

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

Minutes of the 220th Meeting
 (Subject to approval at the 221st Meeting)

Illinois Beach State Park, North Point Marina
 Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club
 701 North Point Road
 Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

220-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

At 9:08 a.m. Commissioner Thomas called the meeting to order and Director Heidorn read roll call.

Commissioners present: George Covington, Donnie Dann, Abigail Derby-Lewis, William McClain, Jo-Elle Mogerman, Charles Ruffner and David Thomas.

Commissioners absent: Pen Daubach and Deborah Stone

Consultants to the Commission present: Valerie Spale, Joe Roth

Others present: Randy Heidorn, Marni English, Kelly Neal, Valerie Njapa, Tom Lerczak, John Nelson, Will Overbeck, Debbie Newman, Eric Wright, Steven Byers, Angella Moorehouse, Brooke Bryant, Samantha McCarrel, Kim Roman, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Staff; Maggie Cole, John Wilker, Dawn Cobb, Hal Hassen, Alex Faulkner, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Drew Ullberg, Forest Preserve District of Kane County; Tom Dimond, Ice Miller; Rachel Goad, Chicago Botanic Garden; Bob Stanley and Bernie Mitchell, Hybernia Area Homeowners Association; Dominic Kempson and Brian Karczewski, Stantec; Ken Jay and Mary Jo Pye, Elk Grove, John Wills, WBK; Carol and Lyra Smith, landowners; David Holman, Ken Spale.

Commissioner Thomas thanked staff for the great field trip. He stated it was really interesting to see some of the pieces that have been restored, different stages of restoration and see the collaboration that has gone on between the Commission, IDNR and Lake County Forest Preserve, it was really very impressive. He thanked Steve Byers for organizing the field trip; Commissioner Dann and his wife, Jackie, for entertaining at their home; Gary Glowacki and Debbie Maurer, Lake County Forest Preserve; Brad Semel, IDNR – Natural Heritage; Diane Tecic, Coastal Zone Management Program, enjoyed hearing from her on some of their activities. Also, a special thanks to Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club for the lovely space and Marni English for organizing us.

Staff and attendees introduced themselves.

220-2) Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Dann, seconded by Commissioner Covington and carried that the Agenda be adopted.

220-3) Approval of Minutes for the 219th Meeting, January 27, 2015

Commissioner Thomas noted that a number of corrections need to be made to the minutes due to difficulties in microphones picking up all of the discussions during the special meeting on January 26, 2015 and at the 219th meeting on January 27, 2015. You may submit any comments you have to Randy Heidorn and these minutes will approved at the September meeting.

Commissioner Thomas reported that at the 219th Meeting, January 27, 2015 at IDNR, legal protection was completed by the Commission for three tracts of land totaling 59.371 acres, two of these areas are owned by private individuals or non-for-profit corporations, who donated the value of the protection agreement to the public. This private land was permanently preserved without further acquisition of the land by the State. The value of the land is \$81,000, based on conservative estimates of the fair market value of the land. Lands protected include the John Clyde Spitler Woods Nature Preserve in Cumberland County, and the Addition to the Gensburg-Markham Prairie Nature Preserve in Cook County. Protection of these lands came about because the Commission has eight staff in the field working with private and public landowners. There are now 383 dedicated nature preserves in 85 counties, totaling 57,753.701 acres, and 178 land and water reserves in 67 counties, totaling 49,848.538 acres.

220-4) Next meeting date and location

September 15, 2015, 10 a.m. Black Hawk State Historic Site, Rock Island, IL

Director Heidorn commented that Black Hawk State Historic Site is owned by the Illinois Historical Preservation Agency and has the Black Hawk Forest Nature Preserve, a gem that will be near the meeting site.

220-5) INPC Staff Report

Director Heidorn indicated that a written staff report was provided to Commissioners and provided some highlights (Appendix 1). He reported on the hiring process. He indicated that IDNR Division of Natural Heritage (DNH) will hire two additional residents, one located in Peoria and one in Springfield.

Applicants for the Area 9 position (Judy Faulkner's old position) are still being evaluated by Central Management Services (CMS). The two middle management positions have been in the system at CMS since September. They are union positions, but Rutan exempt. We have been unable to get an answer as to when these will be posted. He asked the commissioners to

understand the dire situation they are facing with his retirement at the end of the year without these positions filled. This is why getting the strategic plan is so important.

Kelly Neal has been working with the Graduate Public Service Intern (GPSI), Jenny Wells, whose internship will end at the end of June. A new GPSI has been interviewed and will begin in August.

The landowner of Cary Junior High School Prairie Nature Preserve has renamed the preserve Hill Prairie Nature Preserve. This change happened five years ago, but had not been reported.

Commissioner Dann commented that the future of the Commission, its mission and the critical importance of all the work of Director Heidorn, is something that the Commissioners take to heart and take seriously. Commissioner Thomas and he are going to do their best to talk to people in authority in State government to see if they can get the wheels to grind more quickly to get in place what is needed to continue the Commission's good work.

Commissioner McClain thanked Commissioner Dann for saying that.

Commissioner Ruffner asked Director Heidorn if his position would be filled before he retired.

Director Heidorn answered that in the past, most positions of his type are not filled right away and usually have an acting director. He thought that the Commission would have input into the filling of his position.

Valerie Njapa reported on defense issues. A new threat was recently brought to the attention of INPC. Mississippi Lime Company is proposing a new facility with two industrial lime kilns fueled by coal, petcoke, or both. The proposed facility lies within an area where seven sites are protected by the Nature Preserves System, three nature preserves and four land and water reserves. There are sixteen state listed species and two more proposed for listing in the vicinity.

The INPC was notified about the proposed project through the IDNR consultation process. The company applied to the IEPA for a construction PSD (Prevention of Significant Deterioration) permit which is required under the Clean Air Act for projects that may significantly increase air pollution. It was first submitted several years ago and the permit was initially approved, but upon an appeal to the USEPA Board of Review, the permit was remanded. They have since resubmitted their proposal to IEPA to get the construction PSD permit approved. IEPA submitted the project to IDNR consultation for review, and IDNR staff coordinated with INPC to review and respond to IEPA. IDNR consultation staff determined there were no recommendations that could be made which would avoid or minimize adverse effects and be consistent with issuing the permit. In the consultation letter, the NPs and LWRs were detailed as well as the state-listed species in the vicinity. An ecological risk screening evaluation was done to satisfy Section 7, under the Endangered Species Act and based on that, both USEPA and USFWS concurred that there was no threat to federally listed species. This evaluation did not take into account state-listed species. IDNR looked at a 4.5 km radius from the proposed facility and, within that vicinity, located

the seven sites in the Nature Preserves System. INPC staff also sent a letter to IEPA to make sure they were aware of our concerns related to state protected resources and that INPC is statutorily obligated to protect the sites in the Nature Preserves System. The consultation and INPC letters went to IEPA in April, and there has not yet been a response from IEPA.

