

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

Minutes of the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting

(Subject to approval of Commission at 196<sup>th</sup> Meeting)

Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum  
Chicago, Illinois

Tuesday, August 7, 2007

195-1) Call to Order, Roll Call and Introduction of Attendees

At 10:00 a.m., pursuant to the Call to Order of Chair Ross-Shannon, the meeting began.

Deborah Stone read the roll call.

Members present: Jill Allread, Ronald Flemal, Mare Payne, Jill Riddell, Bruce Ross-Shannon, and John Schwegman.

Members absent: Harry Drucker, Richard Keating, and Lauren Rosenthal.

Others present: Steven Byers, Judy Faulkner Dempsey, Bob Edgin, Randy Heidorn, Cindi Jablonski, Angella Moorehouse, Kelly Neal, John Nelson, Debbie Newman, Debbie Reider, Kim Roman, Deborah Stone, and Emily Stork, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); Todd Bittner, Glen Kruse, and John Wilker, Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), IDNR; Matt Schmidt, IDNR; Jeffrey Linkenheld, Arc Design; Mark Robinson, Rubloff Development Group, Inc.; Melinda Pruet-Jones, Chicago Wilderness; Susan Dees, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); Jerry Paulson, Natural Land Institute (NLI) and INPC Consultant; Jill Kennay, NLI; Marilyn Campbell, INPC Consultant; Valerie Spale, Save the Prairie Society and INPC Consultant; Joseph Roth, CorLands and INPC Consultant; Rita Renwick, Illinois Audubon Society; Edmund Thornton, former INPC Commissioner; Steve Bylina, Cathy Geraghty, and Tracy McIntyre, Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC); Rachel Reklau, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC); Alan and Jeanine Dammann, representing an addition to Boone Creek Fen Nature Preserve; Glen and Linda Schuetz, representing Buck Hill Bottom Land and Water Reserve; Jim Payne, Casey Pratt, and John and Linda Rossi.

Laurene von Klan, President and CEO of the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and President of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, welcomed the Commission. She gave a brief overview of the history and mission statement of the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.

Chair Ross-Shannon thanked Ms. von Klan for hosting the INPC meeting.

Chair Ross-Shannon thanked those who facilitated the field trip activities on Monday, August 6, 2007. He also thanked Commissioner Riddell for hosting the dinner at her home Monday evening.

195-2) Adoption of Agenda

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that Item 15 will be deferred until the October, 2007 INPC meeting. Item 20 will be moved forward in the Agenda to accommodate the presenter's schedule. Items 13 and 17 will be presented consecutively.

It was moved by Allread, seconded by Flemal, and carried that the Agenda be adopted as amended.

Chair Ross-Shannon reported that at the 194<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the INPC, held at Giant City State Park Lodge in Makanda, legal protection for three tracts of land totaling 349.87 acres was approved by the Commission. Of these, two areas, totaling 193.68 acres, are owned by private individuals or not-for-profit corporations who donated the value of the protection agreement to the public. The dollar value of the tracts of private land is \$345,650 based on conservative estimates of the fair market value of the land. This private land was permanently preserved without acquisition of the land by the State. Private lands protected without State acquisition at the INPC's 194<sup>th</sup> Meeting were Culp Conservancy Woods Land and Water Reserve, Macoupin County and the Jimenez addition to Black Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve, McHenry County. Protection of this land came about because the Commission has nine staff in the field working with private landowners. There are now 337 dedicated nature preserves in 81 counties totaling 45,081.429 acres and 142 land and water reserves in 58 counties totaling 39,510.934 acres.

195-3) Approval of Minutes of the 194<sup>th</sup> Meeting, May 1, 2007

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Payne, and carried that the Minutes of the 194<sup>th</sup> Meeting, May 1, 2007, be approved.

195-4) 2007 Meeting Schedule

196<sup>th</sup> October 23, 10:00 a.m. Mt. Hope Community Hall, McLean

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that the 2008 meeting schedule will be discussed at the October, 2007 INPC meeting. He asked that suggestions for possible meeting locations be forwarded to the Springfield INPC office.

