

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2015

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

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and staff held a special meeting on Monday, January 26, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Lake Level B-C, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Chair Thomas.

Commissioners Present: George Covington, Donnie Dann, Pen Daubach, Abigail Derby-Lewis, William McClain, Jo-Elle Mogerman, David Thomas and Deborah Stone

Commissioners Absent: Charles Ruffner

Others present: Mary Kay Solecki, Kim Roman, John Nelson, Will Overbeck, Kerry Leigh, Joe Roth, Steve Byers, Valerie Njapa, Kelly Neal, Debbie Newman, Angella Moorehouse, Brooke Bryant, Samantha McCarrel, John Wilker, Bob Szafoni, Ann Holtrop, Tim Schweizer, Marni English, Tom Lerczak.

Director Heidorn explained that we will be working on strategic planning and developing goals and the strategies that will be used to reach those goals. We will work on developing SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Relevant, Time-limited. The process used to reach the goals began with a SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) conducted with staff on January 21-23, 2015, will continue at this Special Meeting and the 219th meeting. He hoped to have a draft strategic plan sent out to Advisors, Consultants and Commissioners for review in March; preliminary approval at the INPC's May meeting; and final approval of the strategic plan document at the September meeting.

Director Heidorn gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the SWOT analysis from the strategic planning done January 20-21, 2015. See Appendix I

Commissioner McClain asked that within each of these themes, are specific issues going to be identified. For example, under "protection", air quality from herbicide drift. Another recurring theme within all of these is the absence or lack of botanists. The colleges and universities made the decision nationwide to diminish traditional study programs in zoology and botany, in favor of pre-med, etc. In doing so, they have also diminished the number of qualified people. Somehow, some organization needs to get the message to them, that we need people throughout the country to fill jobs people are retiring from.

Director Heidorn explained that the Natural Areas Association is drafting an issue letter on for the journal Bioscience on the lack of botanists and field biologists which is being funded by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

Commissioner McClain also commented that adaptability has been a key in what the INPC and Natural Heritage have been able to do. He encouraged everyone to figure out ways that they can adapt, change and manage to accomplish some of these things.

Commissioner Dann asked how much all of this is affected by the attitude of the political leadership of the State.

Director Heidorn answered that the issues are not affected by the political leadership. Looking at the changes, many of the people here today were involved in the 2002 strategic planning discussion. Staffing, particularly administrative staffing, has begun to be the biggest concern since 2002. We have been in coasting mode since the loss of centralized administrative staff, having originally a single person each for stewardship, protection and defense. We have had major growth in the Nature Preserve System, but no growth in our ability to manage the system.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if there has ever been discussion of doing co-hires: where staff already within IDNR or another partnership, have part of their time dedicated between stewardship and part of their time to other work. Is this possible or already been looked at?

Director Heidorn answered that INPC started with a partnership with the Natural Land Institute (NLI) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Many of the early commission staff members were TNC or NLI employees. They served as INPC staff, but were paid by non-for-profits. We have moved away from that model.

Commissioner Thomas commented that we are past the doing more with less. The cutbacks in State government started more than seven years ago. The number of sites we have to manage has increased and the number of staff is far below where it was four to five years ago. The commission needs to reprioritize within our program. It is going to be essential that Commissioners get involved in this process and have serious discussions with staff. What looms over this process is we have a new administration and a huge deficit. There will be cuts. We do need to look at working closer with partners, potentially including sharing staff. However, we need to realize we can't do it all and need to prioritize.

Commissioner Daubach asked what would be the ideal staffing.

Director Heidorn answered he has always wanted to have additional staff to focus on stewardship. He would like to see some middle management. Currently he is not only working with administration and commissioners, but having to work directly with all staff at all levels. The commission needs managers who can focus on other techniques, like prescribed burns, stewardship, etc. There is no way to focus. Right now, he would be happy filling the three vacancies we currently have.

Tom Lerczak commented referring to the doing more with less, the question always comes to mind "why didn't you do more to begin with". If you can do more, why didn't you do more? In 2008, Randy wrote a memo doing less with less. This is the reality because as we get more sites and responsibilities, if the money is cut, staff is not filled, we are doing less with less.

Director Heidorn commented that one of his greatest frustrations is seeing that our budget has crept up, but we are not being allowed to hire. We are doing a lot more contractual work and getting more done but have reached the point where contracting is not working, because we do not have the capacity of people to put the contracts in place. We are not being allowed to hire people with the money we have. The dollars in NAAF have grown to the point where we are targets for sweeps.

Director Heidorn reviewed a proposed revised mission statement. He asked if this mission statement is good enough. Can the INPC live with this mission statement?

"The mission of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission is to assist private and public landowners

in protecting and stewarding high quality natural areas, habitats, endangered and threatened species, and other significant lands in perpetuity, in voluntary dedication or registration of such lands into the Nature Preserves System.”

Concern was expressed about length, content, priorities and use of the mission statement. After much discussion, it was decided staff would work on the mission statement, taking into consideration suggestions made by commissioners, staff and consultants.

Randy Heidorn reviewed the goals that were developed for 2002 plan which are provided in Appendix II.

He indicated that participants will self-divide into five breakout groups and write 1 to 3 goals. He suggested the groups be based on the SWOT themes.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked that Director Heidorn describe the progress on the 2002 plan goals, so that they could assess current status. She wanted metrics.

