

Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant - Sample Application Five

The following text illustrates responses to some of the narrative questions on the *Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant* application form. These responses were provided by teachers whose application scored highly with all the reviewers. Please do not copy the responses into your own application form. Read them to see examples of some complete, high-quality responses to the questions. Please note that the application form is revised annually, and the narrative questions in the current application form may not match the narrative questions from the older application form that these responses represent.

Application Five

1a. In 50 words or less describe the proposed project (who, what, where, when, how).

The students in the environmental science and biology classes will plan, establish, observe and maintain a native prairie plot on one-fourth of an acre behind the baseball fields at our school during the spring and fall.

1b. What are your goals for this project (why do you want to implement the project)?

The goal of the project is for the high school students to have an experience of creating, maintaining and observing a prairie habitat for native plant species. Science classes will analyze the soil and learn the names and characteristics of plant and animal species that inhabit the prairie site.

1c. How will you measure the success of the project?

The success of the project will be measured by the diversity of plant species established and the ability of students to explain the process, identify the plants and continue to use and observe the plant and wildlife species that frequent the site.

2a. What planning activities did the students perform for the project? Be specific.

AP Environmental Science students surveyed the area, created maps of the intended project, brainstormed ideas for projects and prepared a plan of the proposed prairie planting. Biology students assisted with research of appropriate plant species and the process of successful planting.

2b. What implementation activities will students perform for the project? Be specific.

Students will lay out the dimensions of the site, monitor for weed growth over spring and summer, plant the bare root species in the spring and perform the broadcast seeding of the prairie mix in the fall.

2c. What maintenance activities will students perform for the project? Be specific.

Students will maintain this area by observing growth to maintain desirable species, monitor for litter and provide additional water to the site when necessary.

3a. Describe how the project will enhance the educational use of the area. Please do not list learning standards.

The project will enhance educational use as an outdoor classroom of native habitat to observe native plant and animal species as they are established and change over time. Additionally, this project will

encourage students to become more aware of several aspects in the environment they would never have seen or paid much attention to before, such as earthworms, grubs, roots, insects, etc.

4. Describe how the proposed project will positively affect wildlife, improve wildlife habitat and demonstrate relevant ecological concepts.

The deeply rooted prairie plants will encourage infiltration of rainwater, reduce runoff and flooding and provide a buffer between the baseball field and waterway. This will directly demonstrate the concept of cover improving water quality. Wildlife habitat will be improved by a greater diversity of prairie grasses and flowers that are particularly high-quality habitat for birds, butterflies and other beneficial wildlife.

6. What is your time line for this project? List the major activities associated with development of the project and when you expect to perform them.

Order bare root species. – March

Plant bare root species. – May

Remove existing grass cover in spring. Establish temporary cover crop. Continue site preparation and weed control throughout summer and early fall.

Acquire prairie seed mix. Plant in November.

Maintenance and monitoring throughout subsequent years.

7. A long-term care/maintenance plan for the project is imperative.

7a. How will the area be maintained during the school year? Who will do the work?

Students and staff will monitor the area during the school year for proper hydration and litter and weed control. Maintenance of the area is overseen by our school's booster club and will continue to be mowed until the prairie is established.

7b. How will the area be maintained during the summer? Who will do the work?

Students and science staff will perform weeding, watering and litter control of the project area as necessary, and mowing will continue by private contract.

7c. How will the area be maintained in subsequent years? Who will do the work?

Maintenance of the area will continue to be overseen by the booster club and monitored by the biology, environmental science and earth club students throughout subsequent years.

8. Tell us about the resources that you utilized in preparing for this project and discuss how you will involve other people (teachers, community members, etc.) in the project.

The students used a variety of technical experts to research and plan this project including: naturalists at our local nature center; school alumni with agricultural businesses; local plant nursery staff; and a variety of science teachers. These resources will continue to assist with implementation and maintenance of the area as needed.