195-5) Election of Officers – INPC Nominating Committee Report

Commissioner Schwegman stated that the nominating committee was pleased to offer in nomination the following individuals: for Chair, Commissioner Ross-Shannon; Vice-Chair, Commissioner Riddell; and for Secretary, Commissioner Keating.

There were no other nominations from the floor.

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Allread, and carried with a roll-call vote that the following Commissioners be elected as Officers of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission: Bruce Ross-Shannon as Chair, Jill Riddell as Vice-Chair, and Dr. Richard Keating as Secretary.

195-6) Election of Advisors and Consultants

Commissioner Schwegman stated that a list of the nominated advisors and consultants was on the Agenda under Item 6, with the addition of Tom Clay who was inadvertently not listed.

There were no other nominations from the floor.

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Allread, and carried with a roll-call vote that the following be elected as advisors to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission: Dr. William Shilts, Dr. George Vander Velde, and Dr. Derek Winstanley, and the following be elected as consultants to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission: Gerald Adelman, Bruce Boyd, Marilyn Campbell, Tom Clay, John Comerio, Kenneth Fiske, Jerry Paulson, Dr. Kenneth Robertson, Joseph Roth, Valerie Spale, and John White.

195-7) INPC Staff Report

Randy Heidorn presented the INPC staff report, and it is attached as Exhibit A.

195-8) IDNR Staff Report

Glen Kruse presented the ORC staff report, and it is attached as Exhibit B.

195-9) Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

Randy Nyboer was unable to attend the meeting. Glen Kruse stated that the next Illinois Endangered Species Protection board meeting will be held on August 17, 2007, in the Community Room of the Rochester Community Building in Rochester, Illinois.

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that the registration agreements for today's land and water reserve presentation are signed and executed by the landowner as required by administrative rule.

195-10) Jackson and Franklin Co. – Campbell Lake Land and Water Reserve  
(Actually presented after Item 20)

Judy Faulkner Dempsey presented a proposal on behalf of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to permanently register 510.8 acres of natural wetland and bottomland forest as Campbell Lake Land and Water Reserve. The eastern portion of the proposed land and water reserve lies within the 533-acre wetland and forest complex known as the Campbell Lake Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (#167). Of the 510.8 acres owned by the IDNR, approximately 120 acres are within the INAI site. Of this acreage, approximately 15 acres are a shrub swamp/pond. The remaining acreage is wet-mesic floodplain forest. Campbell Lake is located at the southern edge of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division in the Mt. Vernon Hill Country Section. It is an outstanding example of a shallow natural lake in the bottomland of the Little Muddy River system. Protection of the proposed Campbell Lake Land and Water Reserve supports objectives of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) because it will protect a wetland in the Southern Till Plain Natural Division and in the Big Muddy River watershed, where extensive areas of river floodplain and ancient glacial lakebeds were occupied by forested wetlands. The IWAP identifies these wetlands as scarce. The IWAP also stated that bottomland

forests associated with wetlands such as this are important to many amphibians and reptiles, including the northern crayfish frog (*Rana areolata*) which occurs at this site and is identified as a species of conservation concern in the IWAP. Hunting and fishing will be allowed in the proposed land and water reserve. The IDNR reserves the right to remove several hunting cabins in the proposed land and water reserve because they are in disrepair.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by Flemal, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Campbell Lake in Jackson and Franklin counties as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1957)

195-11) Kankakee Co. – Additions to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Kim Roman presented a proposal on behalf of Dr. Marianne Hahn to permanently register two separate tracts, totaling 11.7 acres, as additions to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve. The additions will increase the amount of protected habitat for the state-endangered sedge (*Carex cumulata*) and state-threatened eastern blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium atlanticum*). The additions will also buffer high-quality natural communities within the existing Land and Water Reserve. Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve was registered in 2002 and is located in the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. Since that time, several additions to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve have been registered by both Dr. Hahn and the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The 103-acre Land and Water Reserve is recognized on the INAI (#1581) for its high-quality dry-mesic sand savanna. The Land and Water Reserve also provides habitat for 12 state-endangered or threatened plants and the state-threatened regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*). The registration of these tracts in the Kankakee Sands Conservation Opportunity Area will help meet objectives outlined in the IWAP. Allowable uses for the main Land and Water Reserve will also be allowed in the proposed addition.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by Payne, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of the two tracts as additions to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve in Kankakee County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1958)