Commissioner Ruffner commented that if there are scrubbers on the lime kilns, that would produce lowered emissions and asked if there would be any scrubbers on the lime kilns.

Ms. Njapa answered that in talking to consultation staff, the cumulative effects of ongoing emissions would be lethal to some state-listed species which are vulnerable to very low levels of methyl mercury. It is up to them to show that they would not have any adverse impacts to the state-listed species. If they would be willing to do further ecological risk screening evaluations, we would be willing to look at that.

Ms. Njapa reported that for Johns Manville Site 1 (an old abandoned roadway), USEPA is ready to evaluate remedial objectives/actions. There used to be two low areas in a dune area on Site 1, and these were filled with asbestos containing material (ACM). Vegetation established itself, and Site 1 is now a dry sand savanna. The USEPA has put forth remediation by capping or removal by excavation and disposal. Removal by hand after prescribed burns and a good precipitation event have made it easy to remove the ACM. USEPA conducted a soil investigation with fourteen samples taken from three locations at Site 1 and those samples showed no detection of fibrous material and asbestos was below detection in all fourteen samples. After discussions with IEPA, the Attorney General's office, IDNR and INPC, the state entities determined their preference would be to continue removal by hand.

Commissioner Thomas asked if this is something the Commission should take formal action and submit a letter to USEPA.

Ms. Njapa answered not at this time, we should wait until USEPA's position is known. The next conference call will include USEPA. If USEPA pushes for removal by excavation or capping, then we would need to have another discussion to see what can be done.

Commissioner Dann commented if ever there was a time to let sleeping dogs lie, this was the time.

Ms. Njapa agreed.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if there are any precedents of this happening that you would be able to point to or is this something they are uncomfortable with because it is a non-standard option.

Ms. Njapa answered that some of the superfund sites might follow a process like this but in this particular case, the discussion has not happened yet.

Director Heidorn stated there has been such a turnover at USEPA since the initial talks took place and no formal agreement was issued. This is the reason for the concern.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if Enbridge Energy was penalized in any way, shape or form other than paying for cleanup in the settlement regarding Romeoville Prairie NP.

Director Heidorn answered that is correct through the INAPA. There were many reasons this was recommended by the Attorney General's office. Primarily there were other potential factors in the area that may have caused the break. However, at the federal level, there may have been more consequences. It would have cost us much more than we would have gained and Enbridge Energy complied with everything we had asked.

220-6) IDNR Staff Report

Maggie Cole, Natural Heritage Administrator, on behalf of Natural Heritage Division Chief Ann Holtrop, reported that since the Natural Heritage Division (DNH) meeting, Director Rosenthal moved the Impact Assessment Group back to the Office of Realty and Environmental Planning. IDNR is planning reorganization. For DNH this means formally incorporating the Watershed Protection Program into DNH. Heritage will be reviewing and revising some of the job descriptions, especially vacant ones, hopefully, creating Recovery and Stewardship Specialists, at the regional level. Chief Holtrop will submit DNH proposed changes to the administration by May 15, 2015 and will have an update for the Commission at the September meeting.

Chief Holtrop and the DNH leadership team have identified priorities for field staff and these have been shared with staff.

Specific guidance was given on Category 1 updates, outstanding dedications on state sites and updates for state records of threatened and endangered species.

There has been an active spring burn season in collaboration with INPC staff, as well as Forestry and Wildlife. Brad Semel and his partners have burned 3800 acres in the northeastern and north central parts of the state. Dan Kirk accomplished a 998 acre burn at Goose Lake Prairie State Park and 350 acre burn at Des Plaines Conservation Area. INPC staff also assisted with these burns. Between the north and northeastern districts, 5100 acres were burned. DNH will have more to report at the September meeting.

The Wildlife Action Plan is progressing and is on track for a draft by the end of May. Campaigns leads are meeting every two weeks to discuss issues. Most recently, they discussed a survey of partners on Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA). They will be linking the COAs to campaigns and formalizing the revised list of Species in the Greatest Need of Conservation.

220-7) Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

No report.

Commissioner Thomas commented that we have not had a report for the last two meetings and will push to get one for the September meeting.

220-8) Grundy County – Collins Station Prairie Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Kim Roman, on behalf of IDNR, requested registration approval of Collins Station Prairie Land and Water Reserve (LWR), a 638-acre site, located approximately 4 miles east of Morris in Grundy County. It lies within the Grand Prairie Section and Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. This site includes approximately 105 acres of mesic prairie, a part of which is recognized as a Category I Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site (INAI #0560). The proposed Land and Water Reserve also supports a complex of wet/wet-mesic prairie and sedge meadow, approximately 156 acres in size, includes portions of Heidecke Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area and Goose Lake Prairie State Park. The proposed Collins Station Prairie LWR is a half mile west of the 1,628-acre Goose Lake Prairie Nature Preserve, which is the largest remnant prairie in Illinois, and is known for its grassland dependent birds. The addition of Collins Station Prairie to the larger Goose Lake Prairie complex will protect contiguous habitat for area-sensitive grassland bird species. Collins Station Prairie supports one state-endangered species, the eryngium stem borer (*Papaipema eryngii*), and two state threatened species, the one reptile and the red-veined prairie leafhopper (*Aflexia rubranura*). The proposed Collins Station Prairie LWR is located in the Midewin - Des Plaines - Goose Lake Prairie Macrosite Conservation Opportunity Area identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP). Conservation of this important natural area is consistent with the goals of IWAP and supports action steps identified for the Prairie, Wetlands, and Invasive Species Campaigns. Reserved rights and allowable uses include deer hunting, maintenance of an archery range, fishing from the banks, duck hunters to anchor at the banks and the creation of a parking lot adjacent to the existing parking area.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if it is possible to have that 0.8 acre parking lot graveled rather than paved or asphalted.

Kim Roman answered we could but would have to rewrite the proposal. Gravel would be cheaper than asphalt.

Commissioner Dann asked if there were any stem borer at Goose Lake.

Kim Roman answered that there are. It is less susceptible to the effects of fire. There are not very many experts who can identify stem borer.

Commissioner McClain commented that this site has tremendous potential. It was fabulous to see all of this in one area.

Kim Roman commented that IDNR considered just registering the INAI site but everyone in ORC and Region II agreed to register the whole site.

Joe Roth commented that one important part of the registration is IDNR can increase the spread of rattlesnake master across multiple burn units to promote habitat for the eryngium stem borer.

