

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

Minutes of the 211th Meeting

May 8, 2012

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Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
Minutes of the 211th Meeting
(Approved at the 212th Meeting)

Jarrett Prairie Center
7993 North River Road
Byron, Illinois 61010

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

211-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

At 9:10 a.m., pursuant to the Call to Order of Chair Rosenthal, the meeting began.

Randy Heidorn read the roll call.

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

Members absent: Mare Payne.

Others present: Steven Byers, Bob Edgin, Randy Heidorn, Tom Lerczak, Angella Moorehouse, Kelly Neal, John Nelson, Debbie Newman, Debbie Reider, Kim Roman, Jenny Skufca, and Mary Kay Solecki, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); John Rogner, Assistant Director, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Roger Jansen, Bob Lindsay, Don McFall, Jody Shimp, Penny Snyder, Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), IDNR; Chris Kirkpatrick, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JDCF), representing the proposed Eagles Nest Land and Water Reserve; Bob Blackwell and Tom Elliott, Pekin Park District, representing the proposed Independence Park Woods Land and Water Reserve; Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang, representing the proposed buffer addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve; 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 West Chicago Prairie buffer addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve; Jim Anderson, Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD), representing the proposed McLean Woods and Wetlands Nature Preserve; Elizabeth Kessler and Val Silver, McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD), representing the proposed addition and buffer addition to Barber Fen Nature Preserve, buffer addition to Bystricky Prairie Nature Preserve, and addition to Lind Forest Nature Preserve; Mike Groves and Tom Hartley, 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; Tracy Boutelle Fidler and Heidi Rantala, Cache River Restoration; Russell Heinrichs, and Paul and Carol Soderholm.

Chair Rosenthal thanked the Byron Forest Preserve District for hosting the meeting.

211-2) Adoption of Agenda

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

211-3) Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes, January 23, 2012, and the 210th Meeting Minutes, January 24, 2012

It was moved by Dann, seconded by Clark, and carried that the Special Meeting Minutes, January 23, 2012, and the 210th Meeting Minutes, January 24, 2012, be approved.

Chair Rosenthal reported that at the 210th Meeting of the INPC, held on January 24, 2012, at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Headquarters, Springfield, legal protection was completed by the Commission for six tracts of land totaling 558.47 acres. 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 \$3,196,750 based on conservative estimates of the fair market value of the land. Private lands protected without state acquisition at INPC's 210th Meeting were Markham Prairie East Nature Preserve, Cook County; Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Lake County; and Hartman Spring Nature Preserve, Pulaski County. Protection of this land came about because the Commission has eight staff in the field working with private landowners. There are now 359 dedicated nature preserves in 83 counties totaling 50,368.935 acres and 163 land and water reserves in 67 counties totaling 46,832.169 acres.

211-4) 2012 Meeting Schedule

September 11, 2012 – Monroe County Annex Building, Waterloo

211-5) INPC Staff Report

The INPC staff report is attached as Exhibit A.

Randy Heidorn gave a PowerPoint presentation on the INPC budget projection for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013.

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.

Steven Byers gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.

211-6) IDNR Staff Report

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

211-7) Endangered Species Protection Board Report

No report was submitted from the Endangered Species Protection Board, so the item was deferred.

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

211-8) Jo Daviess Co. – Eagles Nest Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Chris Kirkpatrick presented a proposal on behalf of the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JDCF) to permanently register 119.787 acres as Eagles Nest Land and Water Reserve. The proposed land and water reserve is located in the Wisconsin Driftless Natural Division and will help protect 1.8 miles of the Lower Apple River Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (#1647). This INAI site is a Category II site for being a perennial stream supporting three state-threatened species. The INAI site is also recognized as Category VI for the unusual concentration of freshwater mussels; supporting 18 species of live native mussels with an additional 11 species found dead or weathered in 2002. The proposed land and water reserve lies adjacent to Hanover Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Hanover Bluff Nature Preserve, and an INAI site (#1058), as well as the Hanover Bluff State Natural Area. The proposed site includes 73.95 acres of active agricultural land and 21.78 acres of land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The agricultural land will be planted to native prairie as part of an approved management plan included as part of this registration proposal. The landowner will not seek extension of the current CRP leases beyond the current contract periods (2016). The acquisition and restoration of the proposed Eagles Nest Land and Water Reserve is funded, in part, by a State Wildlife Grant. As part of the grant requirements, the JDCF is required to permanently protect the property. After implementing the habitat restoration plan for the proposed land and water reserve, the JDCF may pursue transferring the property to the IDNR. The site name is derived from an active bald eagle nest located on site. This site will support the priority actions for the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) identified in the streams and forest campaigns.

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

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

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Eagles Nest in Jo Daviess County as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2178)

211-9) Johnson Co. –Wise Ridge Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Bob Lindsay presented a proposal on behalf of the IDNR for permanent registration of 388 acres as Wise Ridge Land and Water Reserve. The proposed land and water reserve is located in the northeast corner of Johnson County. The site is a forested upland with significant natural communities identified by the INAI (#0060) as grade B dry upland forest and dry-mesic upland forest. A small limestone glade was also listed by the inventory as notable. Wise Ridge is at the north boundary of the Greater Shawnee Hills Section of the Shawnee Hills Natural Division. The registration of this site will help support goals of the IWAP in the forests, land and water stewardship and invasive species campaigns. The Tunnel Hill State Trail, an existing IDNR recreation site, lies along portions of the south and east boundary of the proposed land and water reserve. Location along a popular hiking and biking trail will provide

opportunities for public education on issues such as land restoration, forest community management, prescribed fire and invasive species.

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

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

The Commission grants approval for registration of Wise Ridge in Johnson County as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2179)

211-10) Tazewell Co. – Independence Park Woods Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Tom Lerczak presented a proposal on behalf of the Pekin Park District to permanently register 269.29 acres as Independence Park Woods Land and Water Reserve. Independence Park Woods is located between Marquette Heights and Creve Coeur, just south of Interstate 474 in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Until 1972, Caterpillar Tractor Company owned the site and used much of the area as a proving ground for testing heavy equipment. Although approximately one third of the area has been degraded from these activities and earlier coal mining, the remainder of the site was left largely intact, though not untouched. Since acquiring the site in 1972, the Pekin Park District has passively managed it as a recovering natural area, allowing a variety of visitor activities, which would continue upon registration with certain restrictions. Today, areas directly impacted by proving ground activities are in various stages of community development, including grade D upland forests dominated by black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and shrublands with native trees and shrubs as well as non-native species such as autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*). It should be noted that these shrublands provide habitat for a unique assemblage of shrubland birds, four of which have been identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. The main community type at Independence Park Woods, however, is forest. Grade C dry-mesic upland forest is the most widespread forested community type. Although most older stands are dominated by white oak (*Quercus alba*), red oak (*Q. rubra*), and shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), black locust can be a common species in the lower quality stands along with a variety of other species such as hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), elm (*Ulmus* spp.), and black cherry (*Prunus serotina*). Regardless of the forest's botanical quality, Independence Park Woods meets the criteria for registration as a land and water reserve by containing well over 100 acres of contiguous forest that supports 17 breeding bird species considered sensitive to forest fragmentation; of these species, five are also species in greatest need of conservation. The long-term management goal for Independence Park Woods is to maintain contiguous forest coverage on the entire site. Improving forest quality is a secondary goal. Registration of Independence Park Woods will support the IWAP through the invasive species, forest, and land and water stewardship campaigns.

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

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

The Commission grants approval for registration of Independence Park Woods in Tazewell County as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2180)

Chair Rosenthal thanked the Pekin Park District for bringing this site before the Commission.

211-11) Vermilion Co. – 4th Addition to Little Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Roger Jansen presented a proposal on behalf of the IDNR to permanent register a 30-acre forest as the 4th addition to the Little Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve. This site is an addition to the southwest part of the 1098.19-acre Little Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve, which is part of the Harry “Babe” Woodyard State Natural Area located south of Danville in the Vermilion River Section of the Wabash Border Natural Division. The original Little Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve was an 835-acre site registered by the IDNR in 1998 (Resolution 1411). This 30-acre addition increases the size of the Land and Water Reserve to 1128.19 acres. Little Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve protects and buffers the Little Vermilion River, a biologically significant stream recognized by the INAI (#1140) and is habitat for eight state-threatened or endangered animals and plants. The Land and Water Reserve protects approximately 3.4 miles of the Little Vermilion River in two distinct segments: 2.2 miles in the main Land and Water Reserve and 1.2 miles in the disjunct Georgetown addition. Conservation and stewardship of lands within the fourth addition to Little Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve will provide greater habitat for forest-interior birds and supply additional watershed protection to the river. This 30-acre addition contains dry-mesic and mesic upland forest, but does not include river frontage or riparian corridor. No state-listed species are reported from the addition. Protection of this addition supports action steps identified in the IWAP for the streams campaign and the forest campaign.

Mr. Jansen discussed the allowable uses and reserved rights which are outlined in detail in the registration proposal.

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

The Commission grants approval for registration of the 4th addition to Little Vermilion River Land and Water Reserve in Vermilion County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2181)

211-12) Marshall Co. – Buffer Addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, Dedication

Tom Lerczak presented a proposal on behalf of Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang for preliminary approval for dedication of lot #108 (2.2 acres) as a buffer addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve. Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural Area (INAI #0231) is located within the village of Hopewell, approximately 20 miles northeast of Peoria in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Lot #108 is composed of grade C dry-mesic upland forest with species such as red oak (*Quercus rubra*), white oak (*Q. alba*), shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), and redbud (*Cercis canadensis*).

Further into the lot, as the ground slopes downward toward a deep ravine system, the community tends to become more mesic, with fern species present (e.g., Christmas fern [*Polystichum acrostichoides*]) as well as sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and American basswood (*Tilia americana*). Though lot #108 does not contain hill prairie remnants, it is necessary to protect as much of the natural area's intact grade C forest as possible in order to capture the hill prairie-forest ecological complex. The IWAP would be supported by this dedication through the forest, farmland and prairie, and invasive species campaigns. Eight bird species observed on lot #108 are listed as species in greatest need of conservation. If approved, the proposed buffer addition would increase the size of Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve to 11 acres.

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

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of a buffer addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve in Marshall County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2182)

Chair Rosenthal thanked Mr. Brucker and Ms. Yang for bringing this site before the Commission.