He indicated that he could provide a presentation he had given to staff prior to the SWOT analysis. Though the data is not complete, it might give a perspective on what has been accomplished.

Director Heidorn presented a series of slides on the status of items in the 2002 plan. Appendix III is notes for the presentation providing the status of the 2002 plan as of 2007.

After this presentation, Commissioner Covington asked if there were too many strategies in the original plan.

Director Heidorn indicated that with the three administrators in place at the time, the amount seemed reasonable. Unfortunately, changes in administration dropped support for the Commission and required stepping back from the plan. Director Heidorn used stewardship as an example. Prior to the changes he was working on management tracking, invasive species and fire. Management tracking was not done at all. Invasive species were moved to Heritage, that changed the emphasis to building relationships with the nursery industry away from direct invasive plant control. Fire was the only thing he was able to work on, since he was pulled off everything else to handle, the rest of the administrative load.

Commissioner Covington commented that he is often times concerned about the development of plans in these kinds of planning processes that are not prioritized and therefore are impossible to accomplish.

Director Heidorn indicated that the next important part of this planning process will be developing the strategies to accomplish the goals and then as a group prioritizing them. The plans will be even more prioritized when staff plans of work are developed.

After considerable discussion it was decided the group would breakup into groups for protection, defense, stewardship, identification, and outreach/partnership/operations.

It was also decided to review the 2002 goals in the groups to determine if they should be used in the new plan.

A break was taken from 3:30 p.m. to 3:40 p.m.

Commissioners, staff and consultants divided into breakout groups for approximately 35 minutes to discuss goals for stewardship, protection, defense, identification and outreach/partnerships. Recordings of those discussions were made and the results are herein presented with any discussion that followed.

List of goals developed in the break out session. Break out group that drafted the goals is listed in parenthesis.

- 1) Preserve and protect more of Illinois' high quality areas and other significant lands to protect Illinois' biodiversity. (Protection)
- 2) To better define lands that qualify for inclusion in the INPC system. (Protection)
- 3) To improve or maintain the condition of natural areas within the Nature Preserve System. (Stewardship)
- 4) To identify suitable area of significant natural resources to ensure comprehensive representation of Illinois' biodiversity. (Identification)
- 5) To proactively avert threats to lands or sites protected in the nature preserve system to prevent adverse effects. (Defense)
- 6) Increase efficiency and effectiveness in responding to incidence by enforcing the INAPA when violations occur in the nature preserve system. (Defense)
- 7) Enhance partnering opportunities using innovative approaches to be a model in preserving biodiversity in Illinois. (Outreach/Partnership)
- 8) Increase public awareness, support of and understand of INPC, its partners and their impact. (Outreach/Partnership)
- 9) Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness. (Outreach/Partnership)

Valerie Njapa reported the goals for the Defense working group (numbers refer to the above list):

- 5) To be proactive to avert threats before they adversely affect lands or sites protected in the nature preserve system to prevent adverse effects.
- 6) To increase efficiency and effectiveness in responding to incident by enforcing the INAPA when violations occur on lands protected in the nature preserve system.

Commissioner Covington reported goals for Protection:

- 1) Preserve and protect more of Illinois' high quality natural areas and other significant lands to protect Illinois' biodiversity.
- 2) To better define lands that qualify for inclusion in the INPC system.

Joe Roth asked how protection and being proactive tie into giving any guidance on how NAAF funding will be spent.

Commissioner Covington answered NAAF funding would be controlled through the IDNR, not the Commission.

Director Heidorn answered the Commission helps review what IDNR brings to the Commission for land acquisition with use of NAAF. The Commission can choose to endorse or not endorse the use of NAAF for those projects. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with IDNR that they will bring parcels to the Commission to get their approval for NAAF spending. If a site is on the INAI, your director can approve it, otherwise the only way to get it approved is through the Commission.

Angella Moorehouse pointed out that determining what works for a buffer or LWR is not a simple decision and varies with the context.

Kim Roman asked if we could add another goal under protection regarding improving preserve design.

Kelly Neal reported the goals for Stewardship:

- 3) To improve or maintain the condition of natural areas within the Nature Preserve System. This includes promotion adaptive management.

John Wilker asked is it your goal to improve or maintain or is it to work with the landowners to do this since the commission does not actually own the land.

Kelly Neal answered that the suggestion was made to incorporate facilitate into the wording of the goal.

Commissioner Mogerma commented that they changed the first word of their goal to encourage since it was hard to tell if this was a strategy or objective under some other goal, does it become something of itself or under stewardship, protection or defense. They did not have an answer.

Commissioner Mogerma reported the goals for Outreach/Partnerships:

- Revised goal four from 2002 planning to: 7) Enhance partnering opportunities using innovative approaches to be a model in preserving biodiversity in Illinois.
- Made a slight revision of goal six from 2002 planning to: 8) Increase public awareness, support of and understanding of INPC, its partners and its impact.
- Kept goal eight from 2002 planning: 9) Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness.

There was no breakout group for identification during this meeting. John Wilker chose to keep the goal from the 2002 planning which was: Identify suitable areas of significant natural resources to assure comprehensive representation of Illinois biodiversity.

Director Heidorn indicated nine goals have been outlined and asked if everyone was comfortable with those goals at this time.