195-12) Washington and Clinton Co. – Buck Hill Bottom Land and Water Reserve and Addition, Registration

Debbie Newman presented a proposal on behalf of Glen, Linda, and Nathan Schuetz to register Buck Hill Bottom Land and Water Reserve and addition. The proposed Buck Hill Bottom Land

and Water Reserve is a 203-acre, largely-forested site owned by Glen and Linda Schuetz. The proposed addition is 50 acres in size and is owned by Glen, Linda, and Nathan Schuetz. The proposed land and water reserve, a combined total of 253 acres, contains 18 acres of the 158.75-acre Big Open Woodland INAI site (#1598), five acres of the 64.46-acre West End Sportsmen's Club INAI site (#865), and a segment of the unchannelized portion of the Kaskaskia River. Buck Hill Bottom is located in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division and the Lower Kaskaskia Bottomlands Conservation Opportunity Area as designated in the IWAP. Species of greatest need of conservation listed in the IWAP that are found on the proposed land and water reserve include yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), Acadian flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*), hooded merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*), Kentucky warbler (*Oporonis formosus*), prothonotary warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*), wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*), brown thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), central mudminnow (*Umbra limi*), brook stickleback (*Culaea inconstans*), and flier (*Centrarchus macropterus*).

Ms. Newman discussed some of the allowable uses and disturbances on the property. She stated that the family retains the right to conduct a selective timber harvest per an approved plan, with the option of exceeding the limit in the event of a catastrophic event. The family also retains the right to do hunting, fee-based hunting, fishing, primitive camping, hiking, ecotourism, trail maintenance with the right to create additional trails, extraction of oil and gas via a slant method which would cause no surface disturbance, maintain the levees, maintain the culvert under the easement for the Venedy Sportsmen's Club, and to use a tractor, truck, or ATV to remove deer and do any maintenance activities. The Scheutz family also reserves the right to conduct stream bank stabilization.

Ms. Newman recognized Mr. Schuetz and his efforts in land preservation and land management. She stated that Lieutenant Governor Quinn named Mr. Schuetz an environmental hero two years ago. Mr. Schuetz also received the IDNR's Volunteer of the Year award last year.

Chair Ross-Shannon commended Mr. Schuetz on his efforts to preserve his land.

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Riddell, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Buck Hill Bottom in Washington and Clinton counties as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1959)

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Payne, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of the addition to Buck Hill Bottom Land and Water Reserve in Washington and Clinton counties, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1960)

Commissioner Allread stated that it is wonderful to have this rare property in such capable hands. She thanked Mr. Schuetz for his leadership and protection of such a wonderful piece of the State.

Mr. Schuetz stated that he would like to thank Ms. Newman for her time and effort in putting this proposal together. He stated that the land has been in his family for many years, and it has always been special to them. The importance was brought to light by Ms. Newman and others with the IDNR, and he was given guidance and direction which was very much appreciated.

195-13) Cook Co. – Calumet City Prairie and Marsh Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) for preliminary approval for dedication of 40 acres of Calumet City Prairie as Calumet City Prairie and Marsh Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in the corporate limits of Calumet City, Illinois. The dune and swale topography at this site, once a dominant feature of the Chicago Lake Plain Section, includes sand dunes interposed with swales. The site was included on the INAI (#497) for high-quality dry-mesic sand prairie, mesic prairie, wet-mesic prairie, and marsh. These natural communities support four state-listed plant species including grass pink orchid (*Calopogon tuberosus*), marsh St. John's wort (*Hypericum virginicum*), Richardson's rush (*Juncus alpinus*), and marsh speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*). Dedication of Calumet City Prairie and Marsh is consistent with the IWAP, specifically several action steps identified for the Farmland and Prairies Campaign and the Wetlands Campaign. Further, dedication of this site honors the commitment of both the FPDCC and the INPC to collaborate to preserve sites of state-wide ecological significance.

