

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
TWO HUNDRED TWELFTH MEETING

Monroe County Annex
901 Illinois Avenue
Waterloo, IL 62298

September 11, 2012 9:00 a.m.

*Documentary Material Enclosed

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

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3:* Approval of the 211th Meeting Minutes, May 8, 2012; Task Force Meeting Minutes, July 11, 2012; and Nominating Committee Meeting Minutes, July 11, 2012

Item 4: Proposed 2013 Meeting Schedule

January 29, 2013 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Headquarters, Springfield

May 7, 2013 Location to be determined

September 10, 2013 Location to be determined

Item 5: Election of Advisors and Consultants

REPORT

Jill Riddell

Nominating Committee

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Election of Advisors and Consultants

Current Advisors:

Marc Miller IL Department of Natural Resources (Statutory Advisor)	Dr. Brian Anderson IL Natural History Survey (Statutory Advisor)	Dr. Bonnie Styles IL State Museum (Statutory Advisor)
Dr. Mike Demissie IL State Water Survey	Dr. Thomas E. Emerson Illinois State Archaeological Survey	Chuck Giger Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
Dr. Manohar Kulkarni Illinois Sustainable Technology Center	Dr. E. Donald McKay, III Illinois State Geological Survey	Dr. Gary Miller Prairie Research Institute
Dr. William W. Shilts Prairie Research Institute		

Current Consultants:

Gerald Adelman	Jill Allread	Marilyn Campbell
Tom Clay	Harry Drucker	Kenneth Fiske
Dr. Ronald Flemal	Fran Harty	James Mann
Jerry Paulson	Joseph Roth	Bruce Ross-Shannon
John Schwegman	Valerie Spale	Leslee Spraggins
John White		

Item 6: INPC Staff Report

REPORT

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

Item 7: IDNR Staff Report

REPORT

Don McFall
Department of Natural Resources

Item 8: Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

REPORT

Anne Mankowski
Endangered Species Protection Board

Item 9:* Coles Co. – Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Embarras Ridges, located approximately 3.5 miles south of Charleston in east-central Illinois, is a 141-acre site that harbors a large expanse of dry-mesic and mesic upland forest (~136 acres) and approximately five acres of ridgetop fields. The site is owned by Grand Prairie Friends which acquired it in 2012 for conservation purposes with donations from members and friends and grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Grand Victoria Foundation, and the Lumpkin Family Foundation. Embarras Ridges qualifies as a land and water reserve because it is a forest over 100 acres in size that supports 17 species of birds that are either moderately or highly sensitive to forest fragmentation, and it provides habitat for the state-threatened fibrous-rooted sedge (*Carex communis*). The site lies within the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division and is adjacent to the 202-acre Warbler Woods Nature Preserve. Embarras Ridges is composed of steep hills and ravines cloaked with dry-mesic and mesic upland forest that harbors a diverse assemblage of native plants and a rich assortment of migratory and breeding birds including seven bird species in greatest need of conservation as identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP). This area is part of an extensive woodland corridor that covers more than eight miles of dissected hills along the Embarras River near Charleston, and it is an important link in a chain of conservation lands in this corridor. Embarras Ridges is within the Embarras Ecosystem Partnership and the middle and lower part of the Embarras River watershed which is recognized as a Resource Rich Area by the IDNR's Conservation 2000 Ecosystem Program. Conservation of this area supports action steps identified for the forest campaign and the streams campaign in the IWAP.

REPORT

Mary Kay Solecki
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Registration Approval

Item 10:* Kankakee Co. – Additions to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Dr. Marianne Hahn wishes to register two tracts totaling 3.4 acres as additions to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve. Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, located in the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division, was originally registered by Dr.

