# ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
# TWO HUNDRED THIRTEENTH MEETING

Rochester Public Library
1 Community Drive
Rochester, IL 62563

January 29, 2013 10:00 a.m.

*Documentary Material Enclosed

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

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3:* Approval of the 212th Meeting Minutes, September 11, 2012

Item 4: 2013 Meeting Schedule

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| May 7, 2013 | Greenbelt Cultural Center, North Chicago |
| September 10, 2013 | Giant City State Park Lodge, Makanda |

Item 5: INPC Staff Report

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

Item 6: IDNR Staff Report

REPORT
Don McFall
Department of Natural Resources

Item 7: Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

REPORT
Anne Mankowski
Endangered Species Protection Board

Item 8:* DuPage Co. – Belleau Woods Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) seeks to register 122 acres of the 123-acre Belleau Woods Forest Preserve as Belleau Woods Land and Water Reserve. This site consists largely of a grade C/D mesic upland forest dominated by oaks (*Quercus* spp.) and an old field cultural community that is being restored to a floodplain forest. Belleau Woods qualifies as a land and water reserve because the forested communities at this site exceed the minimum threshold of at least 100 acres and supports breeding populations of area sensitive forest birds. In addition, these forested communities support an array of native plants (309 native species), 72 nonvascular plant species, and 50 bird species. Of the bird species recorded within the last 10 years, the blue-winged

warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) are considered species in greatest need of conservation. There are also seven species considered either highly or moderately sensitive to forest fragmentation; including the blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*), hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), hooded warbler (*Setophaga citrine*), red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), scarlet tanager (*Piranga olivacea*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), and wood thrush, have been recorded from the site as summer residents during the last two years. The site is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central DuPage County. The site has undergone management and habitat restoration by the FPDDC since 1995, with an emphasis on removal of invasive woody species, reintroduction of appropriate species via seeding, and control of invasive species. Protection and stewardship of Belleau Woods as a land and water reserve supports several action steps identified in the Forest Campaign section of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) and provides habitat for four birds (with observations less than 10 years ago) identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Erik Neidy | Registration Approval |
| Forest Preserve District of DuPage County | |

Item 9:* <u>DuPage Co. – Springbrook Marsh Land and Water Reserve, Registration</u>

The FPDDC seeks to register 52 acres of the Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve as Springbrook Marsh Land and Water Reserve. This site consists largely of restored prairies and wetlands and lies adjacent to the 1616-acre Springbrook Prairie that received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 212th Meeting in September 2012 (Resolution 2200). Springbrook Marsh qualifies as a land and water reserve because the site lies embedded within the boundary of the Springbrook Prairie Category II INAI site (#1516). The site is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central DuPage County. At least three state-endangered bird species have been recorded from the proposed land and water reserve which include the black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), and northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). The site has undergone aggressive habitat restoration by the FPDDC since 1978, with an emphasis on restoring the surface hydrology, reintroduction of appropriate seed, controlled burning, and control of invasive species. Protection and stewardship of the proposed Springbrook Marsh Land and Water Reserve supports several action steps identified in the Farmland and Prairie and Wetlands Campaign sections of the IWAP and provides habitat for 17 birds and one mammal identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Erik Neidy | Registration Approval |
| Forest Preserve District of DuPage County | |

Item 10:* <u>Marion Co. – Loy Prairie Land and Water Reserve, Registration</u>

The Illinois Audubon Society (IAS) seeks approval for registration of 215.95 acres as the Loy Prairie Land and Water Reserve. The site, located in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division, was purchased by the IAS on December 20, 2010 with funding assistance provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and the Grand Victoria Foundation. Restoration of the site was initiated the following spring. The proposed land and water reserve consists of two tracts. Tract 1 contains 191.65 acres of managed grasslands consisting of non-native

