

## Iowa State Wildlife Grant Success Stories

In the five years since its inception, the State Wildlife Grants Program has played an important role in the conservation of Iowa's wildlife. The following are some of the projects funded through State Wildlife Grants:

### **Management: Proactive Efforts that Benefit Wildlife and People Grassland Birds in Iowa's Prairie**

The "prairie pothole" landscape's undulating hills, fertile soil, many lakes, and good rainfall makes it valuable to both wildlife and people. Sedge wrens, bobolinks and other bird life abound in this environment, along with other rare or declining Iowa birds, such as northern harrier and savannah sparrow. State Wildlife Grant funds were used to conduct research that will help DNR wildlife managers tailor their grassland management and prairie restoration techniques to improve habitat for birds and other prairie wildlife. This project also sets the stage for future research projects that will conserve wildlife and natural places, enhancing our own quality of life.

### **Restoration: Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas Native Prairie Seed Facility**

The majority of Iowa was once prairie; it is estimated that only a fraction (.1 percent) remains. In order to diversify Iowa's degraded remnant prairies and to better re-create prairies on public lands, Iowa DNR is using State Wildlife Grants to construct a native prairie seed production, processing and storage facility at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area. This facility will be used to produce and process local prairie seeds that are especially hard-to-grow. Diversifying Iowa's degraded prairies, will improve habitat for declining grassland birds, such as grasshopper and henslow's sparrows, dickcissels, greater prairie-chicken and short-eared owl. This is a cost-effective way to conserve wildlife and the places they live before they become more rare and more costly to protect.

### **Conservation: Protecting Imperiled Wildlife and Habitat Gladys Black Bald Eagle Refuge**

Bald eagles were nearly decimated by the effects of pesticides such as DDT in the 1950's. Today the species is still endangered but with the help of State Wildlife Grants one of Iowa's oldest and largest night roost sites for wintering bald eagles is now protected. Situated along the Des Moines River, just below the Lake Red Rock dam, up to 250 eagles may be found roosting here each night between early December and late March. This wooded tract in south central Iowa also provides valuable migrating and nesting habitat for many neotropical songbirds, and Indiana bats are known to frequent the vicinity. An existing public viewing platform across the river will offer visitors ample opportunity to view eagles and other wildlife.



*Nest Searching Spring Run Grasslands, Photo Courtesy of Iowa DNR*



*Local Ecotype Prairie Forb Production Plot, Photo Courtesy of Iowa DNR*



*Eagle Refuge Dedication and Donor, Photo Courtesy of Iowa DNR*

**Congress has appropriated \$4.6 million in State Wildlife Grants to Iowa since 2001. This has been matched with at least \$3 million state and partner dollars.**