211-13) DuPage Co. –Brewster Creek Marsh Nature Preserve, Dedication

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) for final approval for dedication of 256.88 acres of Pratt's Wayne Woods Forest Preserve (190.64 acres as nature preserve and 66.24 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 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. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 210th Meeting in January, 2012 (Resolution 2165).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Brewster Creek Marsh in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 13 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2183)

211-14) DuPage Co. – Des Plaines Riverway Nature Preserve, Dedication

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for final approval for dedication of 75 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. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 210th Meeting in January, 2012 (Resolution 2166).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Des Plaines Riverway in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 14 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2184)

211-15) DuPage Co. – Meacham Grove Nature Preserve, Dedication

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for final approval for dedication of 49 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. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 210th Meeting in January, 2012 (Resolution 2167).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Meacham Grove in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 15 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2185)

211-16) DuPage Co. – Swift Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for final approval for dedication of a 116-acre mosaic of natural communities (71 acres as nature preserve and 45 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. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 210th Meeting in January, 2012 (Resolution 2168).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Swift Prairie in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 16 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2186)

211-17) DuPage Co. – West Chicago Prairie Buffer Addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve, Dedication

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for final approval for dedication of 37 acres as the West Chicago Prairie 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, 169.5 acres) to 322.475 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 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. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 210th Meeting in January, 2012 (Resolution 2169).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of the West Chicago Prairie buffer addition to Truitt-Hoff Nature Preserve in DuPage County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2187)

211-18) Lake Co. – McLean Woods and Wetlands Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) for final approval for dedication of 533 acres of the 2751.7-acre Lakewood Forest Preserve as McLean Woods and Wetlands Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve includes 418.2 acres as nature preserve and 114.8 acres as nature preserve buffer. The proposed nature preserve honors the support of the McLean family and is located in the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in southwestern Lake County, within the Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex Conservation Opportunity Area. The proposed nature preserve includes grade C/D dry-mesic forest and grade C/D freshwater marsh and extensive natural community reconstructions. The proposed nature preserve also supports populations of a state-endangered reptile, eight state-endangered birds: the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Forester's tern (*Sterna forsteri*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and yellow-headed black bird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). There are also three state-threatened bird species: the black-billed cuckoo (*Cucyzyus erythrophthalmus*), cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*), and least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*). Protection and stewardship of the proposed McLean Woods and Wetlands Nature Preserve support action #1 and #2 of the IWAP wetlands campaign "... to improve the condition of existing and artificial wetlands" and develop additional wetland habitat; action #3 of the farmland and prairie campaign for restoring and enhancing acreage for rare/extirpated species (specifically prairies and grassland nesting birds), and actions #1 and #2 of the forest campaign to "maintain and enhance forest composition, increase acreage/habitat connectivity, and management of forest communities." The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 209th Meeting in September, 2011 (Resolution 2151).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of McLean Woods and Wetlands in Lake County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2188)

A lunch break was taken from 12:00 p.m. – 12:40 p.m.

211-19) Lake Co. – Addition and Buffer Addition to Barber Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) for final approval for dedication of a 68.8-acre addition (49.2 acres as nature preserve addition and 19.6 acres as buffer addition) to the 18.5-acre Barber Fen Nature Preserve. Barber Fen Nature Preserve is owned by Rodney and Libbie Aavang and was dedicated as an Illinois nature preserve in November, 1990 at the Commission's 130th Meeting (Resolution 1064). Barber Fen Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in McHenry County, within the Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex Conservation Opportunity Area and the MCCD's Queen Anne Macrosite. The Nature Preserve and much of the proposed addition lie within the Barber Fen INAI site (#1267) and a portion of the Nippersink Creek INAI site (#1506). The proposed addition includes grade B/C sedge meadow, grade B/C graminoid fen, grade C mesic forest, grade C wet-mesic floodplain forest, high-quality low-gradient small stream and pond aquatic communities, and old field and pastureland cultural communities. To date, 341 native plant species have been recorded from the Nature Preserve and proposed addition, and the site supports the state-endangered nodding trillium (*Trillium cernuum*) and state-threatened pale vetchling (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*). The creek and adjacent wetlands support a state-endangered reptile, the state-threatened least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) and two mussels (spike [*Elliptio dilatata*] and slippershell mussel [*Alasmidonta viridis*]). Extensive wildlife surveys conducted by the MCCD report 12 bird, eight fish, two reptile, four mussel and six butterfly species from the site that are identified by the IWAP as "...species in greatest need of conservation." Protection and stewardship of the proposed addition supports action #1 of the Wetlands Campaign "... to improve the condition of existing and artificial wetlands" and action #6 of the Streams Campaign "...to restore and manage high-quality examples of all river, stream, lake, and pond communities..." Dedication of the proposed addition will increase Barber Fen Nature Preserve from 18.5 to 87.3 acres and honor the Aavang's vision for land protection. This proposal reserves the right for the MCCD to conduct a master planning process to determine appropriate public access and recreation opportunities in accordance with INPC guidelines. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 209th Meeting in September, 2011 (Resolution 2152).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of an addition and buffer addition to Barber Fen Nature Preserve in McHenry County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 19 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2189)

211-20) McHenry Co. – Buffer Addition to Bystricky Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the MCCD for final approval for dedication of 116.7 acres as a buffer addition to the 17.4-acre Bystricky Prairie Nature Preserve. Bystricky Prairie was owned by Joseph and Harriet Bystricky when the site was dedicated as an Illinois nature preserve in September, 1987 at the Commission's 115th Meeting (Resolution 956). Bystricky Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed buffer addition are located in the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in McHenry County, within the Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex Conservation Opportunity Area and the

MCCD's Queen Anne Macrosite. The proposed buffer addition encompasses nearly all the Slough Creek Sedge Meadow INAI site (#0715) and includes grade C/D sedge meadow, grade C/D wet-mesic prairie, grade C/D low-gradient small stream, and two cultural communities consisting of an old field and community reconstruction. To date, 249 native plant species have been recorded from the Nature Preserve and proposed buffer addition including a federally-listed species, two state-listed plants, state-endangered tall sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*), downy yellow painted cup (*Castilleja sessiflora*), queen-of-the-prairie (*Filipendula rubra*), and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*). Wildlife surveys conducted by the MCCD report four butterflies (silver-bordered fritillary [*Boloria selene*]; purplish copper [*Lycaena helloides*]; Dion skipper [*Eupheys dion*]; and broad-winged skipper [*Poanes viator*]) and one fish (central mudminnow [*Umbra limi*]) from the site that are identified in the IWAP as "...species in greatest need of conservation." Protection and stewardship of the proposed addition supports action #1 of the wetland campaign to "...improve the condition of existing and natural wetlands." Dedication of the proposed buffer addition will increase Bystricky Prairie Nature Preserve from 17.4 to 134.1 acres and honor Joseph Bystricky's vision for land protection. This proposal reserves the right for the MCCD to conduct a master planning process to determine appropriate public access and recreation opportunities in accordance with INPC guidelines. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 209th Meeting in September, 2011 (Resolution 2153).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of a buffer addition to Bystricky Prairie Nature Preserve in McHenry County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 20 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2190)

211-21) McHenry Co. – Addition to Lind Forest Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of the MCCD for final approval for dedication of a 44.1-acre addition (33.3 acres as nature preserve addition and 10.8 acres as buffer addition) to the 20-acre Lind Forest Nature Preserve. Lind Forest was owned by Helen Lind when the site was dedicated as an Illinois nature preserve in May, 1993 at the Commission's 139th Meeting (Resolution 1184). The site was acquired by the MCCD in December, 2002. Lind Forest Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in McHenry County, within the Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex Conservation Opportunity Area and the MCCD's Queen Anne Macrosite. The Nature Preserve and a small portion of the proposed addition lie within the Lind Forest INAI site (#1266) and a portion of the Nippersink Creek INAI site (#1506). The proposed addition includes grade B mesic forest, grade C mesic savanna, grade B seep, high-gradient small stream, and a cultural community consisting of pastureland. To date, 218 native plant species have been recorded from the Nature Preserve and proposed addition, and the site supports the state-endangered nodding trillium (*Trillium cernuum*), ill-scented trillium (*T. erectum*), and the state-threatened pale vetchling (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*). Two state-threatened mussels (spike [*Elliptio dilatata*] and slippershell mussel [*Alasmidonta viridis*]) have been documented from Nippersink Creek, and it is likely both occur within the boundary of both the nature preserve and proposed addition. Extensive wildlife surveys of the site conducted by the MCCD report eight fish and four mussel species that are identified by the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. Protection and stewardship of the proposed addition supports action #7 of the forest campaign "... to restore and manage high-quality examples of all forest

communities,” action #2b of that campaign which calls for contributing to “...ecological connectivity among forests and other habitat patches,” and action #6 of the streams campaign “...to restore and manage high-quality examples of all river, stream, lake, and pond communities...” Dedication of the proposed addition will increase Lind Forest Nature Preserve from 20 acres to 64.1 acres and honor Helen Lind’s vision for land protection. This proposal reserves the right for the MCCD to conduct a master planning process to determine appropriate public access and recreation opportunities in accordance with INPC guidelines. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission’s 209th Meeting in September, 2011 (Resolution 2154). At that time, the proposed acreage of dedicated land was reported to be 39.13 acres. The INPC is now being asked to grant final approval for a higher acreage (an additional 4.97 acres). The instrument of dedication reflects a total of 44.1 acres.

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of an addition to Lind Forest Nature Preserve in McHenry County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 21 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2191)

On the behalf of the MCCD, Elizabeth Kessler thanked the Commission for its approval of the additions to three existing nature preserves. She also thanked Mr. Byers for his work on these projects.

Chair Rosenthal thanked the MCCD for its commitment and for the great work that is being done in McHenry County.

211-22) Winnebago Co. – Buffer Addition to Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve, Dedication

Russell Heinrichs presented a proposal on behalf of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD) for final approval for the dedication of 187 acres as a buffer addition to Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve. The proposed buffer addition is located along the border of the Freeport Section of the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division and the Winnebago Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. The site contains a variety of natural communities and prairie re-constructions. The site is part of the Sugar River INAI site (#1466), and provides suitable habitat for at least nine species of state-listed animals and four state-listed plants. The dedicated buffer area will serve as essential land protection around Colored Sands Nature Preserve. Approval of this buffer dedication supports action steps identified in the IWAP under the campaigns for prairies, wetlands, forests, and invasive species. Dedication of the proposed 187 acres buffer addition will increase the acreage of Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve from 54.7 acres to 241.7 acres. The proposed buffer was granted preliminary approval by the INPC at its 210th Meeting in January, 2012 (Resolution 2169). At that time, the proposed acreage of dedicated land was reported to be 184.7 acres. The INPC is now being requested to grant final approval for a slightly higher acreage (an additional 2.1 acres) that resulted from a recent ground survey. The instrument of dedication reflects this new acreage (187 acres).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of a buffer addition to Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve in Winnebago County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 22 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2192)

211-23) Winnebago Co. – Buffer Addition to Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve, Dedication

Russell Heinrichs presented a proposal on behalf of the WCFPD for final approval for dedication of 317 acres as a 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. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 210th Meeting in January, 2012 (Resolution 2172).

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

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of a buffer addition to Sugar River Alder Nature Preserve in Winnebago County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 23 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2193)

On behalf of the WCFPD, Judy Barnard thanked the Commission for approving the additions to two existing nature preserves. She also thanked Russell Heinrichs and John Nelson for their efforts on these projects.

Chair Rosenthal thanked the WCFPD for its commitment and for the great work that is being done in Winnebago County.