cool-season grasses and native warm-season grasses, 11.9 acres of grade D mesic floodplain forest, two ponds totaling 3.9 acres, 4.9 acres of grade D dry-mesic upland forest, 1.7 acres of developed land and is an introduction site for the state-endangered royal catchfly (*Silene regia*). Tract 2 is 1.62 acres of managed grassland consisting of a fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) field with a few native forbs and a black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) thicket. Additionally, over 100 bird species including 15 listed as in greatest need of conservation in the IWAP have been observed on the proposed land and water reserve. Registration of Loy Prairie will support the IWAP through the Prairie and Farmland and Land and Water Stewardship Campaigns.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Bob Edgin | Registration Approval |
| Nature Preserves Commission | |

Item 11:* Kankakee Co. – Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna Nature Preserve, Dedication

Mr. Willie Spraggins owns 11 acres of the Leesville Savanna INAI site (#1006) and wishes to dedicate five acres as Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna Nature Preserve, in honor of his late mother. Leesville Savanna is recognized on the INAI for its high-quality dry and dry-mesic sand savanna, sand flatwoods, and the presence of 13 state-listed species. The proposed Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna Nature Preserve is known to provide habitat for at least two state-endangered species: yellow wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*) and primrose violet (*Viola primulifolia*). This sites lies within the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division and within the Kankakee Sands, a Conservation Opportunity Area, identified by the IWAP. The proposed five-acre nature preserve provides habitat for at least two wildlife species in greatest need of conservation, including northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) and red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*). Its location, immediately adjacent to Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve, makes this five-acre nature preserve a critical tract in the Illinois Nature Preserves system. The proposed Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna Nature Preserve shares many of the same natural features of the surrounding Leesville Savanna INAI site and is a key conservation holding which provides contiguity of protected habitat on the landscape.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Kim Roman | Preliminary Approval for Dedication |
| Nature Preserves Commission | |

Item 12:* Lake Co. – Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) seeks to dedicate 1092.45 acres of the 1238.7-acre Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve as Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is a mosaic of natural communities (grade C/D freshwater marsh, grade C/D dry-mesic upland forest, grade C/D dry-mesic savanna, and a medium-gradient stream) interspersed with formerly agricultural lands undergoing habitat restoration. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in north-central Lake County. The proposed nature preserve supports populations of seven state-endangered bird species, including the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), king rail (*Rallus elegans*), yellow-headed black bird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*); and three state-threatened species including the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), and Iowa darter (*Etheostoma exile*). The proposed nature preserve also supports one state-endangered plant, the small yellow sedge (*Carex cryptolepis*). The site has undergone

habitat restoration by the LCFPD since 1995, with an emphasis on restoring the surface hydrology, reintroduction of appropriate seed, controlled burning, and control of invasive species. Protection and stewardship of Rollins Savanna supports several action steps identified in the Farmland and Prairie, Wetlands, and Forest Campaign sections of the IWAP and provides habitat for 30 birds, two mammals, one amphibian, and four fish described in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. The site also lies within the Lake-McHenry Wetland Complex Conservation Opportunity Area identified in the IWAP. At least seven sites of archeological interest occur within the proposed Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve. The LCFPD has requested approval for use of motorized vehicles (snowmobiles and regional snowmobile trail) in a portion of the proposed Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve which is outlined in the dedication proposal.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Steven Byers | Preliminary Approval for Dedication |
| Nature Preserves Commission | |

Item 13:* Lake Co. – Buffer Additions to Skokie River Nature Preserve, Dedication