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

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Collins Station Prairie Land and Water Reserve in Grundy County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2324)

220-9) Lee County – Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson, on behalf of the Illinois Audubon Society, requested preliminary approval of dedication of approximately 287.02 acres as the Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located within the Green River Lowland INAI (#1621) site, located in the Green River Lowland Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. This is a Category II site that provides critical habitat for at least three state-threatened or endangered reptiles. The Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary is also documented to provide habitat for 27 faunal species listed in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan as being in Greatest Need of Conservation, as well as one state-threatened plant, pinweed (*Lechea intermedia*). The animal species include thirteen birds (nine breeding), five reptiles, one mammal, and eight moths. An abundance of eolian sand dune deposits, located in close association with numerous wetlands, make this site an ideal breeding and nesting area for reptiles and amphibians. Historically, the Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary consisted of dry sand savanna, wet-mesic sand prairie, dry-mesic savanna, and wetland basins consisting of marsh, sedge meadow and wet-prairies. These communities still exist at Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, but in degraded condition due to invasive woody vegetation and lack of fire disturbance. The site is located in what was once the largest grove of timber in Lee County. This is the first property within the Green River Lowland INAI site (#1621) to be proposed for dedication. Thanks to the Illinois Audubon Society, its members and volunteers, this dedication likely represents only a “first-step” in protecting what will someday be an even larger nature preserve and an incredible example of ecological restoration.

Commissioner Covington asked what the plan was with the existing agricultural fields.

Mr. Nelson answered that they had been retired. The Birdsong Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society is very adamant about not bringing in seed from outside the site. They have been collecting seed from other areas on the property. This will be a slow process of restoring to a mesic sand prairie. They completed a drain tile survey in which they are going to put valves in the drain tiles so that they can manipulate the water levels. The site will become very wet once the valves are put in.

Commissioner McClain stated that the inland swamp was called such because there was a five mile long ledge or outcrop of galena dolomite that held the waters back, creating the large swamp giving the site its name. The Winnebago Swamp got its name from the Winnebago Indians who once lived in the region. There was a movement to establish a hunting preserve of 100,000 acres back in the 1890's, but that movement was overpowered by the desire to dredge the swamp. A hole was blown in the inlet and steam powered dredges used to ditch and drain the wetlands. All of the plant communities of this site are in a publication available from the Natural History Survey by Dr. John Ebinger.

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

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary in Lee County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2325)

220-10) Marshall County – Fern Ridge Nature Preserve, Dedication

Tom Lerczak, on behalf of Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang, requested preliminary approval for dedication of 3.25 acres within the Fern Ridge Natural Area (INAI# 1836) as the Fern Ridge Nature Preserve. Fern Ridge is located within the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division along the Illinois River bluffs. The significant feature of this site is a large population of the state-threatened fibrous-rooted sedge (*Carex communis* Bailey), in which flowering and fruiting individuals have been documented. This population of several hundred clumps is one of only 18 that have been documented throughout the state. Natural communities at Fern Ridge are Grade C and consist of dry-mesic upland forest, mesic upland forest, mesic floodplain forest, and an intermittent high-gradient small stream. Upland forests are dominated by species such as white oak (*Quercus alba*), red oak (*Q. rubra*), shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Floodplain forest species include bur oak (*Q. macrocarpa*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), and American basswood (*Tilia americana*). Notable plants at Fern Ridge include several fern species, including the conservative silvery spleenwort (*Athyrium thelypteroides*); blue beech (*Carpinus caroliniana*); smooth forked aster (*Aster schreberi*); and ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*). The primary threat to this site is invasion by non-native species, which the landowners have already addressed. The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan would be supported by this dedication through the Forest, Land and Water Stewardship, and Invasive Species campaigns.

Commissioner Covington asked what prospect is there for protecting the rest of the natural area.

Mr. Lerczak answered that landowners have not been approached, since this is a new project. Maury Brucker may have talked to some of the neighbors when he monitored the property. There is a lot of potential since the habitat is the same. We have tried to find funding to have a botanical survey along the whole bluff area.

Commissioner Thomas asked if the reason there were no species listed is because no surveys have been done.

Mr. Lerczak answered that surveys have not been done.

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

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Fern Ridge in Marshall County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2326)

220-11) Kane County – Addition to Freeman Kame Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steve Byers, on behalf of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, requested final approval for dedication of a 101.9-acre addition (referred to as the Ed Meagher Savanna and Sedge Meadow) to Freeman Kame Nature Preserve that consists of a nature preserve addition (67.5 acres) and a nature preserve buffer addition (34.4 acres). The Commission granted preliminary approval for dedication of a 96-acre addition to Freeman Kame at its 200th Meeting in October 2008 (Resolution No. 2012). Freeman Kame Nature Preserve (35 acres) and the proposed addition (101.9 acres) are located within the larger 442.7-acre Freeman Kame-Meagher Forest Preserve owned by the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. Freeman Kame Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Kane County, Illinois. The proposed addition includes high-quality (Grade B) sedge meadow and dry-mesic savanna, Grade C dry-mesic forest, Grade C freshwater marsh and Grade C or D mesic prairie. Surveys revealed the presence of five State-listed plant and animal species within Freeman Kame Nature Preserve and the proposed addition: including purple-flowering raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*), bog-panicked sedge (*Carex diandra*), buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) and a reptile. Protection of the proposed addition supports elements of the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan; specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality wetland communities. Five wildlife species listed in the Plan as species in “greatest need of conservation” are present in the addition. Those species include the Dion skipper (*Euphyes dion*), broad-winged skipper (*Poanes viator*), sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*), northern flicker (*Colapates auratus*), and a reptile. The District reserves the right to maintain trails and provide for trail amenities. Dedication of the proposed addition will increase the size of Freeman Kame Nature Preserve from 35.0 to 136.9 acres.

Mr. Byers acknowledged Drew Ullberg and Monica Meyers of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County; the late Dick Young, local Naturalist, who put together information for this site; Jackie Coffey; Mary Kay Solecki; and Jon Duerr, former director of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County.

Commissioner Ruffner asked if the preserve will go all the way to the section line when burning the west side.

Steve answered the Forest Preserve District owns land to the west that is not included in the Nature Preserve. They will not have to cut off the burn at the boundary, but will use other features of the landscape for controlling or planning for controlled burns.

Drew Ullberg thanked the Commission for their attention to this dedication. This is a special place in our system. The district owns 20,000 acres of land and nine nature preserves. They are proud of those and Freeman Kame, not only because of the management but also because of the high natural quality of the land and the species that depend on it. They are dedicated to the conservation and stewardship of this land for the long term.

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

The Commission grants final approval for an Addition to Freeman Kame in Kane County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2327)

220-12) Lake County – Addition to Hybernia Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steve Byers, on behalf of the Hybernia Area Homeowners Association, requested final approval for dedication of an addition to Hybernia Nature Preserve that includes three separate lots (totaling 0.533 acres) and a vacated portion of Cardinal Lane (totaling 0.43 acres). These parcels were granted preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 217th Meeting in May 2014 (Resolution No. 2290). At that time the three lots were owned by Georgene Gullicksen, A.P. Properties, and The Goldie House Trust, respectively. The lots have now been conveyed to the Hybernia Area Homeowners Association. The proposed addition consists of Grade C wet-mesic prairie and Grade C sedge meadow and is surrounded by Hybernia Nature Preserve and the Hybernia - Highmoor Prairie INAI site (INAI No. 1235). Hybernia Nature Preserve and the proposed addition support populations of the State-threatened small sundrops (*Oenothera perennis*) and a federally-listed species. Hybernia Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in southeastern Lake County, Illinois. Protection and management of the proposed nature preserve addition to Hybernia Nature Preserve will eliminate threats posed by these in-holdings and represents good preserve design. Dedication of this addition supports elements of the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan; specifically action items to improve the condition of existing natural wetlands, and restoring and enhancing acreage for rare/extirpated species and native plant communities. Formal dedication of this addition (0.963 acres) will increase the size of Hybernia Nature Preserve from 27.46 to 28.323 acres.

