

**ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA  
TWO HUNDRED FORTIETH MEETING**

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62702

January 25, 2022, 10:00 a.m.  
WebEx meeting due to Covid-19 pandemic

\*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 239<sup>th</sup> Meeting September 14, 2021**

**Item 4: Next meeting dates and locations**

241	May 10, 2022	Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center
242	September 13, 2022	Olney Central College

**Item 5:\* INPC Staff Report**

REPORT  
Todd Strole, Executive Director  
Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 6:\* Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves Report**

REPORT  
Amy Doll, Director  
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves

**Item 7:\* IDNR Staff Report**

REPORT  
Ann Marie Holtrop  
Division of Natural Heritage

**Item 8:\* Endangered Species Protection Board Report**

REPORT  
Dr. Joyce Hofmann  
Endangered Species Protection Board

**Item 9:\* Coles Co. - Addition to Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

Grand Prairie Friends seeks registration of 3 acres as an addition to Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve (LWR), which will increase the size of this site from 141 to 144 acres. Embarras Ridges is part of the greater Warbler Woods Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site #1585, for Category I: Grade B dry-mesic upland forest; Category II: presence of the State-threatened least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) and formerly State-listed fibrous rooted sedge (*Carex communis*) and false hellebore (*Veratrum woodii*); and Category III: contains one nature preserve (Warbler Woods) and four land and water reserves (Embarras Ridges, Warbler Woods, Warbler Woods North and Warbler Bottoms North). Embarras Ridges provides support for the Streams and Forest and Woodland Campaigns of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) and provides habitat for at least eight Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), as identified in the IWAP, including seven birds and one amphibian.

The proposed addition is located in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division and lies within the ~1000-acre Warbler Ridge Conservation Area (WRCA), which contains six Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) sites: the five referenced above and Ambraw Woods LWR. This complex of sites occurs within a forested corridor that extends for several miles along the Embarras River corridor, from north of Lake Charleston to south of Fox Ridge State Park.

The proposed addition benefits Embarras Ridges LWR and the greater WRCA by increasing the size of the reserve, removes an inholding, reduces the amount of edge habitat, provides buffer to high quality resources, prevents future development, aids in management activities, and reduces the likelihood of future defense issues.

**REPORT**

John Griesbaum  
Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Approval for Registration

**Item 10:\* Coles Co. – Warbler Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

Warbler Bluff is a ~42-acre natural area in Coles County that is owned and managed by Grand Prairie Friends. Warbler Bluff is located in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois and lies within a forested corridor that extends for several miles along the Embarras River, from north of Lake Charleston to south of Fox Ridge State Park. Warbler Bluff protects and buffers approximately 1587 feet of the Embarras River and associated forest habitat. The buffering of the Embarras River by Warbler Bluff provides support for the Streams Campaign of the IWAP; and for the Forest and Woodland Campaign, this site helps maintain and enhance the composition of forested habitats in Illinois.

The Embarras River is recognized as a high-quality stream by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory, providing habitat for several threatened or endangered species of fish, reptile and mussels. State and/or Federally listed aquatic species include, but are not limited to, eastern sand darter (*Ammocrypta pellucidum*), smooth softshell turtle (*Apalone mutica*) and the mussels: monkeyface (*Quadrula metanevra*) and snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*).

Grand Prairie Friends seeks registration in perpetuity of the ~42-acre natural area. Registration of this site will protect these, and other, natural resources and benefit current and future visitors,

researchers, and residents of Coles County by preserving the unique natural heritage of East Central Illinois.

REPORT  
John Griesbaum  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval for Registration

