Thirty-first Natural Areas Conference
Chicago, Illinois
October 13-16, 2004
Final Report (May 27, 2005 Draft)

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Introduction

The 31st Natural Areas Conference was held at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza in the River North District of down town Chicago on October 13-16, 2004. The theme for the conference was "Emerging issues : Possibilities and Perils" The following is a description of the planning, financing, and implementation of the conference to provide conference supporters, and hosts an explanation of how the conference was held, participation and results, and a critique of the conference for future conference planners.

I. Conference Objectives:

A. Plan, organize and host the 31st Natural Areas Conference (NAC), October 13-16, 2004, in Chicago with a minimum of 500 conference participants.

B. Provide a forum for natural area practitioners, researchers and enthusiast to share ideas and methods for the protection of rare biological resources and issues affecting the long-term conservation of these resources.

C. Provide a forum to educate and involve land use decision makers and the public on the issues relating to the maintenance of natural biological systems that they steward.

D. Provide symposia on issues of importance to persons involved in the stewardship of natural resources.

E. Provide field trip opportunities to conference participants that will highlight the natural areas within the Chicago Wilderness Region.

II. Administration/Planning

In November and December 2002 at the request of the NAA's executive director, Illinois formed a committee to explore the possibility of having a natural areas conference in Illinois. This committee included members from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Chicago Office, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Chapter The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Office, National Audubon Society, and Chicago Wilderness. This group formed a nucleus of a planning committee that would plan the conference in 2004. The committee after considerable discussion decided to hold the conference in a Chicago venue. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC), Natural Areas Association

(NAA) and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) agreed to host the event. A three-way agreement was drawn up amongst these groups(Appendix I). Randy R. Heidorn, Deputy Director for Stewardship of the INPC staff, and NAA Board of Directors member was selected to chair the conference. Glen Kruse, acting Section Manager for Restoration Ecology represented IDNR. Reid Schuller, Executive Director for the NAA served as the lead representative for the NAA. and as the Financial Section Chief.

A. Planning

A planning committee was first convened in Winter of 2003. The entire committee, made up of persons willing to help from numerous organizations in the Illinois, met bi-monthly in 2003 and monthly in 2004 and planned all aspects of the conference. The committee decided to organize itself into 5 main subcommittees described below The conference was organized loosely following the National Incident Command System. The conference chair served in the role of Incident Commander and Planning Section Chief for most of the duration of the planning process. The Operations Section was divided into 3 branches: Program, Events and Field Trips. Fund raising activities were coordinated by a committee in conjunction with the conference chair and NAA Executive Director who also served as the Financial Section Chief. A complete personnel roster is shown in Appendix B. Leaders of these groups met by teleconference weekly during the last 12 months of the planning effort. They were also responsible for developing a budget with the approval of the NAA Treasurer that was used to guide the conference.

1. Logistics/facilities Section

This subcommittee (section) had the responsibility of selecting the venue, vendor coordination, registration and local financial tracking. Initially this group was lead by the Conference Chair until a professional conference organizer was hired. Upon recommendation of planning committee members, the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana Conferences and Institutes (C&I) was chosen to be the Conference organizer. Scott Miller of C&I then assumed the role of Conference Coordinator and leader of this Section for the remainder of the effort.

2. Program Branch

This Operations Branch was responsible for the selection of the theme, solicitation selection and coordination of keynote, plenary, symposia and concurrent session speakers and poster paper selection and coordination. John Wilker, District restoration Ecologist for IDNR led this effort after the short service of Bob Szafoni (IDNR) in this position in early 2003.

3. Events Branch

This Operations Branch had the responsibility to develop social events, banquets, auctions, raffles art show and exhibits. Included in the is responsibility was the selection of event venues away from the main conference venue, and the selection of menus for catering through out the conference. Jill Kennay of the Natural Land Institute, served as the Events Chair.

4. Field Trip Branch:

This last Operations Branch was responsible for setting up conference and pre-conference field trips. Brian Reilly served as the Field Trip Chair for the conference.

5. Fund Raising Committee:

The fund raising committee was made up of member from the host organizations, several non-governmental organizations and private firms. Christopher Burke served as the Fund Raising Chair. He led the effort to contact private sector contributors. The NAA Executive Director spearheaded efforts to seek regular federal support and other members worked with various locally based NGO and governmental organizations.

B. Fund Raising

Solicitation letters were developed by the committee and sent to engineering, environmental, and land restoration related firms, environmental and conservation organizations, and open space and natural resource governmental agencies and universities in the greater Chicago area. Members of Chicago Wilderness were specifically targeted. The Conference Chair sought grants form the Chicago Wilderness, City of Chicago, Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund, and Illinois Conservation Foundation. Followup contacts were made with all agencies and thank you letters were sent to those sending or promising contributions. As incentives for contributions, donors were given exhibitor space, NAA memberships, registrations and written recognition for contributions. A schedule of the awards is shown in Appendix III. Conference donations and grant payments were accepted primarily at the NAA offices in Bend, Oregon with a few going to C&I in Champaign.

C. Logistics and on site coordination

Conference and Institutes of the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana (C&I) coordinated technical aspects of the conference including printing, registration, mailing, marketing and vendor coordination. C&I has an office located in downtown Chicago. This office solicited bids and proposals from vendors including hotels, banquet sites, bus companies, audio visual companies, caterers and other service providers. Vendors were chosen in consultation with other key planning committee members to fit in with other projects. All conference vendors were supervised and managed by C&I. All bills were sent to C&I in Champaign for payment from conference funds. The C&I office in Champaign coordinated material production, registration, financial record keeping and web marketing.

During the conference, The Conference Chair coordinated the activities of all conference leaders who were responsible for their part of the conference operations. A written incident plan was prepared for each day and time periods before and after the conference. The incident plan described what activities were to occur for the time period (Appendix III) These plans were reviewed each morning before the start of the days activities and at the end of the day to allow for modifications to be made as needed. The Conference Chair

led these daily meetings. C&I staff interfaced with the hotel, aquarium staff and other vendors. Only the Conference Chair (Heidorn) and C&I provided Logistics Section Chief (Miller), were authorized to make changes or additions to services by major contractors during the conference time. C&I staffed the registration booth with the assistance of the IDNR and INPC personnel. A speaker/worker check-in was established in the conference headquarters which was located near the conference registration desk. Local contact information was maintained at the check-in.

