

**ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
TWO HUNDRED FORTY-FOURTH MEETING**

Lost Valley Visitor Center
Glacial Park
6316 Harts Road
Ringwood, Illinois 60072

May 9, 2023, 10:00 AM
In-person meeting with WebEx option

*Documentary Material Enclosed

Item 1: Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3:* Approval of Minutes for the Special Meeting on January 23, 2023, and for the 243rd Meeting on January 24, 2023

Note: Share Accomplishments Summary of the 243rd INPC Meeting

At the 243rd Meeting of the INPC, held on January 24, 2023, at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, Illinois, legal protection was completed by the Commission for five tracts of land totaling 1,007 acres. Three of the five tracts are privately owned, and two are publicly owned. The owners of the private sites donated the value of the protection agreements to the public. Lands protected include Poplar Creek Land and Water Reserve, an Addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Brunt Land and Water Reserve, an Addition to Pilcher Park Nature Preserve, and an Addition to Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve.

Protection of these lands came about because the Commission had staff in the field working with public and private landowners. There are 416 dedicated nature preserves with 62,763 acres; and there are 206 registered land and water reserves totaling 58,729 acres.

Altogether, there are 622 sites with 121,492 acres protected in the Illinois Nature Preserves System.

Item 4: Next Meeting Dates and Locations

245	September 12, 2023	Monroe County Annex Building Waterloo, Illinois
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Item 5:* INPC Staff Report

REPORT
Todd Strole, Executive Director
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

Item 6:* IDNR Staff Report

REPORT
Ann Marie Holtrop, Chief
Division of Natural Heritage

Item 7:* Endangered Species Protection Board Report

REPORT
Randy Schietzelt
Endangered Species Protection Board

Item 8:* Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves Report

REPORT
Amy Doll, Director
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves

Item 9:* Jasper Co. – Gowin-Boldrey Addition to Robert Ridgway Grasslands Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication

The proposed Gowin-Boldrey Addition to the Robert Ridgway Grasslands Nature Preserve will permanently protect 75 acres located within the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) boundary of the Prairie Ridge - Jasper County site (INAI #0754). The property is located in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division of Illinois, and it provides additional habitat to at least 33 State endangered or threatened species known to occur at or near the Prairie Ridge State Natural Area (PRSNA) complex in Jasper County.

With approval for dedication, the Gowin-Boldrey Addition to the Robert Ridgway Grasslands Nature Preserve will increase the amount of permanently protected property at the Jasper County complex of PRSNA to almost 3,000 acres.

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) staff and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) staff located at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, on behalf of the landowner, Illinois Audubon Society, recommend preliminary approval for dedication of 75 acres as the Gowin-Boldrey Addition to the Robert Ridgway Grasslands Nature Preserve.

REPORT
Sami Childerson
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 10:* Lake Co. – Addition to Illinois Beach Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) seeks preliminary 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; Foredune; 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. If approved, this Addition to Illinois Beach Nature Preserve will bring the total acreage of protected land at this site to 1266.42 acres.

REPORT

Melissa Grycan
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 11:* McHenry Co. – Addition to Gladstone Fen Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication

Gladstone Fen was included on the INAI (Site #1265) in recognition of a relict high-quality Graminoid Fen Wetland. In 1991, Lee and Gertrude Gladstone dedicated 6.44 acres as Gladstone Fen Nature Preserve. Fourteen years later, in 2005, their children, Lorna and Evan dedicated an additional 5.34 acres to the preserve. Now, Lorna and Evan propose to dedicate approximately 1.4 acres as a nature preserve addition. This proposed addition will legally protect the remaining conservation land held by the Gladstone family at this site. It will better define the “footprint” of the existing home site and prevent potential encroachment into environmentally sensitive areas should the property change from the current ownership. Ultimately, Lorna and Evan Gladstone wish for the nature preserve to be owned and managed by a land trust or appropriate conservation entity to ensure the long-term health and vitality of their preserve. The nature preserve design herein proposed with this addition will allow the home site to be sold separately from the nature preserve should the Gladstone Family choose to do so. Upon approval of this addition, Gladstone Fen Nature Preserve will total 13.18 acres.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission staff, on behalf of Lorna and Evan Gladstone, recommends preliminary approval for dedication of the proposed 1.4-acre Addition to Gladstone Fen Nature Preserve.