**Item 11:\* Hancock Co. – Cut Off Road Addition to Cedar Glen Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) seeks to register the 12.05-acre addition, known as the Cut Off Road Addition, to Cedar Glen Land and Water Reserve located in the Glaciated Section of the Middle Mississippi Border Natural Division in Hancock County. The Cedar Glen Land and Water Reserve was registered on December 9, 2004, at the 184th Meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC), Resolution #1792. While no listed species or high-quality remnant natural communities are known from the Addition, the area will connect the IDNR-owned Cedar Glen Nature Preserve (616.87 acres) and Cedar Glen Land and Water Reserve (269.54 acres) with the privately-owned Crystal Glen Land and Water Reserve (79.5 acres). The IDNR also owns and manages the nearby Mississippi River Sand Hills Nature Preserve (45 acres). All these INPC-protected sites lie within the 3,845-acre Cedar Glen Kibbe INAI site #0565. The Cedar Glen Kibbe INAI site is designated Category I, II, III, IV, and VI due to the presence of Grade A and B high-quality remnant natural community types including dry barrens, dry limestone cliff, dry-mesic sand savanna, high-gradient small stream, sand hill prairie, sand seep, and wet floodplain forest; specific suitable habitat supporting three State-listed plant species: pale false foxglove (*Agalinis skinneriana*), drooping sedge (*Carex prasina*), and Virginia bunchflower (*Melanthium virginicum*); an outstanding exposure of Keokuk Limestone; and, the presence of an unusual concentration of mussels within the river portion of the INAI. The primary management goals within the proposed Addition are restoration of the dry barrens natural communities, improvements to forest habitat to promote the diversity of native forest flora and fauna, and the reduction of gully erosion associated with the steep ravines. The proposed Cut Off Road Addition to Cedar Glen Land and Water Reserve contributes to the goals of the IWAP by supporting focal species of the Forest and Woodland Campaign and the Streams Campaign and contributes to the goals and efforts to control the focal species of the Invasive Species Campaign. If approved, the proposed Cut Off Road Addition to Cedar Glen LWR will increase the size of INPC-protected lands within the INAI site to 1,022.96 acres.

REPORT  
Ray Geroff  
Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval for Registration

Angella Moorehouse  
Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 12:\* Jackson Co. – Possum Trot Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication**

The Bates family, owners of Possum Trot Farm LLC, seeks preliminary dedication of 78 acres of nature preserve (NP) and two acres of NP buffer as the Possum Trot NP in northwestern Jackson County, Illinois. Possum Trot NP lies within the Greater Shawnee Hills Section of the

Shawnee Hills Natural Division of Illinois. The proposed 80-acre NP consists of forest natural communities intersected by Reed’s Creek and surrounding steep sandstone bluffs. It will permanently protect 60 acres of the currently unprotected 127-acre Reed’s Creek Canyon North INAI site #583, designated for Category VI: unusual concentration of vascular flora. The significant feature of the INAI site is the presence of relict northern plant species along the mesic, north-facing cliff communities situated above Reed’s Creek. The sandstone cliff community is listed as an exceptional feature. Dedication of these lands supports the IWAP by permanently protecting natural lands that help maintain population viability of native species, including at least 12 confirmed-breeding Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN); by managing these associated habitats to benefit native species; and through ensuring a permanent habitat corridor exists for the adaptation and adjustments of native species to future landscape and environmental changes. The preserve resides within the Hill Prairie Corridor – South Section Conservation Opportunity Area. Within the two acres of NP buffer located along the north boundary of the NP, the landowner reserves the right to maintain a 1.5-acre old field community directly south of the house as a native prairie planting and the right to maintain two pre-existing structures on the property.

Dedication of the proposed site as an Illinois nature preserve should be considered for the following qualifying features and/or reasons:

1. Permanent protection of ~60 acres of INAI #583;
2. Presence of at least two State-listed species within the preserve (*Carex willdenowii* and *Crotalus horridus*);
3. Confirmed breeding of at least 12 SGCN within the NP;
4. Permanent protection of >80 acres of forest natural communities; and,
5. Support of the IWAP, specifically the following Campaigns: Forest and Woodland; and Invasive Species.

REPORT  
 Kevin Sierzega  
 Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
 Preliminary Approval for Dedication

**Item 13:\* LaSalle Co. – Marsh Relicts Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication**

The Conservation Foundation (TCF) holds a conservation easement on approximately 67 acres of land owned by Alan Marsh, including the 6.4-acre Marsh Relicts INAI site #678. The site lies in LaSalle County within the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. The landowner is seeking preliminary dedication of 12.3 acres of this land as an Illinois nature preserve. The proposed nature preserve includes the entire Marsh Relicts INAI site, which is recognized for its unusual composition of flora; and it abuts the lower Fox River, also recognized on the INAI, site #1444. The proposed Marsh Relicts Nature Preserve is a refugia for Illinois’ relict plant species, including white pine (*Pinus strobus*), Canada yew (*Taxus canadensis*), northern bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*), and others along the sandstone cliff and ravine system. The extensive north-facing slope system hosts a diverse assemblage of ferns with at least 14 species documented on site, including the State-endangered long beech fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*). The State-endangered butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) also occurs on site. In addition, the proposed Marsh Relicts Nature Preserve is known to support several Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, including three bird species. Dedication of this natural area will legally

protect this habitat in perpetuity and add to the acreage protected along the lower Fox River corridor.