D. Post Conference

Bills were paid to vendors by the C&I with money received from registrations. C&I prepared a financial summary. Similarly, NAA prepared a summary of donations received and expenses related to the conference. These were used to prepare a final financial summary of the conference by the Conference Chair. The conference Chair also prepared a final report for the event.

III. Logistics Section (Scott Miller, C&I , Chief)

A. General preparations

C&I contracted for all printing of conference materials with University of Illinois (U of I) vendors. Layout for the call for papers and registration were handled by IDNR's Office of Public Services, Graphic Services. The Logo for the conference was developed by Patti Rielly (IDNR). The Layout for the final program was handled by a C&I contractor since IDNR layout artists were not available. Mailing for the call for papers was handled by the C&I. However, mail services were provided by the United State Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Offices in Chicago for the Registration Packet. Content for all documents were developed by the Program Chair, Events Chair and Conference Chair with help of the Conference Coordinator.

B. Venue

There are few places like the Chicago landscape where the diversity of nature, history, culture, ethnic groups, business, industry, entertainment and recreation flourish in such close contact. These features have been preserved by generations of forward thinking Chicagoans. In 1909, D.H. Burnham, Chief of Construction for the World's Columbian Exposition, and Burnham's design assistant, Edward Bennett, devised the "Burnham Plan." This first comprehensive urban landuse plan ever developed for an American city, included suggestions for better living conditions for all people, beautification of the city through the creation and protection of a series of parks and natural areas, and a more efficient way of connecting different parts of the city. But, even before the Burnham Plan, Architects Jens Jensen and Dwight Perkins argued in a study of the region's recreational resources and natural areas published in 1904, that efforts should be made to protect natural lands along the Lake Shore, Skokie, DesPlaines, Calumet and Chicago River Valleys, Palos Heights, Blue Island Ridge, Salt and Flag Creek and Lake Calumet. The idea was to ring the city with natural lands to be preserved for their "own sake and scientific value". This effort ultimately resulted in the formation of the Cook County Forest Preserve District in 1914. The District's current land holdings exceed 60,000 acres. This legacy of natural lands and similar efforts in the surrounding counties

provided the rich resources so important in today's restoration efforts in the Chicago Region. In the past decade the Chicago Region has embarked on a renewed effort to preserve the natural heritage. The Chicago Wilderness Coalition a group of more than 170 local, state and federal agencies, not for profit and for profit organizations, universities, research institutions, museums, zoos, nature centers and other groups interested in natural resources and urban planning who work together to promote and steward the natural resources of the region. The Chicago Wilderness is a regionwide biological reserve, that includes lands owned, protected and/or managed by the members of the coalition. The vibrant conservation community with its great history and cutting edge approaches to natural areas protection made it perfect for the 2004 Natural Areas Conference.

The main conference venue was selected by a bid process coordinated by the Conference Coordinator. The conference except for field trips and banquet was held at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, Chicago, IL 60654 in the the heart of the City of Chicago. The hotel which begins on the fifteenth story of the Chicago Apparel Center. Is located on the Chicago River in River North community with dramatic views of the Chicago skyline. The hotel is adjacent to the World Trade Center-Chicago, and minutes from the Loop. The Natural Areas Conference negotiated a rate of $109 plus 14.5% tax per night (Single or Double). The original contract called for no meeting room charges if 800 room nights were sold to conference participants. This was not met. The hotel negotiated a rate of $1030/day (including tax) for all of the rooms needed for the conference. Parking at the hotel became problem. The conference had negotiated a $18/day rate (with in and out privileges) for hotel guests and $12/day (no in out) for other guests . However, there was a new parking facility and the message did not get to the parking attendants or front desk of the hotel. Several participants were overcharged. Although most of these were resolved, there seemed to be a real lack of cooperation at the front desk of the hotel. All other staff at the hotel seemed very helpful and receptive.

Conference Events and meeting were held on three floors of the Hotel. Plenaries, exhibits, breaks and concurrent sessions were held on the 14th floor. The 15th floor held the hotel lobby, a restaurant in addition to having the Wolf Point Room complex this two room complex served as the Conference Headquarters, Registration, Art Show venue and Poster Session venue. The 16th Floor had a meeting room reserved for special meeting and the computer/AV Prep room. Movement between floors was by stairs or elevator. It was more difficult to travel between the 14th floor and than 16th floor since one needed to change elevators or staircases on the 15th floor. These problems did not present any major impediments to movement during the conference.

The banquet was held at the John G. Shedd Aquarium situated on the shores of Lake Michigan. (More information on all aspects of the banquet are reported below.)

C. Catering

The hotel provided catering services for all of the breaks, the box lunch on Friday, the

welcome social and poster session. The food was very good, however there were some complaints that there was not enough fruits and vegetables snacks. The conference coordinator did a very good job estimating the needed amount of food on every day except Thursday afternoon. On Thursday we had 85 walk in registrations, resulting in some shortages for the afternoon break. One problem we were able to address was the tear down of break stations after breaks. NAC participants tend to trickle out to the breaks. On Thursday morning there was still considerable food available at the end of the scheduled break period. The Hotel staff began to take the food away right at that time. The hotel staff was asked by the conference coordinator to leave the food out until consumed for future breaks. In future conference it would be best to make sure the Hotel understands NAC that we want the food to remain beyond the scheduled break time.