Steve thanked Tom Dimond, attorney representing North Lake Hospital, for being with him every step of the process, and working closely with the city of Highland Park to make sure Cardinal Lane was vacated.

Steve Byers acknowledged Dr. Robert Stanley, Vice President of Hybernia Area Homeowners Association; Mike Murphy and Kathy Churnich, Army Corps of Engineers; Kathy Pollock, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; City of Highland Park; and Ice Miller.

Dr. Robert Stanley, Vice President of the Hybernia Area Homeowners Association and Steward of the Hybernia Nature Preserve, thanked the Commission for considering this. These three lots, while small in area, are located in the geographic and ecological heart of the preserve. Had they ever been developed, they would have irreparably harmed the preserve. Through the efforts of many people over a long time, it is very fortunate that this has come together. The Hybernia Association is looking forward to getting this matter resolved and to preserve and protect this small but important preserve.

Commissioner Ruffner asked how this property is managed.

Mr. Byers answered primarily through prescribed burning and control of invasive species. The Homeowners Association has a contractor assist with these primary management activities.

Commissioner Ruffner commented that it seems like an awfully precarious parcel to be burning. It seems it would be very difficult.

Mr. Byers agreed it was a challenge.

Commissioner Ruffner congratulated Steve for accomplishing those burns.

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

The Commission grants final approval for an Addition to Hybernia in Lake County as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2328)

220-13) Cook Co. – Busse Dam Modification, Busse Forest Nature Preserve

Ken Jay, Elk Grove Village; Brian Karczewski, Stantec (consultant for Elk Grove Village); and John Wills, Wills Burke Kelsey Associates, Ltd., presented the proposal to modify a fixed concrete dam on Salt Creek to alleviate downstream flooding during storm events. Busse Forest Nature Preserve lies approximately 8,500 feet upstream of the dam. The 440-acre site, owned by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC), is recognized on the INAI (#0534) due to the presence of dry-mesic upland forest, mesic upland forest, freshwater marsh, northern flatwoods, and shrub swamp natural communities harboring nine state-listed species. The original dam installation in the vicinity of Busse Forest Nature Preserve was discussed by Commissioners on twelve occasions between January 1969 (24th Meeting) and October 1973 (49th Meeting). At the 49th Meeting, the Commission affirmed the FPDCC's opinion and approved the permanent inundation of 17.4 acres of formerly cultivated meadow and woodland of Busse Forest Nature Preserve (Resolution 310). The dam was constructed in 1975. In 2004, the Commission began deliberations (182nd, 186th, 187th, and 188th Meetings) on a proposed modification to the dam in the form of an inflatable rubber bladder that would restrict water flow out of the Busse Reservoir during heavy rain events, thereby reducing flood damage downstream. At the 188th Meeting, the Commission approved the dam modification subject to operational conditions contained in an Applied Ecological Services (AES) report, including a Proposed Decision Matrix (outlining acceptable storm event inundation elevations and durations during periods crucial to plant growth and reproduction); approval of the modification by the landowner, FPDCC; and written acknowledgement by the project sponsor, the DuPage County Board, that a fine would be assessed for each day that the approved AES recommendations were violated (Resolution 1852). The funding for this dam modification was never realized. Now, Elk Grove Village through its consultant, Wills Burke Kelsey Associates, Ltd. (WBK), proposes replacing the fixed concrete weir with a pair of hinged gates that can be lowered and raised to take advantage of the flood storage availability in the Busse Reservoir. The goal of the current proposal is to provide additional flood mitigation without inundating Busse Forest Nature Preserve either more frequently or for a greater duration. At the request of the INPC, WBK performed a comparative analysis of the current proposal within the previously approved AES

Decision Matrix. This analysis exhibited an overall reduction in the inundation duration at the Decision Matrix-prescribed storm event elevations. This information was presented at the 215th meeting. Commissioners refrained from endorsement of the proposed dam modification until several conditions be met including an Intergovernmental Agreement providing assurances of the operational responsibilities. Elk Grove Village has met the requested conditions and is requesting final INPC approval for the proposed dam modifications with the hope of construction beginning in August 2015.

Kelly Neal reported the staff recommendation (Appendix II). Modeling and data do indicate that the gated structure should be an improvement and will be of benefit to the flora of Busse Forest Nature Preserve. In our recommendation, we indicated all the items the Village has met and they have met all the items requested in 2013; and staff recommended approval of the dam modification.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis, referring to the 158 historic storms and the ability in the modeling to have them reduced, asked for a ballpark of how many of those 158 historic storms were of the 100 year flood events.

John Wells stated that DuPage County and engineering in general, have stopped talking about flood frequency because it has become such a source of confusion. Of those 158, some of the most extreme storms Salt Creek experienced (the 2008 flood, the 1987 flood), are still the flood of record and are well over the 100 year storm events. They also used design storms. Those are driven by rainfall frequencies, which have a much longer and much more stable, statistical basis. When talking about the difference between the historical storm and the 100 year storm, this is the difference. This gives a way to look at what actually happened.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if the downscale climate projections were used.

John Wells answered engineers believe this to be the way of the future. Stop putting in fixed weirs that are done for a single storm as a design point. Instead, put in things that are more resilient and more adaptable as climate change comes. We did not use any new statistical projections in doing this. There are at least three events that are in excess of what we would consider a 100-year storm.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked why new statistical projections were not used.

Mr. Wells answered as engineering projects go, this project had a large number of requirements, that getting through those for approval was more than usual for any project to handle previously. IDNR did not present us with that as a requirement. They were content with the design storms of the Illinois State Water Survey.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked if this is not standard practice.

Mr. Wells answered not at this time.

Commissioner Thomas asked if this dam, as originally constructed, reduced the flooding downstream.

Mr. Wells answered very significantly. For the storm event, it was the right solution for the wrong problem. It was the solution to a storm but not the solution to a number of storms. That is what this project is focused on is a band of storms, but it really is not as effective as it could be.

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

The Commission grants approval for the Busse Dam Modification in Cook County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 13 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2329)

220-14) Draft 2015-2020 Strategic Plan

A draft INPC 2015-2020 Strategic Plan was prepared based on the results of staff SWOT analysis; INPC Special Meeting on January 26, 2015; the 219th Meeting of the INPC; and INPC Staff preparation of objectives. Comments are being requested from Commissioners, Advisors and consultants to the Commission, and INPC and IDNR staff. Once comments are collated and addressed, a final draft will be presented to the Commission for approval. The target date for that will be the 221st meeting of the INPC in September 2015. Randy Heidorn presented the draft plan which is included as Appendix III. Comments, questions and responses are listed below.

