

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission  
Minutes of the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
(Subject to approval of Commission at 198<sup>th</sup> Meeting)

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Springfield, Illinois

Thursday, January 31, 2008

197-1) Call to Order, Roll Call and Introduction of Attendees

At 10:05 a.m., pursuant to the Call to Order of Chair Ross-Shannon, the meeting began.

Randy Heidorn read the roll call.

Members present: Jill Allread, Ronald Flemal, Richard Keating, Jill Riddell, Lauren Rosenthal, and Bruce Ross-Shannon.

Members absent: Harry Drucker, Mare Payne, and John Schwegman.

Others present: Steven Byers, Judy Faulkner Dempsey, Randy Heidorn, Cindi Jablonski, Tom Lerczak, Angella Moorehouse, Kelly Neal, John Nelson, Debbie Newman, Debbie Reider, Kim Roman, Mary Kay Solecki, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); Scott Ballard, Jeannie Barnes, Sara Fulton, Mark Guetersloh, Glen Kruse, Jim Renn, Jody Shimp, and John Wilker, Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), IDNR; Kathi Davis, Tracy Evans, Don McFall, and Tim Schweizer, Public Information Liaison, Office of Realty and Environmental Planning (OREP), IDNR; Leslie Sgro, Deputy Director, IDNR; Greg Legan, Illinois Conservation Foundation, IDNR; Bill Richardson, Legal Counsel, IDNR; Susan Dees, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); David Thomas, Illinois Natural History Survey and INPC Advisor; Bonnie Styles, Illinois State Museum and INPC Advisor; Tom Clay, Illinois Audubon and INPC Consultant; Fran Harty, The Nature Conservancy; Casey Pratt, representing Hazelwood Forest Nature Preserve; Margaret Ovitt, representing Nenawakwa Land and Water Reserve; Chris Young, State Journal Register; and Charles Burton.

197-2) Adoption of Agenda

Chair Ross-Shannon that items 7, 13, and 16 are being deferred. It was moved by Allread, seconded by Flemal, and carried that the Agenda be adopted as amended.

197-3) Approval of Minutes of the 196<sup>th</sup> Meeting, October 23, 2007

It was moved by Keating, seconded by Flemal, and carried that the Minutes of the 196<sup>th</sup> Meeting, October 23, 2007, be approved.

Chair Ross-Shannon reported that at the 196<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the INPC, held on October 23, 2007, at the Mt. Hope Community Hall in McLean, legal protection for four tracts of land totaling 714.26 acres was approved by the Commission. Of these, two areas, totaling 504.76 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 \$757,000 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 196<sup>th</sup> Meeting were Funks Grove Land and Water Reserve, McLean County, and Larimore's Salt Fork of the Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve. Protection of this land came about because the Commission has nine staff in the field working with private landowners. There are now 339 dedicated nature preserves in 82 counties totaling 45,327.4 acres and 146 land and water reserves in 61 counties totaling 40,773.16 acres.

197-4) 2008 Meeting Schedule

May 6, 2008	9:00 a.m.	Ramada Hotel, Galena
August 5, 2008	10:00 a.m.	Four Rivers Environmental Center, Channahon
October 28, 2008	10:00 a.m.	World Shooting & Recreational Complex, Sparta

197-5) INPC Staff Report

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

Mr. Heidorn stated that he wanted to highlight the work being done at Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve by John Nelson and Steven Byers. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Byers have been working hard over the last several years on the implementation of the Fen Protection Plan.

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that the work being done at Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve has been great, and he wanted to thank Mr. Heidorn and the staff on the work done on the enforcement issues.

197-6) IDNR Staff Report

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

Mr. Kruse stated that Scott Simpson, District Heritage Biologist, IDNR, received the Spirit of the Shack award from the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This award is given to one person out of a geographic area covering 14 states and three Canadian providences. The person chosen must exemplify the ideals of the great conservationist and educator, Aldo Leopold, and have contributed to conservation in a superior way.

197-7) Endangered Species Protection Board Report

Item was deferred.