211-24) Alexander and Pulaski Co. – Cache River Hydrology Demonstration Project

Heidi Randala, Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), presented a comprehensive PowerPoint proposal regarding the Cache River Hydrology Demonstration Project. Two options were discussed in

detail. Approximately 25 years ago, resource managers developed a list of landscape-scale restoration alternatives that were thought to be essential for preserving the natural features and character found in the Cache River State Natural Area located in the Lower Cache River Swamp (INAI #0610). These alternatives included structures to restore stream gradient and manage water surface elevation at the eastern and western boundaries of the Lower Cache River Swamp; selective dredging to restore permanent open deep water within the river channel and hydraulically connected swamps, ponds and sloughs; and partial reconnection of the upper and lower river segments. Of particular importance at this time is a project proposed by SIUC that would demonstrate the benefits of partial reconnection, particularly focusing on capturing the importance of impacts during very low flows that occur naturally each year during the dry summer months. This information will provide qualitative and quantitative data necessary for selection of a reconnection pathway and structural modifications that will enable biological and hydraulic connectivity.

Kelly Neal presented the INPC staff recommendation, and it is attached as Exhibit C.

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

The Commission grants approval for a special use permit for Option 1 of the Cache River Hydrology Demonstration Project in Alexander and Pulaski counties as described in the proposal presented under Item 24 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting, subject to the stipulations outlined in the staff recommendation.

(Resolution 2194)

211-25) Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2013 Defense Proposals

Randy Heidorn gave a presentation on the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) FY 2013 defense proposals. The NAAF capital appropriation in FY 2012 included \$75,000 to fund contractual natural area defense activities needed on properties included in one of the INPC's protection programs. From the FY 2008, FY 2009, FY 2010 and FY 2011 NAAF capital appropriation, \$475,000, \$225,000, \$225,000 and \$225,000 was appropriated as a part of the NAAF capital budget respectively to defend natural areas statewide. Approximately \$230,000 of the four years of appropriation authority remained unassigned to specific projects at the end of FY 2011. Appropriation authority has exceeded revenues actually in NAAF. The aforementioned appropriation authority remains available to address threats that may arise provided dollars are available within NAAF. NAAF defense projects that were begun in years prior to FY 2012 and continued or completed during FY 2012 include: funding the Illinois State Geological Survey to collect and review groundwater data needed to assess impacts of proposed off-site development, threats or damages, prepare Class III Special Resource Groundwater petitions to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for INPC program sites and provide groundwater consulting services for the INPC staff. In FY 2012, there was a new contract for the continuation of the aforementioned groundwater consulting at \$130,000. It is uncertain what will be appropriated in FY 2013 for NAAF capital. Similar to FY 2012, \$75,000 may be the allocation to defense from this year's appropriation. Specific projects will be selected as needed but will likely include a continuation of the aforementioned groundwater data and consultation services at some level. Specific projects funded during FY 2013 will be reported in May, 2013.

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

The Commission approves the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2013 defense project plan, as presented under Item 25 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2195)

211-26) Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2013 Land Acquisition Proposals

Don McFall stated that the IDNR was still working off the FY10 approved acquisition list. In FY 2010, the IDNR identified, and the INPC approved for acquisition, 20 high priority tracts of land currently for sale within 16 natural areas. The IDNR used funds from the NAAF to acquire one natural area tract of 302 acres during FY 2010. There was no NAAF funded land acquisition in FY 2011 and NAAF was used to acquire one natural area (a 19-acre tract) from the INPC approved list in FY 2012. Depending on the final IDNR budget, tracts from this same approved list will be considered for state acquisition in FY 2013 if and when funds become available. All the proposed acquisition parcels are included on the INAI, and/or provide habitat for endangered or threatened species of animals or plants. The proposed acquisitions total approximately 2,500 acres and would cost approximately \$12,000,000 to acquire. The proposed capital budget for acquisition, preservation and stewardship from NAAF has not been established, and a final decision on the amount of money, if any, to be used for land acquisition in FY 2013 has not been made.

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

The Commission approves the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2013 acquisition plan, as presented under Item 26 of the Agenda for the 211th Meeting.

(Resolution 2196)

211-27) Review of Closed Meeting Minutes

Chair Rosenthal stated that there were four sets of minutes regarding land acquisition from closed meetings of the Commission. The meeting dates were August 2, 2005, May 2, 2006, May 6, 2008, and May 5, 2009. These meetings were closed in accordance with the Open Meetings Act to discuss the purchase of real property. Section 2.06 of the Open Meetings Act provides that public bodies, "shall periodically, but no less than semi-annually, meet to review minutes of all closed sessions. At such meetings, a determination shall be made and reported in an open session that: 1. the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes, or 2. that the minutes or portions thereof no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection."

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

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the closed session minutes from the August 2, 2005, May 2, 2006, May 6, 2008, and May 5, 2009, meetings will remain confidential but will be reviewed semi-annually to ascertain the need to be kept confidential.

(Resolution 2197)

211-28) Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

211-29) Other Business

Randy Heidorn gave an overview of the changes in the Public Meetings Act, and the Public Meetings Act training requirement was discussed. All Commissioners were asked to complete the training as soon as possible and send a copy of the training certificate to him for the file.

Mr. Heidorn stated that there will be a public meeting of the INPC Task Force at 12:00 p.m. on July 11, 2012 at the Environmental Law and Policy Center, 35 West Wacker Drive, Chicago. The concept of having a Natural Areas Conference in Illinois and the development of a friends group or a 501c3 group to help support stewardship in the Nature Preserves System will be discussed at that meeting.

Chair Rosenthal stated that a nominating committee was needed to put together a slate of candidates for advisors, consultants, and officers for the election at the September 11, 2012 INPC meeting.

It was moved by Thomas, seconded by Covington, and carried that the Chair of the INPC be authorized to appoint a nominating committee for the purpose of putting together a slate of candidates for advisors, consultants, and officers for the election to be held at the September 11, 2012 Commission meeting.

Mr. Heidorn stated that he was sad to report the passing of a former INPC Commissioner, Byron W. Hutchins.

211-30) Adjournment

It was moved by Dann, seconded by Thomas, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 1:50 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: April 30, 2012
Subject: Staff Report for the 211th Meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

I. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Operations:

- A. Jenny Skufca and Kim Roman, with Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) Maggie Cole and Steve Shults, assisted with the transfer of the INPC's Photographic Exhibition from the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) to the IDNR's Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center for its spring Nature Fest event and the unveiling of a new boardwalk and interpretive panels at Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve (NP). Due to the current condition of the exhibit, and the need for replacement frames, the exhibit will cease to travel. Discussions are ongoing as to where it will be permanently located.
- B. Randy Heidorn:
 1. Continues to work with John Rogner, IDNR's Assistant Director, on INPC Commissioner appointments. Dr. Brian Anderson and Dr. Bonnie Styles submitted recommendations last year to the Governor's Office.
 2. Prepared a plan of work budget document for the INPC for the IDNR's Office of Resource Conservation (ORC). This document is a step in the Management Assistance Team process that the IDNR is currently following to help set budgeting priorities.
 3. Monitored the spring legislative session and provided comments on several of the proposed bills for ORC and IDNR legislative staff.
 4. Is working with Mike Moomey, IDNR's Division of Natural Heritage (DNH), to complete the acquisition of new radios which are compliant with narrow banding standards and compatible with local fire agency mutual aid channels. An order has been placed and is awaiting Central Management Services (CMS) approval.
 5. Is working with IDNR staff to determine what assigned vehicles will no longer be available when CMS assumes ownership of all vehicles and leases them back to the IDNR.
- C. Kim Roman moved her office from the IDNR's Region II Headquarters in Bartlett to a Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) site in Western Springs.
- D. Mary Kay Solecki reviewed all protection proposals for NP and land and water reserve (LWR) documents for the 211th INPC meeting and provided staff support concerning dedications and new procedures for registering LWRs.
- E. INPC staff contributed photographs and text to "Success Stories" and the INPC Facebook page.
- F. Russell Heinrichs completed a NP and LWR directory for Region I.

I. Training, Presentations, and Meetings Attended:

- A. INPC staff completed ethics training and pesticide applicator testing as needed.
- B. Angella Moorehouse and Ray Geroff provided support for the Peoria Park District in the planning, logistics, execution of the 3rd Illinois Hill Prairie Conference held at Camp Wokanda. They also gave presentations at the Conference. Other staff that participated in the conference include Tom Lerczak, Debbie Newman and Russell Heinrichs.
- C. Randy Heidorn and Kelly Neal participated in a meeting and discussions with IDNR staff to consider a potential fee structure for data requests submitted to the DNH database.
- D. Kelly Neal and Jenny Skufca:
 1. Participated in training for the IDNR's Detailed Impact Review Tool, a database developed for streamlined review of projects submitted for consultation.
 2. Reviewed Wildlife Preservation Fund (WPF) proposals and represented the INPC at the WPF grant ranking meeting.
- E. Jenny Skufca and Randy Heidorn participated in phone meetings with the Vital Lands hiking web application group.

- F. Randy Heidorn, Kim Roman, Angella Moorehouse, Mary Kay Solecki, Russell Heinrichs, Tom Lerczak, and Ray Geroff attended the Annual Prescribed Fire Council Symposium. Mr. Heidorn currently serves as treasurer on the board of directors for the Prescribed Fire Council.
- G. Angella Moorehouse and Tom Lerczak attended the Illinois State Academy of Science annual meeting held at Knox College, Galesburg. Ms. Moorehouse also served on a panel discussion and gave a presentation.
- H. Randy Heidorn:
1. Completed Open Meetings Act training.
 2. Attended the Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC) annual meeting held at Starved Rock State Park Lodge, where he participated in various training events provided by the PSCC and the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). Mr. Heidorn also distributed documents explaining the current condition of the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) to the PSCC.
 3. Participated in the spring meeting of the Natural Areas Association (NAA) Board of Directors. Mr. Heidorn serves as the Vice President of the NAA. At this meeting, he also participated in partner meetings with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. He also attended educational meetings with staff of members of the U.S. Congress. The latter meetings were conducted with Kay Havens of the Chicago Botanic Gardens. The primary goal of the meetings was to make members aware of the impending shortage of botanical and other field biology professionals within the work force, and the possible impacts on conservation efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies.
 4. Participated in the Northeast Climate Science Center listening session hosted by the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Big Rivers Landscape Conservation Cooperatives in Champaign.
 5. Participated in discussions with Chicago Wilderness (CW) regarding a potential Chicago area location for the 40th Natural Areas Conference in 2013.
 6. Represented the INPC at the Endangered Species Protection Board meeting.
 7. As a member, participated in a bi-monthly training event with the Illinois Incident Management Team.
- I. Steven Byers:
1. Served as co-chair of the CW Natural Resources Management Team with Jeff Mengler and represented the INPC on the CW Coordinating Group and CW Steering Committee. He also attended the CW Executive Council meeting and follow-up with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding relevance of CW green infrastructure and regional planning effort to engage resource professionals in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana.
 2. Represented the INPC at The Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Forest Preserve and Natural Lands Institute annual meetings.
 3. Guest lecturer at the University of Illinois regarding CW - natural resource challenges and opportunities.
- J. Kim Roman:
1. On behalf of the INPC, was awarded Audubon's Grassroots Conservation Leadership Award for work at Old Plank Road Prairie NP.
 2. Completed CPR/first aid training offered by the Wilmington Fire Protection District.
 3. Attended the Friends of the Kankakee annual meeting.
- K. Angella Moorehouse:
1. Gave a presentation to the Black Hawk Foundation concerning restoration and management techniques at Black Hawk Forest NP.
 2. Assisted the River Bend Fire Alliance with the planning, promotion, and hosting of the S130/190 and S230 fire training classes.
- L. Ray Geroff completed S230 Crew Boss training.
- M. Tom Lerczak:
1. Attended the Friends of the Sangamon Valley annual meeting.
 2. Provided information to Bradley University's Biology Department on natural resource issues that could be investigated as student projects in Tazewell, Peoria, and Woodford counties.
- N. Mary Kay Solecki:
1. Participated in the annual Grand Prairie Friends (GPF)/Volunteers Stewardship Network luncheon for volunteer stewards and presented the INPC volunteers with a copy of *Creating Homes and Habitats for Illinois Wildlife*.
 2. Participated in a meeting of LTA staff and GPF members to build GPF capacity and meet LTA standards and guidelines for land trusts. She also prepared a draft environmental assessment form and title standards for conservation projects for the GPF board approval.
- O. Debbie Newman:

1. Led a field trip at Salt Lick Point LWR.
 2. Continued to respond to requests for information on bush honeysuckle control in response to a 2011 *Outdoor Illinois* article.
 3. Attended the Heartlands Conservancy annual meeting.
- P. Bob Edgin represented the INPC at a meeting of the Illinois Invasive Plant Species Council.

