ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION
Minutes of the 219th Meeting
(Subject to approval at the 220th Meeting)

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

219-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

At 10:00 a.m., pursuant to the Call to Order by Chair David Thomas the meeting began.

Commissioner Thomas welcomed everyone and thanked staff for the progress made on the five-year strategic planning on Monday, January 26, 2015, at the Special meeting.

INPC Director Randy Heidorn read the roll call.

Members present: George Covington, Donnie Dann, Dr. Pen DauBach, Dr. Abigail Derby-Lewis, William E. McClain, Jo-Elle Mogerman, Charles Ruffner, Deborah Stone, Dr. David Thomas.

Advisors to the Commission present: Thomas Emerson, Illinois State Archaeological Survey (ISAS)

Consultants to the Commission present: Joe Roth, Openlands and Tom Clay, Illinois Audubon Society.

Others present: Randy Heidorn, Marni English, Kelly Neal, Jenny Wells, Valerie Njapa, Tom Lerczak, John Nelson, Will Overbeck, Debbie Newman, Steven Byers, Angella Moorehouse, Samantha McCarrel, Brooke Bryant, Kim Roman, Bob Edgin, Mary Kay Solecki, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Staff; Bob Szafoni, Ann Holtrop, Meghan Strange, Dawn Cobb, Alex Faulkner, Tim Schweizer, Caitlin McMahon, John Wilker, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Jeannie Barnes, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS); Mark Nardini, Kevin Henson, Matt Farmer, Susan Dees Hargrove, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); George Rose, Friends of Sangamon Valley; Don McFall.

219-2) Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner and carried that the Agenda be adopted.

219-3) Approval of Minutes for the 218th Meeting, September 9, 2014

It was moved by Commissioner Ruffner, seconded by Commissioner Dann, and carried that the Minutes of the 218th Meeting, September 9, 2014, be approved.

Commissioner Thomas read the following for record:

At the 217th Meeting of the INPC, May 6, 2014, at the Forest Preserve District of Will County, Four Rivers Environmental Center in Channahon, IL. Legal protection was completed by the Commission for ten tracts of land totaling 1,290 acres. Seven of these areas are owned by private individuals or non-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 $3.9 million, based on conservative estimates of the fair market value of the land. Lands protected include: Dayton Bluffs LWR, LaSalle County; Forever Fields LWR, Knox County; Letcher Basin LWR, Woodford County; Round Pond NP, Pope County; and three properties in Lake County, Monroe County and Woodford County owned by private individuals.

At the 218th Meeting of the INPC held on September 9, 2014 at the Ballard Nature Center in Altamont, IL, legal protection was completed by the Commission for eight tracts of land totaling 802 acres. Three of these areas are owned by private individuals or non-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 $1.7 million, based on conservative estimates of the fair market value of the land. Lands protected included: Paul Wightman Subterranean NP, Monroe County; and two privately owned parcels. Protection of these lands came about because the commission has eight staff working with private and public landowners. There are now 381 dedicated nature preserves in 84 counties totaling 57,694.33 acres and 178 land and water reserves in 67 counties totaling 49,848.538 acres.

219-4) Next meeting date and location

May 5, 2015, 9 a.m.	Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club at North Point Marina within Illinois Beach State Park, Zion IL
September 15, 2015, 10 a.m.	Black Hawk State Historic Site, Rock Island, IL

219-5) INPC Staff Report

Director Randy Heidorn thanked Marni English, Valerie Njapa and Kelly Neal for working on the staff report during his medical leave. He presented the highlights of the report. (Appendix I)

Director Heidorn welcomed all the new interns and asked they introduce themselves and tell what school they are from.

Director Heidorn reported that the Area 9 Natural Areas Preservation Specialist was posted. The Nature Preserves Operation Program Manager and the Protection Program Manager are waiting to be posted due to the current hiring freeze.

Commissioner McClain asked Director Heidorn if any progress was made when he spoke with Central Management Services.

Director Heidorn responded that there was some progress. The issues were with the grading of applicants. There were concerns with applicants who have degrees not specifically listed on the job posting being passed over though it was an equivalent degree. We also wanted to make it clear that we considered resident positions to be professional. They have since incorporated that into their process. The meeting was productive.

Director Heidorn stated staff is continuing to work with the Kane County Forest Preserve, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the Attorney General's Office on and enforcement action for the Bliss Woods NP lead contamination. INPC staff is coordinating with McHenry County Conservation District and the Attorney General's office on a herbicide kill of aquatic plants at Elizabeth Lake NP. Also, worked with Lake County Forest Preserve District, Conservation Police and the Attorney General's office for an incident where herbicide was applied to Salem Lake, within Killdeer Creek and Woodland LWR and Reed-Turner Woodland NP, by an adjacent property owner.

219-6) <u>IDNR Staff Report</u>

Ann Holtrop, acting chief of the Division of Natural Heritage, reported on the division meeting held January 20-22, at Camp CILCA, Cantrall, IL which was the first division meeting as an expanded division. It was the first time the traditional Heritage group got to meet their colleagues in Impact Assessment and Watershed Protection. They did not embark on a strategic planning process, but used this time to get to meet with each other and learn how each program within the division affects other programs.

They have 48 staff including residents. Within the last year, Heritage has added three District Heritage Biologists, a Natural Resource Coordinator, two Office Coordinators and a Resource Planner. There are positions in progress, including the Chief (she is only Acting Chief) and four approved vacancies which are in the same process as the INPCs middle management and Area 9 positions. IDNR is moving forward with another person in the Endangered Species Program, which will be more of the analytical branch of this program helping with recovery planning, permitting and other elements not currently getting addressed.

A new herptile code was passed creating a strong need for a new herpetologist that can deal with all the permits coming from the new legislation. Heritage is moving forward with one more district biologist and has identified that position for Southern Illinois. They are still working on a plant ecologist position discussing whether that position will be more of a plant ecologist, botanist or invasive species coordinator. The Division suffered two great losses

this year with the passing of Bob Lindsay and Amy Young. Heritage is working to fill those positions.

Acting Chief Holtrop shared the Division's mission which is to conserve. They are in the Office of Resource Conservation, but Heritage's niche is really in the conservation. What they conserve is Illinois' native flora, fauna, natural communities and with the addition of Impact Assessment, cultural resources. Inventory, Protection and Stewardship are how they do that work. They inventory natural features, communities including the Natural Areas Inventory, listed plants and animals, species in greatest need of conservation and native herpes, amphibians and reptiles, plants and cultural resources. Protection is authorizing take of listed animals, dedicating through the Nature Preserves Commission and Conservation Easements, and consultation. The Division consults for variety of purposes and implements the Wildlife Action Plan, coordinates Land Acquisition and a whole host of permits. Stewardship includes invasive species removal, recovery planning, habitat restoration, and outreach.

Some of the Division priorities are building relationships, being proactive, getting back to the science roots, and sharing our stories.

Commissioner Thomas asked about the INAI update and the status of that review.

John Wilker answered that of the 175 sites, 60 have been accepted on the INAI. About 20 sites remain at the Natural History Survey and IDNR is waiting on the formal nomination packet. There are about 36 nomination packets that need to be reviewed by Heritage and INPC field staff. Of the nomination packets received, IDNR evaluated and chose not to accept twenty of those. The largest problem causing delays is the number of nominations submitted that need changes because of database issues. Staff has to resolve these. There are an additional 28 sites that are in limbo.

Commissioner Daubach asked how the revision of the Wildlife Action Plan is going.

Acting Chief Holtrop answered that they are doing a repackaging rather than a total rewrite of the plan. Wetlands, Farmland and Prairie, Forest and Woodland, Streams, Invasive Species and Green Cities Campaigns have been tasked with a format on the rewriting and prioritization of the goals.

Commissioner McClain commented on the priorities and that they are wonderful. They are short and direct but behind each and everyone one of those there is a lot of hours waiting to burst forth. He is looking forward to what is down the line and appreciates all that has been done.

219-7) Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

No report.

219-8) Cook County – Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steve Byers, on behalf of the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, requested final approval for dedication of 0.956 acres as an addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve addition consists of Grade A mesic sand prairie. Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve is part of the Indian Boundary Prairies that include Dropseed Prairie Nature Preserve, Paintbrush Prairie Nature Preserve, Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve, and Markham Prairie East Nature Preserve totaling 417.96 acres. The proposed nature preserve addition received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 208th Meeting in May 2011 and represents the 15th addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve. Both Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Markham, Illinois. The proposed nature preserves addition lies within the boundaries of the Gensburg-Markham Prairie Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site (INAI #400) and the National Registry of Natural Landmarks designated by the U.S. National Park Service. Dedication of this addition is consistent with the recommendations of an approved Master Plan, tenets of good preserve design, the "*Biodiversity Recovery Plan for the Chicago Wilderness Region*", and elements of the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan; specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality prairie communities. Dedication of the proposed nature preserve addition (0.956) acres will increase the size of Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve from 200.316 to 201.72 acres.

Commissioner Covington asked how many more parcels are there in Gensburg-Markham.

Mr. Byers answered that there were six individual lots and hoped that additional streets would be vacated. Once the titles have been cleared on those six lots, he would come back to the Commission. Once the final streets that had been platted, but not built upon, are vacated by the city of Markham, this will be the last and final addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie. He acknowledged the leadership of The Nature Conservancy for sticking with it since it has been a long process and the long term, successful vision to realize.

Commissioner Thomas and Commissioner Dann recused themselves from voting because of their association with The Nature Conservancy.

Joe Roth commented that there might be an opportunity for partnership between the Commission, Volo Bog and Illinois Beach with the National Park Service 100th Anniversary in October 2016 to celebrate the National Natural Heritage Landmarks program in conjunction with that service.

Commissioner McClain asked if over time, the prairie matrix has changed.

Mr. Byers answered you can visit this site and you would be pleasantly surprised at what you will see. There have been cottonwoods removed. He recognized Jean Sellers for her leadership to protect this site.

Commissioner McClain asked that if is Gensburg-Markham is holding onto all of its species while other ones are losing species, how was it accomplished.

Mr. Byers answered that it represents a remarkable commitment on behalf of Ron Panzer and Karl Gnaedinger from The Nature Conservancy; and Stuart Goldman, Northeastern Illinois

University, to manage this site. They are out there everyday. They have a list of most wanted invasive species and their location on a GIS system. They have been able over the years to secure funding and cooperative agreements with the Tollway Authority. Carl Becker, Fran Harty and Steve Byers worked very closely to secure an initial $700,000 that went to The Nature Conservancy by way of the Tollway for impacts to wetlands along the Tollway right of way. We were able to successfully secure additional funding that allows The Nature Conservancy to continually commit to this site. They have a strong codray of volunteer stewards that are very vigilant.

It was moved by Commissioner Derby-Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Daubach and carried that the following resolution be approved:

> The Commission grants final approval for an Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie in Cook County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the Agenda for the 219th Meeting.

(Resolution 2320)

219-9) Cumberland County – John Clyde Spitler Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

Mary Kay Solecki requested final approval for dedication of John Clyde Spitler Woods as a nature preserve. It is an 18.865-acre natural area that protects high-quality dry-mesic and mesic upland forest just north of Montrose in Cumberland County. This natural area was gifted to the Ballard Family Nature Center in 2008 with the intention that it be retained as a nature preserve. The proposed preserve comprises most of the 20.4-acre John Clyde Spitler Woods Natural Area recognized by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI # Cumberland001) for its Grade B dry-mesic upland forest (~18.1acres) and Grade B mesic upland forest (~2.3acres) in October 2013. John Clyde Spitler Woods lies about 10 miles northeast of Effingham in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division. This natural area is within the Embarras River Ecosystem Partnership and the Embarrass River basin. The middle and lower part of the Embarras River watershed is recognized as a Resource Rich Area by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Conservation 2000 Ecosystem Program. Protection of Spitler Woods as a Nature Preserve helps fulfill the goals of the Ecosystem Partnership and the Embarras River Watershed Resource Management Plan. Conservation of John Clyde Spitler Woods supports action steps identified in the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan for the Forest Campaign to maintain and enhance the composition of Illinois' forested habitats, continue removal and control of invasive exotic plants, and restore and manage high-quality examples of forest communities. No Illinois nature preserves or land and water reserves occur in Cumberland County, and, upon dedication, John Clyde Spitler Woods will be the first Illinois nature preserve in Cumberland County. The Ballard Family Nature Center retains the right to develop trails, build a small parking lot and determine visitor use with approval of the Nature Preserves Commission. John Clyde Spitler Woods was given preliminary approval for dedication at the 218th Meeting in September 2014. (Resolution #2308)

It was moved by Commissioner Daubach, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for John Clyde Spitler Woods in Cumberland County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the Agenda for the 219th Meeting.

(Resolution 2321)

219-10) Fayette County – Burnside Forest Nature Preserve and Buffer, Dedication

Bob Edgin requested final approval for Burnside Forest Nature Preserve in Fayette County. It is a 39.55-acre site owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The Burnside family had owned the site for more than 50 years prior to donating it to the IDNR on February 10, 2014 with the stipulation that it be dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The site is recognized by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #1796) as having 15.9 acres Grade B mesic upland forest and 4.3 acres Grade B dry-mesic upland forest. Burnside Forest is located about 2 miles southwest of Vandalia on the west bank of the Kaskaskia, in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division of Illinois.