Hahn in 2001, and was 62 acres in size. Subsequent additions to the Land and Water Reserve, registered by both Dr. Hahn and the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) (occurring in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2010), have increased the size of protected property to approximately 123 acres. Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve is recognized on the INAI (#1581) for its high-quality dry-mesic sand savanna and for the habitat it provides for 15 state-threatened or endangered plants, and the state-threatened black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*), and a reptile. Sweet Fern Savanna also provides habitat for an additional 23 insect species and 10 vertebrate species listed in the IWAP as being in greatest need of conservation. The registration of these additions will increase the total amount of protected land to 126 acres, protect and buffer habitat for many species in greatest need of conservation, protect a known occurrence of the state-endangered crowded oval sedge (*Carex cumulata*), buffer high-quality natural communities, and promote more efficient management of the Land and Water Reserve.

REPORT

Kim Roman
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Registration Approval

Item 11:* McHenry Co. – Peter and Pat Stamas Addition to Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Patricia A. Stamas proposes to permanently register 5.6 acres as the Peter and Pat Stamas addition to Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve. The proposed addition consists of a significant portion of the Black-crown Marsh INAI site (#1503) and is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Black-crown Marsh is ecologically significant due to the diversity and high number of rare, threatened and endangered wetland-dependant birds that have been documented to use the basin and surrounding uplands for foraging, breeding, and nesting. The wetland basin was classified in 1995 as a Category II, INAI site for providing suitable habitat for nine state-threatened or endangered birds. Although these same nine species are still observed at Black-crown Marsh, the site is now considered suitable habitat for seven state-listed species due to the de-listing of the sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*) and pied-billed grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*). The seven state-listed species at Black-crown Marsh are black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), common moorehen (*Gallinula chloropus*), American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), and yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). The site is also recognized as an important regional waterfowl breeding area by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The IDNR was first to register land at Black-crown Marsh as Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve (156.35 acres) in 2001. Since then, additional lands have been registered, including two privately owned parcels. Upon approval of this registration proposal, the size of Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve will increase to a total of 376.98 acres.

REPORT

John Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Registration Approval

Item 12:* DuPage Co. – Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 1,589 acres of Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve as the Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve lies within the boundary of the Springbrook

Prairie INAI site (#1516) and consists largely of restored prairies and wetlands. Other communities include graminoid fen and old field plant communities and a low-gradient small stream and artificial impoundment. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central DuPage County. This INAI site has been recognized as a Category II site because of the presence of endangered or threatened species that include the state-endangered northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), and black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), and state-threatened least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*). FPDDC staff has also documented the presence of 12 additional state-listed bird species that include the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), king rail (*Rallus elegans*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Mississippi kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*), cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulean*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), and yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus anthocephalus*). Suitable breeding habitat (primarily wetlands and grasslands) exists for nearly all these species, except for the cerulean warbler, and should be considered either confirmed or potential breeding birds at this site. FPDDC staff has also documented the presence of three state-listed plant species that are considered introduced to the site and include the hairy umbrellawort (*Mirabilis hirsuta*), red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*). Protection of this large mosaic of restored wetlands and grassland at the proposed Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve is consistent with several elements of the wetland and grassland campaigns in the IWAP and provides critical habitat for 63 species of wildlife identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. Protection of this site also supports a key element of the IWAP for the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division which is to restore and manage 10-12 sites with grass cover (> 65%) that are greater than 500 acres in size.

REPORT

Erik Neidy

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 13:* Lake Co. – William G. Wells and Pleasant Hill Wetland Buffer Additions to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Dedication