Mr. Steven Bylina, Jr., General Superintendent of the FPDCC, stated it was his honor and pleasure to address the Commission. He stated that on behalf of President Stroger and the FPDCC, he remains resolute to add to the 7,700 acres already identified as nature preserves for generations to come. He stated that he has enjoyed working with Deborah Stone. He also stated that Mr. Byers' compassion, commitment and professionalism greatly facilitates the process of land protection.

It was moved by Schwegman, seconded by Allread, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Calumet City Prairie and Marsh in Cook County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal under Item 13 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1961)

Chair Ross-Shannon thanked Mr. Bylina for his comments. He stated that the FPDCC is one of the Commission's premier partners.

Lunch break was taken from 12:20 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

195-14) DuPage Co. – West Chicago Prairie Forest Preserve Buffer Addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 17)

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) for preliminary approval for dedication of 169.5 acres of the West Chicago Prairie Forest Preserve as a nature preserve buffer addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve. Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve received final approval for dedication at the Commission's 190<sup>th</sup> Meeting in May, 2006 (Resolution #1880). The proposed nature preserve buffer addition is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Illinois Morainal Natural Division in West Chicago, Illinois and includes elements of mesic prairie, wet prairie, sedge meadow, marsh, and wet-mesic savanna. These natural communities have responded well to more than 20 years of restoration and management by volunteers and staff of the FPDDC and provides habitat for three state-listed plants: western beard's tongue (*Penstemon tubaefflorus*), little green sedge (*Carex viridula*), and white lady's slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*). The site also has breeding habitat for the Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingi*), and Henslow's sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*). Dedication of this nature preserve buffer addition is consistent with the IWAP, specifically several action steps identified for the Farmland and Prairies Campaign and the Wetlands Campaign. The site supports several species identified in the plan as "critical species" for this natural division which includes the silver-bordered fritillary (*Bolorig selene*), silvery checkerspot (*Militaea nycteis*), Blanding's turtle, Henslow's sparrow, sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), and red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*). Dedication of this buffer addition will increase the size of Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve from 115.974 acres to 285.475 acres.

Ms. Rachel Reklau, FPDDC, stated that the volunteer stewardship group for this site is dedicated to maintaining the site and increasing the diversity and restoration potential. She thanked Mr. Byers for his help with this proposal, and she looks forward to working with the Commission.

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that the FPDDC is another wonderful partner in the Commission's effort to protect natural areas.

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Riddell, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of the West Chicago Prairie Forest Preserve buffer addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve in DuPage County, as described in the proposal under Item 14 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1962)

195-15) Lee Co. – Hazelwood Forest Nature Preserve, Dedication

Item was deferred until the October, 2007 meeting of the INPC.

195-16) Lee Co. – Lowell Forest Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson presented a proposal on behalf of the Dixon Park District for preliminary approval to dedicate 54.3 acres to be known as Lowell Forest Nature Preserve. The proposed Lowell Forest Nature Preserve is part of the larger Lowell Park natural area which has long been the subject of preservation efforts by the Dixon Park District and the Walgreen family. This site is located in the Oregon Section of the Rock River Country Natural Division. In 1966, at the suggestion of INPC Commissioner Myrtle Walgreen, and after consultation with the Dixon Park District, the INPC passed a resolution which granted preliminary approval for dedication of Lowell Park as an Illinois Nature Preserve. However, over the ensuing years, the site was never formally dedicated. Protection efforts waned until the mid 1990s. At that time, staff of the Dixon Park District, the IDNR, and the INPC renewed interest in preserving the site and initiated formal plant community surveys. The surveys were necessary to nominate Lowell Park for inclusion on the INAI. In 2002, the site was added to the INAI (#1622) as a category I site containing grade B dry-mesic upland forest and grade B mesic upland forest. Protection and restoration of this area supports several action steps for the Forests Campaign and Invasive Species Campaign of the IWAP.

Mr. Nelson stated that the Dixon Park District reserves the right to maintain and improve the road system for public safety and access to this site, maintain the pavilion and the existing footprint around the structure to maintain the scenic overlook, harvest native rock from the old quarry to maintain the historic structures at the site, and maintain the existing trail system with the potential to expand the trail system with review and approval of the INPC staff.

