

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

Minutes of the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting

January 24, 2012

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Illinois Nature Preserves Commission  
Minutes of the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
(Approved at the 211<sup>th</sup> Meeting)

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

Tuesday, January 24, 2012

210-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

At 10:05 a.m., pursuant to the Call to Order of Vice Chair Thomas, the meeting began.

Randy Heidorn read the roll call.

Members present: Dennis Clark, George Covington, Donnie Dann, Richard Keating, William McClain, Mare Payne, Jill Riddell, and David Thomas.

Members absent: Lauren Rosenthal.

Others present: Steven Byers, Bob Edgin, Stefanie Ervin, Ray Geroff, Randy Heidorn, Russell Heinrichs, Tom Lerczak, Angella Moorehouse, Kelly Neal, John Nelson, Debbie Newman, Kim Roman, Jenny Skufca, and Mary Kay Solecki, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); Marc Miller, Director and John Rogner, Assistant Director, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Ed Anderson, Scott Ballard, Jeannie Barnes, Ben Dolbeare, Michael Blackowicz, Stefanie Fitzimons, Jim Herkert, Don McFall, Michelle Simone, Eric Smith, Penny Snyder, John Wilker, and Samantha Worthington, Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), IDNR; Olivia Campbell, Kathi Davis, Tracy Evans, Nathan Grider, and Keith Shank, Office of Realty and Environmental Planning (OREP), IDNR; Shelly Knuppel, Office of Legal Council, IDNR; Tim Schweizer, IDNR; Anne Mankowski, Endangered Species Protection Board (ESPB); Sue Dees Hargrove, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); Brian Anderson, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) and INPC Advisor; Thomas Emerson, Illinois State Archaeological Society and INPC Advisor; Jill Allread, INPC Consultant; Marilyn Campbell, INPC Consultant; Steve Barge and Tim Girmscheid, Liberty Prairie Conservancy; Tom Clay, Illinois Audubon Society and INPC Consultant, representing the proposed Hartman Spring Nature Preserve; Scott Kobal and Erik Neidy, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC), representing the proposed Brewster Creek Marsh Nature Preserve, the proposed Des Plaines Riverway Nature Preserve, the proposed Meacham Grove Nature Preserve, the proposed Swift Prairie Nature Preserve, and the proposed buffer addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve; Jerry Adelman and Joyce O'Keefe, Openlands, representing the proposed Openlands Lakeshore, Bluff and Ravine Nature Preserve; Mike Groves, Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD), representing the proposed buffer addition to Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve and the proposed buffer addition to Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve; Leslee Spraggins, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and INPC Consultant, and Fran Harty, TNC and INPC Consultant, representing the proposed Markham Prairie – East Nature Preserve; Kathy Rose and Linda Yunker, Fields of Cambridge, representing the proposed Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve; Maury Brucker, John B. Wallace, and Emiko Yang, Illinois Audubon Society; Tanner

Girard, Illinois Pollution Control Board; Jim Payne, Grand Prairie Friends; George Rose, Friends of the Sangamon Valley; Chris Young, The State Journal Register; Peggy Becker, Jennifer Becker, and Paul Soderholm.

210-2) Adoption of Agenda

Item 13 and Item 17 have been deferred at the landowners' request.

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

210-3) Approval of the 209<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes, September 20, 2011

It was moved by Dann, seconded by Keating, and carried that the 209<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes, September 20, 2011, be approved.

Vice Chair Thomas reported that at the 209<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the INPC, held on September 20, 2011, at the Lost Valley Visitor Center, Richmond, legal protection was completed by the Commission for three tracts of land totaling 417.33 acres. All three of these areas are owned by private individuals or not-for-profit corporations who donated the value of the protection agreement to the public. This private land was permanently preserved without further acquisition of the land by the state. The dollar value of the tracts of private land is \$834,000 based on conservative estimates of the fair market value of the land. Private lands protected without state acquisition at INPC's 209<sup>th</sup> Meeting were White Rock Nature Preserve, Monroe County; an addition to North Elkhart Hill Grove Land and Water Reserve, Logan County; and McFarland Hill Land and Water Reserve, Pike County. Protection of this land came about because the Commission has eight staff in the field working with private landowners. There are now 356 dedicated nature preserves in 83 counties totaling 50,127.265 acres and 163 land and water reserves in 66 counties totaling 46,515.369 acres.

210-4) 2012 Meeting Schedule

May 8, 2012 – Jarrett Prairie Center, Byron

September 11, 2012 – Monroe County Annex Building, Waterloo

It was moved by Keating, seconded by Clark, and carried that the September, 2012 meeting date be approved as presented.

210-5) INPC Staff Report

Mr. Heidorn recognized the following employees and presented each with a pin:

Kelly Neal - 10 years of service to the state.

Jenny Skufca - 15 years of service to the state.

Tom Lerczak - 20 years of service to the state.

The INPC staff report is attached as Exhibit A.

Kelly Neal highlighted a few of the stewardship and monitoring efforts contained in the staff report.

Jenny Skufca highlighted a few defense items contained in the staff report.

210-6) IDNR Staff Report

Don McFall presented the IDNR staff report attached as Exhibit B.

210-7) Endangered Species Protection Board Report

Anne Mankowski presented the ESPB report attached as Exhibit C.

Randy Heidorn stated that the registration agreements for today's land and water reserve presentation have been signed and executed by the landowners as required by administrative rule.

210-8) Jo Daviess Co. – Illinois Department of Natural Resources Wiley Addition to Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Vice Chair Thomas stated that a sentence was added to the proposal for registration for the IDNR Wiley Addition to Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve after the agenda was sent out. That sentence is: "The IDNR purchased their portion of the Wiley tract using a \$267,000 federal State Wildlife Grant (SWG). Registration of the property as a land and water reserve was a condition of the grant."

John Nelson presented a proposal on behalf of the IDNR for permanent registration of 104.709 acres as the IDNR Wiley Addition to Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve. The proposed IDNR addition, located in the Wisconsin Driftless Natural Division, will provide important buffer to help protect high-quality natural features found within Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve (301.4-acres) and Apple River Canyon Nature Preserve (442.1-acres). Some cliffs within the proposed addition contain high-quality cliff natural communities identified on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #1069). A nearly one-mile long segment of the Apple River flows through the proposed addition. The canyon also contains scenic bluffs rising from 100 to 150 feet above the Apple River with deep ravines running back from the main gorge, as well as cold-water springs. The wide ranging diversity of habitats, coupled with the unique geologic history of the canyon, makes this natural area one of the most botanically rich places in Illinois. The INAI identified exceptional areas of dry prairie, cliff communities, and dolomite exposures. Currently, nine state-endangered and four state-threatened plant species are known to occur at Apple River Canyon. One state-endangered plant species, white camass (*Zigadenus elegans*), and two state-threatened plant species, cliff goldenrod (*Solidago sciaphila*) and sullivantia (*Sullivantia sullivantia*), are documented from the proposed addition. Registration of the proposed addition helps support goals of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) in the streams, forest, and prairie campaigns, as well as protecting existing habitat for state-listed plants and animals. If approved, the proposed addition will increase the total acreage of Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve from 301.4 acres to 406.109 acres.

Mr. Nelson presented the allowable uses for the site which are explained in detail in the registration proposal.

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 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Wiley addition to Apple River Canyon Land and Water Reserve in Jo Daviess County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2162)

210-9) McHenry Co. – Addition to Black-Crown Marsh and Water Reserve, Registration

John Nelson presented a proposal on behalf of the IDNR for permanent registration of 212.1 acres as an addition to Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve. The proposed addition, located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division, consists of significant portions of the Black-crown Marsh INAI site (#1503) and upland buffer areas. Black-crown Marsh is ecologically significant due to the diversity and high number of rare, threatened, and endangered wetland-dependant birds that have been documented to use the basin and surrounding uplands for foraging, breeding, and nesting. The marsh is suitable habitat for seven state-threatened or endangered bird species. The site is also recognized as an important regional waterfowl breeding area by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Likewise, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers classified the wetland as biologically significant advanced identification wetland Advanced Identification (ADID #U263). Land acquisition, protection, and habitat management at the Black-crown Marsh INAI site has been a work in-progress since 1998. Much of the natural area has been acquired through fee simple land acquisitions by the IDNR and the Lake County Forest Preserve District. The grasslands are being managed and restored to provide habitat for grassland-dependant birds, nesting habitat for waterfowl, and nesting and foraging for a diversity of other wildlife. Currently, the wetland basin suffers from prolonged inundation caused by failed drain tiles and beaver activity. It is anticipated that a water control structure, installed at the outflow of the basin, will allow for comprehensive management of water levels to promote a mosaic of emergent and open-water conditions, or hemi-marsh. Installation of the water control structure is contingent upon completion of land acquisitions and/or conservation easements. The registration of this addition supports the wetlands campaign, forest campaign, prairie campaign, invasive species campaign, and the land and water stewardship campaign of the IWAP. The proposed addition also supports numerous species identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. If approved, the proposed addition will increase the total acreage of Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve to 373.53 acres.

Mr. Nelson presented the allowable uses for the site which are explained in detail in the registration proposal.

It was moved by Dann, seconded by Clark, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for registration of an addition to Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve in McHenry County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2163)

210-10) Bureau and Putnam Co. – Nature Preserve Addition and Buffer Addition to Miller-Anderson Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

Kim Roman presented a proposal on behalf of the IDNR for preliminary approval for dedication of 169-acre addition (5 acres as nature preserve and 164 acres as buffer) to Miller-Anderson Woods Nature Preserve. The proposed addition and buffer addition is located in the Illinois River Section of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois River Bottomlands Natural Division and the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Approximately five acres of one of the tracts is recognized on the INAI (#0382) for its high-quality seep community. Miller-Anderson Woods Nature Preserve provides habitat for many conservative plant species, including the state-threatened queen-of-the-prairie (*Filipendula rubra*) and at least five wildlife species considered to be in greatest need of conservation referenced in the IWAP. Dedication of this addition and buffer addition to Miller-Anderson Woods Nature Preserve will increase the size of the site to 509 acres, protect remnant natural communities, buffer higher quality natural communities and state-listed species, and help complete this site's preserve design.