Conserve Lake County (formerly Liberty Prairie Conservancy) and the Pleasant Hill Homeowners Association seek preliminary approval for dedication of the William G. Wells (8.5 acres) and Pleasant Hill Wetland (12.0 acres) as buffer additions to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve. Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve and the proposed buffer additions are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in east-central Lake County. The proposed buffer additions lie within the boundary of the Oak Grove Botanical Area INAI site (#0654) that consists of 401 acres of open space extending along the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River. Oak Grove Botanical Area has been recognized as a Category II INAI site because of the presence of a relatively large and stable population of a state-endangered and federally listed plant species. The proposed buffer additions include grade C/D sedge meadow and grade C/D wet-mesic and mesic prairie. The prairies at this site are ranked first for conservation in the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan, and the wetlands have been included on the Advanced Identification (ADID) for Lake County in recognition of their high biological and functional value. Protection of the proposed buffer additions is consistent with recommendations of the “North Branch of the Chicago River Open Space (Green Infrastructure) Plan,” with elements of the IWAP, and will increase the size of Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve from 92.76 to 113.26 acres.

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 14:* Lee and Ogle Co. – Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve, Dedication

TNC seeks preliminary approval for dedication of approximately 987.76 acres of land to be known as Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve. At nearly 1,000-acres, the proposed nature preserve represents the “core area” of a much larger functionally restored prairie ecosystem that is managed by TNC and its volunteers. This larger area currently encompasses more than 3,000 acres of restored prairies, oak savannas, woodlands, and wetlands. Together, these lands represent one of the largest prairie landscapes in Illinois. The area proposed for dedication lies within the Nachusa Grasslands INAI site (#0685) which encompasses over 5,000 acres of natural communities and agricultural lands and is located within the Oregon Section of the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division. This INAI site is recognized for its numerous high-quality relict natural communities, extensive grassland habitat, and suitable habitat for several state-listed plants and animals. The proposed Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve contains a rich diversity of plant species found in several restored high-quality relict natural communities and outstanding examples of re-created prairie natural communities. A unique component of this dedication proposal is the planned reintroduction of a bison herd as part of the management plan for the nature preserve. TNC’s management of remnant and restored prairies and savannas at Nachusa Grasslands most directly advances the farmland, prairie, wetland, and forests campaigns of the IWAP, including reintroducing prescribed fire as a natural process, controlling invasive species, and restoring and managing high-quality natural communities.

REPORT
Bill Kleiman
The Nature Conservancy

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 15:* McHenry Co. – Addition to the Proposed Slough Creek Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication

The McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) received preliminary approval for dedication of 40.5 acres of Slough Creek Fen as an Illinois nature preserve at the Commission’s 209th Meeting in September, 2011 (Resolution 2155); however Slough Creek Fen has not yet been presented to the Commission for final approval. The MCCD is now seeking preliminary approval for dedication of an additional 35.2 acres as part of the proposed Slough Creek Fen Nature Preserve. Slough Creek Fen and the proposed addition are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in central McHenry County. The proposed addition encompasses a small portion of the Standlee Fen INAI site (#1614) and consists of grade C mesic savanna. Mesic savanna is considered of global significance and a conservation priority by Chicago Wilderness. Protection and stewardship of the proposed addition supports action #2b of the forest campaign of the IWAP that calls for “...ecological connectivity among forests and other habitat patches.” Slough Creek Fen and the proposed addition are also located within the Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex Conservation Opportunity Area and MCCD’s Queen Anne Macrosite.

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 16:* Saline Co. – Pruett Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

Joseph P. and Norma L. Hart seek preliminary approval for dedication of 17.08 acres as Pruett Woods Nature Preserve. Pruett Woods is located 2.6 miles east of Harrisburg in the Bottomlands Section of the Wabash Border Natural Division. This site is identified as Hart Woods INAI site (#0103), a grade B forest, and is one of only two remaining examples of wet-mesic floodplain forest included on the INAI in the Wabash Border Natural Division. Sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), and pin oak (*Q. paulstris*) are the predominant canopy species with several trees of these species exceeding 30 inches in diameter. Less common canopy trees are hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), and shumard oak (*Q. shumardii*). This site has been enrolled in the Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark program as Pruett Woods since January 31, 2002. The IWAP would be supported by this dedication through the forest campaign.