It was moved by Allread, seconded by Riddell, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Lowell Forest in Lee County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 16 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1963)

195-17) Cook Co. – Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 13)

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) for final approval of Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainial Natural Division. The dune and swale topography of this proposed nature preserve, once a dominant feature of the Chicago Lake Plain Section, is composed of a series of six sand dunes interposed with swales. The site was included on the INAI (#1071) for high-quality dry-mesic, wet-mesic sand prairies, and dry-mesic sand savanna arrayed along the dunes, while the swales support high-quality marsh. These natural communities support a number of state-endangered or threatened species which includes ten plants, three birds, one mammal, one fish, and one reptile species. Protection and stewardship of this site is consistent with the IWAP, specifically several action steps identified for the Farmland and Prairies Campaign and the Wetlands Campaign.

Dedication of the 30-acre site honors the commitment of both the INPC and the FPDCC to collaborate to preserve sites of state-wide ecological significance and marks the first time a parcel of land located in the City of Chicago has been dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 193<sup>rd</sup> Meeting in February, 2007 (Resolution #1935).

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by Allread, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh in Cook County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1964)

195-18) McHenry Co. – Spring Hill Buffer Addition to Boone Creek Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 16)

John Nelson presented a proposal on behalf of Alan and Jeanine Dammann for final approval of the Spring Hill buffer addition to Boone Creek Fen Nature Preserve. The proposed buffer addition consists of dry-mesic upland forest and seep natural communities. The buffer addition is adjacent to the 465-acre Boone Creek Fen and Seep INAI site (#1015) and is located within a ground watershed that has been designated as a Class III Special Resource Groundwater by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois Pollution Control Board. This site is one of the finest examples of graminoid fen and seep wetlands within the State. The entire natural area is under private ownership, and its protection has long been recognized as a worthy goal by many local landowners. The proposed buffer addition is a continuation of efforts by local landowners to create a "macro-preserve" that encompasses as much of the Boone Creek Fen and Seep Natural Area and associated recharge zones as possible. With final approval, this dedication represents the sixth private landowner dedication within the Boone Creek Fen and Seep INAI site. Protection and restoration of the proposed buffer addition supports action steps identified in the IWAP. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 191<sup>st</sup> Meeting in August, 2006 (Resolution #1902).

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Payne, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of the Spring Hill addition to Boone Creek Fen Nature Preserve in McHenry County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1965)

Chair Ross-Shannon thanked Mr. and Mrs. Dammann for dedicating this piece of property.

Mrs. Dammann thanked Mr. Nelson for helping them through this process.

195-19) Ogle Co. – Addition to Pine Rock Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson presented a proposal on behalf of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for final approval of an addition to Pine Rock Nature Preserve. Pine Rock Nature Preserve contains wet-mesic prairie, dry sand prairie, dry sand savanna, and sandstone cliff communities. A prominent outcrop of the St. Peter Sandstone is one of the notable features of the site. Pine Rock was dedicated in 1966 and was the 16<sup>th</sup> nature preserve in Illinois. The original dedication comprises 58.8 acres owned by the Board of Governors of State Colleges and Universities and held and managed by Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. The Nature Conservancy has long been the lead environmental advocate for the site through its land protection program. The site name was derived from the St. Peter sandstone monolith which rises 50 feet high above the relict prairie and the jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) trees which historically grew on site (1877) but have since vanished. Approval of this addition will help protect and restore the natural resource features found within the existing nature preserve, as well as adding significant acreage of relict high-quality oak savanna, wet-mesic prairie, and dry sand prairie natural communities to Pine Rock Nature Preserve. Protection and restoration of the proposed addition to Pine Rock Nature Preserve supports action steps identified in the IWAP. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 194<sup>th</sup> Meeting in May, 2007 (Resolution #1951).

It was moved by Allread, seconded by Flemal, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of an addition to Pine Rock Nature Preserve in Ogle County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 19 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1966)

195-20) Winnebago Co. – Stone Bridge Reserve Land and Water Reserve, Proposal to Cross the Land and Water Reserve with a Sewer Line  
(Actually presented after Item 9)

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that he will recuse himself from this Agenda item due to a professional conflict of interest. Commissioner Riddell assumed the meeting leadership role for this matter.