Ms. Roman presented the allowable uses for the site which are explained in detail in the registration proposal. Ms. Roman also reported that IDOT may widen and improve Route 29 which lies on the eastern border of the existing nature preserve buffer and proposed nature preserve buffer. In IDOT's preferred alternative, the engineers do not plan on widening the Route near the Nature Preserve.

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Covington, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of a nature preserve addition and buffer addition to Miller-Anderson Woods Nature Preserve in Bureau and Putnam counties, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2164)

Eric Neidy, Manager of Natural Resources for the FPDDC, gave an overview of the FPDDC-owned sites that were presented at this meeting.

210-11) DuPage Co. – Brewster Creek Marsh Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 14)

Scott Kobal, Natural Resources Ecologist for the FPDDC, presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for preliminary approval for dedication of 256.8 acres of Pratt's Wayne Woods Forest Preserve (190.6 acres as nature preserve and 66.2 acres as buffer) as Brewster Creek Marsh Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in the far northwestern corner of DuPage County and lies within the boundary of the Pratt's Wayne Woods INAI site (#1401). This INAI site has been recognized as a Category II site (presence of endangered or threatened species) because of the presence of ten state-listed animals and three state-listed plants. Of these, the three state-listed plant species [dwarf bur reed (*Sparganium chlorocarpum*), green yellow sedge (*Carex viridula*), and marsh speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*)]; and eight state-listed animals [American bittern

(*Botaurus lentiginosus*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), and a reptile] are associated with the grade C freshwater marsh community at this site. The other state-listed species present at this site include the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*). The site also includes a low-gradient small stream and a cultural community referred to as a managed grassland. Protection of Brewster Creek Marsh as an Illinois nature preserve is consistent with elements of wetland and grassland campaigns of the IWAP and provides critical habitat for wildlife species in greatest need of conservation.

Mr. Kobal discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the dedication proposal, and he described what is involved with the mock fox hunts which would be allowed in the buffer area.

Commissioner Riddell asked if the approval of the permit for equestrian use would be done at the staff level. She also asked if there were other sites that have this type of situation for the occasional equestrian use.

Randy Heidorn stated that if the Commission gives preliminary approval for this site, the permit for equestrian use would be evaluated at a staff level. Staff would then decide to approve or deny the permit. This may be the first site to request mock fox hunts, but there have been similar kinds of activities where staff have agreed would be allowed in a preserve.

It was moved by Dann, seconded by Covington, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Brewster Creek Marsh in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2165)

210-12) DuPage Co. – Des Plaines Riverway Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 10)

Scott Kobal presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for preliminary approval for dedication of 79.5 acres of the Des Plaines River Forest Preserve as Des Plaines Riverway Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in the far southeastern corner of DuPage County. Although the proposed Des Plaines Riverway Nature Preserve is not an INAI site, the site does support qualifying features for this designation that include the presence of the state-threatened marsh speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*), cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulean*), black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*), and state-endangered black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). These species all occur within suitable habitat in the proposed nature preserve, and the site supports three natural communities including the wet floodplain forest, wet-mesic floodplain forest, and freshwater marsh and two cultural communities that include managed grassland and old field. The wet floodplain forest is considered the finest example of

this community within DuPage County. Protection of Des Plaines Riverway as an Illinois nature preserve supports elements of the forest and wetlands campaigns of the IWAP and provides critical habitat for wildlife species in greatest need of conservation.

Mr. Kobal discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the dedication proposal.

It was moved by Covington, seconded by Clark, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Des Plaines Riverway as an Illinois nature preserve in Du Page County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2166)

210-13) DuPage Co. –Glacial Ridge Nature Preserve, Dedication

Item 13 was deferred at the landowner's request.

210-14) DuPage Co. – Meacham Grove Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 12)

Scott Kobal presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for preliminary approval for dedication of 48.8 acres of the Meacham Grove Forest Preserve as Meacham Grove Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in the north-central part of DuPage County and encompasses the Meacham Grove INAI site (#0523) which was recognized for high-quality dry-mesic and mesic upland forest. To date, the FPDDC staff have recorded 280 native plant species from the site. The proposed nature preserve supports the state-threatened Wood's stiff sedge (*Carex woodii*) and three birds [northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), and wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)] identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. Protection of Meacham Grove as an Illinois nature preserve supports elements of the forest campaign of the IWAP and provides critical habitat for three wildlife species in greatest need of conservation.

Mr. Kobal discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the dedication proposal.

It was moved by McClain, seconded by Clark, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Meacham Grove in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 14 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2167)

210-15) DuPage Co. – Swift Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 11)

Scott Kobal presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for preliminary approval for dedication of 111.1 acres (66 acres as nature preserve and 45.1 acres as buffer) within the Swift Prairie Forest Preserve as Swift Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in the east-central part of DuPage County and encompasses much of the western portion of the Swift Road Meadow INAI site (#1391). This Category II INAI site includes grade C wet prairie and grade C sedge meadow that support a population of a state-endangered and federally listed species. Other natural communities include freshwater marsh and low-gradient small stream. Cultural communities include old field, artificial impoundment, and a community reconstruction. In addition to the federally-listed plant species, the proposed nature preserve supports a state-threatened plant, eared false foxglove (*Tomanthera auriculata*), least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), Kirtland's snake (*Clonophis kirtlandii*), state-endangered black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), and a reptile. To date, the FPDDC staff have recorded 359 native plant species from the site. The proposed Swift Prairie Nature Preserve supports 21 species (18 vertebrates and three invertebrates) identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. Protection of Swift Prairie as an Illinois nature preserve supports elements of the wetland and grassland and prairie campaigns of the IWAP and provides critical habitat for 21 species in greatest need of conservation.

Mr. Kobal discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the dedication proposal.

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Covington, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Swift Prairie in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 15 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2168)

210-16) DuPage Co. – Buffer Addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve, Dedication

Scott Kobal presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for preliminary approval for dedication of 37.4 acres as a buffer addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve. The proposed buffer addition is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central part of DuPage County. This proposal represents the second buffer addition at this site and would increase the size of the nature preserve from its current size of 285.475 acres (Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve, 115.974 acres and West Chicago Prairie buffer addition, 169.50 acres) to 322.875 acres. The proposed buffer addition is located just outside the boundary of, but adjacent to, the West Chicago Prairie INAI site (#0505). The INAI site is also known as the West Chicago Prairie buffer addition. The proposed addition supports freshwater marsh and mesic prairies that support populations of a state-endangered reptile and a state-threatened plant. The state-endangered American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) occurs in the wetlands that

extend from this proposed buffer addition into the existing Nature Preserve. Protection of this parcel as a buffer addition is consistent with elements of good preserve design and the wetland and grassland campaigns of the IWAP and provides critical habitat for wildlife species in greatest need of conservation.

Commissioner Keating asked about the utility easement.

Mr. Kobal stated that it is a ComEd easement, and ComEd personnel are good about contacting the FPDDC before conducting any work.

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Dann, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of a buffer addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve in DuPage County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 16 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2169)

Commissioner Covington stated that he would like to express appreciation to the FPDDC for bringing these five sites before the Commission.

210-17) Lake Co. – Buffer Addition to the Proposed Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Dedication

Item 17 was deferred at the landowner's request.

A lunch break was taken from 12:16 p.m. – 12:53 p.m.

210-18) Lake Co. – Openlands Lakeshore, Bluff and Ravine Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of Openlands for preliminary approval for dedication of 77 acres (44 acres as nature preserve and 33 acres as buffer) of the Openlands Lakeshore Preserve as the Openlands Lakeshore, Bluff and Ravine Nature Preserve. The site is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in southeastern Lake County. The proposed nature preserve was granted preliminary approval for dedication as part of Fort Sheridan Bluff and Ravine Nature Preserve at the Commission's 130<sup>th</sup> Meeting in February, 1991 (Resolution 1071) and encompasses the Fort Sheridan Bluff INAI site (#1078). This site is being brought back to the Commission because the site is now owned by Openlands (previously owned by U.S. Army, then conveyed to the U.S. Navy) and represents less than a half of the acreage of the site first approved by the Commission. The property is now subject to the terms of two Quit Claim Deeds conveying the property from the U.S. Navy to Openlands. The proposed Openlands Lakeshore, Bluff and Ravine Nature Preserve includes grade C beach and eroding bluff communities and ravines consisting of grade C mesic and dry-mesic upland forest and supports populations of the state-endangered shadbush (*Amelanchier sanguinea*), marram grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*), seaside spurge (*Chamaesyce polygonifolia*), buffalo berry (*Shepherdia canadensis*), and state-threatened sea rocket (*Cakile edentula*), golden sedge (*Carex aurea*), ground juniper (*Juniperus communis*), and dog violet (*Viola conspersa*). This

proposal identifies reserved rights as stipulated in the conveyance of the property to Openlands: "...for the purpose of restoring and preserve (the Lakefront Preserve) as a public open space conservation area and nature preserve for passive, low impact to the public, available to the public in perpetuity..." This includes access to, and the right to maintain, existing infrastructure. Openlands specifically requests the right to use the site for educational venues and construct and maintain trails as necessary in order to comply with the terms of the conveyance of the property. Dedication of this site as an Illinois nature preserve is consistent with an earlier determination of the Commission and will protect beach and eroding bluff communities, the Fort Sheridan Bluff INAI site, portions of three ravine systems, habitat that supports eight state-listed plant species, and supports elements of the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan and IWAP.

