

NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
TWO HUNDRED SECOND MEETING

Starved Rock Visitors Center
Route 178 & 71
Utica, IL 61373

May 5, 2009, 9:00 a.m.

*Documentary Material Enclosed

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

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3:* Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting, January 26, 2009, and the 201st Meeting, January 27, 2009

Item 4: 2009 Meeting Schedule

September 22, 2009 10:00 a.m. Illinois Beach Resort and Conference Center, Zion

Item 5: INPC Staff Report

REPORT

Kelly Neal, Jenny Skufca, and Randy Heidorn
Nature Preserves Commission

Item 6: IDNR Staff Report

REPORT

Glen Kruse
IDNR, Office of Resource Conservation

Item 7: Endangered Species Protection Board Report

REPORT

Anne Mankowski
Endangered Species Protection Board

Item 8:* Henderson Co. – Harry N. Patterson Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) wishes to register the entire 540.85-acre Big River Natural Area (Illinois Natural Areas Inventory [INAI] #158), located in Henderson County, as Harry N. Patterson Savanna Land and Water Reserve. The site is located within the Mississippi River Section of the Mississippi River and Illinois River Sand Areas Natural Division and within the Upper

Mississippi River Conservation Opportunity Area identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP). The registration of this site will represent the first site protected by the INPC system in Henderson County. The site is significant because it supports two communities recognized by the INAI as Category 1, grade B dry sand prairie and grade C best of its kind dry sand savanna and as a Category 2 for supporting two state-endangered plants, Patterson's bindweed (*Stylisma pickeringii*) and large-flowered beardstongue (*Penstemon grandiflorus*), and two state-threatened species, kittentails (*Besseyia bullii*) and western hognose snake (*Heterodon nasicus*). The site also provides habitat for at least seven species of greatest need of conservation as identified by the IWAP. The proposed land and water reserve is being named in honor of historic resident botanist, Harry N. Patterson, for whom Patterson's bindweed is named.

REPORT
Angella Moorehouse
Nature Preserves Commission
Michelle Simone
Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval for Registration

Item 9:* Jo Daviess Co. – Rall Woods Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The IDNR seeks to register Rall Woods State Natural Area (174.38 acres) and Falling Down Prairie State Natural Area (108.87 acres) as an Illinois land and water reserve. The 283.25-acre site proposed for registration lies within the Wisconsin Driftless Natural Division and will be known as Rall Woods Land and Water Reserve. The proposed land and water reserve will protect significant areas of loess hill prairie and areas of dry and mesic upland forest. The proposed site contains the entire 15-acre area identified as Falling Down Prairie INAI site (#1683) and is part of the Lost Mound - Hanover Bluff - Mississippi Palisades Conservation Opportunity Area identified in the IWAP. The proposed land and water reserve provides habitat for a number of species of conservation concern, particularly several bird species: yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), Kentucky warbler (*Oporornis formosus*), ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*), field sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), brown thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*), and the state-threatened cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*). It also provides habitat for at least one mammal of conservation concern, the badger (*Taxidea taxus*). Registration of the site will provide protection for the significant natural resources while allowing compatible public hunting and other recreational programs.

REPORT
Jeff Horn
Ed Anderson
Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval for Registration

Item 10:* Kankakee Co. – Addition to Aroma Forest Preserve Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District (KRVFPD) wishes to register in perpetuity 30 acres as an addition to Aroma Forest Preserve Land and Water Reserve. In 1998, the KRVFPD registered in perpetuity 52-acres as Aroma Forest Preserve Land and Water Reserve. This site’s natural features include several grade C communities: sedge meadow, sand prairie, sand savanna, and forested floodplain along the Kankakee River. The entire length of the Illinois portion of the Kankakee River is recognized as an INAI site (#1737). This site is located approximately five miles southeast of Kankakee within the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. In 2008, the KRVFPD acquired a 30-acre brome field immediately south of Aroma Forest Preserve Land and Water Reserve with the help of an IDNR grant. The registration of the 30-acre addition will provide a buffer to the existing Land and Water Reserve, help complete good reserve design, and will provide additional protected habitat for wildlife, including the grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), a species identified in the IWAP to be in greatest need of conservation.

