



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB3514

Introduced 2/18/2025, by Rep. Janet Yang Rohr

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 801/1-15
525 ILCS 22/20

Amends the Department of Natural Resources Act. Authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to make grants to local not-for-profit organizations for the purposes of development, management, maintenance, and study of stormwater retention ponds. Amends the Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Act. Provides that grants under the Act may be used as funding for the creation or maintenance of stormwater retention ponds and shoreline stabilization projects that provide habitat for native plants and animals on park district lands.

LRB104 09668 BDA 19734 b

1 AN ACT concerning conservation.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Department of Natural Resources Act is
5 amended by changing Section 1-15 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 801/1-15)

7 Sec. 1-15. General powers and duties.

8 (a) It shall be the duty of the Department to investigate
9 practical problems, implement studies, conduct research and
10 provide assistance, information and data relating to the
11 technology and administration of the natural history,
12 entomology, zoology, and botany of this State; the geology and
13 natural resources of this State; the water and atmospheric
14 resources of this State; and the archeological and cultural
15 history of this State.

16 (b) The Department (i) shall obtain, store, and process
17 relevant data; recommend technological, administrative, and
18 legislative changes and developments; cooperate with other
19 federal, state, and local governmental research agencies,
20 facilities, or institutes in the selection of projects for
21 study; cooperate with the Board of Higher Education and with
22 the public and private colleges and universities in this State
23 in developing relevant interdisciplinary approaches to

1 problems; and evaluate curricula at all levels of education
2 and provide assistance to instructors and (ii) may sponsor an
3 annual conference of leaders in government, industry, health,
4 and education to evaluate the state of this State's
5 environment and natural resources.

6 (c) The Director, in accordance with the Personnel Code,
7 shall employ such personnel, provide such facilities, and
8 contract for such outside services as may be necessary to
9 carry out the purposes of the Department. Maximum use shall be
10 made of existing federal and state agencies, facilities, and
11 personnel in conducting research under this Act.

12 (c-5) The Department may use the services of, and enter
13 into necessary agreements with, outside entities for the
14 purpose of evaluating grant applications and for the purpose
15 of administering or monitoring compliance with grant
16 agreements. Contracts under this subsection shall not exceed 5
17 years, without an executed extension.

18 (d) In addition to its other powers, the Department has
19 the following powers:

20 (1) To obtain, store, process, and provide data and
21 information related to the powers and duties of the
22 Department under this Act. This subdivision (d)(1) does
23 give authority to the Department to require reports from
24 nongovernmental sources or entities.

25 (2) To cooperate with and support the Illinois Science
26 and Technology Advisory Committee and the Illinois

1 Coalition for the purpose of facilitating the effective
2 operations and activities of such entities. Support may
3 include, but need not be limited to, providing space for
4 the operations of the Committee and the Illinois
5 Coalition.

6 (e) The Department is authorized to make grants to local
7 not-for-profit organizations for the purposes of development,
8 management, maintenance, and study of wetland areas, forests,
9 prairies, stormwater retention ponds, and other landscapes
10 demonstrated to reduce the impact of climate change.

11 (f) The Department has the authority to accept, receive
12 and administer on behalf of the State any gifts, bequests,
13 donations, income from property rental and endowments. Any
14 such funds received by the Department shall be deposited into
15 the DNR Special Projects Fund, a trust fund in the State
16 treasury, and used for the purposes of this Act or, when
17 appropriate, for such purposes and under such restrictions,
18 terms and conditions as are predetermined by the donor or
19 grantor of such funds or property. Any accrued interest from
20 money deposited into the DNR Special Projects Fund shall be
21 reinvested into the Fund and used in the same manner as the
22 principal. The Director shall maintain records which account
23 for and assure that restricted funds or property are disbursed
24 or used pursuant to the restrictions, terms or conditions of
25 the donor.

26 (g) The Department shall recognize, preserve, and promote

1 our special heritage of recreational hunting and trapping by
2 providing opportunities to hunt and trap in accordance with
3 the Wildlife Code.

4 (h) Within 5 years after the effective date of this
5 amendatory Act of the 102nd General Assembly, the Department
6 shall fly a United States Flag, an Illinois flag, and a POW/MIA
7 flag at all State parks. Donations may be made by groups and
8 individuals to the DNR Special Projects Fund for costs related
9 to the implementation of this subsection.

10 (Source: P.A. 102-388, eff. 1-1-22; 102-699, eff. 4-19-22;
11 103-363, eff. 7-28-23; 103-923, eff. 1-1-25.)

12 Section 10. The Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies
13 Act is amended by changing Section 20 as follows:

14 (525 ILCS 22/20)

15 Sec. 20. Establishment of the Healthy Forests, Wetlands,
16 and Prairies Grant Program.

17 (a) The Department of Natural Resources, subject to
18 appropriation, shall establish and administer a Healthy
19 Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program to restore
20 degraded forest lands and native prairies and to promote the
21 growth of native vegetation that removes carbon dioxide from
22 the atmosphere and helps mitigate the impact of climate
23 change.

24 (b) Entities that may apply to participate in the Healthy

1 Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program include:

2 (1) State agencies and units of local government,
3 including, but not limited to, municipalities, townships,
4 counties, forest preserves, and park districts;

5 (2) conservation land trusts;

6 (3) not-for-profit entities with conservation
7 missions, including, but not limited to, climate change
8 mitigation, preservation of natural lands, and
9 conservation of the State's natural resources; and

10 (4) other entities that, because of their missions,
11 are determined by the Department to be eligible recipients
12 of the grants under this Act.

13 (c) At least 75% of the moneys appropriated for the
14 Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program shall be
15 awarded to the State agencies, units of local government, land
16 trusts, and other entities that the Department determines are
17 eligible for a grant under this Section. The Department may
18 use an amount not to exceed 23% of the moneys appropriated for
19 the Program for the purposes of restoring degraded forest
20 lands and native prairies and to promote the growth of native
21 vegetation that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and
22 help mitigate the impact of climate change. The Department may
23 use an amount not to exceed 2% of the moneys appropriated for
24 the Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program for
25 administrative costs associated with the Program.

26 (d) The Department shall adopt any rules necessary for the

1 implementation of this Act, including rules establishing
2 requirements and timeframes for the submission of grant
3 applications by entities that are authorized to apply to
4 participate in the Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies
5 Grant Program.

6 (e) Grants provided under this Act may be used by eligible
7 entities for the purpose of:

8 (1) matching funds for federal or private dollars for
9 projects that forward the goal of climate change
10 mitigation through promotion of the management, planting,
11 maintaining, and preserving of native grasses, plants, and
12 trees;

13 (2) financing projects along roadways and in parks and
14 forest preserves on public or private lands to plant
15 native trees and prairie grasses demonstrated to absorb
16 carbon;

17 (3) financing projects that promote the stewardship of
18 existing public and private urban forests and natural
19 lands, including the removal of invasive or nonnative
20 plant species;

21 (4) funding regional teams tasked with planting native
22 prairie grasses and trees, prescribed burning for the
23 maintenance of natural lands, removing invasive plant
24 species, and educational outreach; and

25 (5) promoting education and marketing regarding local
26 projects or steps community members may take to promote

1 the growth of native vegetation that removes carbon
2 dioxide from the atmosphere; and -

3 (6) funding for the creation or maintenance of
4 stormwater retention ponds and shoreline stabilization
5 projects that provide habitat for native plants and
6 animals on park district lands.

7 (Source: P.A. 103-923, eff. 1-1-25.)