Mr. Byers discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the dedication proposal.

Commissioner Dann thanked Openlands for bringing this site before the Commission.

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

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Openlands Lakeshore, Bluff and Ravine in Lake County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2170)

Jill Allread thanked the Commission on behalf of the Board and staff of Openlands for its support in the first step of this site becoming a nature preserve. She invited everyone to visit the site.

210-19) Winnebago Co. – Buffer Addition to Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 22)

Russell Heinrichs presented a proposal on behalf of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD) for preliminary approval for dedication of 184.9 acres as a buffer addition to Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve. The proposed buffer addition, located along the border between the Freeport Section of the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division and the Winnebago Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division, contains a variety of natural communities which range from wet-floodplain forest to dry sand prairie and sand savanna. These communities within the Sugar River INAI site (#1466), of which Colored Sands Bluff is a part, serve as habitat to at least nine species of state-listed animals and at least four species of state-listed plants. The Sugar River's riparian corridor serves as a critical migration route for many species of birds. The proposed buffer area will serve as essential protection around Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve and the Sugar River. The recreated and restored prairies add valuable native habitat back to the landscape. The restoration work already completed by WCFPD staff serves as a solid indicator that the site will continue to more closely resemble its former presettlement conditions. An onsite group, Sand Bluff Bird Banding Organization, serves

as an important scientific and educational resource to the scientific community and the public. Protection of the proposed buffer addition supports the action steps identified for the prairie campaign, wetlands campaign, forests campaign, and invasive species campaign in the IWAP. Dedication of the proposed 184.9-acre buffer addition will increase the acreage of Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve from 54.7 acres to 239.6 acres.

Mr. Heinrichs discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the dedication proposal.

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

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of a buffer addition to Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve in Winnebago County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 19 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2171)

210-20) Winnebago Co. – Buffer Addition to Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve, Dedication

Russell Heinrichs presented a proposal on behalf of the WCFPD for preliminary approval for dedication of a 317-acre buffer addition to Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve. The proposed buffer addition, located in both the Freeport Section of the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division and the Winnebago Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division, contains a complete cross section of natural communities representative of this area of the Sugar River which range from wet-floodplain forest and sedge meadow to dry sand prairie and savanna to upland forest. These communities are part of the Sugar River INAI site (#1466) and the INAI site provides habitat to at least nine species of state-listed animals and at least 11 species of state-listed plants. Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve has three of these state-listed plants onsite and includes or helps protect all nine of the state-listed animals. The Sugar River's riparian corridor serves as a critical migration route for many species of birds and is likely important nesting ground for several imperiled species. The proposed buffer addition will serve as essential protection around Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve and the Sugar River. The recreated and restored prairies add valuable native habitat back to the landscape of Illinois. The restoration work already completed by WCFPD staff serves as a solid indicator that the site will continue to more closely resemble its former presettlement conditions. Protection of the proposed buffer addition supports the action steps identified for the prairie campaign, wetlands campaign, forests campaign, and invasive species campaign outlined in the IWAP. Dedication of this buffer addition will increase the acreage of Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve from 184.7 acres to 501.7 acres.

Mr. Heinrichs discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the dedication proposal.

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Dann, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of a buffer addition to Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve in Winnebago County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 20 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2172)

Commissioner Riddell, on behalf of the Commission, thanked Mike Groves of the WCFPD for bringing these two sites before the Commission.

210-21) Cook Co. – Markham Prairie – East Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of TNC for final approval for dedication of Markham Prairie – East (consisting of 121 lots totaling 32 acres) as an Illinois Nature Preserve. Markham Prairie - East is one of five prairies collectively referred to as the Indian Boundary Prairies located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. The other prairies include Gensburg-Markham Prairie, Sundrop Prairie, Paintbrush Prairie, and Dropseed Prairie. Of the 508.1 acres of the Indian Boundary Prairies that have been included on the INAI, 386.35 acres have been dedicated as part of the Illinois nature preserves system. Final dedication of this site will increase the amount of land included in the nature preserves system to 418.35 acres. The proposed nature preserve encompasses much, but not all of, the Markham Prairie - East INAI site (#0424). The INAI recognized grade A and B mesic prairie and grade B sedge meadow. Staff of TNC now recognize these communities as grade C mesic prairie and grade B/C wet prairie (as opposed to grade B sedge meadow) and attribute the decline in quality to intrusions to the site and, until recently, lack of management. Dedication of this site as an Illinois nature preserve is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Site Design Plan prepared for the Indian Boundary Prairies by TNC and will protect mesic prairie and wet prairie/sedge meadow that are considered conservation priorities by the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan. TNC is committed to renewed efforts to manage the site. Dedication of Markham Prairie – East also supports elements of the IWAP; specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality prairie communities. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission’s 208<sup>th</sup> Meeting in May, 2011 (Resolution 2139).

Leslee Spraggins, Executive Director of TNC, stated that Indian Boundaries was an extraordinary prairie, and they are continuing to piece it together by getting the streets that will be vacated. TNC is going to do some fundraising to start an endowment for the site.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by Covington, and carried, with Dann and Thomas abstaining, that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Markham Prairie - East in Cook County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 21 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2173)

Commissioner Riddell thanked TNC for its incredible effort over the years, as well as its partner in this, The Natural Land Institute.

210-22) Kankakee Co. – Addition to Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually Presented after Item 18)

Eric Smith presented a proposal on behalf of the IDNR for final dedication of a 77-acre addition to Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve. This acreage is part of the Leesville Savanna INAI site (#1006), which is collectively owned by the IDNR, TNC, and private landowners. In 2009 and 2010, TNC dedicated its holdings as Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve. The IDNR wishes to help complete preserve design of this site by dedicating its qualifying acreage as a nature preserve addition. The 77 acres lie within the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division, which is recognized by the IWAP as a conservation opportunity area. Leesville Savanna is included on the INAI for its grade B dry and dry-mesic sand savannas, grade B sand flatwoods, and for the presence of 12 state-listed species: yellow wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*), crowded oval sedge (*Carex cumulata*), narrow-leaved sundew (*Drosera intermedia*), northern cranesbill (*Geranium bicknellii*), old plainsman (*Hymenopappus scabiosaeus*), shore St. John's wort (*Hypericum adpressum*), another wildflower, Carey's smartweed (*Polygonum careyi*), bristly blackberry (*Rubus setosus*), eastern blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium atlanticum*), primrose violet (*Viola primulifolia*), and regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*). Ten of these state-listed species occur within the proposed addition and will provide another 77 acres of the Leesville Savanna INAI with the highest protection offered by the state of Illinois. It will also protect additional habitat for many plants and animals of conservation concern. This IDNR addition will increase the size of Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve to 155-acres and will facilitate uniform management of this important site to maintain its unique landscape character. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 209<sup>th</sup> Meeting in September, 2011 (Resolution 2139).

It was moved by Covington, seconded by Payne, and carried, with Dann and Thomas abstaining, that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of an addition to Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve in Kankakee County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 22 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2174)

Director Miller thanked the Commission for approving the final dedication for this site. He stated that this was a fitting tribute to a man who dedicated his career to conservation.

Peggy Becker thanked everyone involved in bringing this together, and she knows that Carl would be honored to have this done in his name.

210-23) Lake Co. – Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Dedication  
(Actually presented after Item 21)

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the Fields of Cambridge Homeowner's Association for final approval of dedication of 92.76 acres (25.39 acres as nature preserve and 67.37 acres as buffer) as Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve. The proposed 92.76-acre nature preserve (25.39 acres as nature preserve and 67.37 acres as buffer) is located in the

Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in east-central Lake County. The proposed nature preserve lies within the boundary of the Oak Grove Botanical Area INAI site (#0654), an unprotected matrix of 401 acres of open space that extends along the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River. This site has been recognized by the INAI as a Category II site because of the presence of a relatively large and stable population of a state-endangered and federally listed plant species. This plant species, and 96 other native plant species recorded from this site, are associated with the grade C/D sedge meadow and grade C/D wet-mesic and mesic prairies. The prairies at this site are ranked first (or highest tier) for conservation in the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan and the wetlands have been included on the ADID for Lake County in recognition of their high biological and functional value. Protection of this site is consistent with recommendations of the “*North Branch of the Chicago River Open Space (Green Infrastructure) Plan*” which identified the proposed nature preserve as a high-quality natural area and with elements of the IWAP. The site, formally known as Fields of Cambridge Sedge Meadow and Prairie, received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission’s 204<sup>th</sup> Meeting in January, 2010 (Resolution 2058).

Mr. Byers stated that the previous issue of a nearby parcel being landlocked if this site was dedicated has been resolved. The Liberty Prairie Conservancy has acquired the parcel, and it plans to present the parcel as an addition to the proposed Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve at some time in the future.

Kathy Rose, Fields of Cambridge Homeowner’s Association, thanked the Commission for its consideration of this site.

Linda Yunker, Fields of Cambridge, thanked Mr. Byers for his efforts in bringing this site before the Commission.

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow in Lake County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 23 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2175)

Vice Chair Thomas thanked all who were involved with this site.