REPORT
Kim Roman
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval for Registration

Item 11:* Lake Co. - Addition and Buffer Addition to Pistakee Bog Nature Preserve, Dedication

The IDNR proposes to dedicate four parcels of land comprising 50.32 acres as addition and buffer to Pistakee Bog Nature Preserve. Pistakee Bog is one of four wetland basins located within the Volo Bog State Natural Area. These wetland basins are Volo Bog, Pistakee Bog, Brandenburg Bog, and Lac Louette. The protection of these unique wetlands has long been a goal of the IDNR, the INPC, and The Nature Conservancy. Volo Bog was dedicated in 1970 as the 25th Illinois nature preserve. Pistakee Bog was dedicated as a nature preserve in 1975 and now includes the wetland basin known as Brandenburg Bog. The Nature Preserve lies within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Pistakee Bog Nature Preserve has nine natural communities providing habitat for 11 state-listed plant species. Protection and restoration of the proposed additions supports four action steps identified in the IWAP for the Prairie Campaign, Wetlands Campaign, Forests Campaign, and Invasive Species Campaign. The Nature Preserve is currently 398.55 acres in size, and the IDNR owns and manages 373.13 of these acres. The remaining acreage is in two private ownerships as the Lindblom addition and Brandenburg Lake Island buffer addition to Pistakee Bog Nature Preserve (2.34 and 23.08 acres, respectively). With approval of this proposal, the total area of legally protected land at Pistakee Bog Nature Preserve will increase to 448.87 acres.

REPORT
John Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission
Brad Semel
Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 12:* McHenry Co. – HUM Railroad Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

The McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) seeks preliminary approval for dedication of the HUM Railroad Prairie as an Illinois nature preserve. The proposed nature preserve is 60.5 acres in size and includes all of the HUM Railroad Prairie East (#1269) and HUM Railroad Prairie West (#1270) INAI sites. The proposed nature preserve consists of 25-foot wide rights-of-way located on either side of a 50-foot wide active rail line spanning two different segments of rail line totaling 9.98 miles. The HUM Railroad Prairie East INAI site extends 6.1 miles from near Huntley to southeast of Union. The HUM Railroad Prairie West INAI site extends west 3.88 miles from Marengo to County Line Road. The INAI recognized both segments of the proposed nature preserve for high-quality mesic prairie. HUM Railroad Prairie East was further recognized for high-quality wet prairie and wet-mesic prairie, while HUM Railroad Prairie West was recognized for high-quality dry-mesic prairie. The McHenry County Natural Areas Inventory recognized the presence of sedge meadow along the HUM Railroad Prairie East INAI site and dry sand prairie along the HUM Railroad Prairie West INAI site. The proposed nature preserve traverses from east to west both the Morainal Section and the Winnebago Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in McHenry County. The proposed HUM Railroad Prairie Nature Preserve supports six state-listed plant species, including the state-threatened common bog arrow grass (*Triglochin maritima*), slender bog arrow grass (*T. palustris*), and an orchid, and the state-endangered tall sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*), prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*), and an orchid. The latter two species are also designated federally threatened. In addition, a state-threatened reptile and the state-endangered upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) have been recorded from the proposed nature preserve. Dedication of this site is consistent with recommendations from the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan and elements of the IWAP; specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality prairie communities and collaborate with other agencies for recovery plans and actions for rare or declining species. In addition, two habitat-restricted insect species, the silver-bordered fritillary (*Boloria selene*) and Dion skipper (*Euphyes dion*), have been recorded from the proposed nature preserve and are identified as species in greatest need of conservation. Finally, dedication of these railroad prairies will preserve two INAI sites and is consistent with MCCD's Mission Statement "...to preserve, restore, and manage natural areas and open spaces for their intrinsic value and for the benefit to present and future generations."