D. Audiovisual

Audio visual services other than computer services were provided by the Hotel. The equipment was good, in place and on time. The IDNR's Office of Resource Conservation Watershed Management Section provided computer support for conference. This effort was led by Charlie Foore and Tara Kieninger. Prior to the conference partners supporting the conference were asked to donate video projection equipment and laptop computers for the effort. Speakers were asked to provide Microsoft Power Point compatible files 2 weeks in advance of the conference. The IDNR accepted the presentations both by cd and via an IDNR server based FTP site. Several people did not respond in a timely manner. So it became necessary to provide a way for speakers to load their presentations on the computer. A room was provided and staffed by conference volunteers through out days papers were presented. The room could easily be locked so, it was also used to secure the equipment at night. Volunteers were recruited from partner agencies to operate the computers and projectors in the paper sessions. A training was held in the morning prior to the session to acquaint the volunteers with the equipment. One IDNR owned computer was damaged during the conference. The computer was still under an insurance policy and was repaired at no cost to the conference. Most presenters used Power Point for their presentations. Only a limited number used traditional slides. Future conferences should consider eliminating the use of traditional slide projectors as their rental was a major expense with very limited use.

E. Web Marketing

C&I was provided information that was then posted on the C&I web page. The C&I web page stores conference web sites in a database, that is then accessed seamlessly by external users. This has an advantage in that the web page is permanently available even after the conference is over. The disadvantage is there is only a limited capability for the display and linking the registration document to the page. For this reason we were not able to let participants know in real time the availability of field trips on the web page. This was a great addition that occurred with the Wisconsin conference that could not be done in Illinois. The web page contained all of the information needed for registration and paper submission. It also contained a link to the registration database. PDF copies of all documents were available for down load at this site. The web page was also used as the sole way that abstracts could be downloaded for the conference. Only 20 hard copies

of the abstract were made available at the conference. Most of these were not requested suggesting that people had downloaded them in advance.

F. Registration

Registration was handled by the C&I office in Champaign. Participants had the option to fill out a paper copy and mail registrations, call the office by phone or register online. Most major credit cards were available for payment at time of registration or the person could be billed. There were some problems with the registration database with some obvious over and under charges. The C&I staff were quite helpful in resolving this. There was some confusion on where to send payments. These were sent to the U of I Cashiering Office. Some of the checks were not clearly credited to the conference. Again, C&I staff were very good in resolving these issues.

IV. Operations Section

A. Program Branch (John Wilker, IDNR, Program Chair)

The conference theme: "Emerging Issues: Possibilities and Perils," acknowledged the changing nature of the protection and management needs facing Natural Areas in the 21st century. The strategies we employ now, evolved from the vision of the dedicated people who attended the first natural areas conference 31 years ago. In 2004, we continued this open and important discussion with an increased emphasis on what must be done to sustain Natural Areas in our ever changing landscapes. Presentations, symposia, posters, workshops, field trips and social events were shaped to refine and inspire that collected vision for the future. The conference included two and a half days of plenary and concurrent papers and symposia sessions and posters. One hundred eighty-nine papers were presented in the 3 plenary sessions and 9 concurrent session rooms over 2.5 days. A poster session including 35 posters were also presented. Each session was moderated by a volunteer moderator familiar with the topics that were being presented. Concurrent speakers were given 15-20 minutes for presentation and 5-10 minutes for questions for a maximum of 30 minutes per presentation. No breaks in papers occurred in the afternoon concurrent sessions. Generally, with only a couple of sessions as exceptions, the speakers stayed on schedule. Even with this fairly good record, the conference evaluations contained complaints about those sessions not following the schedule. Also there were a couple of program changes that were announced. These resulted in sessions being moved up. Although these changes were announced, several people complaned about the changes. In future conference the schedules as published should not be changed other than by adding replacements.

The complete program is presented in Appendix IV.

1. Plenaries

The conference began on Wednesday October 12 with an opening plenary session where participants were greeted by the Conference Chair, J. Ralph Jordan, President of the NAA, Harry Drucker, Chairman of the INPC, Joel Brunsvold, Director of the IDNR and Lieutenant Governor of the State of Illinois Patrick Quinn. The City of Chicago presented information on the Cities Nature and

Wildlife Plan. A local author and consultant Joel Greenberg gave a presentation on the Natural History of the Chicago Region This opening plenary ended with a keynote presentation by Eric T. Freyfogle, the Max L. Rowe Professor of Law at the University of Illinois College of Law, where he has taught environmental law and policy for the past 20 years. Dr. Freyfogel presented a talk entitled "Natural Areas in Time and Place".

Plenary presentations were also given from 8 AM- 9:30 AM on Thursday and Saturday. These plenaries served as springboards to symposia that continued in the concurrent sessions.

2. Symposia

The following symposia were included in the program:

a. Perils of Emerging Diseases in Natural Areas
b. Preserve System Design Symposium
c. Adaptive Management at Lockport Prairie
d. Federal Natural Areas Programs
e. Landowner Contact Workshop
f. Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Managing Urban Natural Areas Technology (Underwritten by the City of Chicago)
g. Using Partner's Strengths to Succeed as Natural Areas Practitioners
h. Educating About Nature
i. The Synergy of Invasive Species Programs and their Potential

3. General Concurrent Sessions

General concurrent sessions were presented on the following topics.

a. Grassland and savanna restoration
b. Plant community monitoring
c. Animal species conservation and reintroduction
d. Human aspect in natural areas
e. Sustainability
f. Invasive species
g. Volunteers
h. Rare plant monitoring.

4. Posters

Thirty-five posters were presented at the conference. Food was provide and presenters were asked to be available on Thursday evening. A student poster award was offered. Only 5 students entered the contest. This is likely the result of late advertising of the contest. Winning students were given a free membershi and the first place winner was given a cash award and plaque.

B. Field Trips (Brian Reilly, IDNR, Field Trip Chair)

Twenty-two conference and two pre-conference field trips were planned for the conference. As has been the practice the field trips were held on Friday. Seven of the field trips were cancelled

prior to the conference due to lack of interest.

