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SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST ACQUIRES LANDS BENEFICIAL TO INTERIOR BIRD SPECIES

Harrisburg, IL, April 8, 2009 – The Shawnee National Forest recently acquired two tracts of land, totaling approximately 221 acres, in Union County, Illinois. This brings the total acres purchased as a direct result of a partnership between The Nature Conservancy and the Forest since 2004 to approximately 766. This successful partnership is responsible for an additional 164 acres being considered for acquisition.

“Through this transfer, The Nature Conservancy and the Forest Service achieve a shared conservation goal of reducing fragmentation of habitat in the Shawnee National Forest. We have now created habitat connections that will benefit a number of plant and animal species including the migratory songbirds that nest in the Illinois Ozarks,” said Bob Moseley, director of conservation programs for The Nature Conservancy in Illinois. The Conservancy’s conservation of this area was supported by the Clean Energy Community Foundation.

The most recent acquisitions include one tract containing 68 acres that adjoins the Clear Springs Wilderness and a second tract of approximately 153 acres that adjoins the Bald Knob Wilderness. In addition to important habitat benefits provided by the 221 acres, the new additions also enhance public access and provide a wide range of recreational opportunities.

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“Our partnership with the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy has been an important and successful example of collaborative conservation”, said Ron Scott, Lands Program Manager for the Forest. “These two new additions will provide significant benefits to the wildlife and plant species inhabiting the Forest, as well as to the visiting public who come to enjoy the outdoor recreational opportunities offered on the Shawnee National Forest.”

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. In Illinois, the Conservancy together with its partners and members has been responsible for the protection of more than 80,000 acres in the state.

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