210-24) Pulaski Co. – Hartman Spring Nature Preserve, Dedication

Scott Ballard presented a proposal on behalf of the Illinois Audubon Society for final approval of dedication of 40 acres as Hartman Spring Nature Preserve. Hartman Spring is a 40-acre site located in the western part of the Cretaceous Hills Section of the Coastal Plain Natural Division, and comprises the Britton Spring INAI site (#0022). Hartman Spring is significant because it contains high-quality habitat for a state-endangered amphibian, as well as exceptional features of a spring and spring run. Protection of the proposed Hartman Spring Nature Preserve supports action steps identified by the IWAP to preserve a state-endangered amphibian as one of Illinois'

species in greatest need of conservation and to improve natural wetland conditions by protecting acres of INAI spring and seep habitat identified by the IWAP wetlands campaign. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 209<sup>th</sup> Meeting in September, 2011 (Resolution 2156).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Hartman Spring in Pulaski County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 24 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

(Resolution 2176)

210-25) Kankakee Co. – Approval of a Single Burial Plot within Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve

Kim Roman presented a proposal to allow a single burial plot within Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve. Dr. Marianne Hahn, owner of the 121-acre Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, is in the process of finalizing her will and estate plans. Upon her death, it is her wish to be buried within Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve. While Dr. Hahn also owns adjacent acreage not encumbered by the easement, none of it is suitable for a burial plot because it is either too wet or is already developed. The proposed burial plot is situated on the perimeter of the Land and Water Reserve in a degraded dune that was formerly a vegetable garden. Dr. Hahn wishes to be buried in a simple biodegradable casket or shroud, without the use of a concrete vault or embalming. The grave will be dug by hand, six feet in depth, seeded with native prairie/savanna mix collected from the site, and marked with a glacial erratic. The proposed burial, materials (or lack thereof), and procedures are lawful within the State of Illinois and compliant with local regulations. Dr. Hahn is seeking approval of this use within the Land and Water Reserve, and staff have prepared an updated management plan which includes a single burial plot as an allowable use.

Kelly Neal presented the INPC staff recommendation, and it is attached as Exhibit D. She stated that INPC staff believe the location of a single burial plot within the Land and Water Reserve, as described, will not threaten the natural features or natural quality of the site. Staff recommends approval of the amended management plan which would allow the interment of Dr. Hahn with the stipulation that only this single burial plot be allowed.

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

The Commission grants approval for a single burial plot within Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 25 of the Agenda for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting, subject to the stipulations outlined in the staff recommendation.

(Resolution 2177)

210-26) Public Comment Period

Paul Soderholm stated that it takes money to operate the programs talked about at this meeting. He suggested that the IDNR and/or the INPC publish a list of priorities to see if there are organizations or members of the general public that would like to contribute to a project to acquire a site in need of conservation.

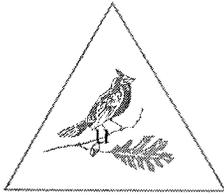
210-27) Other Business

There was no other business.

210-28) Adjournment

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Riddell, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62702  
217/785-8686



**Illinois  
Nature  
Preserves  
Commission**

# memorandum

Exhibit A

**To:** Commissioners  
**From:** Kelly Neal, Jenny Skufca, and Randy Heidorn  
**Date:** January 13, 2011  
**Subject:** Staff Report for the 210<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

## **I. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Operations:**

- A. Randy Heidorn:
  - 1. Continued to help in the preparation of the Fiscal Year 2013 budget by completing numerous budget planning assignments.
  - 2. In consultation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administration, prepared a document describing INPC, Division of Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Protection Board needs and short falls that are and will result if borrowed Natural Areas Acquisition Funds are not repaid or the revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax do not recover. This document has been distributed to Commissioners and other interested INPC partners.
  - 3. Met with Chair Rosenthal and a representative of the Grand Victoria Foundation to discuss questions on potential impacts of State budget issues on INPC operations and capacities.
- B. Staff participated in an IDNR strategic planning effort coordinated by the Management Assistance Team (MAT) of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies as follows:
  - 1. John Rogner represented INPC interests at the agency wide (Executive Staff) MAT sessions.
  - 2. John Rogner and Randy Heidorn represented INPC interests in the Office of Resource Conservation (ORC) MAT session.
  - 3. John Rogner, Randy Heidorn, Jenny Skufca, Tom Lerczak, and Mary Kay Solecki attended a pre-MAT session set up for ORC program and regional personnel to provide ideas for the MAT sessions.
  - 4. INPC staff provided input to INPC participants on increasing efficiency with limited resources in preparation for the MAT and pre-MAT sessions.
- C. Debbie Reider provided support and recorded minutes for the
  - 1. Illinois Prescribed Burn Managers Certification Board
  - 2. Illinois Habitat Fund Advisory Committee meeting
- D. Steven Byers and Kim Roman coordinated with Jenny Skufca in the transfer of INPC's Photographic Exhibition to the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Isle a la Cache Visitors Center. The exhibit has since been transferred to its Sugar Creek Administration Center for display until March, 2012. The exhibit is scheduled to be displayed at the Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center for the spring and summer of 2012.
- E. Mary Kay Solecki reviewed all protection proposals and nature preserve (NP) and land and water reserve (LWR) documents for the 210<sup>th</sup> INPC meeting. She also provided staff support concerning dedications and new procedures for registering LWRs.
- F. Tom Lerczak coordinated the FY12 INPC herbicide order. He also delivered herbicide, signs, and posts to INPC staff.

## **II. Training, Presentations, and Meetings Attended:**

- A. INPC staff submitted and compiled short stories on the results of INPC efforts. These stories will be used to market and inform the public on the value of INPC work in natural areas conservation in Illinois.
- B. Randy Heidorn and Steven Byers joined Chair Rosenthal in participating in the Vital Lands Summit. This included a special PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Byers on the proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.
- C. Kim Roman and Steven Byers participated in a refresher training on IDNR's Natural Heritage Database and using a Garmin GPS unit.
- D. Randy Heidorn and Debbie Reider successfully completed the FEMA Logistics Section Chief (LSC) Course held at the Chicago Fire Academy.
- E. Randy Heidorn:

1. Participated
  - a. As Vice President of the Natural Areas Association in Board of Directors and annual meetings and conference held in Tallahassee, Florida.
  - b. In a Board of Directors Meeting of the Illinois Prescribed Fire Council where he serves as Treasurer.
  - c. In training meetings of the Illinois Type 3 Incident Management Team.
  - d. As the LSC at a wildland fire training event held at the Illinois National Guard, Marseilles Training Center, thereby completing most of his training LSC task book.
2. Represented the INPC on the
  - a. Illinois Wildlife Action Team.
  - b. Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Board
  - c. At a discussion on recreational liability at a Prairie State Conservation Coalition meeting.
- F. Jenny Skufca attended the Illinois Department of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator training and testing.
- G. INPC staff attended anti-harassment training required for all IDNR employees.
- H. INPC staff attended meetings with IDNR Director, Marc Miller, to discuss the IDNR budget.
- I. Steven Byers:
  1. Attended Chicago Wilderness green-infrastructure planning meetings designed to provide updated information regarding the 141 resource protection areas identified in the original green infrastructure plan.
  2. Gave a presentation regarding the Chicago Wilderness at the Land Trust Alliance Rally in Milwaukee. He also represented the Friends of Hackmatack and Chicago Wilderness in “large landscape scale land protection initiatives” in North America.
  3. Provided walking tours of Oakwood Hills Fen NP and Sterne’s Fen NP, both located within the Silver Creek watershed.
  4. Represented the INPC at the
    - a. Openlands Annual Luncheon.
    - b. Lake Michigan Blueprint Workshop sponsored by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The purpose was to develop strategies for addressing threats to biodiversity in the Lake Michigan watershed.
    - c. Illinois Lake Michigan Planning conference.
- J. Kim Roman attended the Chicago Wilderness and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s annual Conservation and Native Landscaping award ceremony at the Chicago Botanic Garden. IDNR was recognized for its stewardship at Hooper Branch Savanna NP, and Commonwealth Edison was awarded for its right-of-way management adjacent to Superior Street Prairie LWR. Four other NP owners/stewards were also recognized.
- K. Angella Moorehouse:
  1. Gave a presentation and led a field trip at Stony Hills NP for the fall festival hosted by the new landowner, the Prairie Land Conservancy.
  2. Assisted the Quad Cities Prescribed Fire Alliance and Illinois Fire Service Institute instructors with the hosting of S234 Ignitions Class held at Black Hawk State Historic Site.
  3. Supervised apprenticeship burns led by resident intern, Ray Geroff, for the completion of requirements to achieve his Illinois Prescribed Burn Leader Certification. The application form for certification has been submitted.
  4. Angella Moorehouse provided information and photographs to the *Iowa Hawkeye* newspaper based in Burlington, Iowa for an article featuring the Mississippi River Sand Hills NP.
- L. Ray Geroff completed S212 Chain Saws and S234 Ignitions Training.
- M. Tom Lerczak:
  1. Attended “A Restoration Celebration,” the 10-year anniversary of the Wetlands Initiative, owner of Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep NP.
  2. Conducted a tour of Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak NP and Long Branch Sand Prairie NP with Tim Kelley for USFWS staff.
  3. Provided information on natural areas and advice on interpretation to the Havana Park District.
  4. Led a fall foliage and tree identification field trip at Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR.
- N. Mary Kay Solecki provided input to a journalist for news articles in Charleston and Champaign-Urbana newspapers on conservation values of Dolan Woods (possible addition to Warbler Woods NP).
- O. Debbie Newman:
  1. Gave a presentation on behalf of the INPC at White Rock NP dedication celebration.
  2. Gave a presentation on exotic species at a Salt Lick Point LWR volunteer day.
  3. Participated in a Southwestern IWAP Partnership Annual Meeting.