Burnside Forest received preliminary approval for dedication at the 218th meeting the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (Resolution #2309).

Commissioner Thomas asked if this is all floodplain.

Mr. Edgin answered that a quarter of an acre is floodplain and the rest is sitting on a ridge above the Kaskaskia River.

Commissioner Thomas commented that having begun his career working along the Kaskaskia River, the forests all along the river contributed to the diversity of aquatic populations in the river as well as habitat for migrating birds. It is always a pleasure to see more of these lands protected and dedicated.

Commissioner McClain asked if there is potential for more to be added in the future.

Mr. Edgin answered that south of the property there is housing, the west side is forest and the forest to the north has been cut open and very low quality. Now that it has been dedicated, there is possibility for landowner contacts to see about getting additional buffer. The river is on the east side and would be floodplain. It is probably going to be a less than a forty acre island.

It was moved by Commissioner Covington, seconded by Commissioner Stone and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for Burnside Forest in Fayette County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 219th Meeting.

(Resolution 2322)

Mr. Edgin reported that he will relay the final dedication to the Burnside family who will be very happy. John Burnside has really been pushing this since 2005. He thanked the Commission.

219-11) Winnebago County – Culvert Project at Johns Mound Group Land and Water Reserve

Kevin Henson and Mark Nardini from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) requested approval for permanent and temporary easements on 0.09 and 0.02 acres, respectively, of Johns Mound Group Land and Water Reserve, to complete a culvert project. The Reserve, owned by the Smeja Homestead Foundation, is located along the west side of IL 2 for approximately 1600 feet. This Reserve is recognized for its significant cultural resources and there are 22 documented mound features. The culvert located near the south edge of the Reserve is in serious condition with the potential to collapse if it is not replaced. IDOT is proposing to replace the culvert and move it 37 feet south of its current location in order to (1) avoid impacting the panther effigy mound feature on the Reserve; and (2) better align it with the existing drainage channel. Elimination of the culvert is not an option because it carries drainage from the Reserve to the Rock River on the east side of IL 2. Due to the depth of the existing culvert, IDOT determined that replacement in its current location would cause more impacts to the Reserve, including the panther effigy mound. If approved, this project will temporarily disturb 0.02 acres of the Reserve for construction purposes, and 0.09 acres will be required for a permanent easement, to be used for construction and future maintenance of the new culvert. (Appendix II)

Commissioner Thomas asked what the thick yellow line represents on Page 13 of the attached proposal.

Mr. Henson answered that it was the boundary line of the Johns Mounds LWR property.

Commissioner Thomas asked what the distance is between the temporary easement and panther effigy mound.

Mr. Henson answered about ten feet.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked whether the standard policy for the culvert replacement design took into consideration projected changes in precipitation or more extreme frequency of precipitation events or if it was just based on historic trends.

Mr. Henson answered the hydrologists look into that. The culvert is designed to accommodate a certain capacity of water. They use fifty-year flood elevations to make the determination. We went with a sixty inch circular reinforced concrete pipe versus a box culvert, in the future if the culvert were to get in bad shape, we can push a polyethylene liner inside to extend the life.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if this reflects only historic trends. She would suggest that they should consider taking into account the likely hood of extreme precipitation. In terms of the investments being made, are these types of considerations really being made.

Matt Farmer, IDOT Project Manager, answered that they use historic trends because they do not have future trends. Historic trends are all we have to go by. However, this based on either a fifty-year or one hundred-year flood event and the difference wasn't that much. As far as using future precipitation, they do not really have any data that is going to tell what future precipitation is going to be.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis commented that there are projects in the country that look at baseline of the historic and different scenarios for projections in precipitation. For example, looking at the twenty-four hour precipitation depth for the 25-year and 100-year, they do look at different projections and was curious to what extent, if at all, those things were integrated into this design. It sounds like just historic trends.

Valerie Njapa gave the INPC staff recommendation and requested approval from the Commission for the temporary and permanent easements for the Johns Mound Group LWR culvert project. (Appendix III)

Commissioner Stone asked what the sequence is of the different approvals and has the Historic Preservation Agency given their approval.

Ms. Njapa answered that has not happened yet. They wanted to get the Commission approval prior to and a formal agreement entered into between IDOT and the landowner. IDOT will then put together a letter of agreement that will then be signed by the INPC and State Historic Preservation Agency.

Commissioner Dann asked if 100-year flood events come about every five or ten years and you had to plan for it, what kind of cost increase would there be.

Mr. Farmer answered we don't have costs. The difference between a fifty-year and a one hundred-year flood event could be an inch of precipitation which isn't that much compared to a five or ten year flood event. It could be approximately $15,000. This project is upsized for safety factors, but they are not able to do this for every project.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis responded that we do have data for projected increases, very robust consensus for increased frequency of those intense storm events. So to go on record to say we do not have any information to use to redesign to reduce risk is very misleading. Thinking about risk of mitigation, there are many different aspects, cost is one and there are many other aspects. It is probably tabled for a different and much broader conversation with the State of Illinois as to how that is integrated into when you have the opportunity to redevelop and design something. Putting in those considerations to protect the investments we are making.

Mr. Farmer said he could not speak for their hydrology engineer, he may have taken these factors into consideration.

Commissioner Thomas commented that this would be an interesting topic to pursue more, but was not sure the right forum to do that. We have already seen the greater frequency of events such as the topping of the levee at Emiquon, since it was formed. For many of these issues flooding for long periods could be detrimental to some of our nature preserves.

It was moved by Commissioner Ruffner, seconded by Commissioner Dann and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the Culvert Project at Johns Mound Group Land and Water Reserve in Winnebago County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 219th Meeting.

(Resolution 2323)

219-12) Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

No Public Comments.

Break for lunch at 11:25.

219-13) INPC 5-Year Strategic Planning Effort: Strategy Development

Director Heidorn reviewed the Strategic Planning efforts that happened at the Special Meeting on Monday, January 26, 2015. On January 20-22, 2015, we began our strategic planning process with the SWAT analysis. At the Special Meeting, we broke into small groups and wrote goals. During this meeting, participants discussed strategies to achieve those goals. Staff, with guidance of this group, took those strategies and prioritize them. Those will be taken by staff to draft SMART objectives. In March, we hope to send out a draft to be reviewed by staff, advisors and consultants. The final product will be targeted for our September meeting.

Presented below are the results of the strategy writing breakout sessions including participants, the goal and associated strategies to accomplish that goal. This information summarizes the results of the breakout group. Audio recordings are available for the breakout sessions. The strategies are followed by the discussion that occurred after the breakout groups presented their strategies if any.

Protection

Breakout Group: Commissioner Covington (Spokesperson), Kim Roman, John Nelson, Mary Kay Solecki and Commissioner Daubach.

Goal: To protect more of Illinois' high quality natural areas and other significant lands.

Strategies:

1) Promote good preserve design, connectivity, and long-term sustainability.
2) Better define lands that qualify for inclusion in INPC System.
3) Encourage transfer of fee ownership of privately owned NP sites to conservation entities.
4) Consider inclusion of affirmative landowner responsibilities in instruments of dedication/registration.

5) Conduct landowner contact for all new INAI sites and high priority existing INAI sites.
6) Increase landowner incentives to encourage participation in NP programs (increase funding for land acquisition and management).

John Wilker asked if there was a need, desire or willingness to establish Nature Preserve System design concepts to identify the pieces that are needed.

Commissioner Covington answered to some extent the existing INAI sites will provide that. That's a list of designated sites. That is the only list that there is correctly.

John Wilker explained that an INAI just identifies critical features of a site, it is not the system design or main acquisition plan in and of itself.

Kim Roman addressed John Wilker that she thought it would fit under promoting good preserve design. We all have informal ideal preserve designs in our plans. She was unsure we have the ability to go preserve by preserve and come up with an ideal situation.

John Wilker clarified that his question was more of scale issue when it comes to strategic planning. Without a good target in mind and understating of how big of a thing we are trying to track.

Commissioner Daubach commented the idea of connectivity is going towards that. If we took a picture of the whole state, where would our focal areas be at a landscape level of conservation. We have bits and pieces of that in a couple of different pipelines. Not sure where it fits under all of these goals, but even a searchable database that has GIS information that works for IDNR owner, INPC protected, privately owned lands, would be one of those technologic improvements that would help everyone do their work.

Tom Clay commented that with the Wildlife Action Plan campaigns lists these goals.

John Wilker commented that having the data and plan, we might be able to turn corners and be able to determine the critical pieces needed.

Commissioner Daubach commented it could be a more comprehensive discussion that's needed. This is something to consider under this partnership bucket. Boots on the ground are very important because not every county has parcel information they make publically available. In some instances you have to know a neighbor. This is where the partnering concept could make a big difference.

Commissioner Thomas commented that The Nature Conservancy really tries to piece together properties to create areas for movement of wildlife. If you have some of those strategies, that dictates priorities.

Commissioner Covington stated that the reason they included the word 'connectivity' it's not that every preserve has to be connected but is one of the criteria that should be evaluated.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if Vital Lands was working on this. Has there been progress?

Commissioner Daubach answered that there is progress in terms of the landscape. They are seeing larger parcels being connected. Vital Lands Illinois is doing one of its best jobs at connecting the fragmented human scale, getting more people to work together, pushing the idea of partnerships, information sharing and networking.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if they were coming out with a mapped product.

Chief Holtrop answered that Prairie State Conservation Coalition is working on this. The proposal is written and we have a lot of the data available, we just need to find funding. They do have some test maps done and is quite impressive when you look at the IDNR owned sites along with those that are owned by conservation organizations.

Commissioner Stone stated that if you had something that is legitimized by the science, has a grand vision, is communicable through maps and is accessible with technology, it would be an incredible help in the outreach and communication.

Stewardship

Breakout Group: Kelly Neal (Spokesperson), Debbie Newman, Samantha McCarrel, John Wilker, Bob Szafoni, Tom Lerczak, Steve Byers, Tom Clay, Illinois Audubon Society and Commissioners Dann, Derby-Lewis, McClain and Ruffner

Goal: Improve and maintain the condition of natural areas within the Nature Preserve System.

Strategies:

1) Engage our partners, landowners and the public to increase stewardship in the NP system (by leveraging funding and other assistance from those partners).
2) Conduct a needs assessment to determine the scope of management needed within the Nature Preserve System.
3) Develop a systematic approach to gather baseline information (with assistance from landowners, partners, volunteers and students).
4) Integrate best science available into the development of management plans for nature preserves and land and water reserves.
5) Promote compatible research opportunities that support adaptive management within the nature preserve system (information cycle, research on best management practices and apply as appropriate at INPC sites).

Identification

Breakout Group: John Wilker (Spokesperson), Angella Moorehouse, Will Overbeck

Goal: Identify suitable areas of significant natural resources to assure comprehensive representation of Illinois biodiversity.

Strategies:

1) Dedicated funding for biological inventories, land acquisition, stewardship and defense.
2) Establish a geographically and temporally appropriate monitoring program for INPC sites.
3) Establish a natural areas training academy.
4) Identify high potential sites identified within the INAI update process to finalize.
5) Update the Natural Divisions of Illinois.
6) Expand relationship with Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.
7) Facilitate development of biodiversity databases (i.e. mussel database).
8) Research – encourage basic biological surveys (streams, caves, important bird areas, insect sites, pollinators etc.).

Commissioner McClain commented that the first four strategies of Stewardship will generate at least some of the needs. As for identification, he had not heard the word reconstruction and somewhere in the process of building nature preserves, preserving and restoring communities, that needs to come up. It may mean buying agricultural land or other types of land to establish communities that will compliment a core area. This is something that really needs to be looked at in the future.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if that was connected to an earlier conversation about identifying opportunity areas to enhance connectivity or planning design. Such as those opportunities to buffer core high quality areas to increase acreage for grassland birds or other area sensitive animals.

Commissioner McClain answered instead of being 20 acres, how can we make it 300 acres and connect to other grasslands.

Commissioner Thomas commented that where this is really being done is in along our rivers. For example, Emiquon where there is 9,000 acres that went from farmland to aquatic habitat. Envisioning where the need is however, he is unsure what role the INPC plays in this.

Director Heidorn commented that a lot of this gets picked up in the preserve design. When there are limited dollars, picking those areas that you are going to restore becomes a more critical decision. It may have the potential, but if creating corridors wherever we want, such as a corn field, will quickly overload ourselves. Trying to steward marginal areas where we do not have the capacity of following through, diverts our resources from the high quality areas.

Commissioner McClain stated that is why we need to go to our partners.

Tom Clay stated, Loy Prairie LWR for example, is a 215 acre corn and soybean field and across the street is Prairie Ridge, with lots of critters and were able to turn this into a land and water reserve, we were able convince funders that it is an ecological lynch pin even though 220 acres is in soy beans, and we do have a model in place that is working.

Commissioner Covington stated we have to think in the long term, measured in generations not years. The ultimate vision is to see these areas restored. But until there is money available, it is better leaving it in corn or soybeans.

