

**ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION**  
Minutes of the 244<sup>th</sup>- A Special Meeting

Illinois Beach Hotel and Conference Center  
Adeline Jay Geo-Karis Illinois Beach State Park  
100 Lake Front Drive  
Zion, Illinois 60099

August 28, 2023, 2:00 PM  
In-person meeting

Todd Strole presented remarks before the official start of the meeting.  
See Attachment I for Todd Strole's remarks.

Natalie Phelps Finnie, Director of Illinois Department of Natural Resources, welcomed everyone.  
See Attachment II for Director Finnie's remarks.

244A-1) **Call to Order, Roll Call**

Commission Chair Derby Lewis called the meeting to order at 2:25pm and read the roll call.

Commissioners Present: Toni Opft, Marcy DeMauro-Roth, Michelle Parker, Dr. Abigail Derby Lewis, Tom Clay, Radhika Miraglia, Robert Szafoni

Commissioners Absent: George Covington, Adam Kessel

Consultants Present: Joe Roth, Randy Heidorn, Kerry Leigh, Michelle Carr, Gerald Adelman, Fran Harty

Others Present: See Attached Appendix 1

244A-2) **Adoption of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Clay, seconded by Commissioner Parker, and carried that the Agenda for the 244-A Meeting be adopted.

244A-3) **Presentation of House Resolution 149 Declaring August 2023 as Illinois Nature Preserves Month**

PRESENTATION

Jeff Keicher, Illinois House of Representative Member

Rep. Keicher thanked the Commission for having him and Rep. Joyce Mason. Rep. Keicher continued to speak about using this month to recognize what INPC is doing to protect the natural environment. He thanked Amy Doll for approaching him about this event and is honored to carry this resolution today. He carried a resolution on prescribed burns earlier this year in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the month of October. Rep.

Keicher went on to talk about Nachusa Grasslands and strongly encouraged people to visit and witness TNC's amazing work in replanting and getting the grasslands back to the way they were originally.

Rep. Keicher was educated as a young man in all the important things Illinois has done to preserve our natural resources over his lifetime. He reiterated the importance of protecting those important and keystone reasons that our ancestors first located in Illinois. "Even though it used to all be swamp land for the most part," Illinois' natural location and environment is the reason we are all here.

Illinois is an amazing place with amazing things going on and most importantly has amazing people who do great things. Taking Nature Preserves seriously is a commonality we find in so many units of governments.

Today we find ourselves with unprecedented pressure on our natural resources. Rep Keicher described an article in the Economist about the cobalt mines in Africa devastating the landscape so we can have a better future with electric vehicles. He went on to say he is not suggesting that is good or bad, but that the cobalt mining is a balance. We need to be aware and embrace this balance going forward. Only through that balance can we learn how to approach farmers about turning their land back to the prairie, speak to businesses about "set-asides" and talk to major corporations about purchasing their power from carbon free sources.

Rep. Keicher calls for less "me" and more "we." We need to come together more like today and recognize the work of the people. He looks to the amazing technologies we have engineered and created and notes we are at an unprecedented time in human history. This day will not stand alone in history, and we will have more days like this because humans will learn to listen and preserve. Nature always wins and we need to make sure we are listening to what she is telling us.

Rep. Keicher thanked the Commission again and commented that he and Rep. Mason work aggressively on the house floor together on several bills and look forward to continuing with the meeting.

244A-4) **The Natural Areas Movement in Illinois**

PRESENTATION

Arthur Melville Pearson - CEO, Roger Tory Peterson Institute; Biographer of George Fell

See Attachment III for Arthur Melville Pearson's Speech

244A-5) **Evolution of the Illinois Nature Preserves System**

PRESENTATION

Brian Anderson - Former Director of Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and Illinois Natural History Survey

See Attachment IV for Brian Anderson's Speech

244A-6) **Lake Co. – Addition to Illinois Beach Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) requested final approval for dedication of a 186.42-acre Addition to Illinois Beach Nature Preserve. The existing 1080-acre nature

preserve is owned and managed by IDNR. The proposed addition is located within the Lake Michigan Dunes Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois and is part of Illinois Beach INAI Site #1083. This addition will provide protection to 14 INAI Category I high-quality Grades A and B natural communities, including Beach; Dry, Dry-mesic, Mesic, Wet-mesic, and Wet Sand Prairie; Dry Sand Savanna; Fore-dune; Freshwater Marsh, Panne, Sedge Meadow, Seep, Pond, and Low-gradient Small Stream. The Lake Michigan Panne natural community is globally rare and has rare plant assemblages. The INAI is also designated as Category II due to the presence of 52 State-endangered or threatened species, of which five are also Federally-listed. The area is recognized as part of a Conservation Opportunity Area by the State Wildlife Action Plan, is a critical region of the Lake Plain Coastal Restoration Partnership, contains wetlands recognized to be of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and is recognized in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Kellogg/Dead Dog Creek Watershed Plan, the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Water Bird Conservation Plan, and the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan. The proposed addition will contribute significantly to national and regional biodiversity, preserve coastal wetland ecosystems, and provide critical habitat for declining plant and animal species. It also serves as a critical avian, mammalian (e.g., bats), and invertebrate (e.g., butterflies, dragonflies) migration corridor. Twenty-three State-listed species, of which two are also Federally-listed, have been recorded from within the boundaries of the proposed addition, and protection of this area will strengthen the resiliency of the existing nature preserve and the multitudes of additional rare species found there..

Preliminary approval was granted at the 244<sup>th</sup> INPC Meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (Resolution 2590). With Final Approval by the Commission, the proposed Addition to Illinois Beach Nature Preserve will bring the total acreage of protected land at this site to 1266.42 acres.

It was moved by Commissioner Szafoni, seconded by Commissioner DeMauro-Roth, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of the Addition to Illinois Beach as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under item 6 of the Agenda at the 244-A INPC Meeting.

(Resolution 2595)

244A-7) **Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)**

No public comments were made.

244A-8) **Adjournment**

It was moved by Commissioner Clay, seconded by Commissioner Oplt, and carried that the meeting be adjourned.

The 244-A Special Meeting at Illinois Beach was adjourned at 3:30pm