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 13:* Cook Co. – Deer Grove West Woodland and Wetland Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) seeks final approval for dedication of the 1,035.1-acre Deer Grove West Woodland and Wetland as an Illinois nature preserve. The proposed nature preserve encompasses the entire Deer Grove West INAI site (#775) and includes 786.9 acres as nature preserve and 248.8 acres as nature preserve buffer. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Cook County. The proposed Deer Grove West Woodland and Wetland Nature Preserve supports savanna, dry-mesic upland forest, mesic upland forest, wet floodplain forest, sedge meadow, and wetland communities that collectively provide habitat for 394 native plant species. Among the plant species are the state-threatened forked aster (*Aster furcatus*), pale vetchling (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*), small sundrops (*Oenothera perennis*), and marsh speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*) and the state-endangered bulrush (*Scirpus hattorianus*). State-threatened or endangered wildlife species reported from the site include the black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*), and a reptile. A large and diverse array of wildlife species have been recorded from the proposed nature preserve, including 16 bird species, that are either highly or moderately sensitive to forest fragmentation. The proposed nature preserve supports several action steps identified in the IWAP, most notably management of area-sensitive wildlife species in forests greater than 1,000 acres and support of a specific recommendation for the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division to restore and manage four to five forested sites between 800-1,000 acres in size. In addition, the proposed nature preserve supports 18 species considered wildlife species in greatest need of conservation. Finally, dedication of this site as an Illinois nature preserve reaffirms the significance of Deer Grove as the first acquisition of land by the FPDCC. By doing so, it honors the foresight of many early conservationists, the ongoing commitment of the FPDCC to "...preserve, protect, restock, and restore...", and the legacy and significance of the Cook County Forest Preserve District Act, Downstate Forest Preserve Act, and Conservation District Act in acquiring nearly 171,000 acres of land to date in northeastern Illinois. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 199th Meeting in August, 2008 (Resolution 2002).

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 14:* Cook Co. – Natural Land Institute – George B. Fell Prairie Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Natural Land Institute (NLI) and the City of Markham seek final approval for dedication of 12.39 acres as the Natural Land Institute – George B. Fell Prairie addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed addition, which is owned by the NLI, is located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division and consists of 91 lots (7.67 acres) and platted, but not built upon, roads (4.72 acres). The 91 lots and platted roads are

subject to an agreement between the NLI and the City of Markham that provides for exchange of properties and provides that the City of Markham will "... assist and cooperate with the INPC, in good faith, to facilitate the dedication of the Markham properties as an Illinois Nature Preserve." The proposed addition is located just south of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve and lies embedded within boundaries for both the INAI site (#400) and the National Registry of Natural Landmarks designated by the U.S. National Park Service. Elements of high-quality mesic prairie and sedge meadow, and grade C mesic sand prairie and wet-mesic prairie occur within the proposed addition. The proposed addition supports a population of a federally-threatened and state-endangered orchid, another state-endangered orchid, and the state-threatened small sundrops (*Oenothera perennis*). Dedication of this addition is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Master Plan for this site, good preserve design considerations, and elements of the IWAP, specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality wetland and prairie communities. Dedication of the proposed addition (12.39) acres will increase the size of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve from 125.826 acres to 138.216 acres. To date, there are an additional 31.934 acres that have received preliminary approval for dedication as additions to Gensburg-Markham Prairie. A quote from "*A legacy of natural lands - George B. Fell and the Natural Land Institute*" summarizes the leadership provided by George B. Fell: "The fight to preserve Gensburg-Markham Prairie was to be George's last, and his penultimate preservation effort." The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 196th Meeting in October, 2007 (Resolution 1971).