Commissioner Stone suggested that Outreach/Partnerships' goal 7 be a strategy under Protection.

John Wilker stated that question was asked with goal 2 was a strategy for Stewardship but the Commission is defined within the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act, as the ones capable of defining what a natural area is. That seems to be more the function of the Commission.

Commissioner Stone commented that not all functions are necessarily goals.

Commissioner Thomas commented that research is a strategy.

Commissioner Stone thought it might be a strategy under communications but it might also be here too. (from the old plan Appendix II)

Director Heidorn asked if goal three and goal five should be strategies elsewhere. (old plan Appendix II)

Commissioner Thomas commented at least goal five should be.

Director Heidorn commented that identification has never been a major issue for the commission staff.

Commissioner Covington stated that it is a means to protecting more of Illinois' biodiversity.

Director Heidorn commented that it is a necessary step in the process.

Commissioner Daubach suggested keeping goal three of maintaining the INAI.

It was agreed to keep goal three. (Listed now as Goal 4)

Director Heidorn asked about moving goal three under one.

Commissioner Daubach suggested that it be kept as a separate goal. As we evaluate and reevaluate the INAI, we will know how well we are doing and that it is a very vital piece of what INPC does.

Commissioner McClain agreed it was vital.

Debbie Newman commented that if the INAI was updated to define what a nature preserve is according to the INAPA, it guides what the commission does.

Commissioner Mogerman stated that if it stays separate, it needs to be rewritten since it did not go with what Debbie Newman stated.

Commissioner Thomas commented that we have two different concepts which are monitoring existing INAI sites and looking at additional sites. The evaluation of existing sites could go under preserve and protect high quality natural areas. That would be a strategy to do that or it could be deemed important enough to be separate.

John Wilker commented that if we remove it as a goal, you are going to have strategies under stewardship, protection, defense and outreach that will be related.

It was agreed to keep goal three (new goal 4) and wordsmith it.

Director Heidorn asked if everybody was comfortable with our draft goals reminding everybody that they might be reworked later in the process.

Commissioner Thomas asked where administrative issues get picked up.

Director Heidorn answered there is an efficiency goal under number eight.

Commissioner Thomas asked if it was a separate goal

Director Heidorn answered yes. He asked the spokesperson from each group to write their goal on the large sheets and this will be our starting point for the second phase of the process which resumed in the afternoon of January 27th.

Commissioner Covington moved to adjourn the Special Meeting and it was seconded by Commissioner Daubach.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:50 p.m.



January 20-21, 2015

SWOT ANALYSIS RESULTS INPC STAFF RETREAT



Methods

- Met at Camp CILCA, Cantrell, Illinois for two half days.
- Participants:
 - INPC Staff (including residents)
 - INPC Chair David Thomas
- Director Heidorn reviewed previous planning (esp. 2002-2006 Strat Plan and IWAP)
- SWOT analysis on NA Conservation Phase (facilitator):
 - Identification (Heidorn)
 - Protection (Heidorn)
 - Stewardship (Njapa)
 - Defense (Neal)
 - Administration/Operations (Heidorn)

||| Steps in SWOT Analysis

1. Participants given color coded sheets to list Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats for one phase (10 minutes)
2. Participants then present each of their sheets which are placed on the wall. (25 minutes)
3. Participants agree to thematic grouping of sheets within phase. (10 minutes)
4. Participants repeat until all phases are addressed except that only weaknesses and threats are addressed for administration /operations
5. Participants prioritize themes by using weighted "Chicago style" voting. (15 votes each, 3/phase)
6. Admin staff collated and summarized results.

||| Stewardship

(Total Votes: 100)

- Resources available (38)
- Volunteers and Partnerships (25)
- Invasive Species (16)
- Tracking of Management/Management Information/Lack of Technology Support (11)
- Outreach and Education (9)
- Experienced Staff with Proven Method (0)

||| **Stewardship Theme:
Resources available (38)**

- Strengths:
 - Funding is available for contracts from NAAF Stewardship, INPC budget, NGO Grants
- Weakness:
 - Not enough to meet growing need (\$, staff, time).
 - Aging workforce, lack of recruits
 - Stewardship effort is fragmented/lack of follow up due to resource limitations and other (weather, safety, distribution)
 - Limited number of staff dedicated to effort

||| **Stewardship Theme:
Resources available (25)**

- Opportunities
 - Unlimited stewardship workload and potential
- Threats
 - Funding and staffing unstable/inadequate relative to growing NPS
 - Retirements
 - Time constraints (i.e. staff diverted to cover administrative shortfalls)

||| **Stewardship Theme: Volunteers and Partnerships (25)**

- **Strengths**
 - Volunteer Stewardship Network (stewards and other volunteers)
 - Partners that engage in stewardship (Landowners, NGOs, grants)
- **Opportunities**
 - Land trusts starting to understand need
 - Young college aged volunteers generate interest
 - Volunteers are workers and Ambassadors
 - Landowners, and VSN have strong expertise
 - Outreach needed to sell volunteers to public owners for stewardship

||| **Stewardship Theme: Invasive Species (16)**

- **Threats**
 - Pervasive problem outside and therefore inside NPS
 - Can destroy resources and sites in the NPS.
 - Increasing problem
 - Rate of increase beyond capacity to manage.