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

197-8) Iroquois Co. – Addition to Iroquois Sands Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Cindi Jablonski presented a proposal on behalf of The Friends of the Kankakee to register a 1.5-acre addition to Iroquois Sands Land and Water Reserve. The proposed addition consists of five lots, and it buffers the higher quality natural area of Iroquois Sands. The addition may prove to support the state-endangered and threatened species found in the original Land and Water Reserve once additional site surveys are conducted and management is initiated. The proposed addition and the Land and Water Reserve are located in the Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. The state-endangered species found on the Land and Water Reserve include: Carey's heartsease (*Polygonum careyi*), shore St. John's wort (*Hypericum adpressum*), eastern blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium atlanticum*), and crowded oval sedge (*Carex cumulata*). The state-threatened regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) can also be found at Iroquois Sands. The permanent registration of the proposed addition also supports objectives in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP), by protecting habitat for wildlife species of conservation concern such as the red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), and by protecting remnants of sand flatwoods, a key conservation objective within the Kankakee Sands. The approval of the registration of this addition will increase the size of Iroquois Sands Land and Water Reserve from 70 to 71.5 acres.

Ms. Jablonski stated that some of the allowable uses of the site will be hunting and the creation of trails.

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

The Commission grants approval for the registration of an addition to Iroquois Sands Land and Water Reserve in Iroquois County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1980)

Chair Ross-Shannon asked that the thanks of the Commission be forwarded on to Marianne Hahn and The Friends of the Kankakee.

197-9) Pope Co. – Big Grand Pierre Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Judy Faulkner Dempsey presented a proposal on behalf of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to permanently register Big Grand Pierre Land and Water Reserve. The proposed Big Grand Pierre Land and Water Reserve is a 330.61-acre natural area (Illinois Natural Areas Inventory [INAI] #369). The area contains dry upland forest, dry-mesic upland forest, mesic upland forest, bottomland forest, and a high-quality creek. It is located in the Shawnee Hills Natural Division, Lesser Shawnee Hills Section. The Lesser Shawnee Hills Section is characterized by rugged terrain, with many bluffs and with an area of sinkholes. The area is significant because it is a large block of forest complex that has frontage on the Big Grand Pierre

Creek and provides habitat for several state- endangered or threatened species. State-endangered species found at the proposed land and water reserve include: smooth false indigo (*Amorpha nitens*), swollen sedge (*Carex intumescens*), wild lettuce (*Lactuca hirsuta*), and squirting cucumber (*Melothria pendula*). The state-threatened climbing milkweed (*Matelea obliqua*) was recently located at the site. The state-endangered southeastern Myotis bat (*Myotis austroriparius*), has been found on the site in mature bottomland forests. The federally endangered gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*) forages over the creek, within one kilometer of the cave where it lives. Big Grand Pierre is in the Eastern Shawnee Conservation Opportunity Area and its preservation helps to meet the goals of the IWAP.

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

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Big Grand Pierre as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve in Pope County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1981)

Chair Ross-Shannon thanked the IDNR for bringing this site to the Commission.

Commissioner Fernald acknowledged the Illinois Audubon Society's role in this site.

#### 197-10) Cook Co. – Addition to Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of The Nature Conservancy for preliminary approval for dedication of a 1.176-acre addition to Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve. Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Cook County, Illinois. Dropseed Prairie is part of the Indian Boundary Prairies (IBP) that include Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve, Paintbrush Prairie Nature Preserve, and Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed addition consists of high-quality mesic prairie and is located just east of Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve within the boundary of this INAI site (#425). Dropseed Prairie received final approval for dedication at the Commission's 164<sup>th</sup> Meeting in August, 1999. Dedication of this addition of high-quality mesic prairie is consistent with preserve design recommendations outlined in the original proposal for dedication, tenets of good preserve design, the "*Biodiversity Recovery Plan for the Chicago Wilderness Region*," and elements of the IWAP; specifically, action steps to restore and manage high-quality wetland and prairie communities. Four of five habitat-restricted papilionid moths (*Papaipma beeriana*, *P. maritime*, *P. sciata*, and *P. silphii*), a tortricid moth (*Eucosma bipunctella*), Byssus skipper (*Problema byssus*), and two-spotted skipper (*Eupheys bimacula*) recorded from Dropseed Prairie are listed by the IWAP as "...species in greatest need of conservation." Dedication of the proposed addition (1.176 acres) will increase the size of Dropseed Prairie from 13 to 14.176 acres and protect the balance of this INAI site.

