

March 31, 2007

Eric Smith (sponsor)
Restoration Ecologist
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
301 South Date Street
Gibson City, IL 60936

RE: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Contract #RC06L01W (Sept 2005-Dec 2006)

Dear Eric,

This letter is in regards to the Final Report for the project entitled "Development of a Web-based Aid to Restoration Featuring Fruits, Seeds, and Seedlings for Illinois Prairie Plants" with principal investigators from Eastern Illinois University (Janice Coons, Nancy Coutant, and Brent Todd at 217-581-6243, 217-581-6609, and 217-581-8372) and from the Illinois Natural History Survey (Kenneth Robertson at 217-244-2171).

The overall goal of this project was to develop a comprehensive descriptive resource with detailed information relative to Illinois prairie plants at all stages of development. The focus of this proposal was to provide images and descriptive information on fruits, seeds and seedlings which currently was lacking. This resource will benefit prairie management and restoration efforts. Specifically, a resource was created for 75-100 prairie species native to Illinois. Fruits were collected at natural areas and prairie remnants throughout Illinois. The resource was to contain:

- 1) color images of fruits, seeds, and seedlings
 - inflorescence with fruits on plant (in natural habitat)
 - individual fruits showing details
 - seeds showing details
 - seedlings at several stages (in greenhouses)
 - descriptive information about fruits, seeds, and seedlings
- 2) flowering and fruiting time
 - weeks from flower to fruit
 - traits to recognize fruits, mature seeds, and seedlings
 - ways to break dormancy
 - time to emergence of seedlings (first and peak)
 - weeks to desirable plant size for transplant
 - ease of propagation from seed
- 3) electronic accessibility
 - new webpage was developed (accessible at www.eiu.edu/~prairie)
 - INHS server where images of fruits, seeds, and seedlings will supplement images of habitat, habit, leaves, flowers, and inflorescences currently at <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/~kenr/prairieplants.html>
 - available for distribution on CDs

As outlined in the project objectives, we developed a website featuring color images of fruits, seeds and seedlings of prairie species. This website currently has images for approximately 136 plant species with fruit images for 125 species, seed images for 113 species, and seedling images for 80 species. Hence, objective 1 was met. All species do not have images for all three stages, but this project will continue into the future with additional images added as they become available. For objective 2, the website contains descriptive information regarding flowering and fruiting times, fruit types, seed descriptions, ways to break seed dormancy, and seedling descriptions for species where images are present. Weeks for seedling emergence and to reach transplant stage varied greatly with environment, so they were not included. For objective 3, a webpage was created at www.eiu.edu/~prairie, and many of the images on this website are also on Ken Robertson's website. Due to the size of this website and the plans for continually updating it, CDs were not produced as per agreement with Eric Smith. Thus, our Final Report is the website.

In addition to the website produced, we donated several plants to Eric Smith for use in restoration of natural areas. Also, some plants from the project were established in a prairie demonstration garden on the EIU campus. Thus plants were not simply discarded.

Information regarding expenditures made under this contract is being forwarded to Kathy Barker under a separate cover.

This project has been an interesting one. We are excited about the website. Let us know if you have any questions or comments regarding this project. We thank the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for the support provided to us.

Sincerely,

Janice M. Coons and Nancy E. Coutant
Professor of Botany and Instructor
jcoons@eiu.edu and necoutant@eiu.edu

encl: Newspaper Article Announcing Project (with hard copy of letter)

cc: Kathy Barker
Kenneth Robertson
Cathy Thomas
Brent Todd