Jeffrey Linkenheld, Civil Engineer with Arc Design Resources in Rockford, Illinois, presented a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of the Rock River Water Reclamation District (RRWRD) for INPC approval for a permanent easement across the Stone Bridge Reserve Land and Water Reserve for purposes of installation and maintenance of a new sanitary sewer line extension. The proposed sanitary sewer line will service future residential and commercial development within the Village of Roscoe. Stone Bridge Reserve Land and Water Reserve is owned by Roscoe Township and was purchased with C2000 grant monies. Its protection and management has been championed locally by the Natural Land Institute (NLI). This site was approved for registration by the INPC and the IDNR in 1995. The significant natural features of the Stone Bridge Reserve Land and Water Reserve are the Hamborg Road gravel prairie (INAI #1042, grade A and C), scattered prairie remnants along the railroad row, the state-threatened kittentail

(*Bessey's bullii*), and the federally threatened prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*). In addition to the INPC approval, the sanitary district must obtain approval from the NLI and the IDNR, entities which also jointly hold conservation easement rights across Stone Bridge Reserve Land and Water Reserve. The primary concern related to this request relates to a planned residential development proposed by the Rubloff Development Group along the Stone Bridge Reserve Land and Water Reserve that will be serviced by the proposed sewer line.

Mr. Linkenheld stated that a jack and bore method would be used to place a steel casing pipe under the trail, and the sewer line would be placed inside the casing pipe. There would be no disturbance to the land surface, thus avoiding impacts to the trail and prairie remnants. To address concerns related to a buffer between the land and water reserve and a planned residential development, a 15-foot wide easement is proposed. The easement will be owned and maintained by the future Homeowners Association of the adjacent development. A common fence will be installed to separate the easement area from individual homeowner lots. The only gated access to the buffer will be provided on the north and south ends of the subdivision. The easement will run the entire length of the subdivision.

Mr. Linkenheld stated that a letter dated July 12, 2007, spelling out the terms and conditions that the developer will adhere to as far as establishing the buffer zone, was sent to Jerry Paulson, Natural Land Institute (NLI), by Mark Robinson, Rubloff Development Group, Inc. Rubloff Development Group is partners in the sewer project and the adjacent subdivision. The following is a list of conditions that have been agreed to by Mr. Paulson and Rubloff Development Group:

1. Rubloff Development Group will erect a fence on the property line between the NLI easement area and the subdivision's western border.
2. The fence will be four to five feet high, with a design to be mutually agreed upon between the parties.
3. Rubloff Development Group will provide a 15-foot easement from the subdivision property line to the east that will run the full length of the western border from north to south ("Easement Area").
4. NLI will have the right of ingress and egress on the Easement Area.
5. Rubloff Development Group will allow for gates at the north and south ends of the Easement Area; the locations to be agreed upon by the parties.
6. The covenants and restrictions that are developed by Rubloff Development Group for the subdivision will include an obligation on the part of each homeowner to mow their portion of the Easement Area. They will also be restricted from doing any plantings or construction, including fencing, within the Easement Area. In the event that the homeowners do not mow their area, or in the event that they erect plantings, fencing, or other structures, the Homeowners Association will have the right to enforce the covenants. In the event that the Homeowners Association does not undertake to enforce those restrictions, the NLI or its designee will have defined rights within the covenants to enforce the mowing and non-construction provisions described herein.

Mr. Linkenheld stated that since this agreement was signed, there has been a revision for provision six. The Homeowners Association will take over the responsibility of maintaining the Easement Area.

Mark Robinson, Rubloff Development Group, stated that provision one has also been modified after discussions with John Nelson. Initially, it was proposed to put the fence on the border between the two properties. The fence has now been moved to the inside of the 15-foot Easement Area. The barbed-wire fence currently exists along the borderline. By moving the fence on the inside of the 15-foot Easement Area, it will allow for more separation of the property owners. It will be a more visual impact to let the homeowner know that there is an easement in place. The homeowner will not be allowed to throw anything over the fence. The Homeowners Association will seed and mow the Easement Area. In the event that the Homeowners Association does not maintain the Easement Area, the covenants and restrictions allow for the NLI, or its designee, to come in and charge the Homeowners Association for that maintenance.