1. Conference Field Trips

A guide or field trip leader was assigned to each tour group Conference field trip participants and guides staged at the check-in booth 15 minutes prior to departure time. The assembled group then exited the building via the elevator and met busses that were staging in a lot next to the Merchandise Mart. Some groups also took Metra trains to the buses waiting for them in the suburbs near their destination. Field trip leaders who did not meet their groups at the confernece venue, met them at their destination. Below is a list of conference field trips:

a. Fens: More than "Peat with Calcareous Seepage"
b. Middlefork Savanna/MacArthur Woods
c. Prairie Restoration in Kane County
d. Dolomite Prairie Tour
e. Fox River Canoe Trip
f. Indiana Dunes National Lake Shore, Indiana
g. Pratts Wayne Woods Forest Preserve
h. Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Tour
i. Illinois Beach State Park
j. Clark and Pine Nature Preserve, Indiana
k. Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
l. Chicago Center for Green Technology (Underwritten by the City of Chicago)
m. Preserving, Improving and creating Natural Areas: Economic and Environmental Revitalization of the Calumet Region of Chicago (Underwritten by the City of Chicago)
n. Field Museum: A look behind the Scenes

2. Pre-Conference Field trips

a. Illinois River Trip

This field trip will involve 3 days, and 2 nights along the Illinois River Valley from Chicago to Peoria. The trip will include stops at natural areas, historic sites, and wetland restoration projects along a 110-mile stretch of the Illinois River. Topics focused on a wide range of environmental issues related to river management and restoration. The trip began in Chicago with a brief stop at the historic site of Marquette and Joliet's portage from the Mississippi River basin to the Great Lakes basin. Stops will also included Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area and Starved Rock State Park, Hennepin-Hooper Lakes, historic sites along the Illinois and Michigan Canal, Forest Park Nature Preserve, Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve, and Illinois' first large-scale wind farm in Lee County.

b. Pembroke Savanna

The Kankakee Sands Macrosite is a bi-state project area consisting of sand savanna and sand prairie landscape that stretches across 60,000 acres in

Illinois and Indiana. This remarkable area has one of the greatest concentration of intact globally rare oak savanna ecosystems left anywhere in the nation. Sites visited include Iroquois County State Wildlife Area Land and Water Reserve, Hooper Branch Savanna Nature Preserve, Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area, Kankakee Sands Restoration, Mskoda Sands Preserve, Leesville Savanna, Conrad Savanna Nature Preserve, Illinois TNC-owned Savannas, Beaver Lake Prairie, Sweet Fern Land and Water Reserve, Guiding Star, and Momence Wetlands.

C. Events (Jill Kennay, Natural Land Institute, Events Chair)

1. Breaks

Breaks were held Wednesday afternoon, and Thursday and Saturday morning and afternoon. Discussion of catering is shown above. The conference committee decided to not suspend paper presentations during the breaks during after noon sessions. Instead participants were advised when the break food would be available. Although this allowed for 16 more papers, it did receive mixed reaction from participants.

2. Evening events

a. Welcome Mixer

A mixer with cash bar was held immediately following the Wednesday plenary sessions. The purpose of this mixer was for persons to meet other participants and then make plans to go out to dinner. A selection of hors d'oeuvre were made available. A special showing of the video "Aldo Leopold and the Wild Prairie Orchids" was shown during this mixer.

b. Poster Session

Similarly, the poster session, which was held after the dinner hour on Thursday provided a cash bar and hors d'oeuvres. The poster presenters were in attendance to answer questions about their posters. A book signing was also held during this session.

3. Awards Banquet

The annual banquet was held at the John G. Shedd Aquarium situated on the shores of Lake Michigan. The evening began in the Oceanarium viewing beluga whales, Alaska sea otters and Pacific white-sided dolphins. Large windows in the underwater viewing gallery of the Oceanarium offered guests face-to-face encounters with the whales and dolphins. Following presentations of the Stewardship Award and the George B. Fell Award in the Amphitheater, we will moved into the original Aquarium for a strolling buffet of carving and pasta stations and a narrated fish-feeding presentation in the Caribbean Reef Rotunda. Self-guided viewing of the aquarium's freshwater and saltwater exhibits, "Amazon Rising: Seasons of the River," and the "Wild Reef – Sharks at the Shedd" were also available. The evening concluded with the Shedd's assorted cheese cakes, and dessert selections, the student poster awards and NAA's annual silent and live auctions led by Randy Nyboer in the main foyer.

4. Exhibits

There were 17 booth spaces available conference exhibitors. The Exhibit space was made available first to the NAA (2), IDNR (1) and the organizations that had donated $1000 or more (10). The space was available to non contributing for profit organizations for $500 (2) and not for profit organizations for $250 (1). We had one no-show for the exhibits. We found that linking booth space to donations was very effective. However we did identify one administrative problem. First, contributors were given priority over vendors. This meant that we could not guarantee that a vendor would have a space until a time close to the beginning of the conference. Second, donors were not very quick to respond if they wanted space. The end result was difficulty filling the last couple of spaces. We recommend continuing giving preference for exhibitor space to donors as it seemed to raise the number of donations. However we need to have a firm deadline for reservations of exhibit space that is at least a month or two ahead of the conference. This will also allow the publication of the names of exhibitors in the program which was impossible due to the lateness knowing who was going to exhibit.

5. Art Spree

The Conference in Chicago held an art spree featuring Illinois artisans displaying original fine craft on Thursday, from 12:00am to 8:00pm, in the receiving room of the Wolf Point Ballroom next to the registration desk. The Illinois Artisans Program, administered by the Illinois State Museum, focuses national attention on the rich heritage of the best designed and crafted traditional, contemporary, ethnic and folk art that exists in Illinois today. The artists used their expertise in their medium to create exciting interpretations of nature. Media will included sterling silver, ceramics, fiber, photography, wood and stone. Pieces were offered for sale to conference attendees and the general public. Both the artist and conference participants seemed to appreciate the venue and activity. This event overlapped with the poster session also held in the Wolf Point Ballroom complex. Sales for the art pieces were not great, but the mutual exposure of the artist to the natural areas movement and the reverse seemed to be mutually appreciated.

6. Other Meetings

The Natural Areas Association held its annual meeting on Thursday evening immediately after the paper sessions. Since one of the concurrent sessions went long, the meeting was delayed. This was definitely a problem in that it reduced the dinner time available that participants had between the meeting and the poster session.