REPORT
Steven Byers
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 15:* Hancock Co. – Buffer Addition to Stony Hills Nature Preserve, Dedication

Gretchen Graft Batz and Roger Batz seek final approval for the dedication of a 140-acre buffer addition to Stony Hills Nature Preserve. The Batzs' own 195.81 acres at this site, all of which was registered as Jamar Haven Land and Water Reserve in November, 1999 (Resolution #1504). In May, 2003 (Resolution #1750), 54.4 acres of the reserve was dedicated as Stony Hills Nature Preserve. The current proposed buffer addition would increase the total size of the Nature Preserve to 194.4 acres, making it the second largest Illinois nature preserve owned by private individuals. A small area (approximately 1.4 acres) around a historic barn, included in the reserve, will remain undedicated. The site lies within the Glaciated Section of the Middle Mississippi Border Natural Division. Significant features include: unique geological exposure and site suitable habitat for two state-threatened species, a reptile and Henslow's sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*). The site also supports at least six prairie and savanna specialists, five birds and one mammal, identified by the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. Management of the site focuses on goals established for the IWAP Farmland and Prairie Campaign. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 201st Meeting in January, 2009 (Resolution #2024).

REPORT
Angella Moorehouse
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 16:* Hardin Co. – Lafarge Limestone Glade Nature Preserve, Dedication

Lafarge North America Corporation seeks final approval for dedication of the proposed 51-acre Lafarge Limestone Glade Nature Preserve. The site is a high-quality grade A and B limestone glade community. The site protects the western part of the Collier Limestone Glade INAI site (#12). A unique assemblage of prairie and glade plants occurs in this rare community type. The Lafarge Limestone Glade natural area is an oak-hickory mosaic containing remnant dry oak woodlands and limestone glades. In southern Illinois, limestone glades are small prairie-like areas which occur on shallow soils over limestone outcrops. This glade occurs in the Lesser Shawnee Hills Section of the Shawnee Hills Natural Division. Lafarge Limestone Glade is one of the last remnants of what was once the largest continuous glade system that existed in Illinois. Preservation of Lafarge Limestone Glade will address several actions steps in the Forest Campaign by conserving an INAI site, assisting private forest management, and assisting with the exotic species campaign by the management that will occur on the site to remove exotic and invasive species. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 200th Meeting in October, 2008 (Resolution 2011).

REPORT
Judy Faulkner Dempsey
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 17:* Iroquois Co. – Buffer Addition to Loda Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Grand Prairie Friends seeks final approval for dedication of a 9-acre crop field as a buffer addition to Loda Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve. The field surrounds Loda Cemetery Prairie on three sides and is being restored to native prairie vegetation. The proposed buffer addition is located near the town of Loda, approximately 30 miles northeast of Champaign, within the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Loda Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve is one of the finest black soil prairie remnants in central Illinois. This 3.4-acre prairie is recognized by the INAI as a grade A mesic prairie known as Pine Ridge Cemetery Prairie INAI site (#1037). The 3.4 acres of grade A mesic prairie at Loda Prairie are 24% of the total grade A mesic prairie known within the Grand Prairie Natural Division. In addition, the prairie harbors a federally and state-endangered orchid. Restoration of the 9-acre field to prairie will more than triple the size of the prairie at Loda Cemetery Prairie from 3.4 acres to 12.4 acres. Small size and isolation are among the greatest stresses to Illinois' native prairies. For many prairies, invasive species are a chronic problem made worse when prairies have a large amount of edge compared to interior habitat. Enlarging the prairie will help alleviate stresses attributable to small size and make the prairie more attractive to wildlife including songbirds. The Commission

conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 201st Meeting in January, 2009 (Resolution 2025).

REPORT
Mary Kay Solecki
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 18:* Winnebago Co. – Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve, Pine Plantation Removal Request

The Winnebago County Forest Preserve District seeks approval to remove a 10.3-acre pine plantation from within Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve. The plantation is approximately 30 years old and consists of red and white pine trees planted in rows at eight foot spacing. The removal of the pine plantation will allow for a prairie restoration consistent with the presettlement conditions documented at the 186.07-acre Nature Preserve. Removal of the pine plantation will also increase the amount of native grassland at the site thus providing better habitat for grassland dependant birds. A timber harvest company will remove the pine trees for pulp and/or saw logs. Any funds generated as a result of the harvest will be used to restore the area to native prairie and open oak savanna. An updated three year management plan for the Nature Preserve is on file and includes prairie and savanna restoration as management objectives.