Director Heidorn commented that recently the Department had asked staff whether it should dedicate Burning Star. This is a large open area that technically qualified because it has rice rats. But it begged the question if we wanted to restore such a large area, that really does not have the kinds of the communities we want, just to make funders happy. In contrast, with Forever Fields, the LWR had additional sites around it. Forever Fields played a role of linking other sites together. For some of us, this is a constant question. Where do we draw the line on stewardship impacts that result from a protection action?

Commissioner Thomas asked how do we make sense of our overall strategy. Are we spending more time on marginal sites that may be more work than they are worth?

Steve Byers stated that we need to look at what we envision for the next 30 or 35 years, not just what we are going to do in the next three years.

Director Heidorn stated the prioritization becomes the real issue. What can we afford to do during that time? Do we want to give up high quality areas in exchange?

Commissioner Ruffner argued that some of these dry xeric forests 100 years ago looked terrible, but now they are being put aside as beautiful upland oak forests. He agreed with Steve Byers that succession happens. We are just looking at right now. These marginal lands, given some time, may become high quality in the future.

Director Heidorn asked do we do this at the expense of existing high quality sites.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis suggested maybe it is not an either or, but when the situation is clear that a marginal site would be a great buffer around an already high quality natural area. Those are the situations where you would call that out. You would not just say anything goes but be really strategic about the placement of that with regard to connectivity.

Director Heidorn stated that it brings us back to the whole preserve design issue.

Bob Szafoni commented that he thinks in 20-25 year intervals and if we are going to have a vision of a 300 acre Matanzas or connected series of preserves, we are going to have to put in place the capacities to manage those before we can actually think about doing them. We are not keeping up with the sites we have now. There are a good number of sites where we are making a difference. Those have a lot of commonalities: staff focused on resources we care about, a committed volunteer base, committed partners and organizations bringing something to that site.

Commissioner Thomas agreed. He worried that with this strategic planning effort, we have some place in the plan where we really start prioritizing. His concern is whether we will have less resources in the future than we have now. Where can we get the most for the effort we put in?

Bob Szafoni commented that he has considered if there are sites he writes off or destroys part of the significant feature to have a permanent fire break, so we can burn the rest of it. Without that, we are not burning anything or we are burning every 12 years. We are not getting anywhere. Prioritization is critical. What are we going to do and where are we going to do it?

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if there was a different way to phrase it, such as is strategy 1 and strategy 5 are meant to get to that end point in that prioritization. Figuring out where you can leverage those activities beyond your own staff capacity. Maybe these strategies are your objective to your higher prioritization.

Commissioner Stone agreed and commented that there is a difference between the long term vision plan and your implementation plan. It does not mean you are going to go out and do anything on the plan in the next year or next five years, but is a way to explain the vision and why it is important. Why it needs more resources. What pieces are needed to get there. It is not an implementation plan. She agreed prioritization is a key.

Angella Moorehouse commented that we need to have those assessments, since it is our responsibility as the commission to protect those sites.

Defense

Breakout Group: Valerie Njapa (Spokesperson), Ann Holtrop, Commissioner Thomas

Goal 1: To proactively avert threats to lands or sites protected in the Nature Preserve System to prevent adverse effects.

Strategies:

1) Strengthen coordination and communication with IDNR.
2) Define roles and responsibilities and tools available to avert threats.
3) Strengthen coordination and communication with landowners and other partners.

Goal 2: Increase efficiency and effectiveness in responding to incidents enforcing the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act when violations occur on sites protected in the Nature Preserve System.

Strategies:

1) Develop response protocols (standard operating procedure and work flow chart by incident type).
2) Obtain baseline data that can be used to document/show impact (can be prioritized for sites in Nature Preserve System).
3) Communicate response protocols to all stakeholders.

Chief Holtrop commented that many of these are great things to do and asked what the capacity of the Commission is to do them. It seems certain things are more specific to the Commission and for those things that may not be, someone else could help with. Should those be part of the Commission's strategic plan.

Bob Edgin commented that he feels like he has so many things to do that he cannot do anything well. When taking on new sites, you not only have to deal with that landowner but also adjoining landowners. We need to start taking an approach of division of this labor.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if there is any overlap with the CTAP sites and INPC sites.

Director Heidorn answered there is a small amount of overlap. CTAP was designed to get data on a statewide basis. For us to really do monitoring, we need to do it at a local scale. To monitor at the scale we need, the cost is astronomical.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if CTAP has baseline data.

Commissioner Thomas answered that they do have baseline data for grasslands.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis commented that we get our partners and other entities involved in order to leverage the work so that it can be done without putting additional pressure on an already limited staff. As part of the needs assessment, we need to look at who is doing what and where we need to make partnerships.

Director Heidorn addressed Chief Holtrop's question regarding the priorities of the INPC. The Commission has the roll of addressing natural areas conservation in Illinois. INPC select sites where the Commission, its staff and commissioners, will play a role. Some of these may drop off our list, not because we think they don't need to be done, but they can be picked up by our partners, such as IDNR, Natural Heritage, and Forest Preserve Districts.

Commissioner Thomas asked that if he interpreted what Commissioner Stone said correctly, we could do a strategic plan that says "this is what we should be doing" but have an implementation plan that says "this is what we are going to be able to do with the resources" we have.

Commissioner Stone answered that is what she was getting at. She would be in support of what Director Heidorn stated: that motivating and getting other players included whether it is our landowner partners or the legislature.

John Wilker commented that there is a tool in our defense tool box that is missing. According to the conservation law, plants are property of the landowner. As for listed plants, we should think about moving forward legislation to allow protection of these plants, since the state has a stake in the conservation of them.

Commissioner Covington asked if it could be dealt with through modifications in the standard instrument of dedication where those rights could be given to the INPC.

John Wilker stated that would work for nature preserves, but not for other plants across the landscape.

Director Heidorn asked if this is something we want to add as a strategy.

Commissioner Stone commented that it is a topic much larger than the INPC. She agreed it is something that needs to be done and may move our state in a progressive fashion of land use law, but we have a long way to go. This is bigger than the INPC.

Outreach and Partnership

Breakout Group: Commissioner Mogerman (Spokesperson), Will Overbeck, Bridget Henning, Commissioner Stone, Brooke Bryant, Joe Roth, Kerry Leigh.

Goal 1: Enhance partnering opportunities using innovative approaches as a model in preserving biodiversity in Illinois.

Strategies:

1) Work with partners to increase outreach to and engagement of the public (i.e. stewardship activities at INPC sites).
2) Work with partners in creative ways (funding) to protect and preserve biodiversity in Illinois.
3) Work with partners to increase research that provides baseline information.

Goal 2: Increase public awareness, support and understanding of INPC, its partners and their impact.

Strategies:

1) Work with partners with expertise in communication to increase public awareness and support of INPC, its partners and their impact.
2) Examine the effectiveness of how bilingual/bicultural communication could enhance the public profile of INPC and its partners.

Goal 3: Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategies:

1) Leverage partnerships to meet the agency's goals.
2) Develop a succession plan.
3) Meet technology needs to realize agency goals.
4) Develop and implement staff training plan with emphasis on changes in federal/state conservation rights and tax law.

Will Overbeck, resident intern, suggested that there might be room to improve on the volunteer/site-steward model for expanded management across preserves that are being neglected. A lot of nature preserves have site-stewards, but those without are getting

neglected. If we can get a dedicated site-steward at each nature preserve, they can report to the partner or agency directly with baseline data and perform management.

Director Heidorn commented when you look on a state-wide basis, there are a number of regions in the state that the capacity of volunteers is there to do it. Culturally, in the metropolitan areas people do not have the connection to the land and as in the areas of low density population are more connected to the land because it is much of their economy. He questioned that he did not see the volunteer/stewardship piece in any of these strategies.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis answered it is meant to be in strategy one, as a high level with your public and you can think of public as volunteer stewards.

Commissioner Mogerman asked can you ship volunteers in, who handles those volunteers. How would it help other organizations like hers that have 150 high school students full of energy. We need some place to work and like taking them to natural areas to work.

Debbie Newman asked how can we work with IDNR, to be able to work on a dialogue to direct what goals are within IDNR in terms of statewide landscape and management.

Director Heidorn asked if this was covered in leverage partnerships.

Commissioner Mogerman answered some of it is.

Commissioner Ruffner commented that the one thing he had not heard is how do we get more money/capitol for resources for everything we want to do. The legislature, the director of IDNR, who do we see about showing all these needs and justification for more money and staff.

Director Heidorn commented that maybe we need an outreach goal defining the Commissioner's role.

Commissioner Thomas commented that we should develop a plan to use Commissioners and other partners to help secure more resources to carry out the rest of the plans, including assistance to help get personnel hired.

Joe Roth commented that under leverage partnerships, money is one thing that we talked about. He also asked if there is a place where non-for-profits may be able to help IDNR with soliciting or accepting and funneling money, similar to what Forest Preserve Districts do.

Commissioner Covington commented that using the forest preserve model is a very good one and they have representation from the county as well as from non-county, private sector.

Director Heidorn stated that this also came from the stewardship discussion the last time we did strategic planning. Modeling after the forest preserve districts would work but would have to be crafted to fit for the INPC since we are statewide.

Commissioner Covington stated it does provide a model and the key is to have a largely independent 501(C)-3 entity.

Director Heidorn stated one strategy would be to develop a plan for how the Commissioners can support our efforts.

Commissioner Thomas commented that maybe you are talking about a goal for implementing this whole plan. Under that might be defined the Commissioners role. There is potential legislation related to land trusts and those partnerships which might be explored. There might be other things, but maybe you need something overriding like that.

Commissioner Daubach commented that maybe one of the roles of the Commissioners really is outreach and protection.

Director Heidorn asked as a group what do we want to do.

Commissioner Thomas suggested that staff could propose what would be helpful and put that out as a goal. We would all get to review it and discuss it further.

Commissioner Daubach commented that she would like seeing suggestions as what the commissioners can do as individuals and as a collective body.

Director Heidorn asked everyone to vote for priorities by giving them seven dot stickers and place them next to what they felt was important.

The results of that vote are in Appendix IV.

219-14) Other Business

No other business.

219-15) Adjournment

Commissioner Derby-Lewis motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Mogerman and approved. The INPC adjourned at approximately 3:00 PM.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
memorandum

To: Commissioners

From: Randy Heidorn, Marni English, Valerie Njapa, Kelly Neal

Date: January 16, 2015

Subject: Staff Report for the 219th Meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
Reporting Period: August 8, 2014 – December 22, 2014

KEY

INPC = Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
NP = Nature Preserve
LWR = Land and Water Reserve
NHL = Natural Heritage Landmark
INAI = Illinois Natural Areas Inventory
PNA = Potential Natural Area
SNA = State Natural Area
SF = State Forest
SP = State Park
FPD = Forest Preserve District
CD = Conservation District
IDNR = Illinois Department of Natural Resources
ORC = Office of Resource Conservation
ISGS = Illinois State Geological Service
IEPA = Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
TNC = The Nature Conservancy
NLI = Natural Land Institute
NAAF = Natural Areas Acquisition Fund
Co. = County
ATV = All-Terrain Vehicle
PD = Park District
CMS = Department of Central Management Services

AREAS

Area 1 - John Nelson
Area 2 - Steven Byers
Area 3 - Kim Roman
Area 4 - Angella Moorehouse
Area 5 - Thomas Lerczak
Area 6 - Mary Kay Solecki
Area 7 - Debbie Newman & Eric Wright
Area 8 - Bob Edgin

INPC OPERATIONS

- Staff changes
  - Eric Wright, Natural Heritage Resident Intern, who began work in the summer, continued as a shared intern with INPC and Heritage working with Debbie Newman and Mark Phipps.
  - Meaghan Collins and Tom Engbrecht ended their terms as Natural Heritage Resident Interns.
- Hiring efforts
  - Kelly Neal participated in interviews for resident interns for IDNR Division of Natural Heritage and INPC. Hired resident will begin their one-year term January 16, 2015. Samantha McCarrel and Brooke Bryant will be located at Western Illinois University and supervised by Angella Moorehouse. Will Overbeck will be located at Moraine Hills SP and supervised by John Nelson.
  - The Area 9 Natural Areas Preservation Specialist (Southern Illinois) (Natural Resource Advanced Specialist): CMS is evaluating the applications. It is currently taking four months or more for this review.
  - The Nature Preserves Operations Program Manager (Natural Resource Manager 2 [NRM2]) and Natural Areas Protection Manager (NRM2) positions were entered into the CMS Electronic Position Action Request System in September. These positions are considered Rutan exempt due to their managerial nature. All such positions have been put on hold pending the transition to a new administration.
  - Randy Heidorn and other ORC managers met with CMS to discuss issues and improvements related

to evaluating and hiring employees for the INPC and IDNR.