The annual meeting for the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils was held on Thursday afternoon in a meeting room on te 16th floor of the hotel. The First annual meeting of the Midwest Invasive Plant Network was also held as a luncheon on Saturday in the same room. This meeting was followed by an Illinois Volunteer Stewardship Network Roundtable. Participants in this

roundtable included both conference participants and the other volunteers.

V. Financial

A. Budget

The conference budget was developed with the input of committee members, NAA Treasurer, conference coordinator and conference chair. The spread sheet program used by the Wisconsin Natural Areas Conference (2003) was used as the basis. It was assumed that there would be 600 participants and $51,000 in fund raising. As will be discussed latter these were over optimistic assumptions based on the belief that more volunteers would participate, and the historical record of the last Illinois' Natural Areas Conference that had nearly 1000 participants.. The complete budget is in Appendix V.

B. Fees

The following is a schedule of conference fees

Registration Fees	Early Registration (Payment by 9/12/2004)	Late Registration (Payment after 9/12/2004)
NAA Member- Full Conference*	$235	$260
New Member Full Conference (includes 1 year membership) *	$250	$275
Non-member Full Conference*	$260	$285
Student Full Conference	$160	$195
Daily#	$80_	$90
Student Daily#	$65	$75
Awards Banquet at Shedd Aquarium.	$55	$65
Pre Conference Field Trip	$210.00	

*Full Conference Registration includes admission to all sessions, all planned breaks and social events, box lunch for Friday, in conference field trips except as noted below, and admission for one to the Awards Banquet at the Shedd Aquarium on Friday night.

Daily registration included admission to all sessions or field trips on a single day including breaks (Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday) and box lunch (Friday only). A banquet ticket must be purchased separately.

Additional fees were required for some field trips. For complete information on fees see the Registration document.

VI. Results and recommendations

A. Operations

Overall, conference participants were satisfied with the content and operations of the conference. Program content, events and facility were well received. With the exception of some complaints about the opening plenary, speakers were generally praised in the evaluations. Events were generally well received. There were limited complaints about the food selection. Namely the lack of healthy choices such as fruits and vegetables at breaks and the banquet was identified. Other than the aforementioned menu issues, the banquet at the Shedd Aquarium was highly praised in the evaluations, however there were several complaints about the auction. Particularly there were complaints about the difficulty in hearing and the lack of seats. This needs to be taken into account for future auctions. Also, several people complained that the raffle drawing was held after the

auction. Field trips were also highly praised particularly for their organization. The overall expense of the conference was identified by some respondents to the evaluation. They were particularly concerned that the line employees would be replaced by administrators with continued increases in costs.

Organizing the conference using the National Incident Command System seemed to be an effective way to operate the conference. Several of the evaluations complimented the conference staff on the smooth operation of the conference. This kind of organization scheme works well for complex coalitions of groups organizing a conference. Since this was a partnership of 5 organizations (NAA, INPC, IDNR, C&I and Natural Land Institute) along with numerous other groups, this structure facilitated organization and was flexible. During the planning of the conference several severe problems arose in Illinois that had nothing directly to do with the conference but impacted the operational climate. Those include the illness/injury of the Executive Director of NAA, and the Director of the NAA, staff changes in the IDNR and NAA and a severe budget crisis for the State of Illinois. The flexibility of the Incident Command System facilitated a successful conference.

B. Participation

Five hundred sixty-five persons participated in the natural areas conference including all categories. This included 21 complementary registrations given to contributors (14) and lead conference workers (7). Daily registrations made up 222 of those registrations. This is considerably less than hoped however did meet conference objective of more than 500 participants. Volunteers did not attend the conference in numbers hoped. This is likely due to the expense. Volunteers are not likely to be able to afford to go to the entire conference since it would require being away from their own occupations. Daily costs seemed to be too high for volunteers. In the future, it might be a good idea to provide a volunteer rate similar to the student rate for those individuals who can get an agency or not for profit to certify they are volunteers. Another factor may be the state of the economy. Chicago is an expensive venue, that may have been too expensive for many governmental agencies that have recently been cutting back travel budgets.

C. Financial

In spite of the low turnout the conference was a financial success meeting revenue goals. Registration revenue was at 60 % of budget, however non- registration including current levels fund raising was at 101% of budget. If you add the outstanding balance of $25,000 of pledges and grants not yet received then the non-registration income was at 138% of budget. Costs were successfully contained by conference staff. Total conference costs were 69% of budgeted. Fixed costs (those not impacted by the number of people) were at 84% of budget. Cost per paid registration was $270/person as compared to budgeted cost $356/ person. The average registration paid per person was $159 (this includes daily registrations) as compared to $240 in the budget. This left a gap of $111/ person ($116/person in the budget) to be met by non-registration income. The non-registration income per paid person was $131. The conference has netted the Natural Areas Association $10,692 as of today. These is an outstanding balance of $25,000 from donors.

Ultimately the conference will net $35,692 in funds for Association programs.

2004 Natural Areas Conference

Chicago, Illinois

Statement of Expense and cost.