Carol Fraser and Lake Forest Open Lands Association (LFOLA) are seeking preliminary approval for dedication of all or portions of six lots totaling 6.42 acres as buffer additions to Skokie River Nature Preserve. Carol Fraser is seeking approval for dedication of a portion of one lot totaling 1.365 acres, while LFOLA is seeking approval for dedication of all or portions of five lots totaling 5.04 acres. These lots lie adjacent to, or are a necessary adjunct, to the Nature Preserve and help maintain its current open space character. Skokie River Nature Preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Lake County and encompasses McLaughlin Prairie and Shaw Prairie (two high-quality mesic prairies). The INAI now recognizes both prairies and eight separate additions to Skokie River Nature Preserve as the Skokie River INAI site (#0658). The proposed buffer additions consist primarily of cultural old-field communities and small managed grassland. The initial proposal for dedication of Skokie River Nature Preserve recognized the nature preserve's patchwork design and recommended "...dedication of adjacent lands as buffer...(and) natural community restoration." The proposed buffer additions are consistent with that recommendation, the precedent established for dedication of buffer additions to this site, and the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act as it pertains to buffers. Protection of these buffer additions will also maintain the current open space character of bordering lands and further protect the Nature Preserve from alterations in surface hydrology. The proposed buffer additions would increase the size of Skokie River Nature Preserve from 134.4 to 140.82 acres.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Steven Byers | Preliminary Approval for Dedication |
| Nature Preserves Commission | |

Item 14:* Lake Co. – Sun Lake Nature Preserve, Dedication

The LCFPD seeks to dedicate 514.8 acres of Sun Lake Forest Preserve as Sun Lake Nature Preserve. This site includes the entire Sun Lake INAI site (#1248) and includes grade C/D freshwater marsh, grade C/D calcareous floating mat, grade C/D dry-mesic upland forest, open water associated with Sun Lake, and extensive habitat restoration of agricultural lands. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in north-central Lake County. Fifteen state-listed species have been recorded from the proposed Sun Lake Nature Preserve and include ten species of wildlife and five species of plants. Of these, five species have been reported in the IDNR (2012) Natural Heritage Database and ten species have been reported by staff

of the LCFPD. The state-endangered wildlife species include the king rail (*Rallus elegans*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), Forster's tern (*Sterna forsteri*), a reptile, fern pondweed (*Potamogeton robbinssii*), spotted pondweed (*Potamogeton pulcher*), bog-panicled sedge (*Carex diandra*), and northern gooseberry (*Ribes hirtellum*). The state-threatened species include the least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erhthropthalmus*), starhead topminnow (*Fundulus dispar*), and grass-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*). For five of these species, the element occurrences or observations date back over ten years and additional surveys are warranted to determine their current status. It is not likely that the Forster's tern currently nests at the site. The site has undergone habitat restoration by the LCFPD since 2004, with an emphasis on restoring the surface hydrology, reintroduction of appropriate seed, controlled burning, and control of invasive species. Protection and stewardship of Sun Lake supports several action steps identified in the Farmland and Prairie, Wetlands, and Forest Campaign sections of the IWAP and provides habitat for 14 birds, one mammal, one amphibian, and one reptile described in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. The site also lies within the Lake-McHenry Wetland Complex Conservation Opportunity Area identified in the IWAP. There are also three archeological sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places within the proposed Sun Lake Nature Preserve.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Jim Anderson | Preliminary Approval for Dedication |
| Lake County Forest Preserve District | |

Item 15:* <u>DuPage Co. – Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication</u>

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) seeks final approval for dedication of 1616 acres of Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve as the Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve lies within the boundary of the Springbrook Prairie INAI site (#1516) and consists largely of restored prairies and wetlands. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central DuPage County. This INAI site has been recognized as a Category II site because of the presence of endangered or threatened species that include the state-endangered northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), and black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), and state-threatened least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*). FPDDC staff has also documented the presence of 12 additional state-listed bird species that include the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), king rail (*Rallus elegans*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Mississippi kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*), cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulean*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), and yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus anthocephalus*). Suitable breeding habitat (primarily wetlands and grasslands) exists for nearly all these species, except for the cerulean warbler, and should be considered either confirmed or potential breeding birds at this site. FPDDC staff has also documented the presence of three state-listed plant species that are considered introduced to the site and include the hairy umbrellawort (*Mirabilis hirsuta*), red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*). The state-threatened slippershell (*Alasmidonta viridis*) (dead individual) and the state-threatened regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) have been recorded from the site by FPDDC staff. Protection of this large mosaic of restored wetlands and grassland at the proposed Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve is consistent with several elements of the wetland and grassland campaigns in the IWAP and provides critical habitat for 63 species of wildlife (46 birds, two fish, two mammals, one butterfly, and three insects) identified in the IWAP as

species in greatest need of conservation. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 212th Meeting in September, 2012 (Resolution 2200).

