

# NEWS RELEASE



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DORIS DUKE  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Environment Program

## **\$10.8 Million Grant Awarded to Accelerate the Conservation of Wildlife Habitat in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin**

**Grant Focuses on the Protection of Priority Areas Identified by These Five States in Their Wildlife Action Plans**

**New York** – The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) today announced a grant of \$10.8 million over three years to accelerate the implementation of the state wildlife action plans in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

DDCF awarded the grant to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF), which will work in partnership with The Conservation Fund (TCF), Ducks Unlimited (DU) and other organizations across the region. An estimated \$9.5 million of the total grant will be devoted directly to the protection of habitat identified as a priority in the wildlife action plans of these five states. The remaining funds will be used to undertake educational efforts and build partnerships that advance the implementation of the plans in these states, and across the Midwest.



*The “blufflands” along the upper Mississippi River are a priority in the wildlife action plans of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin.*

“The state wildlife action plans offer hope for all concerned about the conservation of wildlife and the sustainable growth of our communities,” said Dr. Joan Spero, president of DDCF.

“The state wildlife action plans are so valuable because they identify the wildlife habitats that state officials, scientists, conservationists, hunters, anglers and others agree are priorities to protect now, while much of our wildlife is still abundant and habitat conservation is still cost-effective,” added Dr. Mark Shaffer, director of DDCF’s Environment Program. “This grant is designed to help implement the plans in five states that show great promise, and help expand interest in the plans across the Midwest.”

State wildlife action plans were first conceived in 2000, when Congress mandated that each state develop a comprehensive strategy for conserving its wildlife. The states submitted their plans to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the fall of 2005, and they were all approved by February of 2007. In developing these plans, the state wildlife agencies were careful to consider the broad range of wildlife, including game and non-game species, common species as well as endangered ones. They identified and prioritized key wildlife habitat, in many cases using the latest technology to map these lands. They also brought multiple stakeholders to the table -

<sup>1</sup> Funds for projects in Wisconsin will be made available after the state completes a map of its wildlife focal areas

academics and activists, scientists and sportsmen, along with other interested members of the local public – to work together to establish a common conservation agenda that could achieve broad acceptance within each state.

“This grant should inspire a wide range of organizations and individuals to work together and speed up the implementation of the wildlife action plans, protecting the beautiful lands and clean waters that are so important to our wildlife, as well as our quality of life, here in the Midwest,” said Mark Ackelson, president of INHF.

As an example of an area likely to be a focus for the grant, Ackelson pointed to the area known as the “Blufflands,” and the work of INHF in partnership with the Blufflands Alliance. Identified as a conservation priority in the wildlife action plans for Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, these hills and valleys along the Upper Mississippi River are home to hundreds of species, and critical to the survival of the warblers, orioles, scarlet tanagers, and other songbirds that migrate along this flyway to Central and South America.

“New and even unexpected partnerships are essential to the future of conservation,” said Larry Selzer, president of The Conservation Fund, which will focus its efforts under the grant in Minnesota and Wisconsin. “For outdoor enthusiasts, for wildlife, and for the environment, conservation of forests and other lands is critical. Across the Upper Midwest, we’re working to conserve these precious resources, and this program gives us valuable new tools to do that.”

“Ducks Unlimited members understand the need for including all wildlife in state wildlife action plans. More than 900 species of wildlife use wetlands, so these plans fit well with our wetlands conservation mission,” said Bob Hoffman, DU’s director of operations for its Great Lakes/Atlantic regional office. “This grant will help DU look specifically at wetlands opportunities in Missouri and Illinois.”

Mark Humpert, chair of the newly formed Wildlife Action Plan Technical Working Committee of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, added, “This grant recognizes the good work that the wildlife agencies have put into the action plans, and how these plans can help conservation efforts both within and across state borders.”

Impressed by the inclusive, collaborative, proactive and state-based principles guiding the wildlife action plans, DDCF decided in 2004 to utilize state wildlife action plans as the focusing mechanism for its funding of habitat conservation. This grant of \$10.8 million to accelerate conservation efforts in the Midwest is the second major grant the DDCF has awarded to protect priority habitats in a cluster of states with strong wildlife action plans and promising conservation opportunities. In 2006, the DDCF also awarded a \$7.5 million grant to help implement wildlife action plans in four states in the Southeast: Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. Including these two grants, DDCF has awarded more than \$47 million since 2004 to organizations working to develop, promote and implement the state wildlife action plans across the country.

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The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation ([www.ddcf.org](http://www.ddcf.org)) is to improve the quality of people’s lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke’s properties.

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) was founded in 1979 with the mission of protecting and restoring Iowa’s land, water and wildlife for future generations. Over the last 28 years, INHF has protected nearly 100,000 acres of land at 675 sites in 93 of Iowa’s 99 counties. For more information about INHF, please visit [www.inhf.org](http://www.inhf.org) or contact Cathy Engstrom at 515-288-1846 or [cengstrom@inhf.org](mailto:cengstrom@inhf.org)

Since 1985, The Conservation Fund (TCF) has forged partnerships to protect America’s land and waters through land acquisition, community initiatives and leadership training that emphasize the integration of environmental and economic goals. TCF has protected more than 5 million acres nationwide, including 130,000 acres in the states covered by this grant. For more information about TCF, please visit [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org) or contact Kathryn Brown at 703-797-2507 or [kbrown@conservationfund.org](mailto:kbrown@conservationfund.org)

Ducks Unlimited (DU) is the world's largest private, non-profit waterfowl and wetland conservation organization, with more than one million members in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Since it was founded in 1937 DU has conserved more than 11.9 million acres of waterfowl habitat in North America, including 450,525 acres in the five states covered by this grant. For more information about DU, please visit [www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org) or contact Kristin Schrader at 734-623-2000 or [kschrader@ducks.org](mailto:kschrader@ducks.org)