REPORT
John Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of Removal Request

Item 19: Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2010 Stewardship Proposals

The Natural Areas Stewardship project uses monies provided by the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund [NAAF] (15% of NAAF capital appropriation) to fund management activities on both state and non-state-owned nature preserves and land and water reserves. From currently proposed FY2010 appropriations, \$450,000 will be available for natural areas stewardship needs statewide. Proposed projects will match an additional \$126,500 in non-state funds for natural areas management.

REPORT
Deborah Stone
Randy Heidorn
Nature Preserves Commission
Bob Szafoni
Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Commission Approval

Item 20: Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2010 Defense Proposals

The Natural Areas Defense Program uses monies provided by the NAAF (historically 5% of NAAF capital appropriation) to fund contractual natural area defense activities needed on properties included in one of the INPC's protection programs. From the

FY2008 NAAF capital appropriation, \$475,000 was available to defend natural areas statewide. For the FY2009 NAAF capital appropriation, \$225,000 was ultimately allocated. NAAF defense projects that were begun in FY2008 and completed or continued in FY2009 include: the pick up of asbestos containing material (ACM) in North Dunes Nature Preserve and Illinois Beach Nature Preserve; the collection of hydrological data required for permit applications to allow reconstruction and restoration of hydrology and prevent drainage in the Cache River system which includes Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Nature Preserve, Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve and Cache River Land and Water Reserve; funding the Illinois State Water Survey and Illinois State Geological Survey to collect and review groundwater data needed to assess impacts of proposed off-site development, threats or damages, prepare Class 3 Special Resource Groundwater petitions to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for INPC program sites and provide groundwater consulting services for the INPC staff; and fencing off hazardous mine air shafts that have been preventing management. New projects/contracts initiated in FY2009 include: the development of engineering plans to stabilize the ACM contaminated sand pile north of North Dunes Nature Preserve; addressing wildfire management at Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak Nature Preserve, Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve and other INPC sites; re-sampling of Category 1 INAI sites in INPC programs by the INAI update team to assess conditions in the sites (prelude to monitoring); and a continuation of the aforementioned groundwater consulting services. Approximately, \$45,000 of the two years of allocations remains unassigned to specific projects. This money remains available to address threats that may arise. Based on the FY2010 budget proposal, \$150,000 may be available for allocation to defense. Specific projects will be selected as needed but will likely include a continuation of the aforementioned groundwater data and consultation services at some level. Specific projects funded during FY2010 will be reported in May, 2010.

REPORT
Randy Heidorn
Jenny Skufca
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Commission Approval

Item 21: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 22:* Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2010 Land Acquisition Proposals

The NAAF is administered by the IDNR with review and recommendation of land acquisition projects by the INPC. The IDNR has identified 20 high priority tracts of land currently for sale within 16 natural areas. Depending on the final IDNR budget, tracts from this list will be considered for state acquisition in FY2010. All the proposed acquisition parcels are included on the INAI, and/or provide habitat for endangered or threatened species of animals or plants. Eighteen of the tracts expand existing state natural areas. Two of the tracts would be new state natural areas. Sixteen of the 20 tracts are included in conservation opportunity areas of the IWAP. The proposed acquisitions total 2,800 acres and would cost approximately \$12,600,000 to acquire. The amount for natural area acquisition with NAAF in the proposed state budget is \$3,000,000. As of April 10, 2009, the final state budget has

not been approved. INPC is asked to review and approve a longer list than there is funding for because grant money and partner contributions will be sought to stretch NAAF dollars and negotiations with some landowners will not be successful.

REPORT
Don McFall
Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Commission Approval

Item 23: Other Business

Item 24: Adjournment