**III. Inventory and Monitoring:**

- A. Randy Heidorn (voting INPC representative) and Kelly Neal participated in the Natural Areas Evaluation Committee (NAEC) meetings. Field staff reviewed proposals that were presented to the NAEC.
- B. Kim Roman assisted with a mussel survey at Iroquois Woods NP.
- C. Angella Moorehouse and Ray Geroff participated in the Keokuk, Iowa Christmas Bird Count censusing birds within Cedar Glen NP/LWR, Mississippi River Sand Hills NP, and additional natural areas in west-central Hancock County.
- D. Ray Geroff:
  - 1. Conducted site surveillance of three Illinois Natural Area Inventory (INAI) sites enrolled in INPC programs.
  - 2. Continued a native bee research project at Harry N. Patterson Savanna LWR and Bald Bluff Hill Prairie INAI Site.
- E. Tom Lerczak:
  - 1. Monitored compliance of conservation easements or dedications at 14 sites.
  - 2. Completed a woody plant survey at Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR.
  - 3. Conducted overwintering surveys of red-headed woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and other birds at Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak NP and Walden West LWR.
- F. Mary Kay Solecki assisted INAI update staff with a site survey of Davis Hill Prairie and an addition to Craver's seep, reviewed draft letters prepared by INAI update staff to landowners, and reviewed potential new INAI sites.
- G. Debbie Newman worked with INAI update staff to visit an existing INAI site.
- H. Bob Edgin:
  - 1. Conducted site surveillance at two unprotected INAI sites, Capp Pond, Burnside Forest Culley Barrens LWR, Allison Gravel Prairie NHL, and Big Creek Woods Memorial NP.
  - 2. Completed Annual Monitoring reports for Edward V Price Woods LWR, Robeson Hills LWR, Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR, Horn Prairie Grove LWR, Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR, Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR, Padgett Brothers Sweet Gum Woods LWR, and Marjorie J Brines White Oak Woods LWR.
  - 3. Conducted vegetation sampling in permanent transects at Beadles Barrens NP to closely monitor effectiveness of restoration efforts.

**IV. Protection Program:**

- A. Staff met with landowners and managers to plan and draft protection proposals that are on the agenda of the 210<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- B. John Nelson:
  - 1. Worked with TNC staff on a draft NP proposal for Nachusa Grasslands.
  - 2. Completed a registration proposal for a private addition to Black-Crown Marsh LWR.
  - 3. Met with the owner of Earl and Olive Bothe Prairie NHL to discuss NP dedication.
  - 4. Met with landowners of a site with significant cultural resources for possible protection.
- C. Steven Byers:
  - 1. Represented the IDNR/INPC on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge feasibility study team coordinating with USFWS personnel, IDNR, and Friends of Hackmatack and providing relevant information to team regarding natural resources.
  - 2. Gave a presentation for the City of Chicago Nature & Wildlife Committee regarding land protection options and opportunities with the INPC.
  - 3. Hosted a meeting with the Tollway Authority and AECOM Corporation, and prepared a series of potential sites regarding wetland mitigation opportunities along the I-90 corridor.
  - 4. Had discussions with
    - a. Representatives of Lake Forest Open Lands, regarding protection of land adjacent to Skokie River NP.
    - b. McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) staff regarding final dedication of HUM Railroad Prairie East and the four sites that received preliminary approval for dedication. Prepared a draft instrument of dedication for HUM Railroad Prairie East and addressed issues raised by MCCD staff.
    - c. Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) staff regarding final dedication of a portion of Lakewood Forest Preserve as McLean Woods and Wetlands NP.
    - d. Liberty Prairie Conservancy staff, an INPC Commissioner, and Bill Kurtis regarding protection of land located adjacent to Grainger Woods NP.

5. Participated in
  - a. IDNR internal discussions regarding the Millennium Reserve; a concept for land protection/stewardship/development in the Lake Calumet region.
  - b. Watershed planning efforts for the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow watersheds.
- D. Kim Roman:
  1. Met with a Kankakee Sands area private landowner to discuss protection and management of his property.
  2. Participated in the Lower Fox River Stakeholder Committee meetings and served as a technical advisor to the group. This group was organized by The Conservation Foundation, and it is using the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) to promote conservation efforts in the Lower Fox River Conservation Opportunity Area.
- E. Angella Moorehouse:
  1. Assisted the Prairie River Network in the completion of a draft plan for the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Opportunity Area and gave five presentations on it including to the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team in Springfield.
  2. Renewed contacts with landowners of five unprotected natural areas or areas for potential LWRs, NPs, or conservation easements.
  3. Maintained contact with the landowners of 28 sites enrolled in INPC programs.
- F. Tom Lerczak:
  1. Established landowner contacts for 18 natural areas, NPs, LWRs, or NHLs.
  2. Worked on a LWR proposal for Independence Park Woods.
  3. Attended a land auction for property containing Matanzas Sand Prairie NHL.
- G. Mary Kay Solecki met with the owner of land within the Salt Fork of the Vermilion River INAI site and adjacent to Larimore's Salt Fork of the Vermilion River LWR to discuss INPC's protection programs/ecological values of the River. She also followed up with letter, protection guidelines, and rare species information.
- H. Bob Edgin contacted owners of five unprotected sites to discuss protection options.

#### **I. Land Acquisition:**

- A. Mary Kay Solecki assisted the Grand Prairie Friends with grant applications to fund acquisition of Dolan Woods which is adjacent to Warbler Woods NP.
- B. Steven Byers attended a Brewster Creek Circle Homeowners Association meeting and others meetings hosted by the Village of Wayne regarding the conveyance of Brewster Creek Fen NP by its current owner to the Village.

#### **II. Defense Program:**

- A. Jenny Skufca:
  1. Responded to three reviews for IDNR's Comprehensive Environmental Review Program (CERP) and eight reviews for IDNR's consultation program.
  2. Prepared three Class III Special Resource Groundwater petitions to be submitted to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) for review. The INPC sites included in this round of petitions are Searls Park Prairie NP, Sand Ridge NP, and Yonder Prairie NP.
  3. Facilitated mapping of boundary interface and identification of recorded easement areas with electric cooperatives related to vegetative management to locate any areas of concern.
  4. Submitted a letter to the Lee County Zoning Office regarding INPC protocols for reviewing wind projects near INPC sites, including recommendations for setback distances to ensure no adverse impacts.
  5. With IEPA and IDNR's Contaminant Assessment Section staff, reviewed the Remedial Objectives Report and Remedial Action Plan related to the crude oil pipeline break and subsequent clean-up at Romeoville Prairie NP.
  6. Continued work with IDNR's IT staff toward development of a defense database aligned with INPC's site database – currently populating database with defense issues and designing reports.
  7. Participated in document review and meetings with USFWS and IDNR staff regarding development of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly as it relates to groundwater impacts to INPC sites in the HCP area.
- B. Tom Lerczak, Mary Kay Solecki, Bob Edgin, Stephanie Ervin, and Jenny Skufca met to discuss prioritization, protocol, limitations, and reporting on INPC easement monitoring. The next step will be the formation of a Real Estate Monitoring Committee, per recommendation from the INPC Task Force.

- C. Angella Moorehouse worked with David Holman on legal description/boundary discrepancies at Black Hawk Forest NP, Singing Woods NP, Cedar Glen NP, Stony Hills NP, and Thistle Hills LWR.
- D. Ray Geroff posted boundary signs along utility/road rights-of-ways at two sites in McDonough County, Nenawakwa LWR and Short Fork Seep NP.
- E. Tom Lerczak:
1. Reviewed information and provided comments for the IDNR consultation process related to an ADM facility and Bois du Sangamon NP.
  2. Photo documented the northern boundary of Charles “Chinee” Colvin Sand Prairie LWR, along Stock Lane for future negotiations related to a proposed railroad crossing upgrade.
  3. Reviewed and provided comments for a draft erosion control plan for the Sheridan Road bridge replacement at Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR.
- F. Mary Kay Solecki advised a township road commissioner in Champaign County on an altering mowing regime to minimize negative impacts to state-endangered Sangamon phlox (*Phlox pilosa*) along roadsides in his township with assistance from owner of Smith’s House NHL. This NHL adjoins a township road.
- G. Bob Edgin:
1. Reported theft of boundary signs at Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR to the Illinois Audubon Society and Conservation Police officers. A formal report was filed with the Conservation Police and the investigation is continuing. In April 2011, signs on the north boundary of the LWR were stolen, and two short, unauthorized trails were mowed in the LWR.
  2. Recommended removal of one site from the NHL Program. The landowner who originally enrolled the property passed away, and the heir who inherited the property plowed up the prairie restorations.
- H. Threats to Sites within INPC programs:
1. **Bluff Spring Fen NP, Cook County – Steven Byers, John Nelson, Jenny Skufca**
    - a. Issue: Salt storage. Up to 50,000 tons of road de-icing salt was being stored on property owned by Bluff City Materials and located immediately south of Bluff Spring Fen NP.
    - b. Threat: At concentrations above 45 mg/L, chlorides (salt) are a known pollutant that can alter the chemical composition of groundwater that sustains fen wetland systems and are documented to promote a shift from a diverse assemblage of plants to monotypic stands of salt-tolerant plants.
    - c. Status: Resolved. The Office of the Attorney General filed a Consent Order in the Circuit Court of Cook County requiring a civil penalty, continued monitoring of groundwater, and the ceasing of all salt storage activities.
  2. **Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid NP, Lake County – Steven Byers**
    - a. Issue: The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) intends to widen Route 22. The proposal for dedication of this site provided for this construction. Plans include construction of a berm in order to reduce the width of the road project.
    - b. Threat: Indirect threat posed by sedimentation and subsequent increase in reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), which threatens the long-term viability of a federally-threatened plant.
    - c. Status: Ongoing. IDOT continues work toward acquisition of the property. INPC staff are coordinating with Long Grove Park District and IDOT on a management plan to provide long-term stewardship of the site.
  3. **Middlefork Savanna NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
    - a. Issue: Adjacent landowner, Knollwood Golf Club, dredged a golf course pond and piped sediment into the NP owned by the LCFPD.
    - b. Threat: Direct and indirect impact to aquatic resources/ephemeral ponds in the NP and at Knollwood Club. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined wetlands are “jurisdictional.”
    - c. Status: Ongoing. INPC staff has reviewed and provided comments on a Complaint drafted by the Office of the Attorney General.
  4. **Elm Road Woods NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
    - a. Issue: A large sports complex that will require extensive earth-moving is being built upstream and adjacent to the NP owned by LCFPD.
    - b. Threat: The site is vulnerable to changes in surface hydrology and sedimentation associated with the project.
    - c. Status: Resolved. LCFPD staff continues to monitor this project for compliance with recommendations for erosion/sediment control following initial reports of sediment entering the NP. INPC and LCFPD staff have been satisfied with compliance thus far.
  5. **Bliss Woods NP, Kane County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**