Commissioner McClain asked, looking at Goal 3, are you meaning certain geographic areas of the state as areas of biodiversity; or are you looking at different types of flora or fauna and identifying areas where those are more predominant or diverse.

Director Heidorn answered that the emphasis of that goal is to fill in the gaps of the Nature Preserves System. The original natural areas plan called for protecting examples of all of the community types across the natural divisions and sections, along with all the viable endangered species habitat types. This effort is determining what gaps in the system exist and how those are filled.

Commissioner McClain commented that at first glance this would seem like a simple thing, but it is really quite complex and extremely important.

Director Heidorn commented that they divided the objectives and strategies into actions that could actually be done, realizing impending changes and real limitations on what resources are available.

Commissioner Dann asked if Objective 1.11 is exclusive of IDNR land.

Director Heidorn answered that it does include IDNR land. This is across all landowners and partners.

Commissioner McClain asked about volunteers or partners doing research and monitoring of sites. Many of the nature preserves have studies that have been conducted on them and could be made available to serve as baselines to build upon in the future. Maybe some of the volunteers/partners could be trained to do this sort of work. Cost has always been one of the limitations in getting this information on these systems. It would be an asset to have volunteers/partners who would do this.

Director Heidorn answered that one of the objectives is to develop a database of people who are qualified in doing data collection.

Break from 11:40 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for lunch.

Commissioner McClain commented that all communities need to be represented and protected. In order to get some of them, we will have to re-create them. The re-creation or restoration, will be a big part of the movement in the future. So, in that gap analysis, somewhere we could have a site where a community, might be created if we have the biological data to support it.

Commissioner Covington suggested that the INPC participate with the Land Trust Alliance's training. We should be a part of that, sending staff, volunteers and partners to their rally.

Commissioner Dann asked who the draft will be submitted to and how will the questions/responses received be distributed.

Director Heidorn answered that Commissioners, Advisors, Consultants and staff will have the opportunity to comment by June 15th, 2015. Once it is revised, it will be put out for public comment.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis asked Director Heidorn what his vision for participation is.

Director Heidorn plans to put it out on the web to let people see it. Determine if we get positive, negative or no response. Based on that, make an informed decision to the Commissioners what changes are necessary or if we want to go forward with it as is. He does not see it going beyond our Commissioners, Advisors, Consultants and internal staff during the first review.

Commissioner Thomas commented that we can put it on the web and people can send comments in.

Commissioner Derby-Lewis commented that if putting it up on the web is only seen by those who are in the know, it may not expand the reach to new partners, which may be a lost opportunity.

Commissioner Thomas answered he did not see the staff time available to really have a public comment period.

Commissioner Mogerma agreed with Commissioner Derby-Lewis that the public comment other than on INPC's website, might help reach more partners. She suggested that we might consider targeting bilingual communities.

Commissioner Ruffner asked who is going to implement the developing of monitoring programs.

Commissioner Thomas asked more specifically, who will be responsible for goals and strategies. The plan needs to be more specific on that. The Commissioner's role is not specified.

Commissioner Dann stated that it is a very ambitious plan, but it is challenging in the absence of the institutional memory that our current Director brings, and whatever the skill and competency level is of the appointed replacement. It is scary as future chair and is a great concern.

Director Heidorn stated that the vision of a lot of this plan will be carried out by much of the staff, at the program and project level. What we have historically done, for example, with the Land and Water Reserve Task Force, a group of staff members participated and developed modifications, leading to how we do our land and water reserves now. It is how I envision developing the monitoring protocols. A lot of these documents exist. It is just meshing them together. This plan assumes that that our current operational structure remains. There is a section about implementing the plan that does address this issue. Every January, there would be an annual report about progress on the plan and who has been assigned which projects. Without administrative staff, this becomes very difficult.

Commissioner Thomas commented that as Commissioners, it would be good to have more clarity as to which lands qualify for inclusion since we approve these.

Commissioner Mogerma agreed it was a very ambitious plan and liked the structure. You may be able to carry this out by taking the comments a little further. Toward the end of the plan emailed, there is the SWOT analysis, if you substituted this for some sort of matrix that outlines the strategy and who is responsible or involved in it. This may address years from now why or why not things go as planned. By noting things that you would like to do, but do not have the staff it will help Commissioners identify things which need to be discussed.

Commissioner McClain asked where he could learn more about the training school in Florida.

Director Heidorn answered the Florida Natural Areas Training Academy is a partnership between The Nature Conservancy, Florida State University and Valencia Community College. They have a series of classes and courses they teach. It is a certification program including courses in chainsaw maintenance and stewardship. The Natural Areas Association developed an accreditation package for the Academy and has developed standards for this type of program.

Commissioner McClain asked if they include courses in landowner contacts and building a volunteer base.

Director Heidorn answered yes.

Will Overbeck commented that it seems like it would be important to get internal training for staff and more so than public outreach. There is public outreach for this type of training at forest

preserve districts and various stewardship networks. Maybe there is a need for training contractors since a lot of jobs get contracted out.

Commissioner Ruffner commented that he sees this training as hierarchical. It seems the interns and professional staff needs a certain level of training. As a new commissioner, he felt there is a lot he needs to learn about the INPC. He could help teach the chainsaw operation and maintenance.

Joe Roth commented that depending on the training, there are various ideas about what is wanted. He is working with several sites with plant monitoring and hydrologic monitoring. INPC could reach out to local high schools and use it as a training opportunity. One of these sites could be a trial allowing the pairing of the site and have multiple years of plant community and groundwater data. Dealing with something living versus the blackboard might be one idea to approach it.

Director Heidorn commented the whole idea of the Training Academy was more of an umbrella concept to support and promote better natural areas conservation in and outside the INPC. To get there we have to define our boundaries and build bits and pieces of the concept.

Valerie Spale commented that the work of the Commission is one of the most valuable things happening in the State of Illinois. Probably most of the people have not even heard of the INPC and the work being done in saving our land, the threatened and endangered species and restoration. She felt this was an excellent plan, but you need to think beyond now and figure out how to build your constituency base in the public by bringing in a friends group or support group to help strengthen the support of what you do. There are constant threats to your funding and not filling positions. If there is some place to cut and no voices to stand up to defend INPC, then the INPC is a victim. INPC needs to develop a constituency friends group that has connections to legislatures and can call their senator or representative at a time when legislation is being presented to ask for the support of the Commission programs. Only private citizen groups or non-for-profits can become politically active.

Commissioner Thomas agreed. One of the ideas in the plan is to support legislation for grants for the land trusts. If we can have land trusts from around the state that are connected with us and funding that comes from NAAF, they become advocates. This is another group that has local legislatures that can be advocates for continuing the funding. That may be one of the more viable routes to get there. He told Ms. Spale her points were very well taken and appreciate them. He encouraged everyone to get their comments in by June 15, 2015.