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Erik Neidy | Final Approval for Dedication |
| Forest Preserve District of DuPage County | |

Item 16:* Lake Co. – Sarah and Robert Allgyer Prairie Buffer Addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve, Dedication

Sarah and Robert Allgyer seek final approval for dedication of 0.74 acres as a buffer addition to the 134.4-acre Skokie River Nature Preserve. Skokie River Nature Preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Lake County. Skokie River Nature Preserve encompasses McLaughlin Prairie and Shaw Prairie, two high-quality mesic prairies recognized by the INAI (#0658). The proposed buffer addition consists primarily of grade C/D mesic prairie and a cultural community. To date, 72 plant species have been reported from the proposed buffer addition. The initial proposal for dedication of Skokie River Nature Preserve recognized the Nature Preserve's patchwork design and recommended "...dedication of adjacent lands as buffer...(and) natural community restoration". The proposed buffer addition is consistent with that recommendation, lies adjacent to the Skokie River Nature Preserve, and may lead to additional opportunities to formally protect and manage additional privately-owned lands located along the border of the Nature Preserve. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 207th Meeting in February, 2011 (Resolution 2120).

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Steven Byers | Final Approval for Dedication |
| Nature Preserves Commission | |

Item 17:* Lake Co. – William G. Wells Buffer Addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Dedication

Conserve Lake County (formerly Liberty Prairie Conservancy) seeks final approval for dedication of the 8.15-acre William G. Wells buffer addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve. The Commission granted preliminary approval for dedication of this site and the Pleasant Hill Wetland buffer addition at its 212th Meeting in September 2012 (Resolution 2201); however, the Pleasant Hill Wetland buffer addition is not being presented at this time. Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve and the William G. Wells buffer addition are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in east-central Lake County. The proposed buffer addition lies within the boundary of the Oak Grove Botanical Area INAI site (#0654). This Category II INAI site has a relatively large and stable population of a state-endangered and federally listed plant species. The proposed buffer addition includes grade C/D sedge meadow and grade C/D wet-mesic and mesic prairie. The prairies at this site are ranked first (or highest tier) for conservation in the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan and the wetlands have been included on the Advanced Identification (ADID) for Lake County in recognition of their high biological and functional value. Protection of the proposed William G. Wells buffer addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve is consistent with recommendations of the "*North Branch of the Chicago River Open Space (Green Infrastructure) Plan*," with elements of the IWAP, and will increase the size of Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve from 92.76 to 100.91 acres.

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 18:* Lee and Ogle Co. – Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) seeks final approval for dedication of approximately 987.76 acres of land to be known as Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve. At nearly 1,000-acres, the proposed nature preserve represents the "core area" of a much larger functionally restored prairie ecosystem that is managed by TNC and its volunteers. This larger area currently encompasses more than 3,000 acres of restored prairies, oak savannas, woodlands, and wetlands. Together, these lands represent one of the largest prairie landscapes in Illinois. The area proposed for dedication lies within the Nachusa Grasslands INAI site (#0685) which encompasses over 5,000 acres of natural communities and agricultural lands and is located within the Oregon Section of the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division. This INAI site is recognized for its numerous high-quality relict natural communities, extensive grassland habitat, and suitable habitat for several state-listed plants and animals. The proposed Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve contains a rich diversity of plant species found in several restored high-quality relict natural communities and outstanding examples of re-created prairie natural communities. A unique component of this dedication proposal is the planned reintroduction of a bison herd as part of the management plan for the nature preserve. TNC's management of remnant and restored prairies and savannas at Nachusa Grasslands most directly advances the farmland, prairie, wetland, and forests campaigns of the IWAP, including reintroducing prescribed fire as a natural process, controlling invasive species, and restoring and managing high-quality natural communities. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 212th Meeting in September, 2012 (Resolution 2202).