II. Inventory and Monitoring:

- A. Kelly Neal, Jenny Skufca, and Randy Heidorn attended the 59th Natural Areas Evaluation Committee (NAEC) meeting. Mr. Heidorn is a voting member representing the INPC on this Committee.
- B. Angella Moorehouse and Ray Geroff assisted Dr. Ken McCravy with plant and bee surveys for a native bee study at Cedar Glen NP.
- C. Kim Roman assisted with a bat banding/research project at Pecumsaugan Creek/Blackball Mines NP.
- D. The following staff completed Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site surveillance and submitted documentation: Tom Lerczak, Bob Edgin, Mary Kay Solecki.
- E. The following staff assisted in site evaluations or had discussions regarding new INAI sites that were or will be presented to the NAEC: Ray Geroff, Tom Lerczak, Mary Kay Solecki, and Debbie Newman.
- F. Ray Geroff:
 1. Continued a native bee research project at Harry N. Patterson Savanna LWR and Bald Bluff Hill Prairie INAI Site.
 2. Completed baseline documentation field work and initiated reports for four privately owned INPC sites.
- G. Mary Kay Solecki coordinated with a volunteer eagle nest monitor to continue monitoring nest activity on the Middle Fork of Vermilion River.
- H. Bob Edgin evaluated one privately-owned site to determine eligibility for registration as a LWR.

III. Protection Program:

- A. Staff met with landowners and managers to plan and prepare protection proposals that are on the agenda of the 211th meeting.
- B. Randy Heidorn and Steven Byers participated in a number of IDNR discussions regarding the Millennium Reserve; a concept for land protection, stewardship, and development in the Lake Calumet region. Mr. Byers will be the lead INPC staff person on this effort.
- C. John Nelson:
 1. Continued working with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) staff on a draft NP proposal and management plan for Nachusa Grasslands.
 2. Completed a registration proposal package for the proposed Johns Mound Group LWR.
 3. Met with a landowner regarding an addition to Black-Crown Marsh LWR.
- D. Steven Byers:
 1. Participated in an Illinois Lake Michigan implementation plan meeting.
 2. Represented the INPC at a series of meetings with the Liberty Prairie Conservancy regarding a 2040 Vision for Liberty Prairie Reserve that includes additional lands, stewardship, and continued role of agriculture.
 3. Represented the INPC and IDNR on the USFWS proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge feasibility study team. Continued to coordinate with USFWS personnel, the IDNR, and Friends of Hackmatack regarding the proposed refuge. Reviewed a draft environmental assessment for the proposed refuge that recommended protection of approximately 11,000 acres. Mr. Byers also participated in the team planning for public meetings and the scheduled public release of the environmental assessment.
 4. Continued discussions with: Lake Forest Open Lands regarding protection of land adjacent to Skokie River NP; Openlands regarding final dedication of the proposed Openlands Lakeshore, Bluff and Ravine NP; Long Grove Park District regarding dedication of additional lots at Reed-Turner Woodland NP; McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) regarding final dedication of HUM Railroad Prairie East and plans for adding additional sites to the NP system; TNC regarding final approval for dedication of seven additional lots at Sundrop Prairie NP, and the correction of the legal description for a portion of Gensburg-Markham Prairie NP; and Libertyville Open Space regarding final dedication of a site adjacent to Liberty Prairie NP.
 5. Presented wetland protection opportunities at Trout Park NP, Fox River Fen NP, Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP, and the Forested Fen INAI site (all along the I-90 corridor) to the Tollway Authority and a consultant.
- E. Kim Roman:

1. Participated in Lower Fox River Stakeholder Committee meetings and served as a technical advisor to the group. This group was organized by The Conservation Foundation and is using the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan to promote conservation efforts in the Lower Fox River Conservation Opportunity Area (COA).
 2. Met with a Kankakee Sands area private landowner to discuss protection of his INAI site.
 3. Assisted with the drafting and review of a LWR proposal for an IDNR-owned site in Grundy County.
- F. Angella Moorehouse:
1. Maintained contact with the landowners of 23 sites enrolled in INPC programs.
 2. Gave a presentation to the City of Geneseo Board on protection options for Geneseo Fen, a high quality wetland seep in Henry County nominated for inclusion on the INAI.
 3. Met with staff from Pheasants Forever to evaluate Forever Fields in Knox County as a potential LWR.
 4. Coordinated with the Springdale Cemetery Management Authority Board, Peoria Park District, and Peoria Wilds Volunteer Stewards to maintain protection status for Springdale Cemetery Natural Heritage Landmark (NHL).
- G. Tom Lerczak:
1. Established landowner contacts for 15 natural areas, NPs, LWRs or NHLs.
 2. Provided a letter of support to the Fon du Lac Park District for permanent protection of its Spring Creek Preserve in Tazewell County.
- H. Mary Kay Solecki:
1. Met with Allerton Park staff regarding proposing the Allerton Park INAI site as a LWR.
 2. Continued pursuing designation as a LWR for Embarras Ridges (formerly Dolan Woods), owned by the GPF, and surveyed the site with a GPF representative.
 3. Coordinated with Hal Hassen, archeologist for the IDNR, on preparing LWR eligibility criteria for archeological resources.
 4. Discussed the designation of the IDNR-owned INAI site known as Rock Cut Botanical Area as a LWR with District Heritage Biologist Roger Jansen.
- I. Debbie Newman met with three landowners of unprotected INAI sites and several landowners of INPC protected sites.
- J. Bob Edgin contacted landowners of two unprotected sites to discuss protection options.

IV. Land Acquisition:

- A. Randy Heidorn met with IDNR Realty staff to discuss procedures to involve staff in the review of potential acquisition parcels. Several field staff have had the opportunity to review parcels suggested or offered to the IDNR.
- B. Randy Heidorn and Don McFall, Chief of the DNH, discussed the NAAF plan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 which will be presented during the 211th INPC meeting.

V. Defense Program:

- A. Jenny Skufca and several other staff members provided support to a volunteer performing statewide digital mapping of protected natural areas, including updates to INPC site maps utilizing legal descriptions and county parcel data.
- B. Jenny Skufca, Debbie Newman, and Randy Heidorn worked with Hal Hassen, archeologist for the IDNR, and Dawn Cobb, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, to make preparations to re-inter human remains originally removed from a Native American burial site within an INPC protected area.
- C. Jenny Skufca reviewed and provided comments on behalf of the INPC for Chapters 1-4 of the draft Hine's emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora hineana*) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Randy Heidorn, Kelly Neal, and Jenny Skufca met with IDNR and USFWS staff, consultants, and representatives of the primary partners participating in the development of the HCP for the Hine's emerald dragonfly.
- D. Jenny Skufca:
 1. Responded to three reviews for the IDNR's Comprehensive Environmental Review Program (CERP) and 12 reviews for the IDNR's consultation program.
 2. Coordinated the review and approval process of the INPC's hydrogeology contract with the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) for the period of April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013.
 3. Submitted three Class III Special Resource Groundwater petitions for review to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). The INPC sites currently petitioned include Searls Park Prairie NP, Sand Ridge NP, and Yonder Prairie NP.

4. Submitted a letter to the Monroe County Zoning Office regarding INPC protocols for reviewing wind projects near INPC sites, including recommendations for setback distances to ensure no adverse impact.
 5. Along with the IEPA, ISGS, and IDNR's Contaminant Assessment Section staff, reviewed and provided comments in response to Addendum I and II of the Enbridge Energy's Remedial Action Plan/Remedial Objectives Report related to the crude oil pipeline break and subsequent clean-up efforts at Romeoville Prairie NP.
 6. Facilitated the compilation of a list of sites in INPC programs that are, or potentially could be, threatened by nearby mining activity.
 7. Assisted IEPA groundwater staff with review of post-hearing comments to be provided to the Illinois Pollution Control Board related to "...a proposal to amend the Board's rules for Clean Construction or Demolition Debris and Uncontaminated Soil Fill Operations to allow for use of uncontaminated clean construction or demolition debris (CCDD) and uncontaminated soil to be used as fill at quarries, mines and other excavations." Some of the proposed sites lie within Class III Groundwater Areas or are near other unprotected high quality wetlands.
- E. John Nelson provided assistance to the IDNR regarding potential litigation near Volo Bog NP.
- F. Tom Lerczak:
1. Attended a meeting of the East Peoria Zoning Board of Appeals on January 9, 2012, to provide comments concerning potential threats of erosion and sedimentation to Fon du Lac Seep LWR.
 2. Sent a letter to the Mayor of East Peoria, Dave Mingus, expressing concerns regarding potential threats of erosion and sedimentation to Fon du Lac Seep LWR. Mr. Lerczak also prepared a response, on behalf of IDNR Director Miller, to a letter of inquiry sent to Governor Quinn from an East Peoria resident concerning potential threats of erosion and sedimentation to Fon du Lac Seep LWR and Bennett's Terraqueous Gardens NP.
 3. In cooperation with an IDNR Conservation Police Officer, investigated deer poaching at Elkhart Hill Grove NP.
 4. Reviewed documents and provided information to the INPC's defense specialist regarding the Class III Groundwater designation for Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep NP.
 5. As a representative of the INPC, attended an Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) public meeting and a meeting with IDOT concerning the Eastern Bypass Study in Tazewell and Woodford counties.
- G. Mary Kay Solecki:
1. Researched and ordered trail cameras to be used in an effort to catch ginseng poachers at a NP.
 2. Reviewed plans and attended an on-site meeting regarding hydrotesting of a natural gas pipeline at Upper Sangamon River LWR.
- H. Boundary surveys were conducted in the following locations:
1. Area 4 (Moorehouse) Cedar Glen NP, Stony Hills NP, and Thistle Hills LWR.
 2. Area 7 (Newman)
 3. Area 8 (Edgin) Schulte Woods NP
- I. Threats to Sites within INPC programs:
1. **Foley Sand Prairie NP, Lee County – John Nelson, Jenny Skufca**
 - a. Issue: Proposed wind farm construction and operation. Mainstream Power USA proposes to construct a major wind energy generation facility in Lee, Whiteside, and Bureau counties.
 - b. Threat: Wind turbines (up to 520 feet high) are proposed for locations which will result in shadow flicker, noise, ground vibration, and obtrusive visibility within the NP. Flicker, noise, and vibration have the potential to alter animal behaviors which could shift the existing balance of flora and fauna within the NP.
 - c. Status: New. The IDNR is preparing consultation recommendations to Lee County seeking a one-mile setback from the NP boundaries. This would eliminate the three nearest wind turbines (700 feet, 1400 feet, and 4200 feet) from the NP. Some potential for flicker from a fourth turbine may remain, but one mile should greatly reduce noise and vibration impacts. Up to a dozen wind turbines would remain within three miles of the NP and will be clearly visible from within it, but there is no practical setback to address visibility consistent with building the wind farm. Whiteside County and Bureau County are already holding hearings on this wind project, but the nearest Whiteside turbines are already located more than one mile from the NP. Lee County will be holding hearings on this proposal sometime this spring. The wind farm must be operational by December 31, 2012, to qualify for federal energy subsidies. The INPC submitted a letter to the Lee County Zoning Office on December 22, 2011,