- Kelly Neal, Mary Kay Solecki, Thomas Lerczak, Marni English, Valerie Njapa and John Nelson maintained Springfield INPC operations during Randy Heidorn's medical leave, including procurement, budget tracking, INPC meeting preparations and prescribed burn plan approval.
- Kelly Neal and Randy Heidorn continued to coordinate with IDNR Heritage Staff to discuss options for acquiring a pre-existing management tracking database tool.
- Jenny Wells is in the testing phase of the development of the annual report database that she has been working on for INPC. This database has the potential for functionality beyond INPC annual reporting.
- Randy Heidorn in consultation with Kelly Neal and Jenny Wells worked with IDNR Information Technology Staff to develop an INPC partner Sharepoint web site where agendas can be posted to allow Commissioners, Advisors and Consultants to prepare for meetings. This site, when fully functional will replace the mailing of hard copies.
- Randy Heidorn continued to represent the INPC as a member of the Natural Areas Evaluation Committee.
- Randy Heidorn and Marni English supported the operation of the Illinois Prescribed Burn Certification Board, by developing an agenda for their December meeting. Marni English also recorded and provided minutes for the Board. Randy Heidorn was unable to represent the INPC at this meeting due to health issues.

OUTREACH/PARTNERSHIP/TRAINING/VOLUNTEER COORDINATION/MEETINGS ATTENDED

- Randy Heidorn:
  - Continues to represent Illinois as President of the Board of Directors for the Natural Areas Association presiding over both the Annual meeting of NAA and the Board of Directors meeting and participating in the Annual NAA Awards Banquet in Dayton, Ohio.
  - Attended a retirement seminar held by the State Employees Retirement System.
- Kelly Neal:
  - Completed Rutan Interview Training.
  - Attended Plants of Concern Advisory Group meeting.
- John Nelson:
  - Gave INPC presentation to
    - Natural Land Institute Board.
    - Franklin Creek Preservation Society.
  - Cultural Resource Field training with IDNR Archaeologist Hal Hassen.
- Steve Byers gave a presentations:
  - Madison Audubon on the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.
  - Poplar Creek Stewards at their 25th Anniversary Dinner.
  - Forest Preserves Cook Co. as a part of their Next Century Plan for the Forest Preserves.
- Kim Roman:
  - Organized and coordinated volunteer work days at Langham Island, part of Kankakee River NP.
  - Represented the IDNR/INPC at the 2014 Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration award ceremony, with Illinois Beach NP receiving a Platinum award, and Goose Lake Prairie NP receiving a Gold award.
  - Coordinated the INPC's Facebook Page.
- Angella Moorehouse:
  - Gave a presentation on prairie ecology for the Master Naturalist Program in McDonough Co.
  - Attended the River Bend Wildland Trust Annual Meeting and gave a presentation on the results of the Black Hawk Forest NP Bio Blitz conducted June 27-28.
- Thomas Lerczak
  - Presented a workshop on basic ecology to the University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalist Program.
  - Provided information for posting on INPC's Facebook page.

- Mary Kay Solecki:
  - Gave presentation to Middlefork Audubon Society in Danville on INPC's 50 Years of Saving Nature
  - Attended Cooperative Weed Management Area workshop to start Cooperative Weed Management Area in east-central Illinois.
  - Attended Barnhart Prairie Board meeting.
- Debbie Newman:
  - Gave a presentation to neighbors of NPs/LWRs in Prairie du Rocher.
  - Presentation at Clifftop Member Day atWhite Rock NP.
  - Prepared an article for Clifftop's *Bluffviews* about new Wightman Subterranean and Illinois Ozarks NPs.
- Eric Wright:
  - Completed S130, S190 prescribed burn training, and a Field Day.
  - Completed First Aid and CPR certification.
  - Drafted an article for an ORC article about loess hill prairies.
- Bob Edgin gave an overview of Nature Preserves System to Vincennes University Biological Sciences students.

PROTECTION

Discussion of protection options with the following landowners and potential funders:

Area 1
- Private Landowner
- Franklin Creek Preservation Society
- Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation
- IDNR

Area 2
- Long Grove PD
- TNC
- Libertyville Township Open Space
- Hybernia Area Homeowners Association
- Lake Co. FPD
- City of Elgin
- Crystal Lake PD

Area 3
- 3 Private Landowners
- Joliet PD
- Illinois Audubon Society
- IDNR
- FPD of Cook Co.
- TNC

Area 4
- 5 private landowners
- Prairie Land Conservancy
- TNC
- NLI
- River Bend Wildland Trust
- IDNR

Area 5
- 10 private landowners.
- The ParkLands Foundation
- Macon Co. CD
- Springfield PD
- The Wetlands Initiative
- Bureau Co. Soil and Water CD

Area 6
- 7 private landowners
- Grand Prairie Friends
- IDNR

Area 7
- 5 private landowners

Area 8
- 2 private landowners

EASEMENT/DEDICATION MONITORING/BOUNDARY SURVEYS

Boundary monitoring took place at the following protected areas:

Area 1
- Pistakee Bog NP

Area 2

- Reed-Turner Woodland NP
- Fox River Forested Fen NP
- Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow NP

Area 3

- Starved Rock NP
- Long Run Seep NP
- Iroquois Sands LWR
- Bonnie's Prairie NP

Area 4

- Cedar Glen NP and LWR
- Allison Savanna LWR
- Geissler Savanna LWR
- Jamar Haven LWR
- Nenawakwa LWR
- Robert Evers LWR
- McFarland Hills LWR
- Samuel Barnum Mead Savanna NP
- Stony Hills NP
- Elton Fawks Bald Eagle Refuge NP
- Black Hawk Forest NP
- Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP
- Cecil White LWR

Area 5

- Walden West LWR
- Crevecoeur NP
- Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR
- Anderson Prairie LWR
- Fondulac Seep LWR
- Bennett's Terraqueous Gardens NP
- Fondulac Seep NP
- Cooper Park Wetlands LWR
- Tomlin Timber NP
- Weston Cemetery Prairie NP
- McCune Sand Prairie LWR

Area 6

- Shady Rest LWR

Area 7

- Bohbrink Woods NP
- Swayne Hollow NP
- Bohbrink Woods NP
- Jackson Slough LWR
- Oblate Fathers' Woods NP
- Sipple Slough LWR
- Knobeloch Woods NP

Area 8

- Big Creek Woods Memorial NP
- Robert Ridgway Grasslands NP
- Emma Vance Woods NP
- Richard R and Jean W Graber Grasslands LWR
- Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR
- Padgett Sweet Gum Woods LWR
- Beadles Barrens NP
- Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR
- Horn Prairie Grove LWR
- Marjorie J Brines White Oak Woods LWR
- Edward V Price Woods LWR
- Robeson Hills NP and LWR
- Lost Creek Marsh NP and LWR
- Schulte Woods NP
- Pruett Woods NP
- P & E Refuge LWR
- Culley Barrens LWR

BIOLOGICAL INVENTORIES

Unless otherwise specified, routine inventories were conducted at the following sites (target group of species or species if applicable):

Area 1

- Wilson Prairie NP (botanical)
- Jarrett Prairie NP (botanical)

Area 3

- privately site in Grundy Co (mussel)

Area 4

- Cedar Glen NP (bird; bunchflower [*Melanthium virginicum*])
- Duck Club Road INAI (decurrent false aster [*Boltonia decurrens*])

Area 5

- Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak NP (red-headed woodpecker [*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*])
- Leigh Woods NHL (arrowwood [*Viburnum molle*])
- Walden West LWR (red-headed woodpecker)

Area 6

- Salt Fork of Vermilion River INAI site (botanical)
- North Fork of Vermilion River INAI site (mussel)

Area 7

- Horseshoe Lake SP – Raskey Slough (Decurrent False Aster)
- Coffeen Lake SFWA – Ear-leafed Foxglove (*Tomanthera auriculata*)
- Roberts Cemetery NP – Savana Blazing Star (*Liastris scariosa var. nieuwlandii*)

INAI UPDATE

Area 2

- Rt 137 Mitigation Site
- Deer Grove East Forest Preserve

Area 4

- Buckhorn Woods PNA
- Little Missouri Creek Hill Prairie PNA
- Quincy Bed INAI

Area 7

- Calhoun Co. 2 Hill Prairie Sites
- Washington Co. 2 Flatwoods and Prairie Sites
- Green 005 PNA
- Calhoun 013 PNA
- Calhoun 033 PNA

Area 8

- Allison Gravel Prairie (deletion)

STEWARDSHIP

Planning

Area 1

- Edward Vassallo LWR
- Yonder Prairie NP burn plan
- Apple River Canyon NP
- Elton E. Fawks Bald Eagle Refuge NP

Area 2

- Skokie River NP
- Bartel Grassland LWR
- Gensburg-Markham Prairie NP
- Dropseed Prairie NP
- Freeman Kame NP
- Orland Grassland LWR
- Cary Junior High Prairie NP
- Rollins Savanna NP
- Springbrook Prairie NP
- Swift Prairie NP
- Middlefork Savanna NP

Area 3

- Bonnie's Prairie NP
- Romeoville Prairie NP
- Carl N. Becker Savanna NP
- Collins Station INAI site

Area 4

- Burton Cave NP

Area 5

- Sandra Miller Bellrose NP
- Mettler Woods NP
- Walden West LWR

Area 6

- Woodyard Memorial Conservation Area LWR
- Sargent's Woods LWR
- Little Vermilion River LWR

Area 7

- Buck Hill Bottom LWR
- Marilandica Acres LWR

Area 8

- Dry Fork Woods NHL
- Culley Barrens LWR
- Edward V. Price Woods LWR
- Horn Prairie Grove LWR
- Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR
- Lost Creek Marsh LWR and NP
- P & E Refuge LWR
- Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR
- Padgett Sweet Gum Woods LWR
- Robeson Hills LWR and NP
- Richard R and Jean W Graber Grasslands LWR
- Beadles Barrens NP
- Big Creek Woods Memorial NP
- Emma Vance Woods NP
- Karcher's Post Oak Woods NP
- Robert Ridgway Grasslands NP
- Schulte Woods NP

STEWARDSHIP

Consulting, contract work conducted, administered and completed:

Area 1

- Franklin Creek NP

Area 2

- Bluff Spring Fen NP
- Sterne's Fen NP
- Trout Park NP
- Fox River Forested Fen NP
- Brewster Creek Fen NP
- Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP

Area 7

- Salt Lick Point LWR
- Prairie of the Rock NP
- Blufftop Acres LWR
- Armin Kruger Speleological NP

Area 8

- Burnside Forest INAI site

Prescribed burns completed:

Area 1

- Boone Creek Fen and Seep INAI site
- Volo Bog SNA

Area 2

- Illinois Beach NP

Area 3

- Mskoda LWR

Area 4

- Siloam Springs SP

Area 7

- Harry's Prairie NHL
- Julius J. Knobeloch Woods NP
- Harry's Prairie NHL
- Sand Road Site

Area 8

- Wildcat Hollow SF
- Chauncey Marsh LWR
- Copperhead Hollow SWA
- Stephen A Forbes SP
- Prairie Ridge SNA

Other land stewardship completed by staff:

Area 1

- Boone Creek Fen NP
- Freeport Prairie NP
- Pine Creek NP
- Harlem Hills NP

Area 2

- Sterne's Fen NP
- Bluff Spring Fen NP
- Wolf Road Prairie NP
- Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow NP

- Trout Park NP

Area 4

- Robert Evers LWR
- Cedar Glen NP

Area 5

- Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak NP
- Shoal Creek Barrens
- Henry Allan Gleason NP

Area 6

- Woodyard Memorial Conservation Area LWR
- Barnhart Prairie NP

Area 7

- Prairie of the Rock NP
- Stemler Cave Woods NP
- Bohbrink Woods NP
- Denby Prairie NP
- Missionary Oblates' Woods NP
- Heather's Hollow NHL
- Salt Lick Point LWR
- Bohm Woods NP
- Harry's Prairie NHL
- Posen Woods NP
- Jennings Family Hill Prairie NP
- Bohbrink Woods NP
- Julius J. Knobeloch Woods NP
- Horse Creek Glade NHL

Area 8

- Beadles Barrens NP
- Big Creek Woods Memorial NP
- Horn Prairie Grove LWR

Threats to Sites Report for the 219th Meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (Reporting Period: August 8-December 22, 2014)

- **Sargent's Woods LWR, Coles Co. - Mary Kay Solecki**
  - **Issue:** Ginseng poaching.
  - **Threat:** Poachers dug up and removed roots from over 500 ginseng plants in LWR.
  - **Status:** New; Resolved. Law enforcement issued citations to responsible individuals. Landowner will plant ginseng seed from Illinois wild grown plants.

- **Springbrook Prairie NP, DuPage Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Installation of second communication tower adjacent to NP.
  - **Threat:** Potential threat to endangered and threatened bird species and concentrations of birds that utilize site.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. INPC corresponded with AT&T, DuPage Co. Planning Department, and FPD DuPage Co. requesting that communications be mounted on existing tower in accordance with US Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines designed to minimize impact of these structures on birds.

- **Swift Prairie NP, DuPage Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa, Kelly Neal**
  - **Issue:** Equestrian riders in NP.
  - **Threat:** Trampling of plant communities by horses and disturbance to animal communities.
  - **Status:** Concluded. INPC working with FPD DuPage Co. staff to address issue; to better understand the current situation - where riders are originating from, and to evaluate options to eliminate/minimize impact to NP. New trail alignment has been approved by INPC (project is now concluded).