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

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of an addition to Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve in Cook County, as described in the proposal under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1982)

197-11) Cook Co. – Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of The Nature Conservancy for final approval for dedication of 14.716 acres, consisting of 37 lots totaling 10.472 acres and an additional 4.244 acres through vacation of streets, as an addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve. Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve is part of the IBP that includes Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve, Paintbrush Prairie Nature Preserve, and Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed addition lies adjacent to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve within an area referred to by The Nature Conservancy IBP-Preserve Design map as Gensburg-Markham Prairie North. The proposed addition received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 194<sup>th</sup> Meeting in May, 2007 (Resolution #1949). Both Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Markham, Illinois. The proposed addition lies within the boundaries for both the INAI site (#400) and the National Registry of Natural Landmarks designated by the U.S. National Park Service. Elements of grade B and grade C wet-mesic prairie, mesic sand prairie, and sedge meadow occur within the proposed addition and support a population of the state-endangered grass pink orchid (*Calopogon tuberosus*). Dedication of this addition is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Master Plan for this site, tenets of good preserve design, the "*Biodiversity Recovery Plan for the Chicago Wilderness Region*", and elements of the IWAP; specifically, action steps to restore and manage high-quality wetland and prairie communities. Dedication of the proposed addition (14.716) acres will increase the size of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve from 157.763 (currently the number of acres that have received preliminary approval for dedication) to 172.478 acres.

It was moved by Rosenthal, seconded by Keating, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of an addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve in Cook County, as described in the proposal under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1983)

197-12) Cook Co. – Stein Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of The Nature Conservancy for final approval for dedication of 19.026 acres, consisting of 73 lots, as an addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve. These lots are subject to a conservation easement referred to as the Stein easement. The Grantor conveyed the lots to The Nature Conservancy "...in perpetuity over the protected property..." in an easement which stated both the Grantor and Grantee shall "...conserve the natural values"... "conserve and protect the animal and plant populations, and prevent the use or development of that property for any purpose which would conflict with"... "its natural, scenic, and open condition for both this generation and future generations." Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve is part of the IBP that include Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve, Paintbrush Prairie Nature Preserve, and Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed addition lies adjacent to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve within an area referred to by The Nature Conservancy IBP – Preserve Design map as Gensburg-Markham Prairie North. The proposed addition received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 194<sup>th</sup> Meeting in May, 2007 (Resolution #1949). Both Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Markham, Illinois. The proposed addition lies within the boundaries for both the INAI site (#400) and the National Registry of Natural Landmarks designated by the U.S. National Park Service. Elements of grade B and grade C wet-mesic prairie, mesic sand prairie, and sedge meadow occur within the proposed addition and support a population of the state-endangered grass pink orchid (*Calopogon tuberosus*). Dedication of this addition is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Master Plan for this site, tenets of good preserve design, the "*Biodiversity Recovery Plan for the Chicago Wilderness Region*," and elements of the IWAP; specifically, action steps to restore and manage high-quality wetland and prairie communities. Dedication of the proposed addition (19.026) acres will increase the size of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve from 172.478 to 191.504 acres.

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

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of the Stein addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve in Cook County, as described in the proposal under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1984)

Mr. Byers stated that he would like to thank the staff of The Nature Conservancy for working with him to identify all the different lots that were presented in items 11 and 12.

Chair Ross-Shannon asked Mr. Byers to extend the gratitude of the Commission to the appropriate people at The Nature Conservancy.

197-13) Cook Co. – Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Item was deferred.