- a. Issue: An unknown amount of lead shot has been deposited in the NP by years of trap/skeet shooting at the nearby Aurora Sportsman's Club.
  - b. Threat: Lead shot poses a threat to humans and the environment.
  - c. Status: Ongoing. INPC staff is working with the NP landowner, Forest Preserve District of Kane County, to minimize impact to the NP. Limited information is available due to pending litigation. On recommendation from IDNR Contaminant Assessment staff, the INPC has notified the IEPA that the full nature and extent of potential contamination has not been assessed.
6. **Truitt-Hoff NP, DuPage County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
- a. Issue: The City of West Chicago Community Development/Zoning Review is currently considering a variance that would allow for construction of a 132-foot-tall lighted tower within a close and unobstructed view of the prairie. The NP is co-owned by the City of West Chicago and the FPDDC. The FPDDC has requested this variance be denied.
  - b. Threat: The lighted tower represents a source of light pollution, threat to wildlife, and will impair the aesthetics of the site.
  - c. Status: On going. INPC staff provided stipulations to IDNR Consultation related to protection of the prairie from any adverse impact. INPC comments related to shading of the prairie potentially changing ecological conditions were also provided directly to the FPDDC.
7. **Almon Underwood Prairie NP, Kane County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
- a. Issue: A proposed landscape composting facility was sited adjacent to the NP owned by the Forest Preserve District of Kane County (FPDKC).
  - b. Threat: The proposed facility could introduce weed seeds/other contaminants into the NP and also poses a threat to the ability of the landowner to conduct controlled burns.
  - c. Status: New. INPC staff met with the FPDKC, Kane County planning, and a consultant to express concerns and to suggest alternative sites for the facility.
8. **Spring Bluff NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
- a. Issue: IDNR has a 24-foot-wide easement through the NP, owned by LCFPD, to support public park purposes at North Point Marina.
  - b. Threat: The 24-foot-wide easement (with asphalt surface), and its use by vehicles, represents an intrusion into the NP.
  - c. Status: Resolved. INPC staff met with IDNR/North Point Marina staff and LCFPD staff to review opportunities to reduce intrusion, provide for emergency access, and increase visitor use of the site. The LCFPD proposed to remove the asphalt, provide a 14-foot-wide gravel-based trail to support emergency vehicles, assume maintenance of the trail, and provide amenities to increase visitor appreciation and understanding of site (elevated platform, signage, and trail improvements). Both short-term and long-term plans are being discussed.
9. **Lyons Prairie and Marsh NP, Lake and McHenry counties – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
- a. Issue: The NP, owned by the MCCD is suffering from shore-line erosion associated with higher water levels and boat traffic on the Fox River.
  - b. Threat: Continued shore-line erosion will increase vulnerability of existing wetlands (and wetland-related wildlife) to habitat loss and disturbance. Continued shore-line erosion also poses difficulty with unregulated access via backwaters (bay) into the NP by boaters.
  - c. Status: New. INPC staff met with the staff of the MCCD and a representative of Fox Waterway Agency to review options. The INPC has urged the development of a comprehensive plan (with shoreline armoring) to reduce shoreline erosion that is consistent with permitting requirements of the IDNR and other resource agencies.
10. **Tallmadge Sand Forest LWR, Kankakee County – Kim Roman, Jenny Skufca**
- a. Issue: 88 white oak trees were removed from within the LWR.
  - b. Threat: Direct impact to LWR. Unauthorized removal of trees, over 4,000 feet of up to 18-inch ruts were created throughout the interior of the LWR, and signs were removed.
  - c. Status: Ongoing. The IDNR Office of Legal Counsel continues to work with the Office of the Attorney General on this case.
11. **Nenawakwa LWR, McDonough County – Angella Moorehouse, Jenny Skufca**
- a. Issue: The landowner discovered a grading encroachment within the LWR.
  - b. Threat: Unauthorized intrusion into the LWR, including tire ruts and large graded area leading to the neighbor's property.

- c. Status: Resolved. The McDonough County State's Attorney's Office has informed the INPC that a settlement has been reached, and the LWR landowner will receive a negotiated restitution.
- 12. **Short Fork Seep NP, McDonough County – Angella Moorehouse, Jenny Skufca**
  - a. Issue: The landowner discovered that herbicide had been used within the NP associated with power line vegetative maintenance.
  - b. Threat: Direct impact to flora in the NP causing damage to the vegetation and soils within the high quality portion of seep/sedge meadow of the NP.
  - c. Status: Ongoing. The Office of the Attorney General has filed a Complaint for Injunctive and Other Relief in the Circuit Court for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, McDonough County.
- 13. **Fall Creek Gorge LWR, Adams County – Angella Moorehouse**
  - a. Issue: Unauthorized and potentially dangerous use of the LWR owned by the IDNR.
  - b. Threat: Although officially closed (gate across the road), the area encompassing the gorge and significant features of the LWR is accessible from a county highway which cuts through the LWR. Visitors to the site have cut the fence, dammed up the stream, and installed a swing to use at the newly created "swimming hole." There is evidence of drug use (needles, meth-making supplies) on the LWR.
  - c. Status: Resolved. IDNR site staff recognizes issues and has agreed to assist in the removal of the dam and clean up of the area.
- 14. **Rocky Branch NP, Clark County – Mary Kay Solecki, Jenny Skufca**
  - a. Issue: Chronic, unauthorized use of this rural NP by horseback riders and ATVs.
  - b. Threat: Potential direct impacts to flora, fauna, soil, and water of the NP.
  - c. Status: Ongoing. Although staff of the INPC and the landowner, Eastern Illinois University Foundation, has no information regarding perpetrators, all parties have agreed to increase vigilance. Conservation Police have been made aware of our concerns and will assist with surveillance.
- 15. **Stemler Cave NP, St. Clair County – Debbie Newman, Jenny Skufca**
  - a. Issue: Inaccessibility and vegetative management concerns related to a power line located across the top of the NP sinkhole and cave entrance.
  - b. Threat: Vegetative management could adversely impact the NP and present a safety hazard for the electric cooperative.
  - c. Status: Resolved. Monroe County Electric Cooperative has obtained the necessary easements to move the power line and poles along the road and out of the NP. The Cooperative has amended their easement with the NP landowners to exclude any areas within the NP boundaries. The Cooperative and the NP landowners are now determining the least intrusive manner for abandonment or removal of one pole within the boundary of the NP.

## VII. Stewardship Program:

- A. Kelly Neal participated in document review and meeting with USFWS staff regarding development of an HCP for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly as it relates to stewardship planning and mitigation at INPC sites in the HCP area.
- B. Kelly Neal, Steven Byers, and Kim Roman attended the annual Volunteer Stewardship Network (VSN) Meeting for volunteers and partners in northeastern Illinois. Ms. Neal, Angella Moorehouse and Mary Kay Solecki attended the annual VSN meeting in central Illinois.
- C. Steven Byers and Kim Roman attended the first annual meeting of the Northeastern Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership at the Morton Arboretum.
- D. Debbie Reider served as the LSC on an IDNR incident management team for the recent Asian Carp management effort related to the maintenance of the electrical barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.
- E. Debbie Newman:
  - a. Distributed herbicide license renewal to eight volunteers.
  - b. Attended a Salt Lick Point Committee meeting for volunteers at Salt Lick Point LWR.
- F. Stewardship Planning:
  - 1. Kelly Neal:
    - a. Reviewed nine management schedules, six unscheduled management activities, and five management related CERPs at INPC sites.
    - b. Participated in meetings with IDNR ORC staff and Office of Strategic Services to plan for an electronic ORC permit management system which would include INPC permitting.
  - 2. John Nelson met with the owner of Wirth Prairie NP to discuss management issues.