- **Karcher's Post Oak Woods NP, Hamilton Co. – Bob Edgin**
  - **Issue:** Unauthorized marking of trees in NP and cutting/removal of wood from NP.
  - **Threat:** Unauthorized access and illegal activity in NP.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. INPC is requesting assistance from IDNR's Conservation Police.

- **Cecil White Prairie LWR, Hancock Co. – Angella Moorehouse, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** New fiber optic cable installed along Route 336; encroachment onto LWR without prior notification or approval by INPC and IDNR.
  - **Threat:** Unauthorized earthwork within LWR.
  - **Status:** Resolved. License Agreement executed between IDNR, INPC and Prairie Power, Inc., to retro-actively cover installation and any future maintenance.

- **Iroquois Sands LWR, Iroquois Co.; Carl N. Becker and Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna NPs, Kankakee Co. - Kim Roman**
  - **Issue:** Unauthorized ATV use and trespass in Kankakee Sands preserves.
  - **Threat:** Illegal ATV use is damaging sites and habitat for endangered and threatened species.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. Kim Roman met with the local Conservation Police Officer pointing out access areas and areas damaged by ATV's. Additional surveillance is being performed by law enforcement. If ATV use does not greatly diminish, fencing will need to be installed.

- **Bliss Woods NP, Kane Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Lead shot on site (origin traced back to operation of adjacent shooting range).
  - **Threat:** Lead shot poses a health risk and threat to the environment. And its removal threatens existing plant communities (both wetland and terrestrial ecosystems).
  - **Status:** Ongoing. INPC staff participating with FPD of Kane Co. (owner), IEPA, IDNR, and Attorney General's Office to finalize Consent Order and identify acceptable course of action for removal of lead shot from site.

- **Burlington Prairie NP, Kane Co. - Steven Byers**
  - **Issue:** ComEd is constructing a 345kv electric transmission line across Ogle, DeKalb, Kane and DuPage Counties
  - **Threat:** Transmission line could impact NP.
  - **Status:** Concluded. INPC staff worked successfully with Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) personnel early in the planning process to preclude routes that would be located near Burlington Prairie NP or nearby Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve. The Illinois Commerce Commission did not approve project proposed by ComEd.

- **Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow NP, Lake Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Development proposed near NP.
  - **Threat:** Alteration to surface hydrology, lighting that could disrupt pollinators for federally-listed plant species.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. IDNR has initiated consultation. INPC has corresponded with City of Waukegan re; proposed development. INPC staff has met with owner of NP regarding threat and course of action.

- **Hybernia NP, Lake Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** New development located along southeast border of NP.
  - **Threat:** Potential for direct and indirect impacts to NP (sedimentation, erosion, introduction of weed seeds, disturbance during construction).
  - **Status:** Ongoing. INPC staff has coordinated with City of Highland Park, Development Department and has asked that the boundary of the NP be flagged and that a temporary construction fence be built along boundary by the developer. Project was considered, reviewed, and approved by the City (December 2013) without engaging IDNR in Endangered and Threatened Species Consultation. INPC staff conducted site visit and confirmed that boundary has been flagged and that erosion control measures are in place.

.

- **Kildeer Creek and Woodland LWR and Reed-Turner Woodland NP, Lake Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Herbicide applied to Salem Lake by adjacent property owner without approval of owners of LWR or NP (Lake Co. FPD and Long Grove PD, respectively) or INPC. Portions of Salem Lake are located within the above-referenced LWR and NP.
  - **Threat:** Herbicide application killed all the aquatic plants in Salem Lake, secondary impact on wildlife.
  - **Status:** New. Lake Co. FPD conducted initial investigation and referred their investigation to IDNR Conservation Police. A copy of that investigation was released in December 2014. INPC to coordinate with IDNR Legal Counsel regarding referral to local State's Attorney or Attorney General's Office.

- **Spring Bluff NP, Lake Co.**
  - **Issue 1- Steven Byers and Brad Semel/IDNR:** Paint spill near Skipper Bud's facility.
    - **Threat:** Release of potentially harmful substances into Spring Bluff NP.
    - **Status:** Resolved. INPC coordinated with IDNR to determine paint did not reach or impact NP; referred to IEPA for further evaluation and/or legal action.
  - **Issue 2: Steven Byers:** Sanitary line failure at North Point Marina.
    - **Threat:** Release of potentially harmful substances into Spring Buff NP
    - **Status:** Concluded. INPC coordinating with Lake Co. FPD, IDNR to initiate emergency repair to sewer line.

- **Sun Lake NP, Lake Co. - Steven Byers, Kelly Neal**
  - **Issue:** Water line replacement/installation within existing easement at Sun Lake NP.
  - **Threat:** Potential for direct and indirect impacts to NP (sedimentation, erosion, introduction of weed seeds).
  - **Status:** Ongoing. INPC staff approved soil borings to establish interval width/frequency for directional boring that will be necessary to replace water line. INPC continues to coordinate with the Lake Co. FPD and provided format for license agreement with local municipality.

- **Gillespie Prairie LWR, Macoupin and Montgomery Counties – Tom Lerczak, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) proposed for installation across LWR via directional boring.
  - **Threat:** No surface impact to LWR or vegetation anticipated; however, a new license agreement will be required by IDNR (LWR owner).
  - **Status:** New. INPC staff coordinating with IDNR and DAPL representatives to secure license agreement.

- **Bohm Woods NP, Madison Co. – Debbie Newman, Eric Wright and Mark Phipps/IDNR**
  - **Issue:** Disking occurred on portions of two fields in the NP planted to prairie grasses.
  - **Threat:** Direct impact/injury to prairie plants and soil disturbance.
  - **Status:** New. INPC staff coordinating with IDNR's Offices of Resource Conservation, Land Management and Law Enforcement to resolve the issue.

- **Cotton Creek Marsh NP, McHenry Co. - Steven Byers**
  - **Issue:** Manure pit expansion has been proposed for site in Lake Co. that lies within Class III groundwater for Cotton Creek Marsh NP.
  - **Threat:** Manure pit represents a source of pollutants to both groundwater and surface water resources upon which fen wetlands at Cotton Creek Marsh NP are dependent.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. INPC staff coordinating with Lake Co. Planning Department, Lake Co. FPD, McHenry Co. CD and has sought expertise regarding threat posed by facility with staff of ISGS. INPC staff awaiting analysis from ISGS of threat and necessary remediation steps that will be necessary to eliminate or minimize threat to both surface water and groundwater resources.

- **Elizabeth Lake NP, McHenry Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Herbicide to kill aquatic plants applied in NP in September 2014 without permission of owner (McHenry Co. CD) or INPC.
  - **Threat:** Herbicide killed aquatic plants in linear corridor through NP.
  - **Status:** New. INPC staff coordinated with McHenry Co. CD Conservation Police. IDNR Conservation Police asked by McHenry Co. CD to complete the investigation (completed December 2014). INPC to coordinate with IDNR Legal Counsel regarding referral to local State's Attorney or Attorney General's Office.

- **Oakwood Hills Fen NP, McHenry Co. - Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Construction of power plant within ½ mile of NP.
  - **Threat:** Alteration of surface and groundwater resources upon which fens are dependent, release of toxic substances into air and water.
  - **Status:** Concluded. INPC coordinating with IDNR on Endangered and Threatened Species consultation; correspondence with Village of Oakwood Hills, coordination with ISGS to evaluate threat to groundwater resources. Huge public display against project has delayed consideration of project. Village Board voted to deny petitioner approval to proceed with project.

- **Upper Sangamon River LWR, Piatt Co. - Mary Kay Solecki**
  - **Issue:** Mowing of pipeline easement within LWR is spreading exotic plants to adjacent prairie restoration and grasslands.
  - **Threat:** Cut-leaved teasel and other exotic plants repeatedly spread into prairie restoration and grasslands adjacent to mowed easement.
  - **Status:** New; Resolved. Pipeline company agreed to stop mowing the easement adjacent to prairie restoration and grasslands. IDNR staff management activities should control woody plants in prairie restoration, grasslands and within adjacent easement.

- **Crevecoeur NP, Tazewell Co. - Tom Lerczak, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Neighbor encroachments.
  - **Threat:** Disturbance of NP features, dumping, unauthorized activities.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. After making considerable progress at removing many neighbor encroachments earlier in the year, further efforts have stalled with several items still needing removal (fences, trash, wooden deck). The Village of Crevecoeur has been taking the lead in landowner follow-up contacts, and the local police department issued citations to all offending neighbors. Plans are being made for more direct involvement, as needed, by INPC and IDNR legal counsel. NAAF funds have been secured for full clean-up and fence construction in 2015.

- **Independence Park Woods LWR, Tazewell Co. - Tom Lerczak, Valerie Njapa**
  - **Issue:** Existing Ameren easements across LWR related to new gas pipeline construction.
  - **Threat:** Disturbance of LWR features outside of existing specified easement widths.
  - **Status:** Ameren holds several easements for gas pipeline construction over the LWR. Specific areas of the LWR are covered by undetermined easements, while other areas are covered by easements of specific widths. For easements with undetermined widths, Ameren will specify technical parameters (limits on disturbance) for pipeline construction in 2015. For areas covered by easements of specific width, Ameren is planning to request permission from the landowner and INPC to disturb areas outside of existing easements (construction planned for 2016).

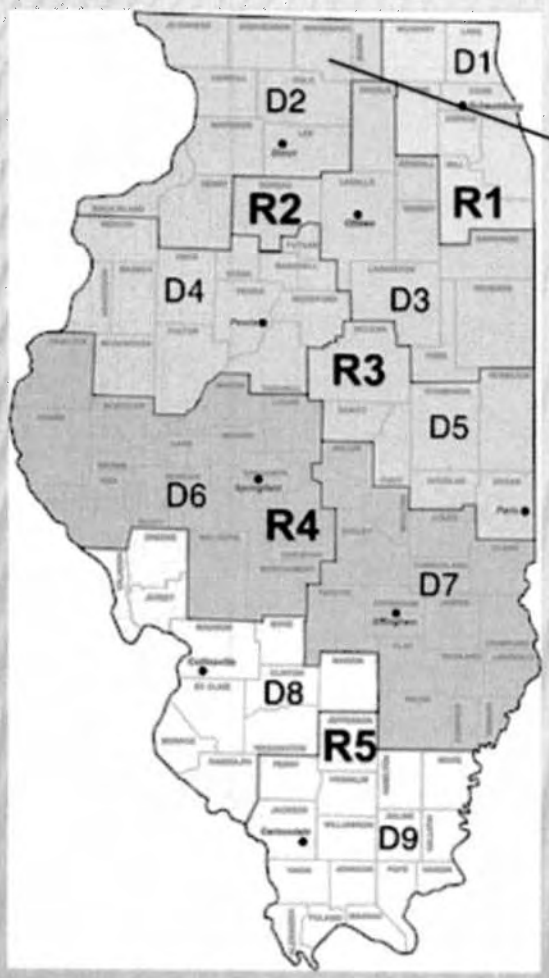
- **Edgewood Farm LWR, Vermilion and Champaign Counties; Larimore's Salt Fork of the Vermilion River LWR, Vermilion Co. - Mary Kay Solecki**
  - **Issue:** Proposed Bulldog Mine near Homer may impact LWR's, NHL, and other conservation areas (including State-listed mussels and fish) on Salt Fork of Vermilion River INAI site.
  - **Threat:** Potential for pollution from mine discharge and mine activities.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. Staff attended informational meeting re: proposed mine. INPC submitted letter stating concerns to IDNR Office of Mine and Minerals.