197-14) Lee Co. – Hazelwood Forest Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson presented a proposal on behalf of Leslie Pratt for final approval to dedicate 43.733 acres as Hazelwood Forest Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is part of the larger 98-acre Lowell Park INAI site (#1622). Lowell Park was added to the INAI in 2002 as a category I site containing grade B dry-mesic upland forest and grade B mesic upland forest. The proposed nature preserve is located within the Oregon Section of the Rock River Country Natural Division. Protection and restoration of this site supports action steps for the Wetlands Campaign, Forests Campaign, and Invasive Species Campaign of the IWAP. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for the dedication at its 196<sup>th</sup> Meeting in October, 2007 (Resolution #1972).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Hazelwood Forest in Lee County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 14 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1985)

Chair Ross-Shannon thanked Casey Pratt for attending the meeting and asked that he relay the thanks of the Commission to his mother, Leslie Pratt.

Mr. Pratt stated that he wanted to thank Debra Carey, Executive Director of the Dixon Park District, and John Nelson of the INCP for their efforts to protect this site.

197-15) Lee Co. – Lowell Forest Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson presented a proposal on behalf of the Dixon Park District for final approval of 49.502 acres as Lowell Forest Nature Preserve. The original proposal was for 54.3 acres, but with the revision to exclude an historic pavilion and overlook to the Rock River, this final dedication proposal is for protection of 49.5 acres. INPC staff recommended the exclusion to address concerns expressed by the Park District Board regarding public use of the pavilion and potential for construction of an observation tower in the future. The proposed Lowell Forest Nature Preserve is part of the larger Lowell Park natural area. This site is located in the Oregon Section of the Rock River Country Natural Division. 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. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 195<sup>th</sup> Meeting in August, 2007 (Resolution #1963).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of the Lowell Forest as an Illinois Nature Preserve in Lee County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 15 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1986)

197-16) McLean Co. – Duncan R. Funk Addition to Stubblefield Woodlots Nature Preserve, Dedication

Item was deferred to the 198<sup>th</sup> INPC Meeting in May, 2008.

197-17) Alexander Co., Pulaski Co., Union Co. – Introduction of an experimental sub-sample of the Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*) to sites in the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission System

Mr. Kath presented an in-depth presentation on the proposed introduction of an experimental sub-sample of the alligator snapping turtle (AST). An official IDNR-approved Endangered Species Recovery Plan for the endangered AST was approved in February, 2006 by all Divisions of the IDNR Office of Resource Conservation (ORC) and Office Director Mike Conlin. The most current research shows no genetic variation between turtles within the Mississippi River drainage (which includes Illinois, Arkansas, and Louisiana). Under the guidance of the Reptile and Amphibian Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC), the IDNR was initially seeking permission from the INPC to release a maximum of ten yearling/juvenile AST at either: the Nature Preserve at Horseshoe Lake Conservation Area (Alexander County), the Nature Preserve at Heron Pond-Little Black Slough State Natural Area (Pulaski County), or LaRue Swamp Nature Preserve (Union County) in the spring/early summer of 2008 [please note that only one site will be chosen, but this has yet to be agreed upon by staff of the ORC (including Region 5 district personnel) and the Reptile and Amphibian ESTAC]. Each of these animals will be affixed with a radio-transmitter as well as implanted with a passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag. This will be considered a sub-sample pilot study in order to help us determine if more animals should be released in the future. The goal is to track animals during three critical periods: the first few weeks after release to assess dispersal; late summer drought; and the first over-winter period. The above-listed sites have been chosen because they are legally protected and contain prime habitat for the AST.

Mr. Kath stated that at this point the IDNR has approximately 30 yearling animals that are being housed at the Glen Oak Zoo in Peoria. These animals were received from Louisiana stock. Genetic testing is being conducted on all of the animals that the IDNR currently has.

Mr. Kath stated that the IDNR has received an additional 12 animals from other zoos around the country. Glen Oak Zoo facilitated the transfer of these animals to its facility. Genetic testing was also done on these animals.

IDNR staff made their first trip to Louisiana in October, 2007 to capture wild ASTs for this program. Permission to capture wild ASTs was obtained from Louisiana and Arkansas. Louisiana granted the IDNR permission to bring back the ASTs, and it requested that a report be

given at the end of the year. Five animals were captured; three adults and two juveniles, all females. These five animals are currently housed at the Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery.

In addition, Mr. Kath stated that he has been working with the St. Louis Zoo. The St. Louis Zoo has had a long-standing captive rearing program for the AST. That program was discontinued a few years ago because they had no one to take the animals. When he contacted the Zoo, they were onboard with restarting their program. All of their animals will be given to the IDNR at virtually no cost.

