

## INPC COMMISSIONER BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENTS

**GEORGE M. COVINGTON**, Vice Chair (term expires 6/30/2015)

Lake Forest, IL

George Covington is an attorney in Lake Forest. He was a partner of the Chicago law firm of Gardner, Carton & Douglas (now Drinker Biddle & Reath) for twenty years and chaired that firm's real estate department. Since 1995 he has practiced law in Lake Forest, specializing in land use issues including conservation easements. He is a graduate of Yale University and the University of Chicago Law School. His practice specializes in real estate law and not-for-profit organizations with a particular focus on conservation easements and related conservation development. He has drafted and negotiated hundreds of conservation easements, ranging from façade easements on downtown buildings such as the Chicago Theatre and Palmolive Building to easements protecting open space and natural areas. He is the author of various articles in professional publications, including *Conservation Easements: A Win/Win for Preservationists and Real Estate Owners*, published in the Illinois Bar Journal and has spoken at numerous meetings and seminars, including ones sponsored by the Illinois State Bar Association and the Land Trust Alliance. In addition to his service on the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, he is a member of Lake Forest Open Lands Association and Little Traverse Conservancy, a Michigan land trust. His past service includes being chair of the Student Conservation Association, Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Corlands, and the Chicago Academy of Sciences. He also was the finance chair for four of the bond issue referendum campaigns of the Lake County Forest Preserve District. He was married to the late Barbara Trentham, an artist, and is the father of three grown daughters, Karen, Jean, and Sarah.



**DONNIE R. DANN**, Chair (term expires 6/30/2016)

Highland Park, IL

Donnie Dann received his bachelor's degree in Business and Economics from Illinois Institute of Technology and attended graduate school at the University of Hawaii and American College receiving a Master of Science in Financial Services. He was a successful business man owning and managing three family owned insurance and financial service companies prior to his retirement. Mr. Dann has been active in the environmental community, particularly as it relates to the conservation of birds and land use issues. In addition to his service on the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, he has served on numerous not-for-profit boards and committees including the American Bird Conservancy, American Birding Association, Illinois Environmental Council, Rare Center, Chicago Audubon Society, Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Bird Conservation Network, Bird Conservation Alliance, Lake Michigan Ecosystem Partnership, and Sierra Club. He has been a volunteer with numerous governmental agencies and advisory boards including Highland Park (Lake Front Commission), Highland Park Park District (Lake Front Advisory Committee), Lake County Forest Preserve District, City of Chicago, Department of the Environment and United States Geological Survey Breeding Bird Surveys. He has served on advisory boards for environmental issues for former Congressman (now U.S. Senator) Mark Kirk and State Representative Karen May. Mr. Dann publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, Conservation Alert, which is sent to over nineteen hundred people and the news media to promote conservation consciousness. He is a lecturer and speaker to school children of all ages and a variety of environmental related groups. He describes himself as a political activist at federal, state, and local levels on conservation issues.



**DR. PEN DAUBACH** (term expires 6/30/2017)

Fults, Illinois

Dr. Pen DauBach received a BA in Anthropology from the University of Iowa, a Master's of Public Administration from the University of North Dakota, a MA in Anthropology and a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Kansas. Dr. DauBach is a founding member of Clifftop (Conserving Lands in Farm, Forest, Talus or Prairie), a non-profit conservation organization and land trust focused on preserving and protecting the Mississippi River bluff land corridor in Monroe, Randolph and St. Clair Counties. She currently serves as the organization's secretary-treasurer. Clifftop owns and manages the White Rock Land & Water Reserve and White Rock Nature Preserve in Monroe County. An advocate for conservation, she also is an active land stewardship volunteer.



**DR. ABIGAIL DERBY LEWIS**, Secretary (term expires 6/30/2015)

Chicago, IL

Abigail Derby Lewis received her PhD in Biological Anthropology from Stony Brook University in 2008. Her background includes research on community and behavioral ecology, land use practices and resource management in the tropics. She has taught courses on a variety of subjects related to environmental studies, ecology, evolutionary biology, and the human-wildlife interface. Since 2009 Abigail has worked as a Conservation Ecologist in the Science Action Center at The Field Museum of Natural History. Abigail's work in the Science Action Center, a division dedicated to translating museum science into lasting results for conservation and cultural understanding, focuses on climate change adaptation for urban natural areas in the Great Lakes region. She works closely with natural resource managers at the federal, state and local level to develop place-based adaptation strategies. Abigail is Co-Chair of the Chicago Wilderness Climate Change Task Force and editor of the Chicago Wilderness Climate Change Newsletter, a bi-monthly publication summarizing news and research pertaining to climate impacts to plants, animals and natural systems.