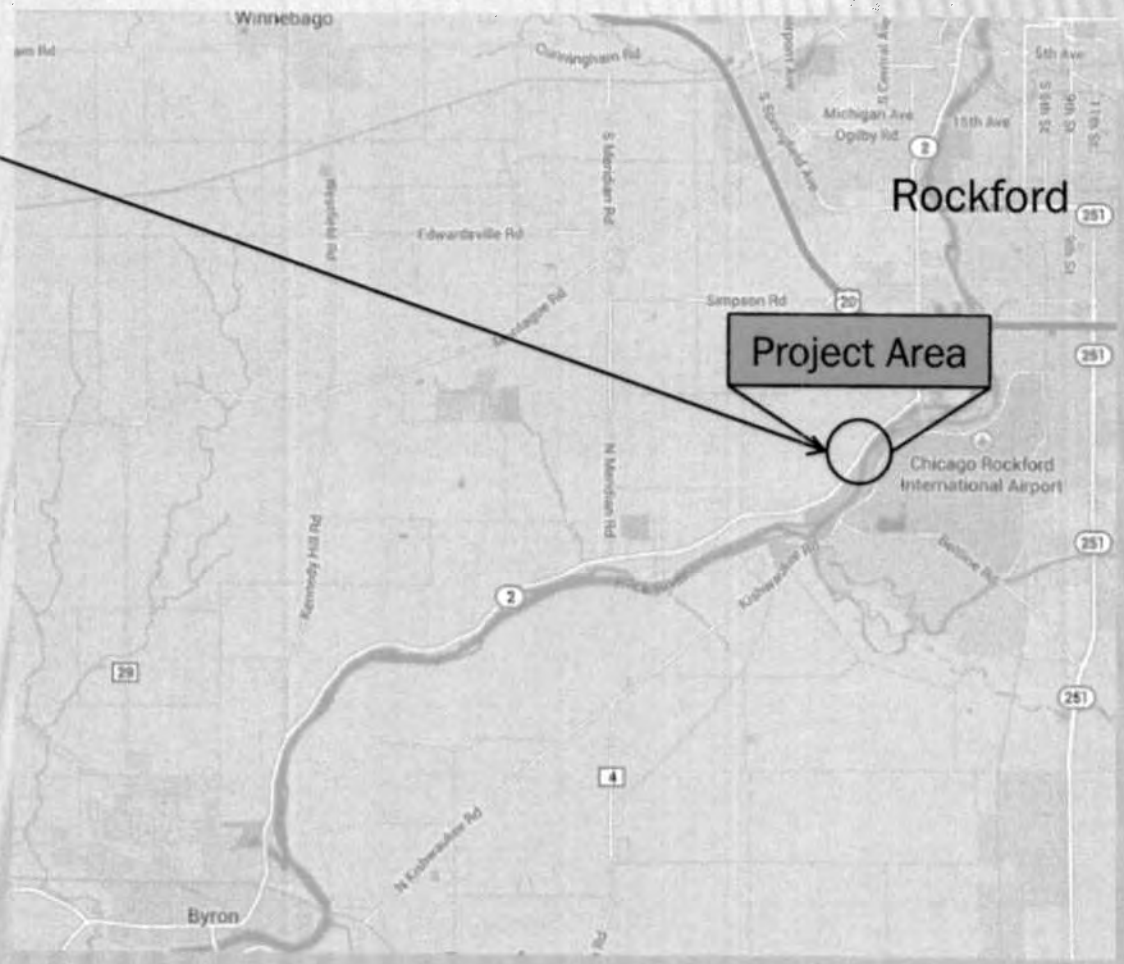
- **Romeoville Prairie NP, Will Co. - Kim Roman**
  - **Issue:** In 2009, an Enbridge pipeline adjacent to the NP had a break in its line, resulting in the release of crude oil.
  - **Threat:** While most of the spill was contained, constituents of crude oil were detected in the NP.
  - **Status:** Ongoing. INPC and IDNR referred the violations to the Illinois Attorney General's Office to amend the existing IEPA's complaint so that counts to Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act can be better addressed. Kim Roman was deposed by Enbridge's attorney.

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

PRESENTED BY THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE





JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

- IL 2 will be constructed in two projects:
- **Project 1** – Culvert replacement scheduled in 2016-2017
- **Project 2** – Reconstruction of IL 2 from Byron to Rockford
  - > Project is not yet in the multi-year program
  - > Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) project

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

- Culvert was extended in 1924 to the existing condition
- 88 acres of drainage area
- 35 trees to be removed within the Nature Preserve for the culvert project.
- Existing Structure is a 3'x5' box culvert
- Proposed culvert to be a 60" reinforced concrete pipe

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

EXISTING CULVERT CONDITION

UPSTREAM HEADWALL

LOOKING INTO CULVERT FROM UPSTREAM

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

EXISTING CULVERT CONDITION

DOWNSTREAM HEADWALL

LOOKING INTO CULVERT FROM DOWNSTREAM

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

CULVERT RATING

- 9 = Excellent, no deficiencies
- 0 = Failed condition – out of service
- This culvert is currently rated a 3
  - > Serious Condition
  - > Loss of section, deterioration, spalling or scouring have seriously affected primary structural components.
  - > Fatigue or shear cracks in concrete
  - > Integral wing walls nearly severed from culvert.
- Rehabilitation or replacement is necessary

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

PROJECT 1 – CULVERT REPLACEMENT

Standard Policy

- 8 foot shoulders
- 1:4 front slope
- Removal of guardrail

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

PROJECT 1 – CULVERT REPLACEMENT

Minimizations

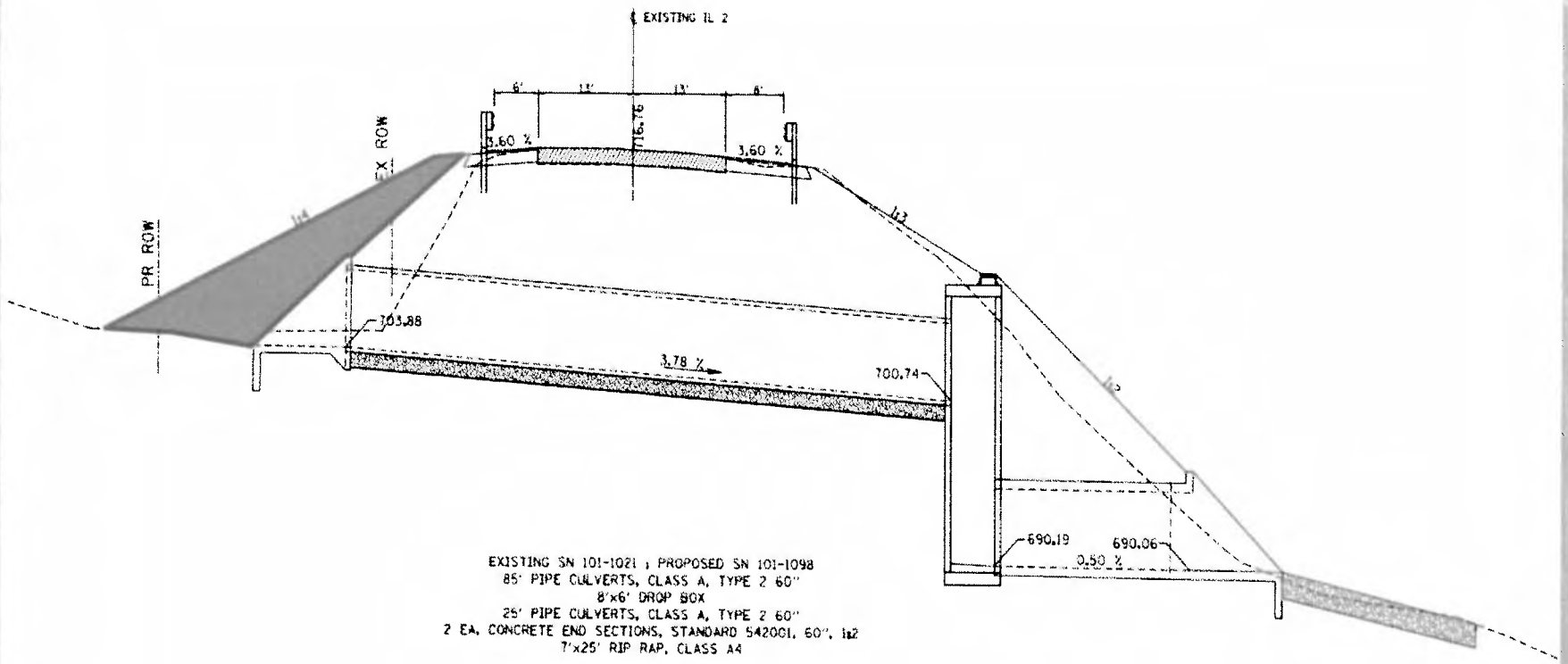
- 6 foot shoulder width
- 1:2 front slope
- Guardrail

Benefits:

- Reduces impacts by 20'

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

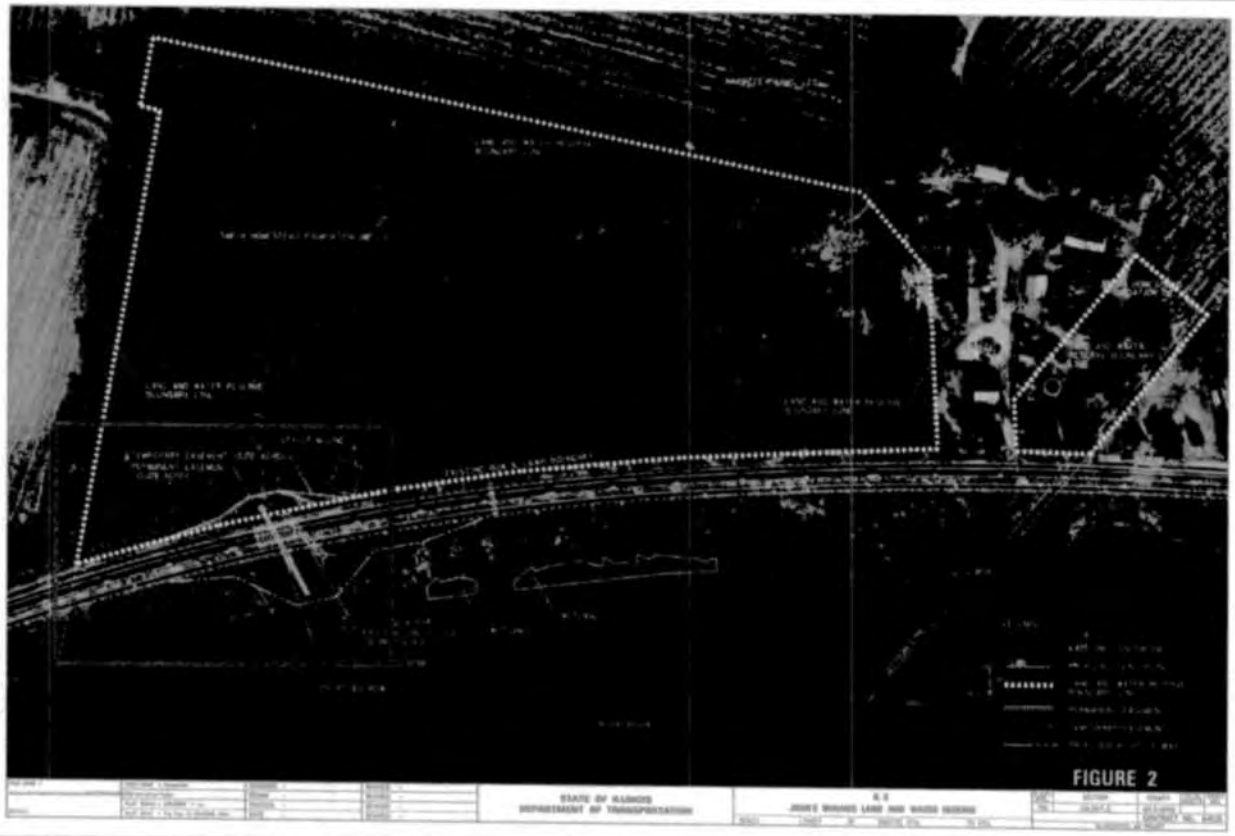
PROJECT 1 – CULVERT REPLACEMENT



JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

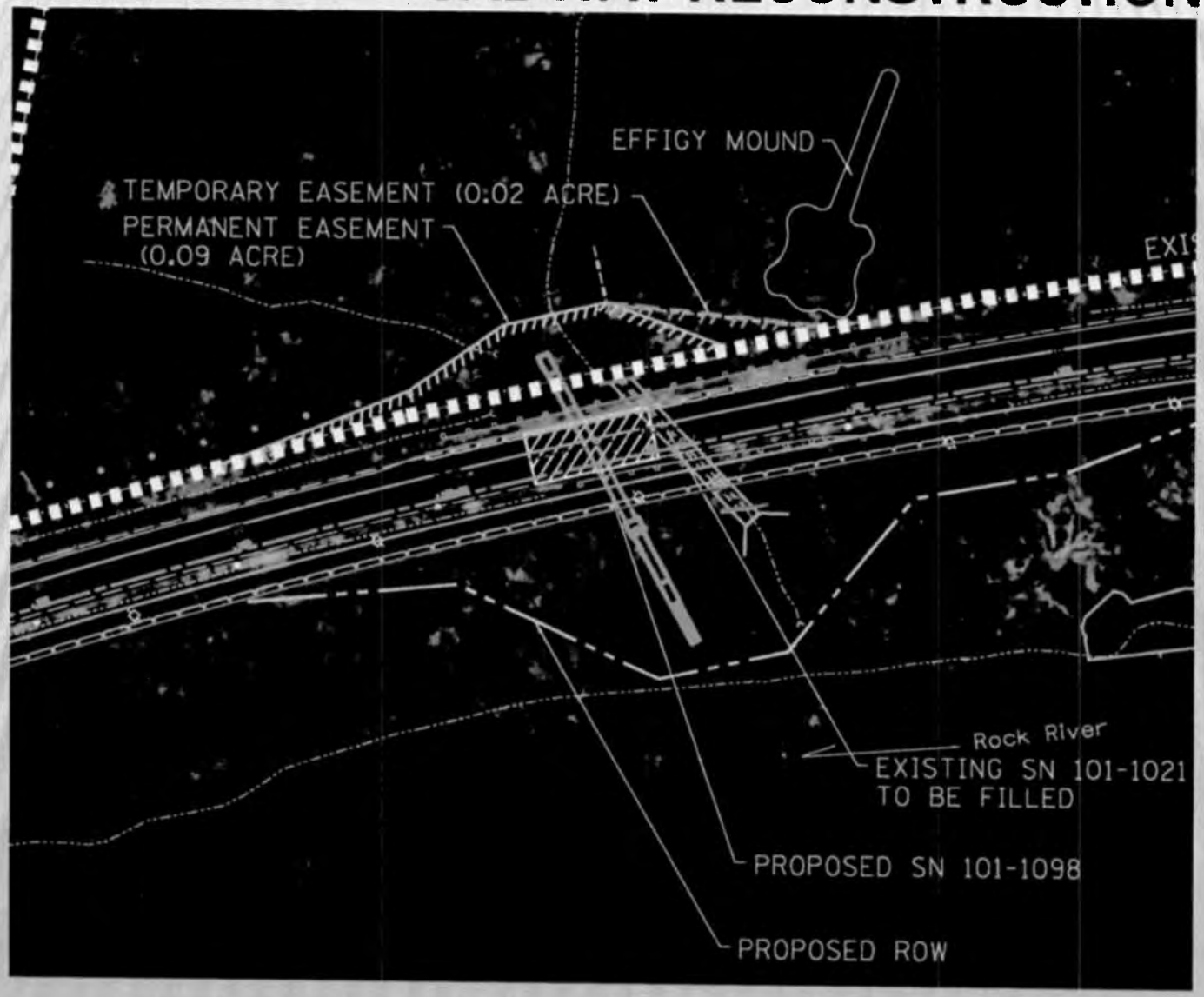
PROJECT 2 – ROADWAY RECONSTRUCTION

- Complete roadway reconstruction
- Alignment shift 9'
- No further tree removal expected
- No excavation beyond the toe of slope along Nature Preserve