Mr. Kath stated that he is also working with Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery in Oklahoma. There is an AST captive rearing program at this facility, and they have agreed to supply the IDNR with animals at a minimal cost.

After consulting with the different experts in Illinois, it has been decided it would be best to do a small, experimental sub-sample release in order to assess survivability, mortality, etc. It was decided that it would be best to release between 10-13 animals at one single location. Each animal would be implanted with a PIT tag, and each animal would have a radio transmitter. A radio tracking protocol was developed by Dr. Chris Phillips and Dr. Michael Dreslik of the Illinois Natural History Survey. Mr. Kath stated that he and Scott Ballard, IDNR District Heritage Biologist, are seeking bids from qualified individuals to do the contract work. If all goes well, the IDNR is looking at an experimental release in the spring of 2008. The tracking would take place in the spring and summer. Sporadic tracking would be done over the winter. The animals would then be re-trapped in March, 2009 to assess the mortality rate. If it is found from this experimental sub-sample release that the mortality rates are low and it appears that the program can be moved into large watersheds or that it will be a successful program in Illinois, the IDNR will move forward into captive breeding.

Mr. Kath stated that the IDNR feels that a safe, protected site for such an experimental sub-sample release would best be a nature preserve. Currently, eight sites are identified in the plan as the first step release sites. Three of the sites are nature preserves. At this point, the release site location is flexible. At this time the IDNR is seeking permission from the Commission for release at one nature preserve. Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Nature Preserve may provide the best habitat for this experimental sub-sample release.

Commissioner Flemal asked if there is a documented population of the AST at Heron Pond at the present time.

Mr. Kath stated that there is not a documented population at this site. He stated that Mr. Ballard spent a large number of hours trapping various sites throughout southern Illinois. In addition, an independent contractor was hired to do trapping to determine if there were any ASTs remaining in Illinois. No ASTs were caught during this period. There are historic records of the ASTs within that watershed of southern Illinois.

Commissioner Flemal asked what the Department is looking for in the genetic testing.

The current research shows that there are three distinct drainages that can be identified through genetic testing for ASTs. There is an east coast drainage, a Mississippi drainage, and a Texas/western drainage. All of the animals within the Mississippi drainage are the states that border the Mississippi River. Research has shown that all of the animals that were tested are all of the same haplotype (haplotype "A"). The IDNR wants to make sure that the animals released are of that same haplotype. Thus far, the researchers at Oklahoma State have advised the Department that all the samples they have received are haplotype "A". The final results should be available in February, 2008.

Commissioner Keating stated that he wanted to congratulate the recovery team members on the thorough study, and he wanted to know the team's prognosis for success based on other states' experiences.

Mr. Kath stated that other states have tried this type of program, and he found that each state had a different protocol. The State of Tennessee is doing an AST release program, and he found that Tennessee does not determine the sex of each animal, and no genetic testing is done before the release. A few ASTs are released at each site. Tennessee's DNR will rely on the public's reports of AST sightings to let them know how the program is progressing. The State of Oklahoma has a release program, but the protocol is more rigorous. Oklahoma is using a recovery plan, and they wanted to review Illinois' recovery plan before they agreed to raise animals for Illinois. It is too early to tell if the programs will succeed because the animals are so long lived. The IDNR wanted to determine how many animals it would need to release per year for a determined amount of years to ensure a less than five percent chance of extinction. In order to do that, Dr. Dreslik ran a computer model. The model showed that in order to make the program successful (dealing with hatchlings animals), the IDNR would have to release between 200-250 animals per year for the next 11-13 years to ensure a 95% chance of survivability. Because the IDNR has captured adult ASTs, he has asked Dr. Dreslik to run the model based on yearlings and adults. That will obviously change the number of animals that are needed. He stated that he has asked permission to make two more trips to Louisiana this year.

He stated that it is hoped that almost all of the animals can be moved to the Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery within the next few weeks. Per the last progress report, all of the animals are doing well with no noticeable health issues.

Commissioner Riddell asked if the AST is a listed species in Louisiana.