**||| Stewardship Theme:
Tracking Management,
Management Info., Lack of
technology support (11)**

- Weakness
 - Lack of stewardship research/monitoring/info sharing
 - Limited digitization and searchability of record
- Opportunities
 - GPSI project
 - Web based management tracking system
 - Resilience of biodiversity

**||| Stewardship Theme:
Outreach and Education (9)**

- Weakness
 - Apathy and ignorance of stewardship needs
- Opportunities
 - Training interns and landowners
- Threats
 - Unneeded Burn bans from Fire/emergency managers
 - Anti restoration movement
 - Changes of public opinion

||| **Stewardship Theme:
Experienced Staff with
Proven Methods (0)**

- Strengths
 - Experience, training tools
 - Plans in place
 - Long term records with staff
 - Prescribed fire program
 - Adaptive Management

||| **Protection (Total Votes 90)**

- Flexible laws/qualifying features/What should we include in the NPS (24)
- Outreach and Education (16)
- Staff (15)
- Long-term Sustainability (13)
- Incentives to protect land (9)
- Partners (7)
- Proven legacy of laws (6)
- "Political" vulnerability of INPC (0)
- Boundary issues (0)

||| **Protection Theme**
Flexible laws/qualifying features/What should we include in the NPS (24)

- **Strength**
 - Flexible range of programs (type and time frame) to meet protection needs
- **Weakness**
 - "Species in need of Cons." not a criterion
 - No program for buffers needing less restrictive land use
 - Dedication of lower quality sites

||| **Protection Theme**
Flexible laws/qualifying features/What should we include in the NPS (24)

- **Opportunities**
 - Rural landowners with larger land holdings
 - Public land = more recreation
 - Flexibility greater with more reserved rights
 - Expanding buffers
 - INAI update sites

||| **Protection Theme**
Flexible laws/qualifying features/What should we include in the NPS (24)

- Threats
 - Low quality sites in the NPS
 - No program for sites that aren't INAI quality

||| **Protection Theme**
Outreach and Education (16)

- Weakness
 - Lack of understanding by IDNR (ie CPO), governmental, NGO's (LTA, Land Trusts) and others
 - Conservation easement/dedications impact on real estate value
 - INPC laws and function
 - Benefits of legal protection
- Opportunities
 - Outreach
 - Open communication to CPO at management level
 - Communicate with NPS owners
 - Consultation program improvements

||| **Protection Theme Outreach and Education (16)**

- Threats
 - Public unfamiliar
 - Funders/land trusts use NPS to protect program but don't understand impacts on appraised value
 - Other IDNR divisions not coordinating with INPC at INAI and NPS sites

||| **Protection Theme Staff (15)**

- Strength
 - Landowner Contact (LOC) Program
 - Protection Focus
 - Staff guides landowners
 - Mission a passion, not a job
- Weakness
 - Not enough time to do LOC, proposals and follow-up with stewardship
- Threats
 - Open job positions
 - Retiring staff: loss of institutional knowledge

||| **Protection Theme**

Long-term Sustainability (13)

- **Weakness**
 - Protection not equal to ecosystem stability
 - Time frame
 - Expanding NPS with same staff resulting in degradation of protected and unprotected sites
 - Protected areas are “islands”
- **Opportunities**
 - Technology: should be able to streamline with online programs: time saver

||| **Protection Theme**

Long-term Sustainability (13)

- **Threats**
 - Too much time in front of computers (current systems are poor)
 - Ensuring the high quality of NP is maintained
 - Fragmented landscape

||| **Protection Theme** **Incentives to protect land (9)**

- **Strengths**
 - Tax incentives (private owners)
 - Grants required legal protection (public/NGO owners)
- **Weakness**
 - Lack of tax incentives in rural areas
 - CRP/USDA integration with INPC programs
- **Opportunities**
 - Existing incentives to Landowners

||| **Protection Theme** **Partners (7)**

- **Strengths**
 - Love-fest
 - Partnerships in with
 - Land Trusts
 - Forest Preserve/Conservation Districts
 - Park Districts
 - IDNR
 - Partners recognize value of INPC
- **Opportunities**

||| **Protection Theme** **Partners (7)**

- Opportunities
 - Land Trust Funding Legislation
 - Expanding protection with existing NPS landowners
 - Expanding partnerships with Land Trusts
- Threats
 - LTA Standards may weaken/reduce desire for Land Trusts to use INPC programs
 - De-valuation of appraised value of lands protected in NPS programs

||| **Protection Theme** **Proven legacy of laws (6)**

- Strengths
 - Legacy of Government protected sites
 - Time tested, institutionalized laws and rules
 - Easements and dedications are perpetual

||| **Protection Theme**
“Political” vulnerability of INPC (0)

- Strength
 - Commissioner support
- Weakness
 - Restructuring of governmental programs can cause loss of expertise or coverage
 - Mistrust of government
- Threats
 - INPC/INAPA vulnerable to political change/legislative challenges

||| **Protection Theme**
Boundary issues (0)

- Strengths
 - Sign program
- Weakness
 - Unresolved legal description/boundary issues/map errors
- Threat
 - Legal description and boundary errors

||| **Protection Theme**
Competing Goal of NPS
Landowners (0)