- outlining the INPC's wind project review protocol. The letter also urged a greater setback from high quality natural areas, especially those protected under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act.
2. **Middlefork Savanna NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
 - a. Issue: An adjacent landowner, Knollwood Golf Club, dredged a golf course pond and piped sediment into the NP owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District.
 - b. Threat: Direct and indirect impact to aquatic resources/ephemeral ponds in the NP and at the Knollwood Club. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined wetlands are jurisdictional.
 - c. Status: Ongoing. INPC staff have reviewed and provided comments on a complaint drafted by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). The INPC is awaiting notice of any progress from the OAG.
 3. **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 former Aurora Sportsman's Club.
 - b. Threat: Lead shot poses a threat to humans and the environment.
 - c. Status: Ongoing. INPC staff are working with the NP landowner, Forest Preserve District of Kane County (FPDKC), to minimize impact to the NP. IDNR Contaminant Assessment staff and INPC staff presented the issue to the IEPA's Division of Public Water Supply staff. The FPDKC has informed the INPC that further sampling will be conducted by its consultant. The INPC has recently received additional reports submitted to the IEPA and has been asked to provide comments to Shaw Environmental, the consultant for the current owner of the former Aurora Sportsman's Club property, Sugar Grove Holding Company. The INPC is also working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The IDNR's Office of Legal Counsel has forwarded a referral to the OAG.
 4. **Trout Park NP, Kane County – Steven Byers**
 - a. Issue: Increased surface runoff from I-90 and the Route 25 interchange.
 - b. Threat: Increased runoff has eroded a channel that allows surface water to enter groundwater-fed streams during high rainfall events.
 - c. Status: INPC staff met with the Tollway Authority and consultants to address the problem.
 5. **Bluff Spring Fen NP, Cook County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
 - a. Issue: The Fen Protection Plan between the INPC and Bluff City Materials, Inc. calls for conveyance of surface water from Gifford Lake to Poplar Creek through proposed stormwater piping.
 - b. Threat: Surface water represents a threat to this groundwater-dependent wetland.
 - c. Status: Permitting is now in place to begin construction of a pipe that will divert water as planned. INPC staff attended a meeting, hosted by the site's landowner, FPDCC, regarding the proposed stormwater piping project. At the meeting, Bluff City Materials, Inc. requested that the landowner and the INPC assist with seeking additional funds before initiating the project.
 6. **North Dunes NP, Lake County –**
 - a. Issue 1 (**Randy Heidorn**): Expansion of Lake County Public Water District (LCPWD) facilities.
 - b. Threat: The LCPWD currently owns in-holdings within the NP where it withdraws water from Lake Michigan. The LCPWD also owns pipelines along 17th Street. The LCPWD is suggesting that the IDNR transfer eight lots within the NP to the LCPWD to allow for expansion of its facilities and secondary access. The NP is located within a historically platted, but not fully developed, subdivision. The only in-holdings along 17th Street not owned by IDNR are the three lots owned by the LCPWD and another owned by the Waukegan Port Authority. Only the IDNR lots are dedicated as NP in this section of the NP. The alleys and streets are not dedicated. Such transfer of land would be considered a taking under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (Act) and would invoke proceedings prescribed in Section 14 of the Act.
 - c. Status: New: The IDNR is initiating discussions with the LCPWD. Since the alleys and streets are not dedicated as NP, the IDNR should be able to work out a solution for those areas. However, use of dedicated land for this expansion is much less likely. The Act allows taking for another purpose only if "an imperative and unavoidable public necessity" exists. As alternatives exist, such a finding may not be possible.
 - d. Issue 2 (**Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**): Proposal of shoreline revetment and underwater reef installment just north of the NP.
 - e. Threat: The proposed actions are expected to cause increased erosion of sand, cutting deeper into the natural communities of the NP.

- f. Status: New. The INPC has solicited and received comments related to the proposed project from a coastal geologist who advised that the project will accomplish the desired outcome but will likely further erode the NP unless sand nourishment occurs at a rate of 80,000 cubic yards per year.
7. **Salt Creek Woods NP, Cook County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
- Issue: Sewer line construction proposed for an existing right-of-way that lies adjacent to the NP.
 - Threat: The proposed construction project could directly impact the NP through construction activities and indirectly by altering the surface hydrology, allowing sedimentation.
 - Status: New. INPC staff have coordinated with IDNR Consultation, the NP landowner (FPDCC), and site stewards to ensure that the project will not impact the NP.
8. **Oakwood Hills Fen NP, Bates Fen NP, and multiple INAI sites, McHenry County – Steven Byers**
- Issue: Maintenance of an existing pipeline.
 - Threat: Unintended, direct and indirect impact to multiple sites of statewide ecological significance. The maintenance project calls for construction of pits to install equipment and excavation to repair pipelines.
 - Status: New. INPC staff is coordinating with the NP landowner (MCCD), pipeline officials, USFWS, and IDNR Consultation to ensure the project will not impact high quality natural areas.
9. **Belmont Prairie NP, DuPage County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca**
- Issue: NP landowner, Downers Grove Park District (DGPD), provided the INPC with a proposal to use a portion of the NP buffer for recreational ball fields.
 - Threat: Potential to adversely impact the significant features of the NP through changes to groundwater and surface hydrology, including the potential input of chemicals used to maintain ball fields and parking lots, and potential lighting impacts to high-quality natural communities.
 - Status: New. An INPC staff assessment was provided to the DGPD on February 27, 2012, outlining potential concerns and defining the proposal's incompatibility with guidance in the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act and its associated administrative rules regarding the use of buffer. Staff found no precedent for the proposed action. A response from the DGPD was received by email on March 8, 2012, stating that it has no intention of proceeding at this time.
10. **Tallmadge Sand Forest LWR, Kankakee County – Kim Roman, Jenny Skufca**
- Issue: 88 white oak trees were removed from within the LWR.
 - Threat: Direct impact to the LWR due to unauthorized removal of trees, creation of over 4,000 feet of up to 18-inch ruts throughout the interior of the LWR, and removal of signs.
 - Status: Ongoing. The IDNR Office of Legal Counsel, with input from the INPC, has provided revisions to the Complaint for Injunction and Civil Penalties. The IDNR and INPC are now awaiting review and approval by the OAG on a Motion to Intervene due to the case's current pending litigation status.
11. **Short Fork Seep NP, McDonough County – Angella Moorehouse, Jenny Skufca**
- Issue: The landowner discovered that herbicide associated with power line vegetative maintenance had been used within the NP.
 - Threat: Direct impact to flora in the NP causing damage to the vegetation and soils within the high quality portion of the NP.
 - Status: Ongoing. The OAG has filed a Complaint for Injunctive and Other Relief in the Circuit Court for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, McDonough County.
12. **White Rock LWR and Salt Lick Point LWR, Monroe County – Debbie Newman, Jenny Skufca**
- Issue: Proposed wind farm construction and operation. The developer, Admiral Parkway, has proposed construction of a commercial wind energy generation facility within one mile of the LWRs.
 - Threat: Wind turbines may result in shadow flicker, noise, ground vibration, and obtrusive visibility from points within the LWRs. Flicker, noise, and vibration have the potential to alter animal behaviors which could shift the existing balance of flora and fauna within the LWRs.
 - Status: New. Monroe County is considering a new wind turbine siting ordinance which is planned for adoption this summer. The Admiral Parkway project is the only pending commercial wind project in Monroe County. It must be completed by the end of the calendar year to qualify for federal subsidies. The IDNR is preparing consultation recommendations to Monroe County which will include the applicant seeking Incidental Take Authorization (ITA) for 14 state-listed endangered or threatened animals, many of which occur within the LWRs, but the "action area" for an ITA cannot include LWRs or NPs. Three of the animal species are also federally-listed under the Endangered Species Act. Should the County approve this project in its current location, and Admiral Parkway not seek ITAs as

recommended, legal action by state agencies may be required to defend the protected resources. The INPC submitted correspondence to the Monroe County Board of Commissioners on December 13, 2010, outlining INPC's wind project review protocol and urged a greater setback from high quality natural areas, especially those protected under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act. On April 4, 2012, the INPC submitted correspondence to the Monroe County Zoning Office making specific recommendations for inclusion in the County's draft wind ordinance, particularly highlighting a need for the County to fully investigate subterranean geologic conditions prior to development.

13. **Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR, Jasper County – Bob Edgin, Jenny Skufca**

- a. Issue: Sign theft and unauthorized mowing at the LWR.
- b. Threat: Recurring violations of the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act.
- c. Status: New. Perpetrator admitted to wrong doing and was issued a citation for unlawful entry by an IDNR Conservation Police Officer. Since this was the suspect's first charged offense, the Jasper County State's Attorney used his prosecutorial discretion and opted not to pursue charges.