REPORT  
Sam Kilgore  
The Conservation Foundation

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Kim Roman  
Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 14:\* DuPage Co. – Buffer Addition to Brewster Creek Marsh Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) requests final approval to dedicate 8.9 acres of natural area as an Illinois nature preserve buffer addition to Brewster Creek Marsh Nature Preserve (BCMNP). The proposed buffer addition lies within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. It is adjacent to BCMNP and a part of the Pratt’s Wayne Woods Forest Preserve, owned and managed by the FPDDC. Dedicated in 2013, BCMNP consists of 190.6 acres of nature preserve and 66.2 acres of nature preserve buffer. The proposed buffer addition was acquired by the FPDDC in 2020 and contains approximately 910 linear feet of Brewster Creek, associated floodplain, second-growth woodland, and old field.

BCMNP is currently 256.8 acres (nature preserve and buffer). Preliminary approval for dedication of the proposed buffer addition was granted at the 239<sup>th</sup> Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting (Resolution #2535). With final approval of this buffer addition (8.9 acres), the nature preserve will increase to 265.7 acres. BCMNP was established to protect unique habitats that support wetland and grassland birds, as well as State-listed plant and animal species. Management objectives are to maintain suitable habitat structure for these species and improve native species richness and quality of the natural communities within the nature preserve.

REPORT  
Scott Meister  
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

John C. Nelson  
Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 15:\* Jo Daviess Co. – Rutherford Refuge at Twin Bridges Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation seeks final approval for dedication of Rutherford Refuge at Twin Bridges as an Illinois nature preserve. Preliminary approval was granted at the 239<sup>th</sup> Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting (Resolution #2536). Rutherford Refuge at Twin Bridges is located on the eastern edge of the Wisconsin Driftless Natural Division of Illinois in northwestern Jo Daviess County, approximately two miles north-northeast of Apple River Canyon State Park/Nature Preserve/Land and Water Reserve. The site consists of 21.86 acres of proposed nature preserve and 2.18 acres of proposed nature preserve buffer. It has been recognized by the INAI as a Category I for Best-of-Kind Grade C sedge meadow and wet-

mesic prairie communities (Rutherford Wetland INAI #1970). Rutherford Refuge contains habitat supporting a least 13 Species of Greatest Conservation Need as defined by the IWAP. Protection and management of the site will serve to help fulfill goals within the Wetlands, Streams, Forest and Woodland, and Farmland and Prairie IWAP campaigns.

REPORT  
Angella Moorehouse  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 16:\* Lake Co. – Chandler Buffer Addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

Lake Forest Open Lands Association (LFOLA) seeks final approval for dedication of approximately 1.5 acres as the Chandler Buffer Addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve, located in the Morainal Section of the Northern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. Preliminary approval was granted at the 239<sup>th</sup> Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting (Resolution #2537). If approved, the buffer addition will increase the size of the Skokie River Nature Preserve to 140.31 acres.

Skokie River Nature Preserve encompasses a mosaic of wetlands, mesic prairies, and dry-mesic forest within the Skokie River Valley in Lake County, Illinois. Skokie River Nature Preserve is 138.8 acres in size and includes the McLaughlin Prairie and Shaw Prairie, two high-quality mesic prairies. Both of these prairie relicts are recognized on the INAI for Grade A and Grade B mesic prairies. With a boundary update approved in 2002, the INAI now recognizes both prairies as the Skokie River INAI site #0658.

Skokie River Nature Preserve consists of land originally dedicated by The Nature Conservancy and subsequently conveyed to LFOLA, other lands owned by LFOLA, and six privately owned parcels of land dedicated as buffer additions. It is an outstanding example of land protection within the urban landscape via citizen driven conservation.

REPORT  
John C. Nelson  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 17:\* Lee Co. – Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

The Illinois Audubon Society (IAS) requests final approval for dedication of 392.4 acres as the Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve. Preliminary approval was granted at the 239<sup>th</sup> Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting (Resolution #2538). The proposed site is located within the Green River Lowland Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois and includes 19.1 acres of nature preserve and 373.3 acres of nature preserve buffer. The proposed nature preserve includes the Augustana Sedge Meadow, INAI site #1828. This natural community was added to the INAI in 2012 as a Category I site for presence of a 1-acre, Grade B sedge meadow. The entire INAI site is 6.56 acres. The larger property surrounding the INAI site has significant ecological value, providing habitat for a wide variety of native plants and animals and offers opportunities for restoration of natural communities that were once widespread in the Green River Lowlands, but are rare today.