- Weakness
 - Second generation landowners
- Threat
 - Use of natural areas as insurance policies against other family threats
 - Attitude and knowledge of next generation of landowners

||| **Defense**
(Total Votes: 86)

- Coordination with IDNR (38)
- Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (INAPA) and other laws (19)
- Staff (17)
- INPC Internal Coordination (10)
- Cooperative Relations/Partners (8)
- Legal Descriptions/baselines/monitoring (0)
- Conflicting interests (0)

||| **Defense Theme**
Coordination with IDNR (38)

- Strength
 - CERP/Consultation staff coordinate with INPC
- Weakness
 - Problems with coordination on sites adjacent to known resources/sites before INPC input
 - Legal Counsel/representation inconsistent
 - Lack of legal/enforcement expertise
 - Staff not always notified of results

||| **Defense Theme**
Coordination with IDNR (38)

- Opportunities
 - Current legal support is good
 - Fines are collected with successful cases
 - Ability to weigh benefits of mitigation vs litigation
 - More CPO training
- Threats
 - Petitioners consider IDNR consultation as INPC sign off on INPC related projects.
 - Uncertainty and long time of enforcement action outcome is discouraging to staff and partners
 - Lack of communication of results
 - CPOs and other IDNR don't understand INPC laws
 - Increased number of pipelines and other utilities
 - Development: energy, infrastructure

|| Defense Theme INAPA and other laws (19)

- Strengths
 - Can use the Attorney General, States Attorney and other governmental infrastructure to enforce.
 - Strong Act
- Weakness
 - INPC lacks proactive regulatory authority to stop threats before they happen
- Threats
 - Precedence of private rights in court judgments
 - Over reaching can hurt our credibility
 - Ambiguous or ill defined real estate laws

|| Defense Theme Staff (17)

- Strengths
 - Local knowledge, experienced, dedicated, skilled and flexible staff
 - Natural Areas Defense Specialist
 - INPC Credibility
 - Class 3 Groundwater delineations
 - Expert/informed testimony
- Weakness
 - Lack of time to handle and/or avert potential threats
 - LOC for neighbors of NPS sites
 - Lack of time for surveillance with large number of sites.
- Threats
 - Loss of experience due to pending staff retirements.

|| Defense Theme INPC Internal Coordination (10)

- Weakness
 - Lack of coordination/investigation may hinder enforcement
 - Threats are often addressed after significant damage
 - No routine approach; No Standard Operating Procedures
- Opportunities
 - Develop procedures to coordinate response to incidents

|| Defense Theme Cooperative Relations/ Partners (8)

- Strengths
 - Cooperative relationships with landowners: they report issues.
 - Field staff and landowners can quickly respond
 - Neighbors brochures
- Opportunities
 - Enhance good relationships with partners, Landowners and advocates helps defend sites.
 - Educate landowners, public, utilities etc of potential threats
 - Rely on landowners and public to ID threats.

||| **Defense Theme**
Legal Descriptions/base
lines/monitoring (0)

- **Strengths**
 - Strong central coordination on Ground water issues. Class III Ground water
- **Weakness**
 - Legal descriptions/boundary discrepancies
 - Need for increased surveillance of NPS
 - Need for more baseline monitoring
- **Opportunities**
 - Clarification of disputed boundaries
 - Routine job task of boundary monitoring
 - Class III Groundwater delineations

||| **Defense Theme**
Conflicting interests (0)

- **Threats**
 - Political interference (Electric Coop)
 - Big Companies believing they are not subject to INAPA or have superior authorities

|| Identification

(Total Votes: 56)

- Biological Skills (18)
- Staff Resources (14)
- Landowner/Public Education (12)
- Partners (12)
- Changes/control of land use (0)
- Usefulness of INAI List (0)

|| Identification Theme

Biological Skills (18)

- Strengths
 - Staff bring expertise, knowledge that helps recognize and evaluate significant sites and species.
 - INAI process/list provide conservation targets.
 - Good people skills
 - Strong taxonomic skills
- Weakness
 - Need for specialized skills for certain taxon
 - Not all skilled at ID in all areas (lack of botanists)
 - Need recent data

||| **Identification Theme Biological Skills (18)**

- **Opportunities**
 - Freedom of staff to follow leads
 - Discovery of new EO.
- **Threats**
 - Future lack of staff with technical ID skills

||| **Identification Theme Staff Resources (14)**

- **Strengths**
 - Experienced Staff
- **Weakness**
 - Limited time for ID because of other responsibilities
 - INAI Process is cumbersome
 - Lack of technology
- **Threats**
 - Not enough time
 - Staff vacancies/pending retirements

|| Identification Theme Landowner/Public Education (12)

- Strengths
 - Maintaining Landowner relationships
- Opportunities
 - First responder for significant site
 - Knowledge of landowners and lands in area
 - Educate public on ID of flora, fauna and natural community type

|| Identification Theme Partners (12)

- Strengths
 - Cooperative work with NGOs and other partners to ID sites
- Opportunities
 - Use skills of partners for outreach, funding, acquisition, expertise and knowledge of sites
 - New INAI Data from Cook Co.
 - Partners

**||| Identification Theme
Changes/control of land use
(0)**

- Threats
 - Land development
 - Loss of sites before data collected
 - No control of unprotected sites
 - Lack of access permission