3. Steven Byers:
  - a. Submitted a letter in support of a Chicago Wilderness grant application to prepare an oak ecosystem recovery plan for northeastern Illinois.
  - b. Assisted with the execution of an INPC MOU and prepared a five-year management plan and management goal statement with Liberty Prairie Conservancy and USFWS for the proposed Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow NP. Submitted a letter of support for stewardship need and participated in site visit at this site with Illinois Clean Energy Family Foundation.
  - c. Conducted a site visit with the landowner at Maunk-Sook Sedge Meadow and Savanna LWR to develop a management plan.
4. Kim Roman:
  - a. Participated in a meeting with the Forest Preserve District of Will County and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding a Section 206 (aquatic restoration) project at Lockport Prairie NP and Prairie Bluff (recharge zone to Lockport Prairie NP).
  - b. Reviewed IDOT's planned herbicide spraying of its road rights-of-way in the Chicago area district, and coordinated response/approval from the various landowners of NPs and INAI sites.
5. Angella Moorehouse coordinated with the Interstate Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D), Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District, IDNR, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, and Augustana College on the U.S. Forest Service Hazardous Fuel Mitigation Grant to reduce heavy fuel loads, control exotics, and implement prescribed burns at Black Hawk Forest NP and Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP. Prepared an application for a grant for Phase 2 of this project.
6. Ray Geroff and Angella Moorehouse:
  - a. Completed new burn permit applications for three sites enrolled in INPC programs.
  - b. Completed plan revisions for four IDNR-owned sites: Fall Creek Gorge LWR, Cecil White Prairie LWR, Robert A. Evers LWR, and Burton Cave NP.
7. Tom Lerczak attended a meeting of the Friends of McNaughton Park to discuss trail mowing at Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR.
8. Mary Kay Solecki:
  - a. Met with a volunteer steward, owners and/or managers of the following sites plan stewardship activities at Horseshoe Bottom NP and Doris Westfall Prairie Restoration NP, Barnhart Prairie Restoration NP, Upper Embarrass Woods NP, Rocky Branch NP, River Bend LWR and Tomlinson Pioneer Cemetery Prairie NP.
  - b. Coordinated installation of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*) box in a barn adjacent to Barnhart Restoration Prairie NP
  - c. Continued coordinating the boundary survey for the Georgetown addition to Little Vermilion River LWR.
9. Debbie Newman:
  - a. Worked with Hannah Kalk, IDNR resident intern, to update and seek approval for existing management plans and prepare new management plans for several NPs and LWRs.
  - b. Took an IDNR Natural Areas Project Manager on a tour of a bluff corridor to discuss stewardship issues.
10. Bob Edgin:
  - a. Served on an ecological restoration team for a super fund mitigation site in Lawrence County.
  - b. Updated three-year management schedules for Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR, Horn Prairie Grove LWR, and Marjorie J. Brines White Oak Woods LWR.
  - c. Contacted owners of 11 protected sites to discuss management issues.
- G. Stewardship project implementation: Staff continued to coordinate and administer stewardship projects, including the Hill Prairie Project, funded by the Landowners Incentive Program (LIP), State Wildlife Grant (SWG), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), an IEPA 319 Grant, the NAAF, Chicago Wilderness Grants and INPC operations fund. These projects involve meeting with landowners, securing landowner agreements, preparing of grant applications, preparing bid packages, supervising contractors, and assisting in conducting restoration activities. Contractor work included prairie reconstruction and seed purchase, exotics and woody species control, dump cleanup, erosion control, boundary survey, fence construction, sign posting, prescribed burn site preparation, and burn crews. Sites where this kind of work occurred include:
  1. Area 2 (Byers): Nine MCCD wetland basins.
  2. Area 3 (Roman): Mskoda LWR, Des Plaines Dolomite Prairie LWR and Messenger Woods NP.

3. Area 4 (Moorehouse): Robert A. Evers LWR, Cedar Glen NP, Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP, Short Fork Seep NP, Elton E. Fawks Bald Eagle Refuge NP, and two sites within the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Opportunity Area.
  4. Area 4 (Moorehouse and Geroff): Nenawakwa LWR, Stony Hills NP, and Black Hawk Forest NP.
  5. Area 5 (Lerczak): Several projects under the Hill Prairie SWG.
  6. Area 6 (Solecki): Woodyard Memorial Conservation Area LWR, Baber Woods NP,
  7. Area 7 (Newman): Eight sites.
  8. Area 8 (Edgin): Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR and P & E Refuge LWR.
- H. Land management conducted by staff includes site surveillance, prairie reconstruction and seed purchase, exotics and woody species control, dump cleanup, erosion control, boundary survey, fence construction, sign posting, coordinating and working with volunteers, prescribed burn site preparation, and participating in or leading prescribed burns. Sites where this kind of work occurred and additional management related activities include:
1. Area 1 (Nelson): Harlem Hills NP, Pine Rock NP, Boone Creek Fen NP, Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow NP, Freeport Prairie NP, and Wilson Prairie NP. Prescribed burns at Black-Crown Marsh LWR, Illinois Beach NP and State Park, Harlem Hills NP, Pistakee Bog NP, Volo Bog NP, and Moraine Hills State Park,
  2. Area 2 (Byers): Illinois Beach NP and State Park (burn), Wolf Road Prairie NP, and Queen Anne Cemetery Prairie NHL.
  3. Area 3 (Roman): Des Plaines Dolomite Prairie LWR, Superior St. Prairie LWR, Butterfield Creek Headwaters LWR, Sweet Fern Savanna LWR, Grant Creek Prairie NP, Hildy Prairie NP, Goose Lake Prairie NP, Wolf Road Prairie NP, Bonnie's Prairie NP, Old Plank Road Prairie NP, Millhurst Fen NP, Wilmington Shrub Prairie NP, and Long Run Seep NP. Prescribed burns at Harlem Hills NP and Grant Creek Prairie NP.
  4. Area 4 (Moorehouse): Prescribed burns at Stony Hills NP, Black Hawk Forest NP, and Cedar Glen NP.
  5. Area 4 (Geroff): Assisted with four prescribed burns and helped with mop-up for the wildfire at Pere Marquette State Park.
  6. Area 5 (Lerczak): Tomlin Timber NP.
  7. Area 6 (Solecki): Larimore's Salt Fork of the Vermilion River LWR, Monticello's Sangamon River LWR, Woodyard Memorial Conservation Area LWR, Doris Westfall Prairie Restoration NP, Fairchild Cemetery Prairie/Savanna NP, and Loda Cemetery Prairie NP.
  8. Area 7 (Newman): Salt Lick Point LWR, Katelyn's Woods LWR, Prairie of the Rock Overlook LWR, and White Rock NP (management and burn). Conducted exotics work at two additional LWRs and one NP.
  9. Area 8 (Edgin): Horn Prairie Grove LWR, P& E Refuge LWR, Lost Creek Marsh LWR, and Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR, Robeson Hills NP, Emma Vance Woods NP, and Green Prairie NHL. Prescribed burns at Robert Ridgway Grasslands NP and led or assisted on 12 burns totaling 194 acres at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area LWR in Jasper County.

**Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
report to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission  
at the 210<sup>th</sup> meeting, January 24, 2012**

**Illinois Natural Areas Inventory**

The 58<sup>th</sup> Natural Areas Evaluation Committee (NAEC) meeting was held in December. Actions taken at the meeting resulted in the addition of two Category I (high quality natural community) sites containing a grade B mesic prairie and a grade B glacial drift hill prairie and associated “best of kind” woodland community and one Category VI site for the presence of high mussel diversity being added to the INAI. With the potential of many sites needing NAEC action as a result of the completion of the INAI Update, there will be 8 NAEC meetings in 2012.

The INAI Update is winding down. The field coordinator Randy Nyboer and regional ecologist Chris Benda will continue to work on the project till the end of January. Chris is working on a couple of complicated sites in southern Illinois and Randy is finalizing the field data QA/QC on 77 sites resulting from the 2011 field season. Tari Tweddale from the Natural History Survey will continue to process the digital data and generate nomination packets for the foreseeable future. Nomination packets for 36 sites are being reviewed by DNR and NPC field staff. Another 41 sites should be available for field review soon and the remaining 77 sites from the 2011 field season should be available in the next couple of months. Nomination packets for qualifying sites will then be sent to the appropriate Natural Heritage Biologist for formal nomination. While they have no direct involvement in the NAEC as voting members, the NAPS will also be given the nomination packets during the nomination evaluation process for comments. The review of these nominations represents a significant commitment from the field staff.

The Category I (high quality natural community) re-check that was paid for by the Grand Victoria Foundation and others is also winding down as the contract has expired. The IDNR should be getting a final report on that project relatively quickly and will make that available when we do.

**Prescribed burning**

Prescribed burning has started up again at DNR preserves and reserves. 15 burns have already been conducted at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area.

**Wildlife Preservation Fund**

The Wildlife Preservation Fund check off will be included on the Illinois Income Tax form again this year. Taxpayers donated about \$150,000 last year and about the same is expected this year. We anticipate using the funds to conduct endangered species surveys, purchase grass and forb seed for prairie restorations and provide matching funds to any group interested in having the INAI completed in their county or region.

**Natural Heritage Resident Interns**

There won't be a resident intern program in 2012 due to the tight budget. The resident intern is a one-year, paid, full-time position with DNR where students working on a Masters degree in biology gain work experience by assisting Natural Heritage Biologists or Nature Preserves Commission Preservation Specialists in the field. There have been more than 60 resident interns since the program began in 1993. The intern program is

funded by the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund.

**Smartphone App**

The natural areas program, in conjunction with IDNR's education section, continues to investigate the potential of a Smartphone application that would; facilitate learning about various aspects of identification, protection, stewardship and defense of natural areas and create a mobile natural areas community that can be further engaged by the DNR to generate support for and spread the word to assist in natural areas protection, stewardship and defense as well as disseminate information relevant to the Department's mission with a primary emphasis on education and natural areas issues. We are developing a list of desired features and potential application developers in anticipation of a future contract. It is thought that Goose Lake Prairie would provide a good site to use to develop an application template.



**ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES  
PROTECTION BOARD**

*One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Illinois 62702 - 1271, (217) 785-8687; FAX (217) 785-2438*

**Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board report  
for the January 24, 2012 Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting**

Submitted by Anne Mankowski, Director

The Board held its 152<sup>nd</sup> meeting on November 18, 2011. Board actions from that meeting and other activities since the INPC's last meeting in September 2011, included:

**1. Preparation for the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species Review and Revision ending in 2014**

The Board has begun work on the next review of the List; the process usually takes about two years. The Board is required by law to base its listing decisions on scientific evidence. Ms. Mankowski is currently compiling species information that will be used by the Board and is reestablishing the technical advisory committees that assist the Board in the review of species status and distribution and making listing recommendations.