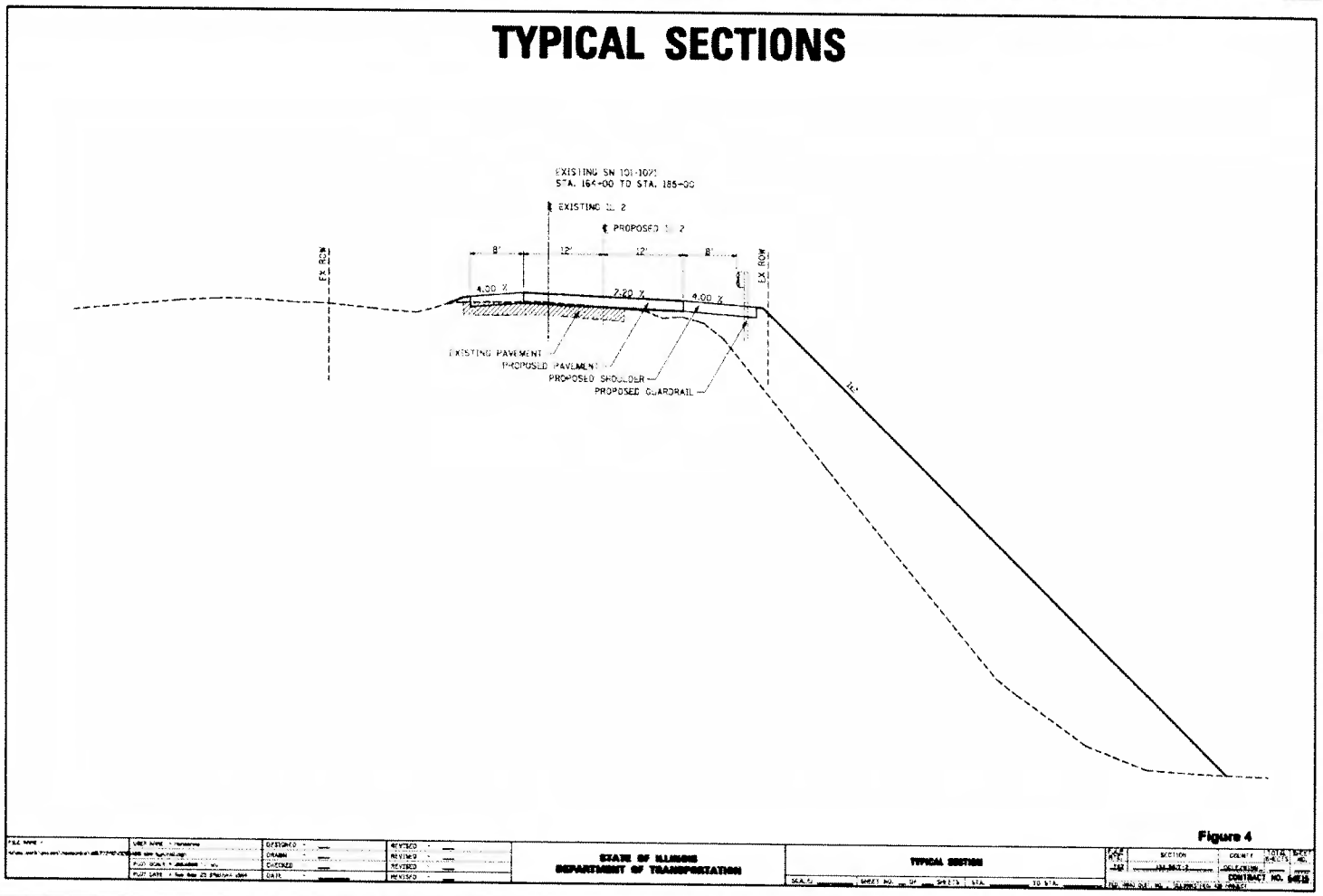
JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

PROJECT 2 – ROADWAY RECONSTRUCTION



JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

TYPICAL SECTION FOR PROJECT 2 DESIGN



JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

TYPICAL SECTION FOR PROJECT 2 DESIGN

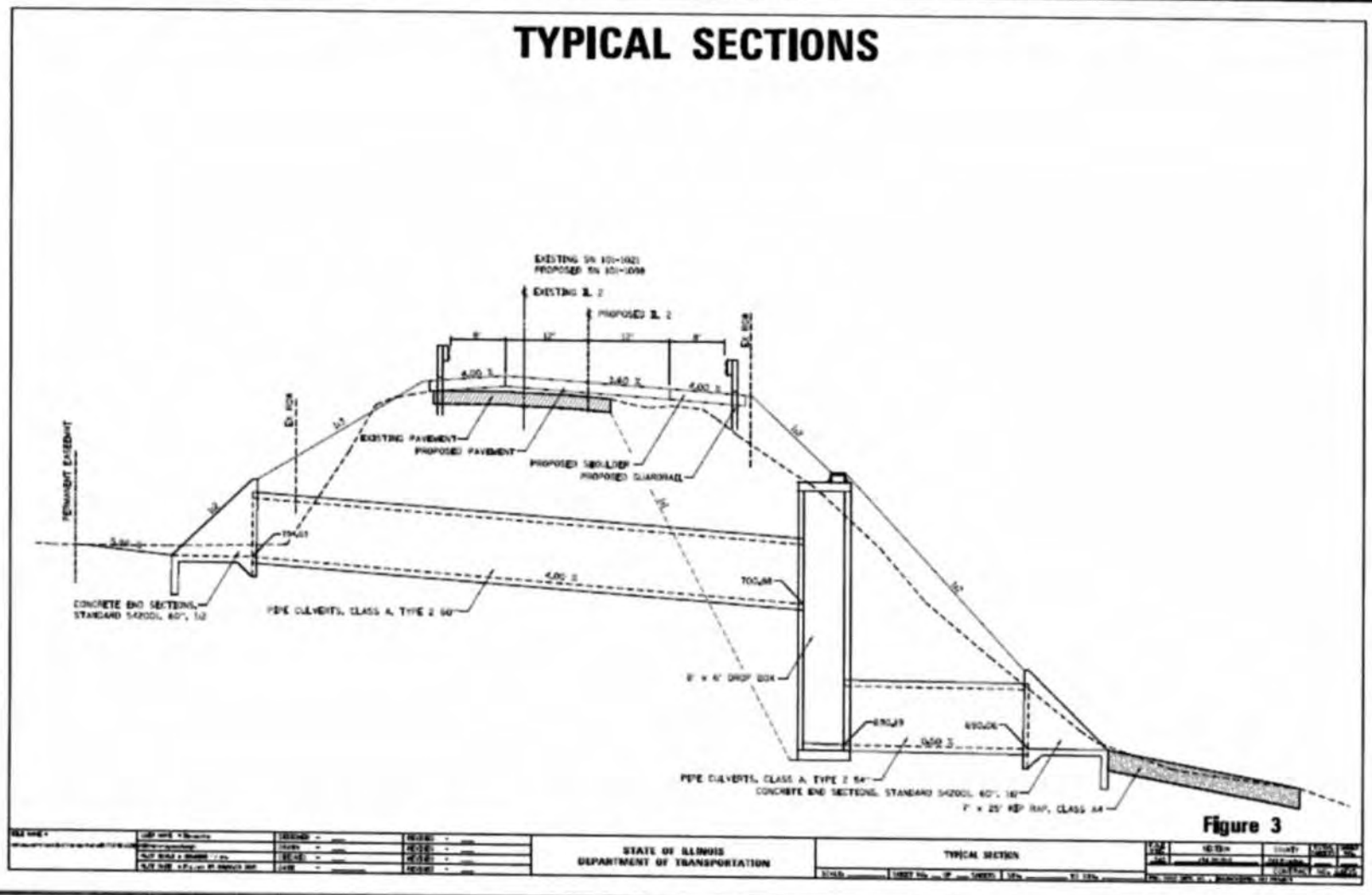


Figure 3

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

- Nine commitments were made pertaining to the John's Mounds Land and Water Reserve
- Meetings with Smeja Homestead Foundation occurred in March 2014

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

COMMITMENTS

1) The property owner will be paid fair market value for the permanent and temporary easements. This money will be used by the owners to improve or enhance the Reserve.

2) No construction activities will take place beyond the construction limits shown for construction of the culvert.

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

COMMITMENTS, (CONT.)

3) The trees growing on IDOT's right-of-way in front of the Reserve will be removed as part of the culvert replacement project. The trees will be cut flush at ground level and the stumps will not be ground or removed. Stumps will be treated with herbicide to prevent regrowth. This will limit the impacts to the mounds caused by the tree roots. Because of the previously-described tree clearing date restrictions for the bats, as well as the date restrictions for the Bald Eagle, trees may be removed in this area only from October 1 through January 15 of any construction year.

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

COMMITMENTS, (CONT.)

4) During construction, a temporary fence will be installed along the easement line to prevent any errant construction equipment from impacting the reserve. This fence will be removed after construction.

5) The existing culvert will be filled in rather than removed so as not to impact the mounds.

6) No excavation shall take place in the temporary easement area, only fill, so as not to impact the mounds.

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

COMMITMENTS, (CONT.)

7) In the road widening section of the road, no excavation will take place beyond the edge of shoulder on the west side of IL 2 so as not to impact the mounds.

8) In the road widening section of the road, no construction activities will take place beyond the toe of slope so as not to impact the mounds.

9) An archaeologist from ISAS will be on site during any excavation in the area of the Reserve.

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

SMEJA HOMESTEAD FOUNDATION RESOLUTION

SMEJA HOMESTEAD FOUNDATION, INC.
also known as the SMEJA FAMILY FOUNDATION

CERTIFIED COPY OF RESOLUTION

I, Kim Smeja, certify as follows:

1. I am the duly elected and qualified Secretary of the Smeja Homestead Foundation, Inc., an Illinois not for profit corporation (the "Foundation").

2. The persons whose name appears below are the designated President and ~~Vice President~~ Secretary of the Foundation, holding the position indicated as of the date below, and the signature appearing next to his or her name is his or her genuine signature:

Name	Title	Signature
Jill Smeja Gnesda	President	Jill Smeja Gnesda
Kim Smeja	Secretary	Kim Smeja

3. The copy of the resolution attached to this Certificate (the "Resolution") is a true and complete copy of the Resolution adopted by the majority vote of the Board of Directors of the Foundation on October 13, 2014, which has not been rescinded, amended or revoked and is in full force and effect, authorizing, among other things, the execution and delivery of the Letter addressed to the Foundation dated October 7, 2014 from Paul Loete, P.E, Deputy Director of Highways, Region Two Engineer, of the Illinois Department of Transportation ("IDOT") in reference to the Program Development Environment, FAP Route 742 (IL2) Section (34,35) T-2 Ogle and Winnebago Counties, Job No. P-92-064-08; Seq# 16317 Contract No. 64E15, IL 2: Byron to Rockford and the work that will be performed adjacent to the Johns Mounds Group Land and Water Reserve ("L&WR") which is owned by the Foundation, including permanent and temporary easements with respect to land which is part of the L&WR, for which fair market value will be paid to Foundation, and removal of trees on the IDOT right-of-way in front of the L&WR, indicating its concurrence with the proposal for construction outlined in said letter. The authorization to execute the Letter does not authorize the execution of easements or rights of way without prior review and approval of appraisals establishing fair market value and provisions that may be contained within the easement documents.