**||| Identification Theme
Usefulness of INAI List (0)**

- Threats
 - Uncertainty regarding status of new sites and old sites INAI qualification

||| **Operations and administration**
(Total Votes: 115, Only considering weakness/threats)

- Staffing (35)
- Lack of Technology and support (27)
- CMS Issues/Contracts (17)
- Succession Planning/Next Generation (16)
- Interagency Coordination (12)
- Commissioners (8)
- Outreach (0)
- Funding Needs (0)

||| **Operations/Admin. Theme**
Staffing (35)

- Strength: Staff empowered
- Logistics: Many sites over large area: long travel times
- Growing system, stagnant or reducing staff level
- Retirements
- Slow...Glacial Hiring process
- Lack of middle management results in line staff doing more administrative work

||| **Operations/Admin. Theme
Lack of Technology and
support (27)**

- Lack of access and support for current technology
- Software outdated causing many problems
- Duplicated tasks required/ lack of streamlining
- Technology an aid instead of a threat

||| **Operations/Admin. Theme
CMS Issues/Contracts (17)**

- Central Management Services has hideous processes : inefficient or broken processes
 - Contracting
 - Hiring
- More focus on process than product
- Out of State restrictions interfere with cross boundary partnering

|| **Operations/Admin. Theme
Succession Planning/Next
Generation (16)**

- Acquire younger volunteers for recruiting future work force
- Loss of institutional knowledge
- Succession planning
- Fill middle management positions

|| **Operations/Admin. Theme
Interagency Coordination
(12)**

- Coordination Has been poor for the following
 - Communications
 - INAI Update
 - Re-write of the Wildlife Action Plan
 - Consultation in some areas
- Need to improve coordination

||| **Operations/Admin. Theme
Commissioners (8)**

- Not always aware of how they can be the most helpful
- Need discussion on preserve selection issues

||| **Operations/Admin. Theme
Outreach (0)**

- Fail to capitalize on "love-Fest"
- Need to educate public, next generation and staff

III Operations/Admin. Theme Funding Needs (0)

- Funding needed for
 - non-protected sites: Hill Prairies
 - Volunteer Coordinators
 - Implement management plans

III Themes repeated or similar in 3 or more phases

- Staff (total votes: 121, all phases)
 - Stewardship:
 - Resources available (24)
 - Experienced staff with proven methods (0)
 - Protection: Staff (15)
 - Defense: Staff (17)
 - Identification: Staff Resources (14)
 - Operations and Administration:
 - Staffing (35)
 - Succession Planning/Next Generation (16)

||| Themes repeated or similar in 3 or more phases

- Partnerships (total votes 52, all phases)
 - Stewardship: Volunteers & Partnerships (25)
 - Protection: Partners (7)
 - Defense: Cooperative Relations/Partners (8)
 - Identification: Partners (12)

||| Themes repeated or similar in 3 or more phases

- Outreach (total votes 37, 3 of 4 phases)
 - Stewardship: Outreach and Education (9)
 - Protection: Outreach and Education (16)
 - Identification: Landowner/Public Education (12)
 - Operation and Administration: Outreach (0)

||| Top 10 Themes or Phases by votes:

1. Staff Themes (121)
Operations and administration (115)
2. Stewardship Phase (100)
3. Protection Phase (90)
4. Defense Phase (86)
5. Identification Phase (56)
6. Partnerships Themes (52)
7. Stewardship: Resources Available Theme (38)
8. Outreach Themes (37)
9. Operations and Administration: Staffing Theme (35)
10. Defense: Coordination with IDNR Theme (32)

2002 INPC Strategic Plan Goals

- GOAL 1: Preserve and protect more of Illinois' high quality natural areas in perpetuity.
- Goal 2: Maintain and improve the condition of resources protected within the Nature Preserve System.
- GOAL 3: Maintain the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory



INPC Strategic Plan Goals

- GOAL 4: Maintain leadership role in preserving biodiversity in Illinois.
- GOAL 5: Provide compatible research opportunities within NP's and LWR's .
- GOAL 6: Increase public awareness, support and understanding of the INPC and its purpose.



INPC Strategic Plan Goals

- GOAL 7: Defend natural areas, nature preserves and land and water reserves.
- GOAL 8: Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness.



Appendix III.

Outline of presentation: Status of the 2002 INPC Strategic Plan presented to Staff and commissioners in preparation for development of goals in response. Results are 2007 data.

GOAL 1: Preserve and protect more of Illinois' high quality natural areas in perpetuity.

- **Strategy 1.1:** Dedicate, register or landmark additional natural areas, with an emphasis on privately owned properties.

- Contact all private landowners of Category I Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) sites
- Enroll 75 privately owned tracts of land

Results

- 500 landowner contacts (100/per year)
- 172 tracts (19,287 acres)
- 92 private (7711 acres)
- Value of private land \$28.7 million

- **Strategy 1.2:** Increase communication with landowners to foster interest in land dedication and to keep landowners engaged and informed.

- newsletter to owners by 2003.
- newsletter on the INPC web site
- Create a landowner database

Results

- 100 landowner contacts/year of INAI owners
- 70% of NP system owners contacted
- Major public owners contacted yearly

- **Strategy 1.3:** Increase landowner incentives to encourage participation in INPC programs.

- Legislation to reduce property taxes on land and water reserves by 2004.
- Double the amount of stewardship monies available for privately owned nature preserves and land and water reserves to \$100,000.