REPORT
Bob Edgin

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 17:* Cook Co. – Addition to Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

TNC seeks final approval for dedication of seven lots totaling 0.591 acres as an addition to Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve. Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve is one of five prairies collectively referred to as the Indian Boundary Prairies located in southern Cook County in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Of the 508.1 acres of the Indian Boundary Prairies that have been included on the INAI, 418.35 acres have been dedicated as part of the Illinois Nature Preserves System. The proposed nature preserve addition lies within the boundary of the Sundrop Prairie INAI site (#1575) and includes grade C mesic prairie. Dedication of this addition is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Site Design Plan prepared for the Indian Boundary Prairies by TNC, will protect mesic prairie considered a conservation priority by Chicago Wilderness, and supports elements of the grassland campaign identified in the IWAP. With final approval of this proposed addition, Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve will increase from 90.84 acres to 91.431 acres. The seven lots received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 145th Meeting in October, 1994 (Resolution 1249).

REPORT
Steven Byers

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Final Approval for Dedication

Item 18:* Lake Co. – Addition to Liberty Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Libertyville Township seeks final approval for dedication of 11.07 acres as a buffer addition to Liberty Prairie Nature Preserve. Liberty Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed buffer addition are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in east-central Lake County. When the proposed buffer addition was granted preliminary approval for dedication, the land was still being farmed. Since that time, the farm lease has expired, and Libertyville Township has been actively restoring the proposed buffer addition. The proposed buffer addition includes a regional trail that once extended through Liberty Prairie Nature Preserve. The rerouted trail is safer for public use and has eliminated the direct and indirect impacts the trail once had on the high-quality prairie. The proposed buffer addition lies adjacent to Liberty Prairie Nature Preserve and includes elements of good preserve design. Protection and stewardship of Liberty Prairie Nature

Preserve and the uplands surrounding the site (which include this proposed buffer addition) supports elements of the grassland campaign identified in the IWAP. With final approval of this proposed buffer addition, Liberty Prairie Nature Preserve will increase in size from 66.069 acres to 77.139 acres. The proposed buffer addition received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 176th Meeting in August, 2002 (Resolution 1666).

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 19:* Marshall Co. – Buffer Addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, Dedication

Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang seek final approval for dedication of lot #108 (2.05 acres) as a buffer addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve. Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural Area INAI site (#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 in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. If approved, the proposed buffer addition would increase the size of Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve to 10.85 acres. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 211th Meeting in May, 2012 (Resolution 2182).

REPORT
Tom Lerczak
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 20:* Cook Co. – Correction of the Legal Description for an Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Natural Land Institute (NLI) received final approval for dedication of eight lots as an addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve at the Commission's 161st Meeting in October, 1998 (Resolution 1451), and the dedication document was recorded in Cook County on January 29, 1999. Subsequently, the parcel was conveyed to TNC, and an error in the legal description was found. The Commission was notified by TNC and NLI that the aforementioned dedication document contained an error in the legal description, thereby invalidating that original dedication document. The legal description has been corrected, and a new dedication document has been signed by the landowner. The new dedication document needs to be approved by the Commission and re-recorded.

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of Corrected Legal
Description

Item 21:* Lake Co. – Woodland Restoration at Five Nature Preserves Owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District

The Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) believes that one of the most difficult and pressing issues that faces management and restoration of wooded ecosystems in Illinois is developing and implementing a sound strategy to sustain oak regeneration in historically oak-dominated woodland and forest communities while preserving the existing diversity that is present in these ecosystems today. The LCFPD also believes that unless an effort is made to address oak regeneration failures, the decrease in historical oak dominance may become precipitously worse in the future. The LCFPD's Southern Des Plaines River Preserves (SDPRP) represent some of the highest quality natural areas within Lake County's Forest Preserve system. Five of the six SDPRP sites have nature preserve status and protection. These sites are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Monitoring of wildlife and plants at these sites has shown that the District's restoration and management actions which include the reintroduction of fire, control of white-tailed deer populations, and removal of invasive species have improved the quality of these nature preserves. A study of current vegetation patterns at these sites indicates a need to implement a second phase of restoration focused specifically on restoring canopy and sub-canopy structure and composition to facilitate the regeneration of desirable shade-intolerant trees, especially oaks, native shrubs and a healthy diverse native flora. The most significant conservation concerns at SDPRP sites, based on current data, indicate that in these woodlands there is a lack of native shade intolerant tree regeneration, loss of native tree and shrub diversity, lack of diversity and abundance of the herbaceous layer, and loss of micro-habitats which lead to the overall loss of biodiversity of plants and animals. This proposed second phase of woodland restoration represents a long-term, science-based initiative to restore mixed-hardwood woodland communities in Lake County. The LCFPD proposes the following: Year 1: Removal of a portion (60-90% depending on plant community type) of non-oak, shade tolerant understory trees and shrubs; Year 2: Planting of native trees or seeds and herbaceous seeds in areas where the canopy has been thinned; Year 5-10: Adaptive management to make determinations of need for and implementation of further thinning and plantings. Phase II restorations are proposed for Elm Road Woods Nature Preserve (INAI #1555), Grainger Woods Nature Preserve (INAI #0667), Lloyd's Woods Nature Preserve (INAI #0663), and MacArthur Woods Nature Preserve (INAI #1003) for the winter 2012-2013. The Phase II woodland restoration for Edward L. Ryerson Nature Preserve (INAI #1007) is proposed for the winter of 2013-2014.

REPORT

Jim Anderson
Lake County Forest Preserve District
Kelly Neal
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval of Woodland Restoration

Item 22:* Lake Co. – Dam Removal at Two Nature Preserves Owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District

LCFPD, landowner of MacArthur Woods Nature Preserve (INAI #1003) and Lloyd's Woods Nature Preserve (INAI #0663), proposes to remove two low-head dams (24' long x 2.4' tall x 148' wide and 32' long x 2.6' tall x 140' wide, respectively) on the Des Plaines River adjacent to the Nature Preserves to improve habitat quality, restore natural riverine hydraulics, allow the passage of riverine fishes, reduce trapping of bedload material, improve navigability for paddlers, and eliminate public safety hazards. This proposal is recommended by the Chicago District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) as part of its Upper Des Plaines River Phase II Flood Reduction and

Ecosystem Restoration Study. The proposed bank to bank dam removals also support a regional northeastern Illinois effort to defragment the upper Des Plaines River, and these are the last two dams remaining along the River in Lake County. Both concrete dams were designed and built for use as fords for agricultural purposes, such that livestock could cross the River. Neither dam is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The riparian corridor at both sites is comprised of degraded floodplain forest with dominant species including box elder, sugar maple, silver maple, riverbank grape, garlic mustard, and reed canary grass. Recent surveys conducted by the USACOE, state, and local agencies found no federal or state listed species or viable critical habitats within the restoration sites. Access to both dams will occur from the west side of the River on lands which are not under INPC protection. Bank stabilization and restoration will occur at each of the Nature Preserves. The INPC approved the removal of a similar dam at Edward L. Ryerson Nature Preserve (the first dam removed on the upper Des Plaines River) at its 203rd Meeting in September, 2009 (Resolution 2052).

REPORT

Jim Anderson
Lake County Forest Preserve District
Jenny Skufca
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval of Dam Removal

Item 23:* McHenry Co. – Request for Continued Use of an Equestrian Trail at Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve

The establishment of a limited trail system for horseback access with the stipulation of a three-year evaluation period prior to final approval was approved at the 191st INPC Meeting in August, 2006 (Resolution 1910). The IDNR, landowner of Black-Crown Marsh Land and Water Reserve, was to monitor the impacts of the trail programs and provide its findings annually to the Commission. After the completion of the three-year trial period, the IDNR was to prepare a summary report and ask for final approval of the trail. In 2007, the equestrian trail system and associated parking was established following the IDNR Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CERP) reviews and guidelines: A three-year evaluation of the compatibility of equestrian use with natural resource features of the Land and Water Reserve was done. A small gravel parking lot of 5,552.3 ft² was developed immediately adjacent to Wegner Road to allow trailer access. A two-segment perimeter trail (north loop 1.77 miles and south loop 0.76 miles) was established using a combination of existing grassed farm road, establishment of a grassed trail segment bordering the existing corn field, and routing of the trail through abandoned hay field (south loop). Hydric soils were avoided. Access to the south loop was limited (closed) during the peak migration periods of 15 March to 15 May and 1 October to 30 November, or at other times deemed necessary to protect sensitive resources (e.g., excessive rains, rare occurrence of migrating or nesting species) and to comply with INDR horse trail policy. Documented evidence of avian disturbance would jeopardize continuation of the program. Foot traffic was prohibited. The IDNR is now requesting the continued use of the horse trail system at this site.

REPORT

Don McFall
Department of Natural Resources
Kelly Neal
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval of Equestrian Trail Use

Item 24:* McLean Co. – Request to Construct Two New Buildings within Thaddeus Stubblefield Grove Nature Preserve

The Sugar Grove Foundation is seeking approval of a proposal to construct two new buildings within the Funks Grove Cemetery Association-owned buffer addition to Thaddeus Stubblefield Grove Nature Preserve. Currently, the 24-acre buffer addition is occupied by a portion of the Sugar Grove Nature Center complex, which includes a portion of the Center’s parking lot, a corn crib, a maintenance building, a nature center and office, and an observatory. The remaining portion of the buffer addition consists of a tallgrass prairie restoration with a small stream and riparian vegetation. The proposed location of the two buildings, a maple sap/honey house and an observatory, would be within the existing footprint of the Sugar Grove Nature Center complex within the buffer addition and would not disrupt natural or restored plant communities. Provisions for developing the nature center for restoration and educational activities were included in the original preliminary dedication proposal approved at the Commission’s 138th Meeting in March, 1993 (Resolution 1167). The rules for management of nature preserves state that service areas for management and/or visitor facilities may be established in dedicated buffer areas. Final designs of the buildings and their exact placements will be subject to INPC staff approval.

REPORT
Tom Lerczak
Kelly Neal
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of Structure Placement

Item 25:* Request from the Office of the Attorney General to Review the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Consultation at Rice Lake Conservation Area Environmental Management Program and Mississippi Sand Mining Permit at Ernat’s Marsh Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Site

Assistant Attorney General Thomas Davis sent a letter to the INPC requesting the INPC review IDNR consultation procedures as they apply to two specific IDNR decisions. The IDNR has provided a written response to Mr. Davis’ concerns. The correspondence from Mr. Davis to the INPC and the IDNR’s response has been included in the INPC meeting agenda packet.

REPORT
Randy Heidorn
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Review of the Request

Item 26: Election of Officers – INPC Nominating Committee Report

REPORT
Jill Riddell
Nominating Committee
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Election of Officers

Item 27:* Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2013 Stewardship Proposals

The Natural Areas Stewardship project uses monies provided by the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) to support management activities on both state and non-state-owned nature preserves and land and water reserves. The FY13 ORC spending plan is not yet finalized, so amounts available for Natural Areas Stewardship are not yet known. The IDNR intends to fund as many submitted

proposals as funds will permit. The IDNR requests approval of the FY13 NAAF Stewardship Proposal list in anticipation of available funding.

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

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Commission Approval

Item 28: Review of Closed Meeting Minutes

There are 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."

REPORT
Randy Heidorn
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Disposition of Closed Meeting
Minutes

Item 29: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 30: Other Business

Items may be discussed, but no final action may occur for items not previously included on the agenda.

Item 31: Adjournment