	EXPENSES	rate/detail	Bugeted Amount	Actual Amount	Vendor	SubVendor		Uof I Charges/Income	NAA Charges/Income	Holiday Inn	
	PRINTING/GRAPHICS/PHOTOCOPYING										
5000	Call for papers pre conf ann+ - printing		$ 730	$ 979.57	U of I	C&I		$ 979.57	$ 0	0	0
3500	Registration packet - printing		$ 800	$ 869.00	U of I	C&I		$ 869.00	$ 0	0	0
1,000	Conference program - printing		$ 2,500	$ 1,906	U of I	C&I		$ 1,906.30	$ 0	0	0
1	program layout/design		$ 0					$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
1	Conference final program - design		$ 600		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
20	Abstract book photocopying		$ 100		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
1000	Name badge inserts (printed)		$ 70					$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
1000	Evaluation forms (printing and layout)		$ 40	$ 4.50	U of I	C&I		$ 4.50	$ 0	0	0
25	Signs, posters		$ 250	$ 615.00	U of I	Capitol Blueprint		$ 615.00	$ 0	0	0
10	Participant lists (+ electronic)		$ 0	$ 39.10	U of I	C&I		$ 39.10	$ 0	0	0
	Misc. registration materials	Mayors Letter and other	$ 0	$ 11.84	U of I	C&I		$ 11.84	$ 0	0	0
	Misc. photocopying		$ 50	$ 20.80	U of I	C&I		$ 20.80	$ 0	0	0
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 5,140**	**$ 4,446**							
	MAILING										
5000	Call for papers postage/mailing	566.02, 539.33	$ 800	$ 1,105.35	U of I	C&I		$ 1,105.35	$ 0	0	0
800	Reg. confirmation cards postage/mailing		$ 80		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
3500	Registration packet - postage	$0.30	$ 1,400		USEPA			$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
	Shipping		$ 100	$ 61.02	U of I	C&I		$ 61.02	$ 0	0	0
	Post-conference mailings		$ 100		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 2,480**	**$ 1,166**							
	AUDIO VISUAL										
18	35mm projector with remote	$47	$ 1,210	$ 1,658.86	U of I	Holiday Inn	1658.86	$ 1,658.86	$ 0	1658.86	0
19	Easel	$9	$ 0	$ 2,614.74	U of I	Holiday Inn	2614.74	$ 2,614.74	$ 0	2614.74	0
5	35mm Ballroom	$94	$ 0	$ 0.00	U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
3	Powerpoint projector - large	$336	$ 1,275	$ 2,695.65	U of I	Holiday Inn	2695.65	$ 2,695.65	$ 0	2695.65	0
20	AV Electrical service Fee for Ow	$26	$ 1,000								
18	screens	$43	$ 950								
5	big screens (9x12')	$166	$ 250								
22	AV cart and cables	$20	$ 440								
5	Lavalier microphones	$128	$ 600								
	Conference Internet connection	$10		$ 9.95	U of I	Holiday Inn		$ 9.95	$ 0	9.95	
16	large sound system	$100.00	$ 900								
19	Podium with Microphone	$25.50	$ 1,600								
	Service Charge		$ 0								
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 8,225**	**$ 6,979**							
	MEETING ROOM RENTAL/FEES										
	equipment and linen rental		$ 1,837	$ 1,837.00	U of I	Shedd Aquarium		$ 1,837.00	$ 0	0	1837
	Hotel Room Rental		$ 0	$ 4,120.00	U of I	Holiday Inn	4120	$ 4,120.00	$ 0	4120	0
	Hotel Bartender/cashier fees		$ 0	$ 720.00	U of I	Holiday Inn	720	$ 720.00	$ 0	720	0
	cash bar attendance		$ 240	$ 240.00	U of I	Shedd Aquarium		$ 240.00	$ 0	0	240
	aquarium event staffing & operation		$ 3,500	$ 3,500	U of I	Shedd Aquarium		$ 3,500.00	$ 0	0	3500
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 5,577**	**$ 10,417**							
	TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIP										
20	Conference field trips		$ 10,000								
	Buses			$ 9,113.50	U of I	Coach		$ 9,113.50	$ 0	0	0
	Metra			$ 445.70	U of I	Metra		$ 445.70	$ 0	0	0

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	Canoes			$ 400.00	U of I	outfitter		$ 400.00	$ 0	0	0
	Other Field Trip			$ 147.00	U of I	Frank Llyod Wright		$ 147.00	$ 0	0	0
	social/mixer transport			$ 1,382.84	U of I	School Bus		$ 1,382.84	$ 0	0	0
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 10,000**	**$ 11,489**							
DISPLAY/POSTER RENTAL											
20	Poster boards - 4 days	$65									
18	Skirted tables - 4 days	$22		$ 3,010.00	U of I	Contractor		$ 3,010.00	$ 0	0	0
18	3' pipe & drape - 4 days	$20									
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 4,000**	**$ 3,010**							
FOOD AND BEVERAGE											
	Spring Board Meeting			$ 373.46	U of I	Holiday Inn		$ 373.46	$ 0	373.46	
600	Wed pm Break	$10	$ 6,000	$ 3,570.00	U of I	Holiday Inn	3570	$ 3,570.00	$ 0	3570	0
600	Wed pm Social/Mixer	$15	$ 9,000	$ 4,765.95	U of I	Holiday Inn	4765.95	$ 4,765.95	$ 0	4765.95	0
600	Thurs am Break	$10	$ 6,000	$ 4,165.00	U of I	Holiday Inn	4165	$ 4,165.00	$ 0	4165	0
600	Thurs pm Break	$10	$ 6,000	$ 4,165.00	U of I	Holiday Inn	4165	$ 4,165.00	$ 0	4165	0
600	Thurs poster session art show	$15	$ 9,000	$ 5,465.08	U of I	Holiday Inn	5465.08	$ 5,465.08	$ 0	5465.08	0
600	Fri Box lunch	$11	$ 6,600	$ 4,254.25	U of I	Holiday Inn	4254.25	$ 4,254.25	$ 0	4254.25	0
600	Fri Banquet	$54	$ 32,400	$ 21,600.00	U of I	Shedd Aquarium		$ 21,600.00	$ 0	0	21600
600	Sat am Break	$10	$ 6,000		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0	0	0
600	Sat pm Break	$10	$ 6,000	$ 7,140.00	U of I	Holiday Inn	7140	$ 7,140.00	$ 0.00	7140	0
600	banquet beverage	$2	$ 1,200	$ 284.00	U of I	Shedd Aquarium		$ 284.00	$ 0.00	0	284
	gratuity @19%		$ 17,400		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0.00	0	0
	tax										
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 105,600**	**$ 55,783**							
TRAVEL, PER DIEM, LODGING & FEES											
1	SPEAKERS - Keynote travel		$ 100	$ 52.03	U of I	Freyfogel		$ 52.03	$ 0.00	0	0
1	SPEAKERS - Keynote lodging		$ 400	$ 0.00						0	0
1	SPEAKERS -Plenary Travel	$70	$ 1,500	$ 20.00	U of I	Johannsen		$ 20.00	$ 0.00	0	0
3	Artspree Parking		$ 0		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0.00	0	0
3	SPEAKERS - Plenary lodging		$ 750	$ 137.24	U of I	Holiday Inn		$ 137.24	$ 0.00	137.24	0
	Registrar Travel									0	0
		Brownfield	$ 0	$ 318.48	U of I	Mixed		$ 318.48	$ 0.00	250.48	0
		Horsch	$ 0	$ 743.96	U of I	Mixed		$ 743.96	$ 0.00	592.98	0
		Peters	$ 0	$ 371.48	U of I	Mixed		$ 371.48	$ 0.00	296.48	0
		Miller	$ 0	$ 69.00	U of I	Miller		$ 69.00	$ 0.00	0	0
		Carpool Charge	$ 0	$ 407.08	U of I	Carpool		$ 407.08	$ 0.00	0	0
1	NAA EXEC DIR - travel		$ 500	$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00	0	0
1	NAA EXEC DIR - lodging		$ 750	$ 750.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 750.00	0	0
1	Fell award - travel		$ 500	$ 451.20	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 451.20	0	0
1	Fell award - lodging - 2 nights		$ 315	$ 718.20	U of I	Holiday Inn		$ 718.20	$ 0.00	718.2	0
1	Fell award - banquet fee	$30	$ 0	$ 0.00						0	0
1	Fell award - conference registrat	$185	$ 0	$ 0.00						0	0
2	Stewardship awards - travel	$225	$ 450	$ 550.00						0	0
2	Stewardship awards - lodging	$100	$ 630	$ 876.69	Mixed	Holiday Inn		375.72	500.97	375.72	0
2	Stewardship awards - X 2 spous	$30	$ 0	$ 110.00						0	0
2	Stewardship awards - conferenc	$185	$ 0	$ 705.00						0	0
	International Guest Travel		$ 4,500							0	0
	Camilo Nhancale	$630	$ 0	$ 630.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 630.00	0	0
	Tierck Hoekstra	$600	$ 0	$ 600.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 600.00	0	0
	N.P.S. Chauhan		$ 0	$ 915.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 915.00	0	0
	Denise Marcal Rambaldi		$ 0	$ 600.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 600.00	0	0
	International Guest Lodging									0	0
	N. P. S. Chauhan		$ 0	$ 225	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 225.24	0	0
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 10,395**	**$ 9,751**							
REGISTRATION MATERIALS / FEES											
600	Registrar fee ($15,000 for first 5(	$16.50	$ 16,000	$ 15,000.00	U of I	C&I		$ 15,000.00	$ 0.00	0	0
800	Envelope/folder for materials		$ 1,420	$ 1,479.10	U of I	American T-Shirt		$ 1,479.10	$ 0.00	0	0