Results

- \$600 Thousand available for Stewardship
- \$183 Thousand available in FY07 from non-IDNR from NAAF
- \$25 Thousand available from INPC budget
- Conservation easements receive lower tax assessments

- **Strategy 1.4:** Promote protection of natural areas through programs outside of INPC.

- Enroll 15 sites into the Nature Preserves System through purchase of easements.
- federal government to designate 50% of federally owned Category I INAI sites as RNA
- 15 tracts of land acquired using the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund by 2007.

Results

- 44 tracts purchased totaling 5171 acres costing \$19.3 million
- Additional lands acquired through C2000 and other IDNR programs

GOAL 2: Maintain and improve the condition of resources protected within the Nature Preserve System.

- **Strategy 2.1:** Develop management plans for nature preserves and land and water reserves.

- Prepare management schedules for 95% of legally protected areas by 2007.

Results

- 60 plans per year approved
- Minimum of 145 plans per year needed to keep up to date

- **Strategy 2.2:** Develop new techniques and improve or maintain existing techniques for management of natural areas, including: prescribed burning, deer management, invasive species management, restoration and reintroduction.
 - prescribed burn legislation
 - list of research needs circulated annually
 - 30 management guidelines by 2007

Results

 - IDNR/IEPA Memorandum of Understanding
 - Prescribed burn legislation being promoted by TNC
 - 25 guidelines to date 9 scheduled for this year.
- **Strategy 2.3:** Implement monitoring/surveillance procedures using modern technology to track and evaluate: 1) what management ...; 2) ... “management condition” ...
 - methods to evaluate the “management condition”
 - management tracking system
 - Monitoring using methods in all of the dedicated nature preserves by end of 2004.

Results

 - Manage MATS is under development. Due end of year
 - Management Condition tool begun development, but is not currently being worked on.
- **Strategy 2.4:** Increase management and restoration of natural areas and Nature Preserve System.
 - Hire 3 stewardship specialists
 - three stewardship project proposals per year in each of the INPC’s field staff
 - NAAF stewardship dollars to 10% of land acquisition.
 - prescribed fire program on 50% of NP
 - brush control program on 50% of NP
 - invasive species control program on 50% NP
 - Improve 50% of the NP “management condition” by 2007.

Results

 - 10% NAAF to Stewardship
 - FY07:\$600 K for Stewardship
 - \$183 K for non-IDNR from NAAF
 - \$25 K from INPC budget
 - Staff facilitate management on 100 sites/year
 - Not meeting management needs
- **Strategy 2.5:** Partner with IDNR and other landowners to promote stewardship.
 - Work with IDNR on the development of an integrated land management planning and tracking system by 2007.

Results

 - Manage Mats under development by contract.
 - Completion date 12/2007
- **Strategy 2.6:** Provide equipment to staff for stewardship activities.
 - Annually assess stewardship equipment needs within each of the INPC’s field staff Areas
 - Annually prioritize requests and provide equipment as funding is available.

Results

 - ATV & other fire/management Equipment
 - Trucks

- Small equipment blanket

GOAL 3: Maintain the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory

- **Strategy 3.1:** Assist IDNR in maintaining and updating the INAI program on an ongoing basis.
 - Staff training session
 - Participate in NAEC program quarterly meetings.
 - Increase by 10% the number of INAI sites visited by INPC staff by 2003

Results

- Participate in NAEC
- INAI RFP is out.
- Need NA Protection Manger to support INPC Role
- **Strategy 3.2:** Obtain an IDNR community ecologist for its INAI program.
 - Schedule meetings with partners by 2003 to discuss collaboration efforts to secure community ecologist services.
 - Results
 - Natural Heritage Vacancies filled in Springfield
 - Division Chief
 - NA Program Manager
 - INPC Project manager
 - Invasive Species Project Manager

GOAL 4: Maintain leadership role in preserving biodiversity in Illinois.

- **Strategy 4.1:** Assume a leadership role in preserving Illinois' biodiversity among organizations concerned with the protection of natural areas.
 - Sponsor Illinois Natural Areas Symposium
 - Partner with organizations to promote and support landscape inventory projects
 - Lead quarterly meetings of the VSN
 - support VSN \$10,000 annually
 - Link between the VSN EcoWatch.
 - Participate in Chicago Wilderness.

Results

- 31st Natural Areas Conference 2004
- INAI Update
- \$15K to VSN
- INPC an active member of Chicago Wilderness
- **Strategy 4.2:** Provide expertise on natural areas to landowners, government agencies and not-for-profit organizations.
 - Provide one training session per year to staff and others beginning in 2003.

Results

- Regionally important training. (Karst, prescribed burning)
- Staff one forum or training per year.
- **Strategy 4.3:** Create a list of natural features not currently represented within the Nature Preserves System.
 - Create list by end of 2002.
 - Use sites identified on the list to prioritize protection efforts by end of 2003.

Results

- List developed
- List used
- Now using IWAP in addition

GOAL 5: Provide compatible research opportunities within NP's and LWR's .

