability Assessment of Key Habitats and Indicator Species.
 - 2. Recommend Climate Adaptation Strategies.
 - 3. Outline an Adaptive Management Approach for Informing Management Decisions.
 - 4. Recommend Changes and Additions to Existing Monitoring Programs.
- B) IDNR completed two regional water supply plans with local partners, one covering 11 counties in Northeast Illinois (Chicago region) and one 11 counties in East Central Illinois. Possible effects of climate change are addressed through 2050. A third region, Kaskaskia River Basin in SW IL, was announced in March.