REPORT
John Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 19:* McHenry Co. – Slough Creek Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication

The McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) seeks final approval for dedication of 75.7 acres of Slough Creek Fen as an Illinois nature preserve. Slough Creek Fen received preliminary approval for dedication in two separate actions by the Commission. In September 2011, at its 209th Meeting, the Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication of 40.5 acres of Slough Creek Fen as an Illinois nature preserve (Resolution 2155). Subsequent to that action, the MCCD sought to expand the boundary of the nature preserve to include important groundwater recharge zones and to amend the boundary slightly. In September 2012, at its 212th Meeting, the Commission granted preliminary approval for dedication of an addition of 34.5 acres to the proposed Slough Creek Fen Nature Preserve (Resolution 2203). The MCCD has now combined the legal description to include both parcels of land. Slough Creek Fen is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in central McHenry County. The proposed nature preserve encompasses most of the Standlee Fen INAI site (INAI # 1614) and consists of grade B calcareous floating mat, grade B shrub fen, grade C mesic savanna, grade C/D sedge meadow, a grade C/D low-gradient small stream, and a cultural community (managed grassland). To date, 226 plant species have been recorded from the proposed nature preserve including a federally-listed plant species. Protection and stewardship of the proposed nature preserve supports two of the IWAP Campaigns that include "... to improve the condition of existing and artificial wetlands" and to promote "...ecological connectivity among forests and other habitat patches." Slough Creek Fen is also

located within the Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex Conservation Opportunity Area and MCCD's Queen Anne Macrosite. This proposal reserves the right for the MCCD to conduct a master planning process to determine appropriate public access and recreation opportunities in accordance with INPC guidelines.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Steven Byers<br>Nature Preserves Commission | Final Approval for Dedication |

Item 20:* Saline Co. – Pruett Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

Joseph P. and Norma L. Hart seek final approval for dedication of 17.08 acres as Pruett Woods Nature Preserve. Pruett Woods is located 2.6 miles east of Harrisburg in the Bottomlands Section of the Wabash Border Natural Division. This site is identified as Hart Woods INAI site (#0103), a grade B forest, and is one of only two remaining examples of wet-mesic floodplain forest included on the INAI in the Wabash Border Natural Division. Sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), and pin oak (*Q. paulstris*) are the predominant canopy species with several trees of these species exceeding 30 inches in diameter. Less common canopy trees are hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), and shumard oak (*Q. shumardii*). This site has been enrolled in the Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark program as Pruett Woods since January 31, 2002. The IWAP would be supported by this dedication through the forest campaign. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 212th Meeting in September, 2012 (Resolution 2204).

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Bob Edgin<br>Nature Preserves Commission | Final Approval for Dedication |

Item 21:* Lake Co. – Proposal for Meso-Predator Control at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve

The LCFPD seeks approval to control meso-predators at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve as part of a two-year study funded through the Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) Great Lakes Restoration Project. Experimental control of meso-predators (primarily raccoons [*Procyon lotor*]) will be conducted in an effort to determine the efficacy of such management in increasing the recruitment and overall population viability of a state-endangered reptile. At Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, and the adjacent Chiwaukee Prairie and Illinois Beach State Park, population modeling has indicated that the population is in decline due to low juvenile recruitment combined with unsustainable levels of adult mortality. Recruitment at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve is suppressed by high levels of predation of both nests and hatchlings. Since monitoring the population in 2006 began, 92.3% of documented and unprotected reptile nests (12 of 13) have been at least partially depredated. Many conservation efforts have included head-starting programs as a technique to improve recruitment (currently implemented by the LCFPD). However, head-starting programs are time consuming and expensive with the efficacy on long-term population viability largely unknown. A more effective, efficient and non-intrusive means of increasing nest success, hatchling survivorship and achieving population viability may be to reduce populations of meso-predators in areas where reptiles occur. In a similar study, predation rates on reptile nests dropped high of 95% prior to removal down to 9.4% after management (Engeman et al, 2005). The results of the study will be evaluated to determine if continued meso-predator control in the future is warranted to secure one of the largest populations of this state-endangered reptile in the state.

