

Final Report

Wildlife Preservation Fund – Small Projects FY 06

Project Title: Shorebird Nesting Island

Grant Number: 06-003W

Ballard Nature Center
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The Ballard Nature Center has completed the FY05 Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund Small Project #06-003W, titled *Shorebird Nesting Island*.

In July 2005, a local heavy equipment contractor constructed a 7-acre shallow water wetland on a former agricultural field following NRCS specification and design. The wetland was designed to promote shallow water wetland communities and provide habitats for both plant and animal communities. As part of the restoration effort, native wetland vegetation has been collected locally and will be over seeded into the wetland areas this winter. Logs and woody material were added to the wetland restoration to provide breeding areas and egg mass attachment sites for reptiles and amphibians. The surrounding 25-acre agricultural field was restored to an Illinois ecotype prairie community by frost seeding native prairie grasses and forbs in February 2005. The prairie restoration was sprayed with Plateau herbicide in May 2005 to reduce weed competition. An interpretive trail was constructed through the prairie restoration and along a portion of the shoreline berm of the wetland to provide environmental education opportunities.

The Wildlife Preservation Fund assisted with the development of a .33-acre nesting island for shorebirds. This nesting island was constructed in the center of the 7-acre wetland during August 2005. The nesting island was shaped by the contractor to provide level nesting areas for shorebirds. The entire island was covered with 3 rolls of filter fabric to prevent weed growth and was then covered with 142 tons of CA-7 gravel at 3" thick. The combination of filter fabric and gravel will provide a long term nesting location that should require minimal maintenance.

The Ballard Nature Center is requesting reimbursement from the Wildlife Preservation Fund for 142 tons of CA-7 gravel that was purchased for \$1,971.25. As part of the overall nesting island project, the Ballard Nature Center is responsible for the purchase of the 3 rolls of filter fabric, the spreading of the rock and the cost of the construction of the nesting island.

Throughout Illinois the lack of available nesting areas for shorebirds has reduced the breeding range of certain shorebirds. This nesting island will provide a secure nesting site for shorebird species that occur in grassland communities, including black-necked stilts, killdeer, spotted sandpipers and possibly interior least terns. Native wetland vegetation will become established in the wetland to provide both foraging and migratory habitats for shorebirds and marsh birds. The project will also provide an excellent educational opportunity to promote shallow water wetlands and benefits for shorebirds, marsh birds, reptiles and amphibians in Illinois. The Ballard Nature Center will incorporate this shorebird-nesting island into its environmental education programs and workshops.

The Ballard Nature Center wishes to thank the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund for its continued support of the center.



Constructing the island.



Rolling out the fabric.



Pinning the fabric in place.



Spreading
the rock.



Completed island