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600	Name badge (with insert), ribbons		$ 500	$ 496.50	U of I	C&I		$ 496.50	$ 0.00	0	0
	Velcro, pushpins, stamp, duck (aka "duct") tape		$ 50	$ 123.55	U of I	C&I		$ 123.55	$ 0.00	0	0
	Misc. sign printing		$ 100	$ 0.00						0	0
1	web charges		$ 150	$ 224.10	U of I	C&I		$ 224.10	$ 0.00	0	0
1	overtime for U of I staff& Packet Assembly		$ 0	$ 2,298.50	U of I	C&I		$ 2,298.50	$ 0.00	0	0
400	VISA charges @4%		$ 3,200	$ 2,307.17	U of I	C&I		$ 2,307.17	$ 0.00	0	0
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 21,420**	**$ 21,929**							
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES											
70	Memberships		$ 0	$ 2,190.00	naa			$ 0.00	$ 2,190.00	0	0
25	Complimentary registrations - sp	$185	$ 0		U of I			$ 0.00	$ 0.00	0	0
200	conference T-shirts - design & production		$ 1,064	$ 1,065.00	U of I	American T-Shirt		$ 1,065.00	$ 0.00	0	0
	Misc. office supplies		$ 50	$ 0.00						0	0
	Student paper awards		$ 150	$ 50.72	U of I	Wilker		$ 50.72	$ 0.00	0	0
	Executive Director Salary/benefits		$ 0	$ 7,000.00	naa			$ 0.00	$ 7,000.00	0	0
	Raffle/Silent Auction items		$ 500	$ 0	naa			$ 0.00	$ 0.00	0	0
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 1,764**	**$ 10,306**							
OTHER EXPENSES											
	Pre-Conference Field Trip		$ 3,990								
	TNC Catering			$ 348.36	U of I	TNC		$ 348.36	$ 0.00	0	0
	Hart reinburment			$ 293.96	U of I	Harty		$ 293.96	$ 0.00	0	0
	Harty Snacks			$ 163.48	U of I	Harty		$ 163.48	$ 0.00	0	0
	Holiday Inn Peoria			$ 1,258.34	U of I	Peoria Holiday Inn		$ 1,258.34	$ 0.00	0	0
	Fairfield Inn			$ 1,711.10	U of I	Fairfield Inn		$ 1,711.10	$ 0.00	0	0
	TNC Car Rental			$ 280.00	U of I	TNC		$ 280.00	$ 0.00	0	0
	Harty Supplies			$ 84.16	U of I	Harty		$ 84.16	$ 0.00	0	0
	TOTAL		**$ 3,990**	**$ 4,139**							
	EXPENSE SUBTOTAL		**$ 178,591**	**$ 127,926**							
	10 fixed % contingency		$ 7,299	na							
	EXPENSE TOTAL		**$ 185,890**	**$ 127,926**			45334.53	123687.69	14362.41	48089.04	27461
	Indirect	15.00%	$ 27,884	$ 19,189	naa			$ 0.00	19188.909		
	Conference Expense		**$ 213,774**	**$ 147,115**				**$ 123,688**	**$ 33,551**		
REVENUE											
	NON-REGISTRATION REVENUE										
	BLM*	$10,000.00	$ 0	$ 0.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 0.00		
	City Of Chicago	$8,520.00		$ 8,520.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 8,520.00		
	DuPage Co Dept of Dev & Envir Conce	$500.00		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	USDA Forest Service	$5,000.00		$ 5,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 5,000.00		
	USFWS	$2,500.00		$ 2,500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,500.00		
	USGS BRD	$5,000.00		$ 5,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 5,000.00		
	Chicago Wilderness*	$10,000.00		$ 0.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 0.00		
	IDNR Wildlife Preservation Fund*	$10,000.00		$ 5,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 5,000.00		
	American Fisheries Society	$100.00		$ 100.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 100.00		
	Il Chapter Wildlife Society	$500.00		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	Illinois Native Plant Society	$500.00		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	Illinois Audubon Society	$1,000.00		$ 1,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 1,000.00		
	Midewin National Tallgrass	$2,500.00		$ 2,500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,500.00		
	Professional Association of Conservati	$500.00		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	Save the Prairie Society	$100.00		$ 100.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 100.00		
	Springfield Audubon Society	$200.00		$ 200.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 200.00		
	The Nature Institute	$500.00		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	National Park Service	$6,000.00		$ 6,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 6,000.00		
	Western Illinois University	$1,000.00		$ 1,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 1,000.00		
	Lake County Forest Preserve District	$2,000.00		$ 2,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,000.00		
	Forest preserve Distirct of Will County	$1,000.00		$ 1,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 1,000.00		
	CECI	$250.00		$ 250.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 250.00		

