

The Conservation Fund

In June 2022, Apex Clean Energy awarded a \$70,000 conservation grant on behalf of Mulligan Solar to the Conservation Fund to support the Hill Prairie Habitat Restoration Project. The project is a partnership between the Conservation Fund, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and private landowners.

About the Hill Prairie Restoration Project

The 70-acre grassland and prairie habitat restoration site is located about eight miles west of the Mulligan Solar facility. The project will help restore an extremely rare habitat type known as Loess Hill Prairie. Due to the invasion of shrubs and trees that overtake native species, current estimates find there to be fewer than 530 acres of this type of prairie remaining in Illinois, so this restoration will meaningfully increase the number of hill prairie acres in the region.

The site currently has limited flower and nectar resources, diminished nesting areas for wildlife, and declining water quality. Apex's grant will provide the following benefits:

- critical habitat for state-listed threatened and endangered species, with a specific benefit for the monarch butterfly
- habitat for local game species (turkey, deer, rabbits, and squirrels), bat species that require open prairie areas for foraging, birds (northern bobwhite and flycatchers), and reptile species (ornate and eastern box turtles)
- improved soil structure and water infiltration through the replacement of invasive trees with native plants
- reduction in runoff impacting surrounding lands, erosion, and sedimentation introduced into the river system



About the Apex Conservation Grant Program

As a company with a core value of sustainability, Apex Clean Energy endeavors to not only minimize our projects' impacts, but also promote an ecological balance. Through the Apex Conservation Grant Program, each renewable energy project commercialized by Apex will contribute a sum of money, proportional to the size of the project, to support local or regional wildlife conservation, reforestation and flora restoration, protection of sensitive habitats such as grassland or wetlands, and other environmental conservation initiatives in or near project communities.