VII. Stewardship Program:

- A. Jenny Skufca, Tom Lerczak, and Bob Edgin facilitated acquisition of new, lightweight boundary signs and sign drivers as a result of the recommendations received during staff meetings on improving the INPC's real estate monitoring protocol.
- B. John Nelson provided a brief presentation to the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD) Board to answer and discuss questions regarding pine plantation harvesting at Sugar River Alder NP in response to public scrutiny over pine harvesting at other WCFPD sites.
- C. Randy Heidorn:
 1. As the Presiding Officer for the Illinois Prescribed Burn Managers Certification Board (IPBMCB), conducted the 5th meeting of the IBPMB. At that meeting, the IPBMCB approved a recommendation for amendments to the administrative rule that would enlarge the board, set a quorum for the board, and extend the deadline that allows a procedure for grandfathering in experience for certification. These amendments have been approved by the Director of IDNR and have been submitted for adoption to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.
 2. Participated in an after action report process to assess the IDNR's response to a wildfire that occurred at Pere Marquette SP in November, 2011.
 3. Reviewed the proposed Utility Damage Prevention Act (HB3884), and assisted the IDNR in its opposition to this bill. This bill would have banned planting, including natural regeneration of trees, that could reach 25 feet or more within 20 feet of transmission or distribution lines and poles, authorized the utilities to come onto any lands and remove trees, and make it a crime to interfere with the removal. Mr. Heidorn attended a hearing of the House Public Utilities Committee in opposition to said legislation under the direction of the IDNR legislative liaison.
- D. Tom Lerczak:
 1. Mobilized prescribed fire equipment to control a wildfire at Sand Ridge State Forest on March 20, 2012.
 2. Coordinated the FY12 sign order (various INPC signs and specialty restriction signs), steel post order, and herbicide order.
 3. Coordinated with INPC staff to distribute herbicide, signs, and steel posts to field locations.
 4. Provided a written opinion to the Pekin Park District concerning a possible orienteering event at Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR.
 5. Sent a letter to a citizen in response to a comment on the INPC's Facebook page concerning signage at Carpenter Park NP.
- E. Debbie Newman distributed herbicide licenses to eight volunteers.
- F. Bob Edgin:
 1. Continued to serve on an ecological restoration team for a super fund mitigation site in Lawrence County.
 2. Administered a contract for growing and transplanting of a minimum of 2,500 state endangered royal catchfly (*Silene regia*) plants in the Prairie Ridge COA. A minimum of 250 plants were introduced into each of seven sites that are NPs or LWRs.
- G. Stewardship Planning:
 1. Kelly Neal:
 - a. Attended the annual Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) Researchers Meeting to determine 2012 protocols for monitoring, cross-pollination, and seed distribution. The orchid occurs at more than 20 INPC sites.

- b. Met with Kathi Davis, IDNR Office of Realty and Environment Planning (OREP), to discuss 2012 gypsy moth control in northern Illinois and subsequent INPC permitting needs.
 - c. Participated in meetings with ORC staff and Office of Strategic Services staff to continue planning for an electronic ORC permit management system which would include INPC permitting.
 - d. Reviewed 39 management schedules, five unscheduled management activities, two deer management proposals, and five management related CERPs at INPC sites.
 - e. Developed protocols and coordinated review with the INPC, DNH, and OREP of 85 National Pollution Discharge Eliminations System (NPDES) permit applications and approvals for herbicide/pesticide treatments adjacent to, or within, INPC sites. Reviewed initial information for three NPDES utility right-of-way permit applications.
 - f. Continued administration of INPC's special use permitting, having issued over 260 permits with approximately 140 additional permits in various stages of review or pending further information. The proposed ORC permit management system should allow for more accurate tracking and reporting of permit numbers.
 - g. Worked to update landowner contact information in the existing stewardship program database.
 - h. Researched, coordinated, or prepared three correspondences in response to issues or concerns conveyed to the INPC by landowner partners, volunteers, and the public.
2. Kelly Neal attended, and Jenny Skufca participated by phone, in a meeting with the USFWS, Hanson Material Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey to discuss groundwater information, models, and adaptive management considerations for habitat (including INPC sites) within the Hine's emerald dragonfly HCP area.
 3. Steven Byers attended, and Kelly Neal participated by phone, in a meeting sponsored by the FPDCC and USFWS to address hydrology issues, erosion, and gulying in areas of the Hine's emerald dragonfly habitat at McMahan Woods and Fen NP.
 4. Kelly Neal and Kim Roman participated in a meeting with the FPDWC, USFWS, and Midwest Gen regarding the management of the rail line adjacent to Lockport Prairie NP. Ms. Neal participated in a subsequent conference call to consider monitoring objectives and adaptive management procedures to address potential rail line impacts to the Hine's emerald dragonfly habitat at Lockport Prairie NP.
 5. Russell Heinrichs:
 - a. Met with Unimin Mine representatives concerning an annual charitable donation.
 - b. Attended a Middle Rock Conservation partnership meeting.
 - c. Attended a Land Conservancy of McHenry County meeting.
 - d. Prepared management plans for: Colored Sands Bluff NP, Sugar River Alder NP, Hanover Bluff NP, Sentinel NP, Ayers Sand Prairie NP, Wilkinson-Renwick Marsh NP, and Harlem Hills NP.
 - e. Met with staff of Northern Illinois University to discuss stewardship and future use of Pine Rock NP.
 6. Steven Byers:
 - a. Hosted a Wolf Road Prairie meeting to review management needs and take steps to finalize the management schedule for the site.
 - b. Met with representatives of the Tollway Authority regarding hydrological concerns at Trout Park NP. Mr. Byers also presented a package of information on opportunities to protect the Forested Fen INAI site at Fox River Country Day School and assist with stewardship of other sites as part of a Tollway mitigation package acceptable to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
 7. Ray Geroff and Angella Moorehouse completed management plan revisions for nine INPC sites.
 8. Tom Lerczak met with advocates, volunteers, owners, and/or managers to discuss the plan for management or provide material support for management for the following sites: Carpenter Park NP, Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR, Black Partridge Park Woods LWR, and Walden West LWR.
 9. Mary Kay Solecki updated and/or planned stewardship activities with the landowners of Horseshoe Bottom NP and Prospect Cemetery Prairie NP.
 10. Debbie Newman:
 - a. Attended a Salt Lick Point Committee meeting.
 - b. Coordinated a plant survey project between a volunteer and the landowner at a Jersey County LWR.
 11. Bob Edgin:
 - a. Contacted landowners of 11 protected sites to discuss management issues.
 - b. Met with staff from Vincennes University to discuss trail renovation and relocation at Robeson Hills following storms that felled numerous trees, destroyed two foot bridges, and severely damaged a suspension bridge.

- c. Updated management plans for: Karcher's Post Oak Woods NP, Lost Creek Marsh NP, Robeson Hills NP, Schulte Woods NP, Lost Creek Marsh LWR, Robeson Hills LWR, Edward V. Price Woods LWR, Culley Barrens LWR, P & E Refuge LWR, Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR, Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR, Padgett Brothers Sweet Gum Woods LWR, Ping Prairie at Huskey Hollow NHL, Lake Sara Flatwoods NHL, Green Prairie NHL, Allison Gravel Prairie NHL.
- H. Stewardship project implementation: Staff continued to coordinate and administer stewardship projects, including the Hill Prairie Project, funded by the Landowners Incentive Program, State Wildlife Grant, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, IEPA 319 Grant, NAAF, CW Grants, and INPC operations fund. These projects involve meeting with landowners, securing landowner agreements, preparation 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): Sterne's Fen NP, Wolf Road Prairie NP, Trout Park NP, Bluff Spring Fen NP, Fox River Fen NP, Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP, and McHenry County wetlands phragmites control.
 - 2. Area 3 (Roman): Messenger Woods NP, Superior Street Prairie LWR, Mskoda LWR, and Des Plaines Dolomite Prairies LWR.
 - 3. Area 4 (Moorehouse and Geroff): Stony Hills NP, Cedar Glen NP, Black Hawk Forest NP, Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP, Short Fork Seep NP, Harper's Woods NP, Samuel Barnum Mead Savanna NP, Robinson Park Hill Prairies NP, Singing Woods NP, Grubb Hollow Prairie NP, Nenawakwa LWR, Robert A. Evers LWR, Cecil White Prairie LWR, Thistle Hills LWR, McFarland Hill LWR, two sites within the Siloam Springs COA, and three sites within the Upper Mississippi River COA.
 - 4. Area 5 (Lerczak): Black Partridge Park Woods LWR, Chinquapin Bluffs LWR, and Mackinaw River LWR.
 - 5. Area 6 (Solecki): Woodyard Memorial Conservation Area LWR and Riverbend LWR.
 - 6. Area 7 (Newman): Prairie of the Rock NP, Storment Hauss NP, Armin Krueger Speleological NP, Brickey-Gonterman Memorial Hill Prairie NP, DesPain Wetlands LWR, Prairie of the Rock Overlook LWR, White Rock LWR, and Salt Lick Point LWR.
- I. 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 include:
- 1. Area 1 (Nelson and Heinrichs): Freeport Prairie NP, Wirth Prairie NP, Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow NP, Boone Creek Fen NP, Harlem Hills NP, Volo Bog NP, Illinois Beach NP, Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP, Illinois Beach State Park (SP), Rock Cut SP, Chain O' Lakes SP, and Moraine Hills SP.
 - 2. Area 2 (Byers): Volo Bog NP, Hybernia NP, Sterne's Fen NP, Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP, Trout Park NP, Wheeler Fen LWR, and Shaw Woods and Fen NHL.
 - 3. Area 3 (Roman): Short Pioneer Cemetery Prairie NP, Hildy Prairie NP, Yorkville Prairie NP, Wilmington Shrub Prairie NP, Wolf Road Prairie NP, Goose Lake Prairie NP, Long Run Seep NP, Ayers Sand Prairie NP, Voight Pauper Cemetery Prairie LWR, Des Plaines Dolomite Prairies LWR, Sweet Fern Savanna LWR, and Superior Street Prairie LWR.
 - 4. Area 4 (Moorehouse and Geroff): Stony Hills NP, Black Hawk Forest NP, Cedar Glen NP, and assisted DNH staff in Region IV with prescribed burns of 14 additional units.
 - 5. Area 5 (Lerczak): Tomlin Timber NP, Fon du Lac Seep LWR, Cooper Park Wetlands LWR, and Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR.
 - 6. Area 6 (Solecki): Barnhart Prairie Restoration NP, Horseshoe Bottom NP, Loda Cemetery Prairie NP, Upper Sangamon River LWR, Embarras Bluffs NHL, and Luke Woods NHL.
 - 7. Area 7 (Newman): Prairie of the Rock NP, Salt Lick Point LWR, Prairie of the Rock Overlook LWR, DesPain Wetlands LWR, Martha and Michelle Prairie LWR, Harry's Prairie NHL, and Pere Marquette SP.
 - 8. Area 8 (Edgin): Beadles Barrens NP, Beall Woods NP, Lost Creek Marsh NP, Robeson Hills NP, Jasper County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP, Marion County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP, Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR, P & E Refuge LWR, Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR, Horn Prairie Grove LWR, Chauncey Marsh LWR, Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR, Lake Sara Flatwoods NHL, Green Prairie NHL and Green Prairie NHL, Pyramid SP, Ramsey Lake SP, Stephen Forbes SP, Ballard Nature Center, Iroquois County Conservation Area, and Crawford County Conservation Area.

**Illinois Department of Natural Resources
report to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
at the 211th meeting, May 8, 2012**

Natural Heritage Resident Interns

Hannah Kalk, Stefanie Ervin, Michael Blackowicz, Ray Geroff, Russell Heinrichs and Christy Troxell-Thomas completed their one year natural heritage internship. There will not be a resident intern program in 2012 due to the tight budget. We are exploring ways to return the program in 2013. The resident intern is a one-year, paid, full-time position with Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) 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 64 resident interns since the program began in 1993. The intern program is funded by the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF).

Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month (ISAM)

The Governor issued a proclamation declaring May “Invasive Species Awareness Month” to encourage Illinois residents to learn about ways they can help combat the introduction and spread of invasive plants and animals in the state. The IDNR recognized invasive species management efforts in the state with an awards ceremony May 1, 2012 at IDNR headquarters in Springfield. Karen Tharp was recognized as the Professional of the Year for her work as Volunteer Stewardship Network Coordinator and supervisor of the Southern Illinois Invasive Plant Species Strike team for The Nature Conservancy. The Illinois Department of Transportation Region 1, District 1 was recognized as the Organization of the Year for its role in supporting the development and establishment of the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership and for conducting a multi-year invasive plant mapping, control and monitoring project along its highways. Greg White was recognized as Volunteer of the Year for his work with the Southern Illinois Weed Watch Project. The Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month website at www.invasive.org/illinois lists more than 60 events and resources to combat invasive species in Illinois.

Stewardship grants and contracts

The US Forest Service, through the Hazardous Fuels Reduction on Non- Federal Lands grant program, approved a grant request for \$112,000. The grant will be used for brush clearing and prescribed burn management for 127 acres at Des Plaines Dolomite Prairie Land and Water Reserve in Will County.

The US Forest Service, through the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry grant program, provided \$110,000 to the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation for “Applying an Exotic Plant Strike Team Strategy to Improve Forest Health in Northwest Illinois.” The grant will be used to hire a two-person, full-time team to work on invasive species control and prescribed burning in natural areas in 11 counties in northwestern Illinois for a two year period. There will be a monitoring and mapping component of the work as well. Nature preserves and land and water reserves are priority treatment areas.

IDNR’s FY2012 NAAF stewardship program has started with contract work planned at approximately 15 state owned nature preserves and land and water reserves. The contracts are funded with approximately \$256,000 from the Natural Areas Acquisition

Fund (NAAF) and are matched by more than \$500,000 of other funds. Ducks Unlimited received a \$75,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to restore wetlands and associated uplands at Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve in McHenry County.

Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI)

The 59th Natural Areas Evaluation Committee (NAEC) meeting was held on March 20, 2012. Actions taken at the meeting resulted in the addition of two new Category I sites containing grade B dry and dry-mesic upland woodlands and grade B dry-mesic barrens and sandstone cliff community. Category I designation was added to two current INAI sites for the presence of grade A mesic upland forest, grade A mesic dolomite cliff communities and grade B loess hill prairie. The combined acreage for these four sites represents 45.5 acres of high quality natural community added to the INAI.

The 60th NAEC meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2012. The agenda will include at least three new sites with Category I high quality natural communities. The Division of Natural Heritage has made the review of nominations from the recently completed INAI Update a priority workload item for the coming field season. To date, the IDNR has approved 19 nominations from the Update, there are 63 sites that are under review by IDNR and Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) field staff, and the Illinois Natural History Survey is still processing approximately 90 nominations. The table below shows the field review status by INPC Natural Area Preservation Specialist.

INPC Field Review	# of Sites									
	Angella	Bob	Debbie	John	Kim	Mary Kay	Steve	Tom	Vacant	Total
INHS processing	4	17	12	18	6	3	2	7	21	90
Field Review	4	14	6	9	10	7	4	4	5	63
INAI - Accepted	2	1		1	5	1	2	6	1	19
Questions		1				2		2	2	7
INAI - Pending	1		2							3
Total	11	33	20	28	21	13	8	19	29	182

The field review stage is critical for the INAI. The Update team conducted the field work and provided the IDNR the necessary information for the NAEC to take action on individual sites. However, the Natural Heritage and INPC field staffs also have valuable experience with INAI natural communities. This field review allows the staff the ability to make comments and adjust the nominations. No nominations have been rejected but approximately one-third of all nominations have been modified from what was submitted, mostly in minor ways. This is not an indictment of the work of the Update staff, but reflects the quality control as well as an enhancement of the work product from the Update. The field review adds a seasoned perspective as well as increased value to the high quality product that we continue to receive from the Update team.



To: Commissioners

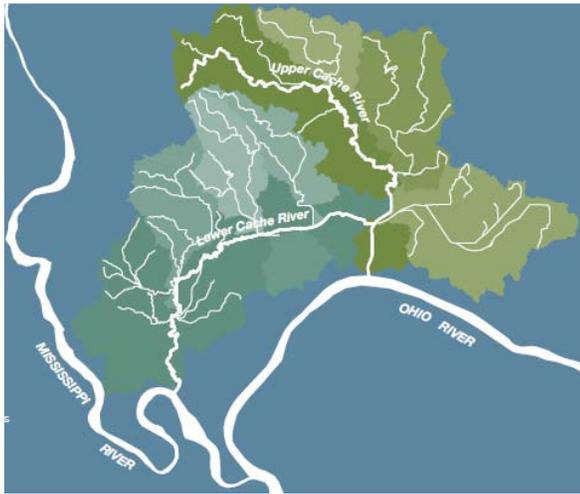
From: Kelly Neal, Jenny Skufca, and Randy Heidorn

Date: May 4, 2012

Subject: Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Staff Recommendation Regarding Item 24 – Cache River Hydrology Demonstration Project

Background:

The Cache River basin is located in the extreme southern part of Illinois, just north of the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Because of its unique location at a junction of major rivers and at the confluence of

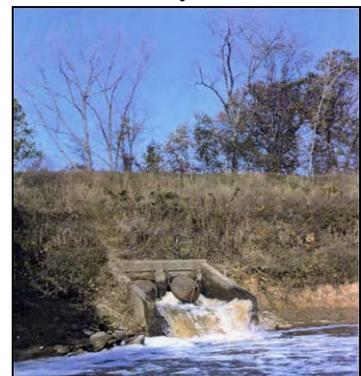


different topographic and physiographic regions, the Cache River basin exhibits diverse physical, chemical, and biological features resulting in a great diversity of natural communities with many plant and animal species on the edge of their geographic range. Some of the natural communities within the basin are relatively undisturbed and still support the full range of species and natural character they displayed prior to human disturbance. Many of the bald cypress trees (*Taxodium distichum*) in the cypress-tupelo swamps in the basin are more than 1,000 years old and are near the northernmost extent of the range for this species. The Cache River basin contains nationally and internationally significant habitats that merit protection and restoration. However, changes in land use practices and hydrologic modifications have significantly threatened the ecological integrity of some of the important

habitats and wetlands in the basin, which include 113 species considered threatened or endangered in Illinois, as well as 17 species listed in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) as species in greatest need of conservation.

The basin covers parts of six southern Illinois counties. The total drainage area of the basin is 737 square miles. Since the construction of the Post Creek Cutoff in 1915, the Cache River basin has been divided into two sub-watersheds: the Upper and Lower Cache River watersheds. The Upper Cache River watershed consists of the eastern part of the Cache River basin with a drainage area of 368 square miles; it drains directly to the Ohio River through the Post Creek Cutoff. The Lower Cache River watershed consists of the western part of the Cache River basin with a drainage area of 358 square miles; it drains to the Mississippi River through a diversion channel at the downstream end of the River.

The Karnak Levee, along the western bank of the Post Creek Cutoff near Karnak, separates the Upper and Lower Cache River watersheds. This levee was built across the old Cache River channel in 1952 and forces drainage from the Upper Cache River to flow directly to the Ohio River through the Post Creek Cutoff. It was also designed to prevent any flood from the Upper Cache and Ohio Rivers from backing into the Lower Cache River. The Karnak Levee was designed with two 48-inch gated culverts to allow local drainage along the west side of the levee to flow to the Post Creek Cutoff. The Karnak Levee breached in 2003, causing portions of the Lower Cache to flow directly into the Post Creek Cutoff. Eleven square



East side of Karnak Levee prior to the breach showing two gated culverts releasing water from the Lower Cache River into the Post Creek Cutoff.

miles of the Lower Cache River watershed flowed eastward through the breach and culverts, draining into the Ohio River via the Post Creek Cutoff reversing the flow through this portion of the original channel.

Prior to the breach, drainage from the Lower Cache River watershed was assumed to flow west into the Mississippi River. However, a considerable amount of water from the eastern portions of the Lower Cache River currently flows east to the Post Creek Cutoff. This easterly flow also occurred during flood events prior to the breach when both the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were above flood stage. The hydraulics of the Lower Cache River are very complex. Since the division of the Cache River basin into two watersheds, the Lower Cache River does not receive flow from the Upper Cache River to maintain a sustained flow in the downstream direction.¹



Clearer water draining from the Lower Cache River flowing from the breach in the Karnak Levee as it enters the Post Creek Cutoff.

The Cache River basin has experienced impaired water quality that threatens its biodiversity; much of this is due to human modifications to the aquatic and terrestrial watershed (IEPA 2008)². Rivers need free-flowing water. The gentle current of a free-flowing river brings oxygen and dissolved nutrients, while also moving pollutants out of the system. A river and its connected natural areas are most healthy, diverse, and sustainable when water is flowing through them. Further, aquatic animals must be able to move freely to find suitable habitat for breeding and survival during periods of drought.

A current initiative of the Joint Venture Partnership, which includes Ducks Unlimited Inc., the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Natural Resource Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is to restore flow variability and physical connectivity between the upper and lower segments of the Cache River. This is also a goal in the IWAP, as well as the management plans for Lower Cache River “Reserve” which includes Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve and Buttonland Swamp, a part of Cache River Land and Water Reserve and a National Natural Landmark.

Proposal:

The restoration project to reconnect the Upper and Lower Cache River channels has been postponed in order to address water quality issues and ecological integrity in the Lower Cache. Although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Illinois State Water Survey have provided critical information about how water flows through the system, additional detail is needed to advance this project into final design and planning. Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIUC) sought and received a State Wildlife Grant titled, “Demonstrating the benefits of Stream Restoration to Aquatic Communities in the Cache River Basin.” In the grant, SIUC proposed a pilot project that would assess and demonstrate the effects of increasing stream flow on oxygen dynamics and macroinvertebrate communities in the Lower Cache River. This project has the potential to demonstrate the benefits of restoring even, low flows to the Lower Cache system. Data obtained should aid in selecting the pathway and designing the channel/connection structure necessary to rejoin the upper and lower segments of the Cache River.

Two options for conducting this demonstration have been proposed by SIUC. The first option has been determined to be the best possible demonstration design, while the second option attempts to take into account certain limitations presented by the state’s recent litigation concerning that section of the Cache River.

Preferred Option:

Reconnection would be simulated by creating flow in the Lower Cache River east of State Route 37, monitoring four sites and comparing them to four reference sites in the Upper Cache River. Dissolved oxygen, primary production, turbidity, and duckweed cover would be assessed. Results would allow quantitative assessment of changes in dissolved oxygen and stream metabolism to increased flows. The pilot project should also help to determine how increasing flow in the Lower Cache channel would affect the production, abundance, and diversity of macroinvertebrate communities through sampling.