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	Envir. Engin & Water Resources Grou	$300.00		$ 300.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 300.00		
	Il Section ASCE	$250.00		$ 250.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 250.00		
	Bollinger, Lach and Associates	$500.00		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	Christopher Burke & Associates	2000		$ 2,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,000.00		
	Cowhey Gudmundsen leder	40		$ 40.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 40.00		
	Hey & Associates	1000		$ 1,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 1,000.00		
	Land and Water Resourcers	500		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	The Nature Conservancy Illinois Chapt	2000		$ 2,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,000.00		
	Pulte Homes	2500		$ 2,500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,500.00		
	Space Co, Inc	500		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	McGinty Brothers	500		$ 500.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 500.00		
	J. F. New Plant Nursery	1000		$ 1,000.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 1,000.00		
	Budgeted Conference Donations		$ 51,000								
10	Exhibitor space rental	$ 350	$ 4,250	$ 1,000.00	U of I			$ 1,000.00	$ 0.00		
5	Non-profit Exhibitor space rental	$ 150	$ 0	$ 250.00	U of I			$ 250.00	$ 0.00		
19	Pre-Conference Field Trip Rever	$ 210	$ 3,990	$ 2,520.00	U of I			$ 2,520.00	$ 0.00		
	Pre Conf Field trip: International	"210*.8= 42		$ 126.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 126.00		
	Auction		$ 4,000	$ 4,733.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 4,733.00		
	Raffle		$ 1,500	$ 2,480.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,480.00		
	Other		$ 2,010	$ 3,345.00	U of I			$ 3,345.00	$ 0.00		
	Membership Fees (international)	2 years		$ 180.00	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 180.00		
200	T-shirts/membership/ other sales		$ 3,000	$ 2,738.75	NAA			$ 0.00	$ 2,738.75		
	SUBTOTAL		**$ 69,750**	**$ 71,133**				**$ 7,115**	**$ 64,018**		
	REGISTRATION REVENUE										
	Member Full	$ 235	$ 0	33370	U of I			$ 33,370.00	$ 0.00		
	New Member Full	$ 250	$ 0	11750	U of I			$ 11,750.00	$ 0.00		
	Non-member Full	$ 260	$ 0	12220	U of I			$ 12,220.00	$ 0.00		
	Student Full	$ 160	$ 0	2720	U of I			$ 2,720.00	$ 0.00		
	Member Full late	$ 260	$ 0	1040	U of I			$ 1,040.00	$ 0.00		
	New Member Full Late	$ 275	$ 0	1100	U of I			$ 1,100.00	$ 0.00		
	Non- Member Full Late	$ 285	$ 0	2850	U of I			$ 2,850.00	$ 0.00		
	Student Full Late	$ 195	$ 0	390	U of I			$ 390.00	$ 0.00		
	Daily	$ 80	$ 0	16640	U of I			$ 16,640.00	$ 0.00		
	Banquet	$ 55	$ 0	2585	U of I			$ 2,585.00	$ 0.00		
	Daily Late	$ 90	$ 0	990	U of I			$ 990.00	$ 0.00		
	Student Daily late	$ 75	$ 0	375	U of I			$ 375.00	$ 0.00		
	Banquet Late	$ 65	$ 0	65	U of I			$ 65.00	$ 0.00		
	Conference Field trips	$ 20	$ 0	580	U of I			$ 580.00	$ 0.00		
	~~Full~~ conference registrants Tuesday	$ 235	$ 144,000	86675	U of I			$ 86,675.00	$ 0.00		
	TOTALCONFERENCE REVENUE		**$ 213,750**	**$ 157,808**				**$ 93,790**	**$ 64,018**		
	Net Conference Revenue (Loss)		**$ (23.61)**	**$ 10,692.78**				**$ (29,897.69)**	**$ 30,466.43**		

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

October 13, 2004

GREETINGS

As Mayor and on behalf of the City of Chicago, I extend warmest greetings to all those attending the 31st Natural Areas Association (NAA) Conference.

Since 1980, the NAA has been committed to the advancement and preservation of natural diversity. Through presentations, symposia, workshops, field trips and social events, the NAA works to inform, unite and support persons engaged in preservation. At this years conference, a special emphasis will be placed upon exploring ideas of how to sustain natural areas in our ever changing landscapes. I commend the Natural Areas Association for its commitment to the preservation of our environment.

While you are in Chicago, I hope you will take time to discover all that makes our city an exciting place for preservation. Right now, we are drafting a plan that will help improve conditions for nature and wildlife throughout the city, a plan that includes new parks and open space to better accommodate the over seven million birds that migrate through Chicago each year. In addition, our new Millennium Park's Lurie Garden highlights many of the plants and flowers native to our area.

Best wishes for a successful and enjoyable event.

Sincerely,

Richard M Daley

Mayor