The site is located in what was once the largest prairie grove in Lee County. Eolian sand dunes, combined with glacial outwash deposits and basins that formed near the base of the Bloomington Moraine, made this landscape uniquely suited to the growth of trees in what was once a seemingly endless expanse of open prairie in the early 1800s. These same characteristics spared the site from the ravages of the plow that erased from existence the original prairies and “great swamps” of Lee County. Today, relicts of this former timbered grove remain at the proposed Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve. As restoration efforts unfold across the site, these natural communities will improve in structure and composition. The IAS and its volunteers are managing this site for the benefit all native species of plants and animals and for the benefit of the public who are welcome to visit the site and enjoy its beauty and tranquility.

This nature preserve is named in honor of the late Russ Gremel, who championed and generously funded the purchase of this unique natural area. Russ Gremel’s goal was to provide a sanctuary where young people could learn firsthand about native birds, and nature in general.

REPORT  
Kaleb Baker  
Illinois Audubon Society

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

John C. Nelson  
Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 18:\* McHenry Co. – Buffer Addition to Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County (TLC) seeks final approval for dedication of approximately 4.25 acres as a buffer addition to Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, located in the Morainal Section of the Northern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. Preliminary approval was granted at the 239<sup>th</sup> Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting (Resolution #2539). The original nature preserve was dedicated in 2005, is 36.4 acres in size and is now owned by TLC. In 2006, 6.4 acres were dedicated as buffer by the McAndrews Glen Homeowners Association and in 2010, another 1.5 acres were dedicated as buffer by a private landowner. If approved, this dedication will increase the amount of protected land at the existing nature preserve from 44.3 to 48.55 acres. The proposed buffer addition is located along the southern boundary of Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, and it includes a portion of relict sedge meadow that is contiguous with the high-quality sedge meadow found within the existing nature preserve. The buffer addition also includes part of an artificial spring-fed pond and a drainage feature that conveys water away from the nature preserve to the south through its historic drainage outlet. Additionally, the buffer area includes upland dry-mesic oak woodland. Dedication of the proposed buffer addition will help protect the high-quality fen and sedge meadow found within the existing nature preserve and will allow for better land management and restoration activities and prevent future development. This buffer addition will also expand the visitor trail system.

Boloria Meadows was named in recognition of an abundance of silver-bordered fritillary butterflies (*Boloria selene*) observed inhabiting the fen and sedge meadow in the spring of 2003. TLC is a 501 c3 not-for-profit conservation land trust in McHenry County that owns and

manages three dedicated nature preserves: Yonder Prairie, Irish Oaks, and Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow.

REPORT  
John C. Nelson  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 19:\* Madison Co. – John M. Olin Nature Preserve, Paved Trail and Fencing Projects**

The Nature Institute (TNI) is requesting approval for two different projects at their privately-owned John M. Olin Nature Preserve. Both projects have been completed, and TNI realizes that these projects should have been coordinated with INPC for review and approval prior to construction. There were no reserved rights for these improvements at the time of dedication. One project is the paving of a trail and the other is a fencing project, both being located within dedicated buffer. The paving project covers a total of 3,028 linear feet and a 0.7-acre area, with approximately 1,218 of the linear feet and 0.28 acres of the area covering a pre-existing dirt trail. The remainder area involves paving over a pre-existing roadway, with no expansion of the trail’s footprint. The purpose of this project is to make the nature preserve more accessible to all individuals, so everyone has the same opportunity to enjoy nature and the experiences TNI has to offer. For the fencing project, TNI installed 250 feet of post and rail within dedicated buffer area: 180 feet at the main entrance and along the trail boundary and 70 feet at the Blue Pool, a prohibited area where there is an abandoned rock quarry. The purpose is to control access to ensure public safety, to keep hikers on the designated trail, and to protect native vegetation alongside the trail. By securing the Commission’s approval, these projects can be incorporated into the management plan and maintained into the future. INC staff support approval for both projects.

REPORT  
Angela Moan  
The Nature Institute

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval for Paved Trail Project  
Approval for Fencing Project

Debbie Newman and Valerie Njapa  
Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 20: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)**

**Item 21: Other Business**

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

**Item 22: Adjournment**