Mr. Kath stated that Louisiana is the only state where the AST is not protected. The one measure that it has enacted is that Louisiana no longer allows commercial harvest of the animal. A private citizen with a fishing license can take ASTs, but he did not know if there was a daily limit. Louisiana provided a five year comprehensive state-wide survey of the known AST locations. From those results, IDNR staff were able to key in on the potential hot spots when they went to Louisiana.

Kelly Neal stated that she provided the Commissioners with a staff recommendation, and the conditions for approval were outlined in that recommendation. She stated that the recovery team has yet to be determined, and the team will be assisting with some of the planning. The plan

may be revised to a certain extent. The Commission will be involved in the process, especially when it relates to the release of animals into a nature preserve. The Commission would have a final say on any decisions regarding what would occur on a nature preserve. The conditions recommended are:

1. There is no genetic variation between Illinois populations and source populations used for translocation.
2. Animals have been properly quarantined and determined to be free of disease or other contaminants that could impact the local ecology.
3. Animals are radio and PIT tagged, and researchers continue to track their locations until it is determined negative impacts resulting from release are minimal. Tagging should remain on animals and continue to be functional.
4. An effort is made by researchers to assess whether animals translocated from southern states are able to adapt to Illinois climate/overwinter in Illinois.
5. To the extent possible, monitor impacts to local faunal assemblages as a result of the introduction of a new predator into the nature preserve ecosystem.
6. This release will be considered a pilot study and adaptive management principles will be used as new information becomes available.
7. Any changes will be done in consultation with INPC staff.
8. If any negative impacts are determined, the animals will be removed from the nature preserve.

Mr. Kath stated that because there have been multiple revisions made to the recovery plan, it is his intent to update the plan with those revisions.

Commissioner Flemal asked that the Commission be kept informed on the progress of this program.

Mr. Kath stated that he would be happy to do that.

Commissioner Allread stated that the Commission is pleased that this program has been given such thorough investigation. She stated that, personally, she could think of no better opportunity to bring a species back to a nature preserve that has improved water quality. She also thanked Ms. Neal for being very involved in this process.

Mr. Kath stated that Ms. Neal has been very helpful, and he stated that he will keep Ms. Neal and the Commission involved in the process.

Mr. Kath stated that when the radio tracking protocol was put together, it was decided that the IDNR would like to have a slight buffer of animals. A maximum of 13 animals to be released is requested.

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

The Commission grants approval for the introduction of an experimental sub-sample of the alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*) (maximum of 13 yearling or juvenile alligator

snapping turtles) at either Horseshoe Lake Nature Preserve, Alexander County, or Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Nature Preserve, Pulaski County, or LaRue Swamp Nature Preserve, Union County, subject to the conditions contained in the staff recommendation from Kelly Neal dated January 24, 2008 and as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Exhibit C).

(Resolution 1987)

197-18) Clark Co. – Miller’s Rocky Branch Land and Water Reserve, Ownership Correction

Mary Kay Solecki presented a proposal for a correction of ownership of the Miller’s Rocky Branch Land and Water Reserve. Miller’s Rocky Branch Land and Water Reserve, owned by D. Paul and Anna B. Miller, was registered at the 166<sup>th</sup> meeting of the INPC in February, 2000 (Resolution #1518). It has recently come to light that the Land and Water Reserve is owned by a family trust and not by Mr. and Mrs. Miller as individuals. The original registration agreement states that Mr. and Mrs. Miller own the property. The land and water reserve registration agreement has been corrected to show that the D. Paul and Anna B. Miller Revocable Trust owns the property, and D. Paul Miller and Anna B. Miller signed the agreement as Trustees for the Trust.

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

The Commission grants approval of the revised registration agreement to show the corrected ownership of Miller’s Rocky Branch Land and Water Reserve in Clark County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the Agenda for the 197<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 1988)

Chair Ross-Shannon asked if a protocol could be implemented to document the owner of record of a site before it comes before the Commission for dedication or registration.