**WILLIAM E. MCCLAIN** (term expires 6/30/2016)

Carlinville, IL

William McClain received his bachelor's degree in botany from Eastern Illinois University and his master's degree, also in botany, from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. He has worked as an instructor of biology at Carlinville High School, Carlinville, Illinois, a research botanist for an environmental consulting firm, and a field biologist and Natural Areas Program Manager for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. He has continued to publish extensively on invasive species, threatened and endangered plants, woodland communities, wildland fire, and prairies since retiring from the Department of Natural Resources in 2003. He was named a Fellow of the Illinois State Academy of Science in 2005. In addition to his service on the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, he currently is an adjunct research associate in botany at the Illinois State Museum and an adjunct research scientist at the Illinois Natural History Survey.



**DR. JO-ELLE MOGERMAN** (term expires 6/30/2016)

Chicago, IL

Jo-Elle Mogerma is a native Chicagoan who grew up with a love of animals. She applied that love to her academic pursuits obtaining a B.A. in Biology from Macalester College, a M.A. in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota and a PhD. in Biology from the University of Illinois-Chicago. She fell into informal science education as a way to engage others, particularly people of color and urban residents in science and conservation. In 2004, Jo-Elle returned to employment at Brookfield Zoo as the new Director of Community Relations. She has since become Vice President of Institutional Planning & Inclusion. She had previously managed as the Zoo's Outreach Programs from 1995–2001. In the intervening years, she led the Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center as Executive Director, and served in academic positions as an Adjunct Professor in environmental issues at Robert Morris College and as an instructor in biology at Harold Washington College. Jo-Elle has devoted her professional life to creating and implementing conservation education programs that address institutional and audience needs. Several awards have been granted under her leadership of organizations, programs or projects.



**DR. CHARLES RUFFNER** (term expires 6/30/2015)

Murphysboro, IL

Charles Ruffner received his Ph.D. in old-growth forest ecology from Pennsylvania State University in 1999 and currently serves as Professor of Forestry at Southern Illinois University where he teaches courses in Forest Measurements, Wildland Fire Management, Mapping and GIS, and International Agriculture. Within the state and region he serves on the Illinois Prescribed Fire Council Board of Directors and on the Oak Woodlands and Forests Fire Consortium Governing Board. During his last year of sabbatical leave, he served in Zabul Province, Afghanistan with the Mississippi National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team as a Civilian Expeditionary Workforce Hydrologist and Watershed Planner. Before this deployment he served as instructor for the Agriculture Development for Afghanistan Pre-deployment Training program focusing on Rural Land Use Issues and Soil Conservation and Erosion Control Measures. Other overseas experience has taken him to the British Isles, Dominican Republic, Panama, and Venezuela.



**DEBORAH C. STONE** (term expires 6/30/2017)

Chicago, IL

Deborah C. Stone serves as the Chief Sustainability Officer and Director of the Department of Environmental Control for Cook County, Illinois. Deborah became the County's first Sustainability Officer in 2011. Cook County is ahead of target in its goal to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions from building energy use by 80% by 2040. She serves as Director of the Cook County Department of Environmental Control which regulates air emissions, and engages communities in solid waste planning. Projects include an award-winning ordinance fostering recycling/reuse of building demolition debris. She also teaches environmental economics at DePaul. As Deputy Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources she oversaw the State's first water supply planning and spearheaded Conservation Congress, a working partnership of hundreds of recreation and natural resources constituent groups. As the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission's fourth Director (2006-2010), she helped landowners protect natural areas. At the Illinois Budget Office she managed the capital budget and several agency operating budgets including IDOT. As Executive Director at the Metropolitan Planning Council, she broadened programs in housing, transit and walkable development to a regional scale. M.A., University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy.



**DR. DAVID L. THOMAS** (term expires 6/30/2017, current\*)

Champaign, IL

Dr. David Thomas received his Bachelors of Science in Zoology and Masters of Science in Ecology from the University of Illinois. He received his Ph.D. in Ecology and Systematics from Cornell University. He is a certified Fisheries Scientist. Dr. Thomas is Chief, Emeritus of the Illinois Natural History Survey where, prior to his retirement, he served for over 10 years. Dr. Thomas also served as the Director of the Waste Management and Research Center and Director, Ecological Programs for Charles T. Main, Inc. During his professional career, he served in many capacities including serving as the non-federal co-chair, Research and Information Work Group, National Invasive Species Advisory Committee, Chair of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Invasive Species Working Group, and member of the Illinois Aquatic Nuisance Species Steering Committee. He was a member of the Hines Foundation and worked on efforts to look at the state of the nations ecosystems. In addition to his service on the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, he has been an active supporter of the Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy and serves on their Board of Directors.



\*Commissioners serve until they are reappointed or replaced.