Mr. Linkenheld stated that there will be an annual maintenance fund that will be dedicated to maintaining the Easement Area.

Mr. Linkenheld stated that a letter to David Branch, Hallmark Homes, Inc., dated July 24, 2007, from David Noel, Economic Development Coordinator for the Village of Roscoe, was given to each Commissioner. The letter confirms that although the conservation easement was not shown on the approved tentative plat, the Village of Roscoe recognizes that the easement has been added and will continue with the approval process of the subdivision. The Village of Roscoe will make sure the 15-foot easement shows up on this plat and subsequent plats.

Mr. Linkenheld stated that even though 15 feet is not a large buffer, it will provide the room necessary for maintaining the prairies and to safely conduct prescribed burns. He stated that he felt the change to have the Homeowners Association legally obligated to manage the Easement Area was a good revision to the agreement. The developer cannot deed that land or donate the 15-foot Easement Area directly to an outside entity. The best compromise was to have it deed restricted and under the guise of the Homeowners Association.

Mr. Nelson stated that he spoke with Jerry Paulson and Andy Bacon, NLI, and they are in agreement with these provisions as well. If this proposal is approved, one of the main concerns now would be to make sure the railroad prairies are protected during the pipeline installation. Traversing the prairies in vehicles should be strictly prohibited and the land and water reserve boundary clearly marked with appropriate silt fencing prior to any construction activities. Mr. Nelson stated that each Commissioner was given a staff opinion which recommends approval of this approval.

Commissioner Allread stated that she commends the effort of working together and coming up with the necessary compromises to move forward with the project. The fact that the easement has been provided for and there will be no impact above ground on the installation is tremendous progress. She stated that she would suggest that the developer, with the help of the INPC, educate the homeowners about the special area in their neighborhood.

Mr. Robinson stated that he has been working with the NLI to work out a plan for a gift and sale to the NLI of an 88-acre tract of land owned by Rubloff Development Group. This tract is located approximately two miles down the path to pristine portions of the Kinnikinnick Creek. He stated that it has been a great working relationship through this process, and he appreciated everyone's efforts.

It was moved by Schwegman, seconded by Allread, and carried, with Ross-Shannon abstaining, that the following resolution be adopted:

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission approves the request by the Rock River Water Reclamation District for a permanent easement across the Stone Bridge Reserve Land and Water Reserve for purposes of installation and maintenance of a new sanitary sewer line extension as described in the proposal presented under Item 20 of the Agenda for the 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1967)

Commissioner Riddell turned the meeting over to Chair Ross-Shannon for continuation of the agenda.

195-21) Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

(Actually presented after Item 19)

Jerry Paulson stated that Senate Bill 17 will set up a new process to define how forest lands, wetlands, and natural lands in Illinois will be valued for property taxes. He stated that thanks to the work of the Commission, this Bill does not affect dedicated nature preserves or nature preserve buffers. He felt that there will be a lot of natural areas in the State that will qualify for reduced property taxes under this new law. Once the Governor signs the Bill, the next step would be to develop procedures for applying for this special valuation and determining what will go into the management plans that go along with the properties in order to qualify for this special valuation. He urged the Commission staff to work with the IDNR and the Department of Revenue to help develop those guidelines. He stated that those involved with conservation easements and land trusts throughout the State have been inundated with requests to protect these areas by using conservation easements since the rules were changed on how forest land would be taxed.

195-22) Other Business

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that Josua Lindhal Hill Prairies Nature Preserve was given final approval by the Commission at its 193<sup>rd</sup> Meeting on February 6, 2007 (Resolution #1941). The Rock Island County Recorder discovered an error in the legal description for the site. The legal description has been corrected, and the dedication document needs to be returned to the Rock Island County Recorder's office to be re-recorded. A copy of the corrected legal description was included in each Commissioner's agenda packet.

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Allread, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission approves the amended legal description for Josua Lindahl Prairies Nature Preserve, and the amended legal description is to be attached to the original nature preserve dedication document. The amended document will be re-recorded with the office of the Rock Island County Recorder.

(Resolution 1968)

195-23) Adjournment

It was moved by Payne, seconded by Allread, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

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