Draft of proposal to iSEE

Several efforts are underway on the University of Illinois campus to promote the use and reestablishment of native plant species. The intent is to integrate native plants into the main campus landscaping and establish larger more diverse plantings in areas farther from the main campus in conjunction with the removal of invasive plants such as bush honeysuckle. To date much of the funding has come from the Student Sustainability Committee. Work at the moment is concentrated on the 2.3 acre prairie at Florida and Orchard in Urbana, the wooded area at the southern end of the Arboretum including the Pollinatarium, and the Forestry Plantation along Race Street.

In addition to the SSC several campus and community groups have made substantial contributions to the effort. The Master Naturalists and Grand Prairie Friends have provided hundreds of volunteer hours as have citizens who just show up for work days. Individual students, faculty and staff as well as Red Bison and Students for Environmental Concerns along with several student service organizations put in hundreds of hours.

NRES purchased a $30,000 chipper and hired a contractor to remove honeysuckle with a forestry mower at the forestry plantation. The machine was also used at a limited basis at the Arboretum. Additional staff and in kind support was provided by the Arboretum, Pollinatariun, Prairie Research Institute and Illinois Natural History Survey.

Assuming SSC funding is received by the Arboretum, the forestry mower will return to the Arboretum and remove large stands of honeysuckle. Workers will then remove by hand the honeysuckle too close to trees for the machine to cut. The area will then be replanted with native understory species as the invasive plants are brought under control.

Additional funding beyond that provided by SSC will be required to complete this effort. It is anticipated that the Arboretum and others will seek grants for future work and research. It is therefore requested that the remaining funds in the $10,000 donation “Support for Sustainable Landscapes” Dr. Jack Paxton made several years be made available to further this work. The funds would be used to supplement and match SSC and other funding. Specifically the funds would be available for the following purposes as needed: supplies and rental of equipment, removal of invasive plants by contractors or hourly workers in campus areas (especially those near the current work areas to reduce the amount of seed for birds to carry into cleared areas), and purchase and planting of native plant material at appropriate campus locations.

Dr. John Marlin a research affiliate at ISTC and INHS and Adjunct Professor in NRES has been the volunteer coordinator of several of the SSC projects and can coordinate the proposed project.

Primary collaborators include Dr. Marlin: Arboretum Director, Dr. Kevin McSweeney; and Jay Hayek the Extension Forester within NRES.