220-15) Review of Closed meeting minutes

Director Heidorn read the following:

INPC meetings minutes for August 2, 2005; May 2, 2006; May 6, 2008; May 5, 2009; May 7, 2013; and September 10, 2013, were closed in accordance with the Open Meetings Act to discuss the purchase of real property. Section 2.06 of the Open Meetings Act provides that public bodies shall periodically, but no less than semi-annually, meet to review minutes of all closed sessions. At such meetings, a determination shall be made and reported in an open session that 1) the need

for confidentiality still exists as to all or portions of these minutes; or 2) that the minutes or portions there of no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection.

Director Heidorn spoke with OREP, there are still parcels in each of these minutes that are in the process of land acquisition and OREP has asked that they remained closed.

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

The Commission has reviewed the minutes of the Closed Meetings, held August 2, 2005; May 2, 2006; May 6, 2008; May 5, 2009; May 7, 2013; and September 10, 2013, and directed the minutes remain closed.

(Resolution 2330)

220-16) FY 2015 and 2016 NAAF Defense Program

Director Heidorn reported the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) capital appropriation for Defense in FY2011 through FY2012 included \$225,000 each and \$250,000 in FY2013 through 2015 to fund contractual natural area defense activities needed on properties included in one of the INPC's protection programs. NAAF defense projects that were begun in years prior to FY2015 and continued or completed during FY2015 include: funding the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) to collect and review groundwater data needed to assess impacts of proposed off-site development, threats or damages, prepare Class III Special Resource Groundwater petitions to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for INPC program sites and provide groundwater consulting services for the INPC staff. In FY 2015, a new contract has been proposed to continue the current monitoring at sites. This current proposal is for continuing monitoring at several INPC protected sites. We are also awaiting a contract proposal for some additional Class III delineations from the ISGS. The Plants of Concern Project, coordinated by the Chicago Botanic Garden is being funded at \$14,000. In FY2016 \$250,000 may be available for allocation to defense from this year's appropriation. Specific projects will be selected as needed but will likely include a continuation of the aforementioned groundwater data and consultation services at some level. In addition we are planning on using this source of funding to collect status information on resources within the preserves and reserves to improve INPC's ability to monitor the status resources prior to threats occurring up to \$50,000. Specific projects funded during FY2016 will be reported in May, 2016.

Commissioner McClain commented that he would like to see stiffer penalties for some of the offenses that happen often.

Director Heidorn answered that is why it is critical to have the groundwater contract available to us because they can provide us data that can be brought to bear in the court of law.

Director Heidorn requested approval to continue the same approach for using defense funds.

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

The Commission grants approval to continue the NAAF Defense Program for use of the FY 2016, as described in the proposal presented under Item 16 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2331)

220-17) FY 2016 NAAF Land Acquisition Program

John Wilker reported the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) is administered by the IDNR with review and recommendations of specific land acquisition projects by the INPC. Since last year's report, NAAF expended just over \$560,000 to add 3 parcels totaling slightly more than 160 acres to the state's portfolio of natural areas. The IDNR has option contracts on another four parcels totaling 2205 acres with an anticipated cost of around \$1,500,000. As of April 20th, 2015 the state budget has not been approved. The capitol budget for land acquisition from NAAF has not been established. A final decision on the amount of funds to be used for land acquisition in FY16 has not been made. It is anticipated however, that the NAAF Fund should sustain an anticipated target of \$1,000,000 in additional land acquisition expenditures. Therefore, as some parcels have been on the list for several years with some work in progress, the proposed FY16 list is recycled from the viable remainders of the FY13, FY14 and FY15 lists. All of these projects have been approved previously by the INPC. This combined list contains eleven parcels totaling around 3,900 acres at an anticipated cost of almost \$10,000,000. If additional parcels receive favorable regional review they will be brought before the Commission at a later date. The INPC is asked to review and approve a larger list than there is funding for because matching monies will be sought to stretch NAAF dollars and negotiations with some landowners will not be successful. All of the proposed parcels are 1) identified Illinois Natural Area Inventory sites or, 2) buffer a Nature Preserve or Land and Water Reserve owned by the IDNR or, 3) provide habitat for endangered and threatened species of animals or plants.

Commissioner Thomas asked if after the legislative session and budget approval if some of these funds that are still available, might be released.

Director Heidorn answered that he has done a considerable amount of analysis. The projects on contract and an additional project for approximately a million dollars and then an additional million on top of that, we can sustain. Any more than that, we might start impacting operations because we may not have the cash flow to cover it. There is no concern with the \$3.5 million in contracts, but beyond that it would be risky.

Commissioner McClain asked if any of these secured parcels, are there any additional parcels purchased that are necessary for a project to proceed.

Mr. Wilker answered three successful acquisitions, two at Cache River which have a large scope identified and one at Franklin Creek which also has a large acquisition target. All of these parcels were to help complete large preserves designs that would facilitate large scale projects.

Commissioner McClain asked that with no purchases, are there preserve designs, large scale projects or restorations that could not go forward.

Director Heidorn asked Commissioner McClain if he meant the projects that are waiting to be purchased.

Commissioner Thomas answered that it is his understanding we cannot discuss these without going into executive session. He believed Commissioner McClain wanted a general response.

John Wilker answered that they are all tied to large projects.

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

The Commission grants approval for the FY 2016 NAAF Land Acquisition Program and grant approval of the executive director to approve proposed acquisition of land listed on the INAI, as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the Agenda for the 220th Meeting.

(Resolution 2332)

220-18) Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

No Public Comments.

220-19) Other Business

No other business.

220-20) Adjournment

Commissioner Dann motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Ruffner and approved. The INPC meeting adjourned at 1:54 PM.



Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

memorandum

To: Commissioners

From: Randy Heidorn, Valerie Njapa and Kelly Neal

Date: April 23, 2015

Subject: Staff Report for the 220th Meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
Reporting Period: January-March 2015

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

INPC = Illinois Nature Preserves Commission	ORC = Office of Resource Conservation
IDNR = Illinois Department of Natural Resources	IDOT = Illinois Department of Transportation
CMS = Department of Central Management Services	ISGS = Illinois State Geological Service
EPA = Environmental Protection Agency	CD = Conservation District
FPD = Forest Preserve District	FP = Forest Preserve
PD = Park District	TNC = The Nature Conservancy
NLI = Natural Land Institute	INAI = Illinois Natural Areas Inventory
NP = Nature Preserve	LWR = Land and Water Reserve
NHL = Natural Heritage Landmark	NAAF = Natural Areas Acquisition Fund
SP = State Park	SF = State Forest
SNA = State Natural Area	SHA = State Habitat Area
INAPA = Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act	

AREAS

Area 1 - John Nelson and Will Overbeck	Area 5 - Thomas Lerczak
Area 2 - Steven Byers	Area 6 - Mary Kay Solecki
Area 3 - Kim Roman	Area 7 - Debbie Newman and Eric Wright
Area 4 - Angella Moorehouse, Brooke Bryant and Samantha McCarrel	Area 8 - Bob Edgin
	Area 9 - Vacant