REPORT
Gary Glowacki
Lake County Forest Preserve District
Kelly Neal
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of Meso-Predator Control

Item 22:* Lake Co. – Proposal for an Outdoor Educational Area at Volo Bog State Natural Area and Volo Bog Nature Preserve

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), landowner of Volo Bog Nature Preserve, proposes to establish an outdoor education area to be known as Chipmunk Woods which would utilize less than one acre of the dedicated Nature Preserve to afford young children an opportunity to interact with their natural environment through exploration, discovery, native plantings, and ecological restoration. The 186-acre Nature Preserve is recognized on the INAI (#1005) and protects Illinois' only remaining open-water quaking bog exhibiting all stages of classic bog succession supporting 21 threatened or endangered species. The outdoor education area is proposed for a degraded upland area located a short distance from Volo Bog State Natural Area Visitor Center and functionally serves as buffer to the high-quality wetland natural communities. The near proximity to the Visitor Center will allow careful monitoring of the educational activities, as well as provide an ideal setting for training restoration volunteers. Some activities considered for Chipmunk Woods include turning over logs and rocks; catching and releasing worms, millipedes, and other small animals; building a fort; balancing on logs; becoming buried in leaves; or doing leaf rubbings. The area proposed for unstructured play will be clearly demarcated from the rest of the Nature Preserve. No impact will occur to the natural features for which the site was dedicated. No alternative upland area is suitable for the proposed outdoor classroom due to the distance from the Visitor Center. Volo Bog State Natural Area is well known regionally for its innovative environmental education programs. Current research supports that active involvement with nature nourishes a child's physical, social, and emotional development. This proposal supports a national effort to reintroduce the natural world in an interactive way to a generation disconnected from the intrinsic value of protecting and stewarding natural areas.

REPORT
Stacy Iwanicki
Department of Natural Resources
Jenny Skufca
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of an Outdoor Educational Area

Item 23:* Administrative Rule Establishing Fees to Recover the Cost of the Natural Heritage Data Base

Changes to the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act precipitated by the approval of the IDNR sustainability legislation (P. A. 97-1136 formerly known as Senate Bill 1566) require that the Commission establish fees, by rule, to recover the actual cost of collecting, storing, managing, compiling, and providing access to natural heritage data including inventories, registers, and records compiled and maintained on behalf of the Commission. Staff of the IDNR's Division of Natural Heritage and IDNR Legal Counsel Office, in cooperation with Commission staff, have prepared a draft rule for Commission consideration. This new Part (17 IL Admin Code 4020) is being promulgated pursuant to the revision of Section 6.01 of the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (525 ILCS 30/6.01). This Part defines the inventories, registers and records of nature preserves, other natural areas and features, and species of plants and animals and their habitats maintained on behalf of the INPC, develops procedural and fee framework for providing this data to potential users, and

sets the initial fee rates. The Commission is further charged to review these fees and procedures every five years to determine if the fees and procedures generate enough revenue to recover the costs of maintaining the database and then revise the rule accordingly. Once approved by the Commission and the Director of the IDNR, this rule will be submitted to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules for publication, public review, and final approval.

| REPORT | ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED |
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| Tara Kieninger<br>Department of Natural Resources<br>Randy Heidorn<br>Nature Preserves Commission | Approval of Administrative Rule |

Item 24: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 25: Other Business

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

Item 26: Adjournment