**2. Work on the ESPB 2012 Biennial Report and 40 Years of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act Publication**

2012 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act. As per Board discussion at the ESPB 150th meeting held May 13, 2011, Ms. Mankowski is working on information for a 40-year review of accomplishments and challenges relative to provisions and requirements of the Endangered Species Protection Act. Depending on the length and complexity of the document it will either be incorporated into the ESPB 2012 Biennial Report or produced as a stand-alone document.

**3. ESPB Webpage Maintenance**

Working with IDNR webmasters, Ms. Mankowski continues updating the ESPB webpage on the IDNR website in response to user requests and inquiries for information. The Board's webpage serves as the primary resource for ESPB and IDNR administered endangered and threatened species programs and many updates have been to provide users easier access to forms and program staff contact information. The ESPB webpage enjoys a great deal of user activity, demonstrating a significant public interest in endangered and threatened species – during a recent 21-day period, the ESPB webpage was visited by a total of 1,093 unique visitors, with a one-day high of 76 unique visitors, a daily average of 52 unique visitors and a weekday average of 58 unique visitors.

**4. Meetings**

Ms. Mankowski participates in IDNR ORC twice-monthly and Natural Heritage monthly administrative meetings.

Ms. Mankowski participated in the 58<sup>th</sup> Natural Areas Evaluation Committee (NAEC) meeting held at IDNR headquarters December 6, 2011. The ESPB is a voting member of the NAEC. The meeting included combined approval of one new Category I (high-quality community) site and one new Category VI (unusual concentration of flora and fauna) site.

Ms. Mankowski attended the 2011 USFWS Region 3 Threatened and Endangered Species Coordinators' meeting from October 3 – 6 in South Haven, Michigan. The meeting brings together endangered and threatened species staff from the USFWS and the eight states within the region. Agenda items included

annual reports from each program and discussions about evaluating species endangerment, planning for and evaluating the potential for vulnerability of species and habitats to the effects of climate change, updates to USFWS/State Cooperative Agreements, annual budgets, and potential funding and grant opportunities.

Ms. Mankowski attended the November 15, 2011 meeting for planning related to Project Passenger Pigeon at the Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago. Project Passenger Pigeon is an international effort to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the extinction of the species and to use it not only as an opportunity to familiarize people with this remarkable species, but also to raise awareness of current issues related to human-caused extinction, explore connections between humans and the natural world, and inspire people to become more involved in building a sustainable relationship with other species.

Ms. Mankowski attended the November 16, 2011 meeting of Illinois Wildlife Action Team held at IDNR headquarters. The Board is a member of the team.

### **5. Coordination with IDNR and INPC:**

Ms. Mankowski coordinated with the Endangered Species Program and Div. of Wildlife ORC, Impact Assessment Section OREP, Office of Land Management, Office of Law Enforcement, Office of Legal Counsel, Office of Public Services, Media Relations, and Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, on multiple matters, including:

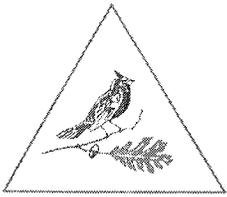
- Met with IDNR ORC Director, Jim Herkert, to review ESPB/IDNR coordination of endangered and threatened species work.
- Met with and provided assistance to IDNR Office of Legal Counsel in reviewing the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act and the administrative rules that support it as they relate to various endangered and threatened species issues.
- Met with IDNR Legal Counsel and Natural Heritage staff and INPC staff to discuss a project involving the proposed relocation of an Illinois-threatened plant.
- Provided recommendations to IDNR regarding issues related to authorizations for incidental taking of endangered and threatened species and permits for possession of specimens or products of endangered or threatened species.
- Continued project management of the Illinois Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) recovery project. A report of 1<sup>st</sup> year accomplishments will be posted on the ESPB webpage.
- Continued project management for the development of a Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) recovery plan.
- Provided review, comments, and questions to IDNR on one draft incidental take authorization: Dresden Island Hydroelectric Project, Grundy County involving the Greater Redhorse (*Moxostoma valenciennesi*), River Redhorse (*Moxostoma carinatum*), and Pallid Shiner (*Mybopsis amnis*).
- Fielded and referred 23 requests to IDNR for E&T consultation, incidental take, data, permits, etc.
- Directly responded to 80 requests for ESPB and E&T information from the public and other state and federal agencies.

### **6. Coordination with other Agencies**

Ms. Mankowski provided information about the listing process for endangered and threatened species and species status and reference information to Illinois Natural History Survey staff working on contract to update the list of fish species in greatest need of conservation for the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.

### **7. 153<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board**

The 153<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board will be at 10:00 A.M. on February 17, 2012 at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.



# memorandum

Exhibit D

To: Commissioners  
From: Kelly Neal, Jenny Skufca, Randy Heidorn  
Date: January 6, 2012  
Subject: INPC Staff Recommendation Regarding Item 25 - Proposal to allow a single burial plot for the landowner within Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve.

**Background:**

Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve was registered on August 20, 2001, as the 60<sup>th</sup> Illinois land and water reserve. The 122.91-acre Land and Water Reserve, owned by Dr. Marianne Hahn (108.21 acres) and The Nature Conservancy (14.7 acres), has been recognized on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (#1581) for its high-quality dry-mesic sand savanna and for the habitat it provides for at least 14 state-threatened or endangered plants and the state-threatened regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*) and a reptile. Sweet Fern Savanna lies within the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois.

Dr. Hahn is in the process of finalizing her will and estate plans, and it is her wish to be buried within Sweet Fern Savanna Land & Water Reserve.

**Proposal:**

In 2002, Dr. Hahn registered 62.2 acres of Sweet Fern Savanna as an Illinois land & water reserve. The original registration excluded approximately two acres of land owned by Dr. Hahn for potential future use. As Dr. Hahn purchased additional acreage adjacent to the original land and water reserve boundaries, she registered them as additions primarily for their buffering capacity. At the time of registration of the original land and water reserve and its subsequent additions, Dr. Hahn had not considered her interment as a use for the site.

The two acres which were omitted from the registration agreement are potentially suitable for development, but are undesirable for a burial plot. The small area which is well above the water table is currently a driveway and parking area with old concrete pads for trailer homes and a septic field. Location of a burial plot in the area outside Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve boundaries would involve considerable earth-moving and re-location of a driveway and parking area. This is a much more invasive and costly option than allowing for a single burial plot within the Land and Water Reserve.

The proposed location of the burial plot is a former vegetable garden from an old homestead and is immediately south of the existing parking area. This location is not a high-quality natural community. It is Dr. Hahn's wish to be buried in a simple biodegradable casket or shroud, without

the use of a concrete vault or embalming. The grave will be dug by hand, six feet in depth, seeded with native prairie/savanna mix collected from the site, and marked with a glacial erratic. The proposed burial, materials (or lack thereof), and procedures are lawful within the State of Illinois and compliant with local regulations. Dr. Hahn has registered her property with the Illinois Comptroller's Office as a Family Burial Ground, pursuant to Section 8 of the Illinois Cemetery Care Act (No. 0460023).

Location of the proposed plot would cause much less disturbance to the site than re-locating the parking area and driveway. There would be minimal short-term impact to the site, and no high-quality natural communities or listed species would be affected. The location of the single burial plot would not affect the burn regime or other management activities of the site. Approval of a single burial plot for the landowner does not imply the site would be used for additional burials on site.

### **Legal Authorities and Responsibilities**

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission has the authority to approve such an action. With regard to cemeteries, the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act prohibits new interment (without a prior right) only after a site has been dedicated as a nature preserve (this rule does not apply to registered areas). The Register of Land and Water Reserves, 17 Il Admin. Code Ch. V Section 4010 does not specifically address cemeteries or interments. It states "mineral exploration, mining, or other mineral extraction, or earth moving is not allowed on registered areas unless mineral rights are excluded from the registration agreement or moving or removal of the material is part of a restoration plan included in the management program" (Section 4010.240). However, Section 4010.270 reads "Management and uses not otherwise allowed by this Part may be specifically approved by the Department and the Commission where the management or use is consistent with the management program...". Additionally, Section 4010.210 states, "A management program, as provided for in Section 4010.220, may allow for deviations from this Part if the deviations do not threaten the natural features or natural quality of the area."

### **Analysis:**

While Dr. Hahn does own two acres that are not currently registered as a land and water reserve, this property is not suitable for burial due to the existence of a septic field. Alternative locations on this property are covered by concrete. Removal of this concrete would cause significantly more ground disturbance and erosion than would be required for standard grave dimensions.

An updated management schedule has been prepared to include the single burial plot as proposed. The proposed location for burial within the Land and Water Reserve historically was used as a garden in which frequent ground disturbances have already occurred. The natural communities in this natural area have sand-based soils and have recovered from periodic ground disturbances. Many plant species specific to sand savanna habitats are disturbance dependent. After burial, the grave would be seeded with native species collected from within Sweet Fern Savanna.

### **Recommendation:**

Dr. Hahn has worked diligently to acquire, protect, steward, and restore high-quality natural areas in the Kankakee Sand Area. Her wish to be interred on her own property that she has tirelessly dedicated herself to seems fitting.

INPC staff believe the location of a single burial plot within the Land and Water Reserve, as described, will not threaten the natural features or natural quality of Sweet Fern Savanna. Staff recommends approval of the amended management plan which allows the interment of Dr. Hahn with the stipulation that only this single burial plot be allowed.