4. The Foundation is duly organized, validly existing and in good standing under the laws of the State of Illinois; that there is no provision in the organizational and governing documents of the Foundation limiting the authority of the Foundation to adopt the Resolution, or requiring approval of the Resolution by the vote or consent of any other person or party; that the Foundation has the power to carry on its business as now being conducted; and that, to this date, no proceedings for dissolution, liquidation, consolidation or merger have been instituted by or against the Foundation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have executed this Certificate as Secretary of the Foundation this 13 day of October, 2014.

Kim Smeja
Secretary

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Figure 5 Sheet 1

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
SMEJA HOMESTEAD FOUNDATION, INC.
also known as the
SMEJA FAMILY FOUNDATION

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the SMEJA HOMESTEAD FOUNDATION, INC., also known as the SMEJA FAMILY FOUNDATION ("Foundation"), an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, desires to conserve the natural heritage resources and archeological resources of the Johns Mounds Group and prevent the use or development of the Johns Mounds Group for any purpose or in any manner that would conflict with the maintenance of the significant natural features and associated ecological processes thereof; and

WHEREAS, the Foundation is willing to execute and deliver a copy of a Letter addressed to the Foundation dated October 7, 2014 from Paul Loete, P.E, Deputy Director of Highways, Region Two Engineer, of the Illinois Department of Transportation ("IDOT") in reference to the Program Development Environment, FAP Route 742 (IL2) Section (34,35) T-2 Ogle and Winnebago Counties, Job No. P-92-064-08; Seq# 16317 Contract No. 64E15, IL 2: Byron to Rockford and the work that will be performed adjacent to the Johns Mounds Group Land and Water Reserve ("L&WR") which is owned by the Foundation, including permanent and temporary easements with respect to land which is part of the L&WR, for which fair market value will be paid to Foundation, and removal of trees on the IDOT right-of-way in front of the L&WR ("Letter"), indicating its concurrence with the proposal for construction outlined in said Letter since such proposals address the desire of the Foundation to conserve the Johns Mounds Group. The authorization to execute the Letter does not authorize the execution of easements or rights of way without prior review and approval of appraisals establishing fair market value and provisions that may be contained within the easement documents.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Foundation hereby adopts the following resolutions (Resolutions):

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Jill Smeja Gnesda, President of the Foundation, and Kim Smeja, Secretary of the Foundation, are hereby authorized and directed, on behalf of the Foundation and as and for the act of the Foundation, to execute and deliver the Letter to IDOT indicating its concurrence with the proposal for how construction of IL 2 adjacent to the L&WR will be completed, including the purchase of permanent and temporary easements with respect to land which is part of the L&WR, for which fair market value will be paid to Foundation, and removal of trees on the IDOT right-of-way in front of the L&WR outlined in said Letter.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the signature or other acts of Jill Smeja Gnesda or Kim Smeja shall be necessary and sufficient to bind the Foundation for purposes of these resolutions.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the appropriate officers of the Foundation are hereby authorized and directed, on behalf of the Foundation and as and for the act of the Foundation, to take such actions as may be necessary, appropriate or convenient for the Foundation to carry out these resolutions.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Foundation is hereby authorized and directed to certify these Resolutions to any necessary party.

ADOPTED this 13 day of October, 2014, by the Board of Directors at a duly convened meeting of the Board of Directors.

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Figure 5 Sheet 2

JOHN'S MOUNDS LAND AND WATER RESERVE

CONCLUSION

- IDOT is requesting approval of Temporary and Permanent Easements from INPC to complete the construction project, part of which will be on nature preserve property
- We have made every effort to avoid or satisfactorily mitigate any adverse affects to the nature preserve
- These repairs are necessary to ensure public safety, failure to do so may result in an eventual *collapse* of roadway

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

memorandum

To: Commissioners

From: Valerie Njapa

Date: 07 January 2015

Subject: INPC Staff Recommendation regarding Item 12 – Culvert Project at Johns Mound Group Land and Water Reserve, Winnebago County, Illinois

Background:

The Johns Mound Group Land and Water Reserve (L&WR) is a 16.9-acre parcel owned by the Smeja Homestead Foundation, Inc. It is located in Winnebago County within the Freeport Section of the Rock River Hills Natural Division. The L&WR contains significant cultural resources, and 22 earthen mound features constructed by ancient cultures have been documented, one of which is a panther effigy mound (this is one of only two such mounds that remain intact in Winnebago County, Illinois). The mounds were constructed during the Middle Woodland (200 B.C. to A.D. 350) and Late Woodland (A.D. 700-1000) periods. Locally, the L&WR is situated on a high terrace on the west side the Rock River, and it is also located along the west side of Illinois Route 2 for approximately 1600 feet.

Proposal/Request:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is requesting approval for permanent and temporary easements on 0.09 and 0.02 acres, respectively, of the L&WR, to complete a culvert project. There are ten culverts (built in 1924) that IDOT will be replacing along Illinois Route 2 due to their condition (rated poor to serious). One of the ten culverts, located near the south edge of the L&WR, is in serious condition with the potential to collapse if not replaced. IDOT is proposing to replace this culvert and move it 37 feet south of its current location in order to (1) avoid impacting the panther effigy mound feature on the L&WR; and (2) better align it with the existing drainage channel. The permanent easement will be required to install the replacement culvert, and for construction work to grade, shape and blend the drainage ditch into the culvert; the temporary easement will be required to fill in around the culvert to match the existing gradeline. Elimination of the culvert is not an option because it carries drainage from the L&WR to the Rock River on the east side of Illinois Route 2. Due to the depth of the existing culvert, IDOT determined that replacement in its current location would cause greater impact to the L&WR, including injury to the panther effigy mound.

IDOT is proposing a second project that involves widening the roadway along the same section of Illinois Route 2 where the culverts will be replaced; however, this project is not expected to impact the L&WR and will not be included as part of INPC's staff recommendation.

Legal Authorities and Responsibilities:

Relevant sections of the Register of Land and Water Reserves (17 Ill. Adm. Code, Part 4010):

Section 4010.220 The Management Plan

a) A registered area shall have a management program which shall be prepared and adopted at the time the area is registered. The management program shall be adopted and included by reference in the registration agreement. The management program must be prepared by the landowner. The Commission and Department will assist in preparing the program at the landowner's request. The management program is subject to approval of the owner, Commission, and Department. Revisions to the management program are subject to approval of the owner, Commission, and Department except that revisions to the multi-year schedule of specific management are subject to approval of the owner and Commission.

Section 4010.260 Prohibited Uses

a) No living or dead plant or animal materials, or organic material including soils, minerals, or water, may be removed from a registered area except as may be provided in the management program or an approved wildlife management plan or forest management plan or for the purposes of scientific research approved by the landowner, consistent with the management program and in consultation with Commission staff.
e) Mineral exploration, mining or other mineral extraction, or earth moving is not allowed on registered areas unless mineral rights are excluded from the registration agreement or moving or removal of the material is part of a restoration plan included in the management program.

Section 4010.270 Approval of Specific Management and Uses

Management and uses not otherwise allowed by this Part may be specifically approved by the Department and the Commission where the management or use is consistent with the management program or for the purposes of restoring a high quality natural community (a plant and animal assemblage that existed in Illinois at the time of settlement by immigrants from Europe), enhancing populations of threatened or endangered species, or enhancing the opportunity for scientific research.

Section 4010.310 Public Notice

b) Before any agency or entity of State or local government may undertake an action that will disrupt natural vegetation or natural communities on a registered area, there must be a finding by the Commission at a meeting and by the Department that the action is in the public interest.

Analysis:

Based on the serious condition of the culvert located near the south edge of the L&WR, and the fact the culvert cannot be eliminated due to drainage needs, the proposed action is necessary. The proposed action will cause disturbances to the soil and vegetation on 0.11 acres of the L&WR, which are prohibited actions on land and water reserves (Section 4010.260). However, to be more specific, the proposed action will not disrupt natural vegetation or natural communities, eliminating the need for the Commission to make a finding that the proposed action is in the public interest (Section 4010.310). The qualifying feature of the L&WR is the presence of an ancient Native American earthen mound complex, known as the Johns Mound Group. The proposed action will not impact any of the earthen mounds or other significant cultural resources on the L&WR. The Commission can approve the proposed action pursuant to Sections 4010.220, 4010.260, and 4010.270, since the proposed action is consistent with the management program for the L&WR.

Recommendation:

INPC staff recommends approval of this request by the Commission, based on the following provisions:

1. There will be no impact to any of the earthen mounds on the L&WR, the features that qualified the parcel for registration as a land and water reserve in the Illinois nature preserves system. Elimination of the culvert is not a viable option, and the only other alternative for replacing the culvert is in its current location which would have impacts to the earthen mound features on the L&WR.
2. IDOT secures written approval by the landowner (this has already occurred).
3. Prior to commencing the proposed action, IDOT receives concurrence in writing from both the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the State Historic Preservation Officer.
4. IDOT has agreed to mitigate for the impacts, as follows:
    a. The property owner will be compensated for the easements, and the money will be used to make improvements to the L&WR.
    b. The trees growing on IDOT's right-of-way in front of the L&WR will be removed, and the stumps will be left at ground level and treated with herbicide. The tree removal will eliminate impacts to the earthen mounds caused by the root systems.
    c. Construction activities will not extend beyond the planned construction limits for replacement of the culvert. During construction, a temporary fence will be installed along the easement lines to ensure there are no impacts beyond the pre-determined construction limits.
    d. The existing culvert will be filled in to prevent impacts to the earthen mounds on the L&WR; due to its depth, removal would cause impacts to the mound features.
    e. There will be no excavation in the temporary easement area, only fill, in order to prevent impacts to the mound features.
    f. An archaeologist from ISAS will be on site during any excavation in the area of the L&WR.

Goal (Stewardship): Improve or maintain the condition of natural areas within the Nature Preserve System

Strategy	Votes
Engage our partners, landowners and the public to increase stewardship in the NP system (by leveraging funding and other assistance from those partners)	28
Conduct a needs assessment to determine the scope of management needed within the NP system	17
Develop a systematic approach to gather baseline information (with assistance from landowners, partners, volunteers & students)	9
Integrate best science available into the development into the development of management plans for nature preserves and land and water reserves	7
Promote compatible research opportunities that support adaptive management within the nature preserve system (information cycle, research on best management practices and apply as appropriate at INPC sites)	4
Total	**65**

Goal (Protection): To protect more of Illinois' high quality natural areas and other significant lands

Strategy	Votes
Promote good preserve design, connectivity, & long-term sustainability	20
Better define lands that qualify for inclusion in INPC System	5
Encourage transfer of fee ownership of privately owned NP sites to conservation entities	3
Consider inclusion of affirmative landowner responsibilities in instruments of dedication/registration	2
Conduct landowner contact for all new INAI sites & high priority existing INAI sites	1
Increase landowner incentives to encourage participation in NP programs (increase funding for land acquisition & management)	0
Total	**31**

Goal (Identification): Identify suitable areas of significant natural resources to assure comprehensive representation of Illinois biodiversity.

Strategy	Votes
Dedicated funding for biological inventories, land acquisition, stewardship and defense	11
Establish a geographically and temporally appropriate monitoring program for INPC sites	8
Establish a Natural Areas training academy	3
Identify high potential sites identified within the INAI update process to finalize	0
Update the Natural Divisions of Illinois	0
Expand relationship with Illinois Wildlife Action Plan	0
Facilitate development of biodiversity databases (ie. mussel database)	0
Research – encourage basic biological surveys (streams, caves, important bird areas, insect sites, pollinators etc.)	0
Total	**22**

Goal (Outreach/Partners): Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness

Strategy	Votes
Leverage partnerships to meet agency goals	9
Develop a succession plan	7
Meet technology needs to realize agency goals	3
Develop & implement staff training plan with emphasis on changes in federal/state conservation rights & tax law	2
Total	**21**

Goal (Defense): Increase efficiency and effectiveness in responding to incidents and enforcing with INAPA when violations occur on sites protected in the Nature Preserves System

Strategy	Votes
Develop response protocols (standard operating procedure & work flow chart by incident type)	11
Obtain baseline data that can be used to document/show impact (can be prioritized for sites in NP System)	4

Communicate response protocols to all stakeholders	0
Total	**15**

Goal (Defense): Pro-actively avert threats to sites protected in the Nature Preserves System to prevent adverse impacts

Strategy	Votes
Strengthen coordination & communication with IDNR	11
Define roles & responsibilities & tools available to avert threats	2
Strengthen coordination & communication with landowners & other partners	0
Total	**13**

Goal (Outreach/Partners): Increase public awareness, support and understanding of INPC, its partners their impact

Strategy	Votes
Work with partners with expertise in communication to increase public awareness & support of INPC, its partners & their impact	9
Examine the effectiveness of how bilingual/bicultural communication could enhance the public profile of INPC & its partners	3
Total	**12**

Goal (Outreach/Partners): Enhance partnering opportunities using innovative approaches as a model in preserving biodiversity in Illinois

Strategy	Votes
Work with partners to increase outreach to & engagement of the public (ie. stewardship activities at INPC sites)	3
Work with partners in creative ways (funding) to protect & preserve biodiversity in Illinois	2
Work with partners to increase research that provides baseline information	1
Total	**6**