INPC OPERATIONS

- Staff changes
 - Three resident interns began their one year terms on January 16. Samantha McCarrel and Brooke Bryant are located at Western Illinois University and supervised by Angella Moorehouse. Will Overbeck is located at Moraine Hills SP and supervised by John Nelson. Eric Wright, who has assisted Debbie Newman in Area 7, will end his appointment in June.
- Hiring efforts
 - Randy Heidorn participated in interviews for two resident interns for IDNR Division of Natural Heritage. Hired resident will begin their one-year term in June.
 - The Area 9 Natural Areas Preservation Specialist (Southern Illinois) (Natural Resource Advanced Specialist) CMS is still evaluating the applications. It has currently taken six months for this review. We have been unable to get an update on the status of this review.
 - The Nature Preserves Operations Program Manager (Natural Resource Manager 2 [NRM2]) and Natural Areas Protection Manager (NRM2) positions were entered into the CMS Electronic Position Action Request System in September. These positions are considered Rutan Exempt due to their managerial nature. All such positions were put on hold pending the transition to a new administration. We have been unable to get an update on the status of these positions.
 - Kelly Neal researched, prepared and submitted a request to University of Illinois Springfield for a Graduate Public Service Intern (GPSI) in computer science to continue working with the annual

report database designed by GPSI Jenny Wells. Applications were reviewed by Neal and GPSI interviews will be conducted on April 24th.

- Strategic planning effort
 - Kelly Neal, Valerie Njapa and Randy Heidorn summarized the results of the planning sessions held at the 219th and Special Meetings of the INPC in January. Randy Heidorn then reviewed, combined and streamlined the prioritized strategies and sent them out to select INPC staff to draft objectives to implement the strategies.
 - The following staff prepared draft objectives implementing strategies for the listed goal categories: Kelly Neal (Stewardship), Kim Roman (Protection), Valerie Njapa (Defense), Bob Edgin (Identification) and Randy Heidorn (Outreach, Partnership, Operations).
 - Randy Heidorn took the draft objectives, eliminated conflicts or combined objectives for efficiency and reduced the targeted objectives to match available capacity. This has become the first draft of the Strategic plan which will be presented for review during the 220th meeting.
- INAI Compact executed by INPC and IDNR finalizing execution of Compact by IDNR, FP Cook County, TNC, INPC, and Chicago PD. The purpose of INAI Compact is to support protection, restoration, and management of INAI sites within the boundaries of Millennium Reserve. IDNR has received Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant from EPA totaling \$999,725 to restore 287.5 acres of wetlands, prairies, and savannas that support breeding marsh birds and other rare species.
- In the absence of any middle management staff, Tom Lerczak and Mary Kay Solecki continue to assist with statewide procurement needs and review of protection proposal for the INPC agenda.
- Kelly Neal continues to coordinate with IDNR Heritage Staff to discuss options for acquiring a pre-existing management tracking database tool.
- Jenny Wells has been working with INPC staff to test the annual report database and has moved the database to a production site.
- Randy Heidorn continued to represent the INPC as a member of the Natural Areas Evaluation Committee.
- It has been noted that Cary Junior High Prairie NP has been renamed by the landowner as Hill Prairie NP back in 2010. However this name change has never until now been noted in the public record of an INPC meeting as per our normal procedures.
- Staff continue to provide Kim Roman materials for posting to the INPC Facebook page

OUTREACH/PARTNERSHIP/TRAINING/VOLUNTEER COORDINATION/MEETINGS ATTENDED

- INPC staff participated in the IDNR, Division of Natural Heritage Annual Staff Meeting/Retreat at Camp CILCA, Cantrell, Illinois.
- Randy Heidorn and Kim Roman participated in the Illinois Vital Lands Summit in Champaign in February.
- Randy Heidorn and Angella Moorehouse attended the annual meeting of the Prairie State Conservation Coalition at Starved Rock State Park Feb. 26-27. Heidorn had been asked to analyze draft land trust grant program language that might tap into NAAF to fund the program. He was asked at that meeting to describe the results of that modeling and review effort. The idea of the grant program was an outgrowth of the INPC Stewardship Taskforce efforts conducted in 2012.
- Randy Heidorn:
 - Met with representatives of Trust for Public Lands (TLP), Illinois Association of PDs, TNC, Sierra Club and Illinois Audubon for a pre-publication presentation on a TLP study of the cost-benefit analysis they conducted on land acquisition/protection programs at state and local levels in Illinois. At this point the report has not been released.
 - Represented INPC at the Board of Directors meeting of the Natural Areas Association in Washington, D.C. Heidorn serves as President of the Board for this professional conservation organization. While in Washington DC, Heidorn met with several leaders of conservation partners including TNC, The Land Trust Alliance, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Park Service, U. S. Forest Service, and U. S. Bureau of Land Management
- Kelly Neal attended the Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid 2015 Researcher's Meeting.

- Will Overbeck gave an oral presentation to the Society for Ecological Restoration, Midwest-Great Lakes Chapter Annual Meeting.
- Steve Byers met with:
 - Crystal Lake PD, Board of Trustees about the resources and challenges at Sternes Fen NP;
 - FPD Kane County, Dundee Township Open Space, and Openlands about Raceway Woods;
 - FP Cook County – Natural Resource Management Plan for the Forest Preserves.
- Kim Roman attended Friends of Kankakee board meeting and annual luncheon.
- Angella Moorehouse, Tom Lerczak, Brooke Bryant and Samantha McCarrel attended the Pesticide Clinics, tested and received their applicator’s license.
- Brooke Bryant and Samantha McCarrel:
 - Attended an Invasive Species Workshop in Macomb on Feb. 18th, hosted by the Cooperative Extension Service.
 - Attended chainsaw training at Allerton Park in Monticello on Feb. 27th.
 - Completed online training for fire classes I100, S130, S190 with S130/190 field day completed on Mar. 26th.
- Tom Lerczak attended Emiquon Science Symposium at Dickson Mounds Museum, Feb. 19.
- Mary Kay Solecki:
 - Attended Coles County Greenways pre-launch meeting.
 - Attended Barnhart Prairie Board meeting.
- Debbie Newman: gave a presentation at Illinois Indigenous Plant Symposium.