197-19) McDonough Co. – Request for Rural Waterline Placement, Nenawakwa Land and Water Reserve

Angella Moorehouse reported that the West Prairie Water Cooperative of McDonough County is requesting permission for a rural waterline along the western border of Nenawakwa Land and Water Reserve. The waterline was installed in August, 2007, without the knowledge/permission of the INPC or the IDNR. The owners of the Land and Water Reserve, Edward Card and Margaret Ovitt, signed an easement granting permission for the waterline prior to the installation. However, the easement document contained an incorrect legal description (for a residential inholding adjacent to the Land and Water Reserve which Mr. Card and Ms. Ovitt sold before the waterline request). The owners have not signed an easement document with the corrected legal description and are waiting for the INPC and the IDNR to grant permission for the waterline before they sign the easement agreement.

Ms. Moorehouse stated that the waterline trench is approximately three feet wide, and it runs the full length of the wet border (2,300 feet or approximately .158 acre) of the Nenawakwa Land and Water Reserve. The Land and Water Reserve is 142.5 acres in size, and it is located approximately seven miles southwest of Macomb. The soil must subside before restoration can begin. Earth moving is not allowed on a land and water reserve unless the material is part of a restoration plan included in the management plan. This water line was not included in the management plan. Management uses not otherwise allowed may be specifically approved by the Department and the Commission where the management use is consistent with the management program for the purpose of restoring high-quality natural communities. There was no high-quality natural community here. The site was a former crop field that was seeded to prairie during a prairie restoration in 1995, before the registration. The goal is to restore that trench line to what it was before.

She stated that it is the staff recommendation is that there cannot be any final approval of what should be done at this time. She recommends that the Commission direct her to work with the West Prairie Water Cooperative of McDonough County, the IDNR, and the landowners to develop an agreement to resolve this issue as a management issue. She stated that she has met with the attorney representing the West Prairie Water Cooperative of McDonough County, members of the Cooperative, and the landowners. She has also met with the engineers that installed the waterline, and they had planned to re-grade the trench, and no new dirt will be brought in. Discussions are underway for them to purchase seed and replant the seed after the soil has been repaired. Provisions for future maintenance of the waterline are also being discussed so there will be no damage to the Land and Water Reserve and the grassland habitat. The IDNR is going to require a comprehensive environmental review, and she is in the process of completing that form. This review is necessary before the IDNR will approve the agreement, and the Department will have to sign the agreement as will the INPC, the landowner, and the West Prairie Water Cooperative of McDonough County.

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that the fact that this was an inadvertent violation, he is comfortable letting staff work out the technical details. As far as the easement itself, he felt that the broad right of ingress and egress over adjacent land was too broad. He would suggest that this be revised to limit this provision.

Ms. Moorehouse stated that this item will be brought back to the Commission at its 198<sup>th</sup> Meeting for further discussion.

Charles Burton, attorney for the West Prairie Water Cooperative of McDonough County, stated that the Commission's assessment is correct. There was confusion as to what the property was and what the conservation easement actually meant. He stated that the Cooperative has already agreed to do whatever is necessary for the remediation.

197-20) Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

There was no public comment.

197-21) Other Business

Randy Heidorn stated that the INPC is coming up on some major milestones. By the end of 2008, the Commission will probably reach its 500<sup>th</sup> area in the programs. The Commission will have its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 200<sup>th</sup> meeting in 2008. In light of that, it is important to let people know about the Commission and use this as an opportunity to get the Commission's message out to the public and policy makers within State government and local organizations. A draft document has been prepared which lists the important milestones, history of the Commission, educational opportunities, and the positive aspects of the Commission as it relates to the State of Illinois. Over the last four years, the Commission has dedicated private lands at the rate of \$4 for every \$1 spent by the Commission on staff. The idea behind this document was to give the Commissioners something to share with various people to educate others about the Commission.

Chair Ross-Shannon stated that Commissioners act as ambassadors for the Commission when talking with local groups, other individuals, or legislators. This type of document would be beneficial to leave with each person to remind them of the benefits of the Commission. He asked that each Commissioner review the draft document within the next two weeks and suggest revisions to improve the content.

Commissioner Allread suggested that staff have access to this information as well.

#### 197-22) Adjournment

It was moved by Flemal, seconded by Rosenthal, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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