Simulating the goal of restoring flowing water in the Lower Cache River would entail pumping up to 10 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the Buttonland Swamp west of State Route 37 into the eastern section of the Lower Cache that includes Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve. Buttonland Swamp is part of Cache River Land and Water Reserve. Researchers at SIUC have documented that the Lower Cache River is often oxygen deficient during much of the summertime. To conduct this pilot project, SIUC would station a pump alongside the River, next to State Route 37, and pump up to ten10 cfs of water eastward beginning in late June, 2012. The pilot project would end sometime in the late summer or early fall. This is when seasonal rainfall typically recharges the system, and the water surface elevation exceeds 328.4 feet within the managed area. Additionally, the pump would be turned off during any storm events.

Second Option:

Although the preferred option has been deemed most desirable, as it more closely mimics actual reconnection of the River segments during periods of very low flow, a second option has been designed in the event the IDNR determines that it does not want to conduct the preferred option. Occurring entirely within Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve, the second option would examine potential responses only to enhanced flows. It is intended to serve as a demonstration of the first step in the reconnection process. A pump would be stationed alongside the River, just east of one of the biological and oxygen monitoring sites. Up to 10 cfs of water would be pumped alongside the River in semi-rigid tubing for 300-500 feet, at which point it would be returned to the Cache River. This option would create a 300-500 foot reach of recirculating water that would allow for examining responses to enhanced River flow at a much smaller scale. This version of the low flow pilot project proposed by SIUC would enhance the flow normally expected in this segment of the River during the dry summer months by recirculation of existing water. Water from the River would be recirculated at a rate of up to 10 cfs for up to 10-12 weeks through use of a large electric pump. SIUC would pump this volume of water beginning in late June, 2012. The project would end sometime in the late summer or early fall, depending on River levels. The pump would be turned off during storm events.

Intended benefit:

The in-stream pilot project is intended to quantify oxygen dynamics in the Lower Cache River before and after the addition of water to simulate reconnection. The project would also contribute to attaining many of the goals of the IWAP including: (i) *increasing the knowledge of distribution and abundance of wildlife*, (ii) *describing stream habitat and conditions*, (iii) *describing problems in the stream*, and (iv) *describing effects of a proposed conservation project* (IDNR 2005). The stream reaches included in this pilot demonstration have populations of the state endangered cypress minnow (*Hybognathus hayi*), and the rare dragonfly (*Arigomphus maxwelli*). SIUC will monitor macroinvertebrate communities in the River for two years while documenting oxygen dynamics in the stream. SIUC hopes to provide quantitative information on how the proposed reconnection of the Cache River would influence water quality and in-stream communities, emphasizing this influence during periods of very low flow that frequently and regularly occur during the dry summer months in the Midwestern United States.

This pilot project also addresses many of the stream-specific goals of the IWAP, including actions 7a and 7b, *increasing our understanding of baseline conditions and the effects of altered hydrology and water quality* (IDNR 2005). By simulating stream reconnection, it should demonstrate how a future restoration effort would influence in-stream habitat quality and stream ecosystem processes (secondary production of macroinvertebrates and stream metabolism). The goal is to restore a more natural hydrology in the Lower Cache River. Because this pilot project would allow SIUC to quantify a gradient of influence from increased flow (the morphology of the channel is not uniform, so increasing discharge would have different effects on water velocity in each reach), it expects responses of stream ecosystem processes would be correlated to the reach-specific change in flow. SIUC would directly measure the effects of low water velocity and dissolved oxygen on the stream, two parameters which placed the Cache River on the impaired waters list (IEPA 2008).

The ultimate purpose of this “simulated reconnection” of the Cache River is to provide information that would allow for informed cost-benefit analyses of reconnecting the Cache River while also informing the final design and planning process. Data would allow for the selection of a pathway for reconnection while also identifying the

design of the hydraulic pathway and structural mechanism necessary to establish physical connectivity between the disconnected river segments.

Legal Authorities and Responsibilities:

Section 4000.570 Permits for Research or Educational Activities states:

“a) Application may be made to the Commission or Department for permission to conduct research or educational activities in nature preserves, using a Special Use Permit. The permit forms are available upon request from the Commission or Department. Whether the proposed activities would be carried out by an individual or by an organization, a permit is issued to an individual, who is then responsible for other persons or organization members referenced in the permit. To conduct research activities on nature preserves owned by public land managing agencies, a separate permit from the landowner or custodian may be required; in such cases the applicant must first obtain an approved permit from the landowner or custodian before applying to the Commission. b) Examples of activities which require an approved permit include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) Removal of any substance in the nature preserve, such as plant or animal material, soil, surface water, groundwater, and archaeological artifacts, in accordance with Section 4000.580; 2) Installation of monitoring equipment or other items; areas to be visited, frequency and length of visits, and detailed description of disturbances to be made; the species or objects to be taken, number of specimens, method of taking, and disposition of specimens. f) Each permit may contain specific provisions and restrictions. A permit may be modified, suspended, or revoked by the Commission and Department for violation of conditions of the permit, this Section, or based upon a determination of the Commission and Department that the activity jeopardizes the preserve.”

The Rules for Management of Nature Preserves (17 Ill. Adm. Code, Part 4000) states:

“Section 4000.440 Water Level Control. Natural water levels shall not be altered. Water levels which have been altered by artificial means which include, but are not limited to, installation of drain tiles and creation of ditches, may be changed if identified in the master plan or management schedule as essential for the maintenance and restoration of natural conditions or to protect significant or notable features.”

The Register of Land and Water Reserves (17 Ill. Adm. Code, Part 4010) states:

“Section 4010.240 Prohibited Management b) Altering of natural water levels is prohibited in registered areas. Water levels which have been artificially altered may be changed if such change is identified in the management program as being essential for the maintenance and restoration of natural or desired conditions.”

The Rules for Management of Nature Preserves (17 Ill. Adm. Codes, Part 4000) also states:

“Section 4000.120 Applicability of Rules c) Management, development, or uses of a specific preserve, not otherwise allowed under the rules, may be allowed as a provision of the master plan for the site, or may be approved by the Commission under Section 4000.160 of this Part.”

and

“Section 4000.160 Approval of Specific Management Activities

Management activities otherwise prohibited under the rules or an approved master plan may be approved by the Commission upon written request of the owner. The request must outline the objective of the management activity, and identify the natural communities and any threatened or endangered species, or significant or notable natural features, that may be affected by the proposed activity. If the Commission determines that the proposed activity will enhance the natural features of the preserve, consistent with the proposal for dedication, the Commission shall approve the request. The Commission may, with reasonable notice to the custodian, withdraw approval for management activities previously granted if it is subsequently determined that the activity may have an adverse impact on the nature preserve.”

Analysis:

INPC staff is authorized to review special use permits for activities within nature preserves and land and water reserves that are consistent with the Rules. When a request for a special use permit is for an action that would not normally be approved, or has preserve-wide or community-wide impacts, the request is brought to the

Commissioners for review. As the activities requested in this special use permit would manipulate the hydrology within both a nature preserve and a land and water reserve, the approval of the permit must be done at the Commissioner level.

The division of the Cache River basin into two sub-watersheds by human intervention has been recognized for over 30 years as a detriment to the natural ecological process of this river/swamp backwater system by biologists, resource managers, and entities involved in the Joint Venture Partnership. From an ecological perspective, reconnection of the Cache River system would be of benefit in restoring the high quality plant communities in this area, as well as benefitting the assemblage of rare, threatened and endangered species that are unique to this area. Ultimate reconnection of the Upper and Lower Cache River systems will result in the “restoration of natural conditions ... to protect significant or notable features” as stated in the Nature Preserves Rules for Management and similarly stated in the Administrative Rule for Register of Land and Water Reserves.

In an effort to obtain the most accurate information possible to determine how to best achieve reconnection, results from research, such as that proposed by SIUC, would help to inform future decisions. SIUC and the IDNR have noted in the proposal that staff gage data collected by the partnership suggests that reductions in water surface elevation and total volume instigated by pumping fall within the natural variation documented for this river segment. Also, structural crest elevations would not be manipulated, so the system would recover quickly subsequent to cessation of pumping. Minimal disturbance instigated by this pilot would produce critical information supporting the benefits of restoring connectivity, even during periods of very low flow that are typically encountered seasonally in the Cache River watershed. An access road currently exists that would allow for the easy placement of the pump.

The management plan for Section 8 Woods Nature Preserve and Cache River Land and Water Reserve (Buttonland Swamp) calls for efforts to continue to “provide for the partial reconnection of the upper and lower segments of the Cache River” by working “with appropriate agencies, organizations, and individuals to complete engineering and design of structural modifications required to achieve partial reconnection of the river segments, and satisfy all permit requirements.” This demonstration should further that goal by providing detail about low water flow that would be needed to design the low flow channel (i.e. the pathway that water will take from the upper to lower segments of the Cache River).

SIUC has indicated that in discussions with the IDNR, it was agreed that in the event the water dropped below 326.5 water surface elevation (WSE) or storage capacity of 730 acre feet of water, pumping would immediately cease.

Only the strictly aquatic animals, which include the cypress minnow and the bantam sunfish (*Lepomis symmetricus*), could be significantly impacted by excessive reductions in water surface elevation caused by pumping. For this reason, careful monitoring of water in the area known as Buttonland Swamp would be conducted, and pumping would be terminated if WSE falls below 326.5, at which point 730 acre feet of storage capacity for water remains. These species prefer clear water in heavily vegetated areas, so it is unlikely that any incidental take would occur by pulling these animals to and through the pump. A screen would be placed over the influent pipe to mitigate accidental take of these and other aquatic species. The remaining animal species are quite mobile and well adapted to fluctuations in water levels. Listed plant species historically have thrived even in very dry conditions within wetland habitat and would be unaffected by WSE fluctuations instigated by pumping.

Recommendation:

INPC staff recommends approval of both options with the following stipulations:

- The IDNR, as landowner, will have the final determination on which one of the two options presented most suites its needs.
- Pumping must stop when WSE drops below 326.5 feet.
- Water intakes and outlets placed within the habitat must be sufficiently screened to prevent harm to any aquatic fauna.

- No more than 10 cfs of water may be pumped. A determination should be made in the field that this rate of pressure would not negatively harm aquatic fauna if they were near screened intake pipes/hoses.
- The District Heritage Biologist (DHB) will determine the route of access and location for pump placement, electrical lines, etc.
- The DHB must approve any removal of trees or other vegetation required for pump placement. If trees need to be removed, they should be less than six inches in diameter (DBH).
- The project will be reviewed by the IDNR through its Comprehensive Environmental Review Process.

Citations:

¹Demissie, M., L. Keefer, Y. Lian, F. Yue, and B. Larson. 2008. *Hydrologic and Hydraulic Modeling and Analyses for the Cache River for the Purposes of Evaluating Current Conditions and Alternative Restoration Measures*. Center for Watershed Science, Illinois State Water Survey, Champaign, IL. 121 pp. Contract Report 2008-01. Prepared for the Cache River Joint Venture Partnership.

²Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. 2008. *Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List-2008*. Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Springfield, Illinois. IEPA/BOW/08-016.