

**Illinois Wildlife: Up Close and Personal
Why Not Now?, Incorporated
Illinois Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Preservation Fund Grant
Final Report**

Grant Agreement Number: 09-033W

Grantee name, address and telephone number:

Why Not Now? Inc. 9928 Grange Hall Road Princeville, Illinois 61559

Time-frame of the report: August 21,2008 to June 30, 2009

Grantee representative: Brad Guidi, Executive Director

**309-258-6002 exec@campbigsky.org or
brad.guidi@wildblue.net**

Project objectives:

- 1. To provide Illinois residents with disabilities the opportunity to view wildlife in the natural habitat, utilizing spotting scopes and binoculars provided through a previous IDNR Wildlife Preservation Fund grant award.**
- 2. To educate citizens of Illinois, including those with disabilities and their friends, family, and caregivers, about indigenous species of Illinois wildlife including deer, turkey, coyote, squirrel, ducks, geese, herons, hawks, and numerous other mammals and birds.**
- 3. To educate our guests on the importance of maintaining and improving wildlife and wildlife habitat in Illinois.**

Completed project description:

The accessible wildlife viewing blind and propane heaters have been purchased, delivered, and assembled (volunteer labor) and are currently on view to campers at the Bruce's Lake pavilion to familiarize them with the equipment and the activity. The blind will be secured to a sled which will allow us to move the blind by towing behind a truck to its intended location near out wetland, food plot, and timber. A fence will be put up around the blind to prevent grazing cattle from disturbing the blind and its contents. Campers will begin to use the blind by the end of June, 2009. As a discount was obtained for the blind, permission was granted by IDNR to purchase two portable catalytic heaters (propane) to provide comfort to campers on cold mornings or evenings.

Summary of project accomplishments:

As the unit is currently on display to allow campers to become familiar with the unit and the activity our accomplishment to date is letting our campers know that this activity will be forthcoming. We anticipate that a period of three weeks will allow wildlife to become used to the presence of the blind so that campers will be able to view the animals from the blind.

Introduction:

Why Not Now? Inc., doing business as Camp Big Sky, operates a 102 acre accessible camp for children and adults with disabilities in northern Fulton County near Farmington. The camp is available, at no cost, to any person of any age with any disability that limits or restricts their access to the outdoors and their family, friends, and caregivers. As part of our expanding nature study activities we planned to purchase and set a wheel-chair accessible wildlife viewing blind so that our guests can view the diverse and healthy wildlife in their habitats. Spotting scopes and binoculars acquired through a previous IDNR Wildlife Preservation grant will be used inside the blind, which will accommodate up to four campers in wheelchairs.

Materials and Methods:

Materials consisted of:

- One, four person, wheelchair accessible blind**
- Two, portable, catalytic propane heaters**
- Spotting scopes and binoculars**

Method:

Campers will either wheel, walk, or be transported to the blind, located at the apex of our wetland, prairie grassland, food plot, and timber to maximize the opportunities to view a wide variety of local wildlife. Due to the presence of grazing cattle in the area we will fence off the blind to prevent damage to the blind.

While the activity will be available during the day, the early morning and dusk time frames will be promoted as they will most likely result in observing wildlife. A text-based educational activity will also be incorporated into the program to enhance understanding of the animals and their habitats.

Discussion and Summary:

To the best of our knowledge, Camp Big Sky will now be able to offer one of the only accessible wildlife viewing opportunities in the state of Illinois that will allow children and adults with disabilities to view, study, and learn about Illinois wildlife in their natural habitats. This project will add yet another unique outdoor recreational opportunity from which people with disabilities will be able to select from when they visit Camp Big Sky.

Project Expenditures

One (1) Whitetail 4-Man condo accessible wildlife viewing blind.....	1507.84
Shipping for blind.....	182.82
Local delivery charge from freight dock to camp.....	35.00
Two (2) ProCat PerfectTemp Catalytic Heaters with shipping.....	155.42
Seven (7) propane cylinders for propane heaters.....	18.22
Total Expenditures.....	1899.30

Receipts for all expenditures are attached to the hard copies of our final report.