- **Strategy 5.1:** Maintain a well-managed research permit program.
 - Issue a minimum of 400 compatible research permits annually.
 - Continue to respond to each permit application within 20 days.
 - Results
 - 528 permits/year (468-555)
 - Applicants contacted in 20 days or less.
 - Issuance may take longer
 - **Strategy 5.2:** Identify needed research for the Nature Preserves System.
 - Create a list of research needs by the end of 2002 (see also Strategy 2.2).
 - Results
 - Agenda was developed
 - **Strategy 5.3:** Promote needed research agenda: contact target academic and research institutions.
 - Circulate the proposed research needs list to at least 50 academic and research institutions, repeating annually.
 - 10% of research permits issued should be from the list of research needs by 2007.
 - Results
 - Circulated in 2004
 - No attempt to correlate research to list.
- GOAL 6: Increase public awareness, support and understanding of the INPC and its purpose.
- **Strategy 6.1:** Capitalize on the INPC 40th anniversary in 2003 to raise public awareness.
 - Create a 40th anniversary public relations/media relations plan by September 2002.
 - Plan an event commemorating the 40th anniversary by January of 2003.
 - Results
 - 40th Anniversary events were held in
 - Rockford
 - Cache River Visitor Center in Southern Illinois
 - Metro-east St Louis
 - Central Illinois
 - **Strategy 6.2:** Increase outreach to government agencies, non profit organizations and elected officials.
 - Develop INPC messages directed to elected public officials by June of 2002.
 - Plan a staff and Commissioner training session on using message points by January of 2003.
 - INPC staff or Commissioners will participate in 10 organized forums annually to advocate for the mission and represent INPC interests.
 - Results
 - Each staff one forum per year
 - Commissioners have advocated for NA conservation INPC and IDNR budgets
 - Promotes NA conservation with Federal (Shawnee NF, Lost Mound NWR)
 - **Strategy 6.3:** Provide educational opportunities within protected areas.
 - Identify a minimum of two nature preserves or registered sites that are suitable for educational opportunities by the end of 2002.
 - Outreach a plan about these select sites by January of 2003. Key message that nature preserves are a public benefit and not all restricted from use.
 - Results:
 - Staff periodically lead tours at sites..

- **Strategy 6.4:** Be more proactive reaching the public with information about the INPC and its benefits to Illinois.
 - Create a two-year public relations plan with time line for proactive tactics by January of 2003.

Results

- None

- **Strategy 6.5:** Use the upgraded signage program to help educate the public about nature preserves.
 - Develop a schedule for placing new signage at all nature preserves by 2003
 - Replace old entrance signs with new entrance signs at nature preserves at a rate of 40 annually.

Results

- New signs placed on new sites.
- Old signs being replaced by owners on as needed.
- Sight specific NP signs being created and deployed as time available.
(Orders placed in 04, 05, 07)

GOAL 7: Defend natural areas, nature preserves and land and water reserves.

- **Strategy 7.1:** Educate landowners, non-profit organizations and other government agencies, including law enforcement organizations, on the importance of defending NA's, NP's, and LWR from negative impacts.

- Educate landowners adjacent to NP and LWR regarding threats
- Maintain annual contact with 50% of NP, LWR and NHL landowners.
- Collaborate with other agencies for potential threats.
- Meet with Conservation Police Officers

Results

- Neighbor's Brochure
- Meet with 70% of owners NP and LWR
- Meet with 41% NHL owners
- Meet with large conservation agencies
- Limited training provided to other IDNR offices
- Limited training to other agencies

- **Strategy 7.2:** Train staff to defend natural areas from potential negative impacts.
 - Develop procedure to share information internally regarding how previous threats have been handled by end of 2002.
 - Develop parameters to evaluate and address commonly encountered threats by end of 2004.

Results

- Threats Report

- **Strategy 7.3:** Incorporate potential threat information during development of protection proposals and management plans for NA's, NP's and LWR's.

- check list of potential threats
- Include threat analysis in every proposal.
- Strategic baseline data unique for each protected area
- Update threat analysis every three years when updating management plans.

Results

- Checklist is being developed
- Four Class III Special Resource Ground Waters designated to date

GOAL 8: Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Strategy 8.1:** Update electronic equipment to meet staff needs.
 - Assess computer equipment needs for staff by December 2002.

- Assess Geographical Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment needs for staff
- Annually review and prioritize electronic equipment needs
 - Results
 - GPS
 - GIS
 - Manage MATS
 - Broadband access deployment
- **Strategy 8.2:** Increase staff training to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Assess staff computer, GIS and GPS training needs
 - Assess staff estate tax and real estate law training needs
 - Develop a staff training plan.
 - Results:
 - Training in
 - Fire management
 - Invasive species
 - Biotics
 - Tax law
 - Computer applications
 - No current plan
- **Strategy 8.3:** Improve communication with other agencies and the public
 - Add all INPC minutes to the website by December 2004.
 - Develop ability to search INPC minutes on website by December 2002.
 - Maintain and enhance good working relationship with other State and federal agencies such as the IDNR, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency.
 - Results
 - Meeting from 145th to present to be on web.
 - Earlier not allowed due to space limits.
 - INPC working to promote NA on federal lands.
 - Coordinating enforcement actions with IEPA and AG
- **Strategy 8.4:** Assess increased staffing needs.
 - Update the comprehensive work load analysis to determine current work load of staff by end of 2002.
 - Results
 - Budget constraints limited hiring new staff.
 - Two replacement headcount to be filled in FY07
 - Restructuring