REPORT

John C. Nelson
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 12:* Pope Co. – Gibbons Creek Barrens Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication

The IDNR seeks to dedicate the existing 173.24-acre Gibbons Creek Barrens Land and Water Reserve located in the Greater and Lesser Sections of the Shawnee Hills Natural Division in Pope County as the Gibbons Creek Barrens Nature Preserve. The site was originally registered at INPC Meeting #215 on September 10, 2013, as LWR #172, but subsequent management and species surveys have elevated the quality and significance of the site. Dedication will enhance protection for Category I, II, and III qualifying features within the IDNR-owned portion of the Gibbons Creek Barrens INAI Site #0339, including Grades A and B Dry Barrens and Dry Woodland natural communities. The Grade A Dry Barrens was noted in the original INAI documents as being the best example of this community type in southern Illinois, containing over 100 plant species and the only known population of the State endangered Hale’s Corydalis (*Corydalis halei*) in Illinois. The site also provides habitat for three other State-listed species: Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*), Carolina Whipgrass (*Scleria pauciflora*), and Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*). Approximately 260 plant species have been recorded from the site as well as at least 13 Species of Greatest Conservation Need identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.

REPORT

Christina Feng
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 13:* Mason Co. – Addition to Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve, Final Dedication

The IDNR seeks final approval for dedication of 40 acres as an Addition to Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve, located in the Illinois River Section of the Illinois River and Mississippi River Sand Areas Natural Division in Mason County. The first portion (920 acres) of Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak was dedicated on April 1, 1970 (Meeting #31, Resolution #115), one of only 64 nature preserves dedicated prior to the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI). Another 540-acre parcel was dedicated later that year on October 14, 1970 (Meeting #34, Resolution #145). Finally, 50 acres from two different parcels were dedicated as nature preserve buffer on May 23, 2011 (208th meeting, Resolution #2141). The proposed addition will connect the three previously mentioned dedicated areas. The nature preserve is adjacent to the privately-owned 86-acre Bob Spanski’s Walden Too Land and Water Reserve. All these INPC-protected sites lie within the Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak INAI Site #0732. The Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak INAI Site is designated a Category I natural area due to the presence of Grade B high-quality remnant Dry Sand Prairie and Dry Sand Savanna. The site is Category II due to known specific suitable habitat supporting three State-listed plant species: State

endangered Small Burhead (*Echinodorus tenellus*), and State threatened Hall’s Bulrush (*Scheonoplectus hallii*) and Umbrella Sedge (*Cyperus grayoides*). Altogether, nine listed species have been found at the existing nature preserve. Management and use of the 40-acre addition will be consistent with the long-term conservation of Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve as a whole and will promote the maintenance and management of the unique natural features for which the site was originally dedicated. The primary management objective for this addition is to maintain and restore natural communities, while providing habitat for the known State threatened Regal Fritillary. According to the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve is within the Mason County Sands Conservation Opportunity Area, providing a platform for conservation projects and a priority for implementing action steps. The proposed Addition to Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve protects additional habitat and buffers known habitat for 27 wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

Preliminary approval was granted at the 243rd INPC Meeting on January 24, 2023 (Resolution 2585). With final approval by the Commission, the proposed Addition to Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve will increase the size of this INPC-protected site to 1,550 acres.

REPORT

Byron Paulsen
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Final Approval for Dedication

Item 14: Review of Closed Meeting Minutes

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Commissioners must review closed minutes at least twice a year to determine if they must remain closed. The following meetings had closed minutes and need to be reviewed: August 2, 2005; May 2, 2006; May 6, 2008; May 5, 2009; May 7, 2013; September 10, 2013; and September 10, 2019.

REPORT

Todd Strole
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Determination if closed minutes remain closed

Item 15: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 16: Other Business

Items may be discussed, but no final action may occur for items not previously included on the agenda.

Item 17: Adjournment