PROTECTION

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

Area 1

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNC • Boy Scouts of America, Blackhawk Area Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDNR • NLI |
|--|---|

Area 2

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPD Kane County • Hybernia Area Homeowners Association • Crystal Lake PD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Elgin • FP of Cook County • Dundee Township |
|--|---|

Area 3

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Private Landowners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kendall County FPD |
|--|--|

Area 4

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four private landowners • Western Illinois University • Prairie Land Conservancy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NLI • River Bend Wildland Trust • IDNR |
|--|--|

Area 5

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two private landowners. • The ParkLands Foundation • Macon County CD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springfield PD • Fondulac PD |
|--|---|

Area 6

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four private landowners • Grand Prairie Friends | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Conservation Foundation |
|--|--|

Area 7

- Three private landowners

Area 8

- Six private landowners

EASEMENT/DEDICATION MONITORING/BOUNDARY SURVEYS

Boundary monitoring took place at the following protected areas:

Area 1

- Stonebridge Trail LWR
- Wilson Prairie NP
- Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary

Area 2

- Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP

Area 3

- Tucker Millington Fen NP
- Hooper Branch Savanna NP

Area 4

- Cedar Glen NP & LWR
- Allison Savanna LWR
- Cecil White LWR
- Jamar Haven LWR / Stony Hills NP
- Nenawakwa LWR
- Robert Evers LWR
- McFarland Hills LWR
- Elton Fawks Bald Eagle Refuge NP
- Black Hawk Forest NP
- Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP
- Munson Township Cemetery Prairie NP
- Greenlee Cemetery Prairie NP
- Brownlee Cemetery Prairie NP
- Spring Grove Cemetery Prairie NP
- Burton Cave NP
- Harry N. Patterson Savanna LWR

Area 5

- Gillespie Prairie LWR
- Crevecoeur NP
- Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR
- William and Therese McMaster Woods NP
- Meredosia Hill Prairie NP
- Walden West LWR
- Henry Allan Gleason NP
- Funks Grove LWR
- Barkhausen Woods LWR
- Speckman-Stelter Woods LWR

BIOLOGICAL INVENTORIES

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

Area 1

- Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary (plants and natural community)

Area 4

- Cedar Glen NP (bird)
- Mississippi River Nauvoo INAI site (bird)

Area 5

- Havana/Easton Route (Illinois Chorus Frog) [*Pseudacris streckeri illinoensis*]

INAI UPDATE

Area 2

- Deer Grove East FP

Area 4

- Ellison Creek Sand Prairie INAI

STEWARDSHIP

Planning

Area 1

- Mineral Marsh NP
- Harry N. Patterson Savanna LWR

Area 2

- Berkeley Prairie NP
- Liberty Prairie NP
- Middlefork Savanna NP
- Paw Paw Woods NP
- Springbrook Prairie NP

Area 4

- Robert A. Evers LWR

Area 5

- Carpenter Park NP
- Fon du Lac Seep NP
- Henry Allan Gleason NP
- Funk's Grove LWR
- Long Branch Sand Prairie NP
- Revis Spring Hill Prairie NP
- Sand Prairie Scrub Oak NP
- Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR

Area 6

- Miller's Rocky Branch LWR

Area 8

- Recovery progress reports to Endangered Species Protection Board for: *Polygonum arifolium*, *Styrax americana*, *Hypericum adpressum*, *Carex alata*, *Iresine rhizomatosa*, *Clematis viorna*, *Penstemon tubaeflorus*, and *Silene regia*.
- Jasper County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP
- Prairie Ridge Jasper County LWR
- Prairie Ridge SNA Jasper County LWR
- Marion County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP
- Prairie Ridge Marion County LWR
- Prairie Ridge SNA Marion County LWR

Area 9

- Cache River LWR
- Section 8 Woods NP
- Wise Ridge LWR

STEWARDSHIP

Consulting, contract work conducted, administered or completed:

Area 2

- Bluff Spring Fen NP
- Fox River Forested Fen NP
- Sternes Fen NP

Area 3

- Superior Street Prairie LWR

Area 4

- Robert A. Evers LWR

Area 7

- Salt Lick Point LWR
- Prairie of the Rock NP

Area 8

- Marjorie J Brines White Oak Woods LWR
- Big Creek Woods Memorial NP
- Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR
- Beall Woods NP
- Horn Prairie Grove NP

Prescribed burns completed:

Area 1

- Boone Creek Fen NP
- Lowden Miller SF
- Yellowhead Marsh INAI
- Kettle Moraine NP
- Black Crown Marsh LWR

Area 2

- Chain O' Lakes SP
- Turner Lake NP
- Volo Bog NP
- Hill Prairie NP
- Boloria Sedge Meadow and Fen NP
- Sternes Fen NP

Area 3

- Kankakee River NP
- Hooper Branch Savanna NP
- Green River INAI site
- Goose Lake Prairie NP

Area 4

- Siloam Springs State Park
- Spunky Bottoms
- Harry N. Patterson Savanna LWR
- Stony Hills NP

- Cecil White Prairie LWR

Area 5

- Meredosia Hill Prairie NP

Area 7

- Wm A. Demint Memorial Hill Prairie NP
- Fults Hill Prairie NP
- Salt Lick Point LWR

Area 8

- Beadles Barrens NP
- Jasper County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP
- Lost Creek Marsh NP
- Marion County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP
- Red Hills Woods NP
- Robert Ridgway Grasslands NP
- Rock Cave NP
- Horn Prairie Grove LWR
- Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR
- Embarras River Bottom State Habitat Area

Area 9

- Collier Glade NP
- Lafarge Limestone Glade LWR

- Crevecoeur NP

- White Rock NP
- Stemler Cave Woods NP
- Pyramid SP

- Loy Prairie LWR
- P & E Refuge LWR
- Prairie Ridge LWR – Jasper County
- Prairie Ridge LWR – Marion County
- Richard R and Jean W Graber Grasslands LWR
- Green Prairie NHL
- Wildcat Hollow SF
- Ramsey Lake SP
- Stephen A Forbes SP

- Flag Pond LWR

Other land stewardship completed by staff:

Area 1

- Bell Bowl Prairie INAI
- Boone Creek Fen NP

- Franklin Creek NP
- Moraine Hills SP

Area 2

- Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP
- Bluff Spring Fen NP
- Sternes Fen NP

- Trout Park NP
- Fox River Forested Fen NP
- Somme Prairie NP

Area 4

- Robert Evers LWR
- Cedar Glen NP

- Mississippi River Sand Hills NP

Area 5

- Meredosia Hill Prairie NP

- Sand Prairie Scrub Oak NP

Area 6

- Barnhart Prairie Restoration NP

Area 7

- Prairie of the Rock NP
- Illinois Ozarks NP
- Prairie of the Rock Overlook LWR

- Salt Lick Point LWR
- Wm A. Demint NP

Area 8

- Embarras River Bottom SHA

**Threats to Sites Report for the 220th Meeting of the
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
(Reporting Period: December 23, 2014 – April 2, 2015)**

Ramsey Railroad Prairie NP, Fayette County – Bob Edgin

- **Issue:** Ramsey Railroad Prairie ownership dispute.
- **Threat:** Village of Ramsey is claiming ownership of the south 800 feet of the NP.
- **Status:** New; ongoing. The Village is claiming ownership based on the premise the Illinois Central Railroad (ICR) did not have the legal right to transfer ownership to the IDNR in 1998, due to a reverter clause in the deed for the property when it was acquired by the ICR. The Village is claiming the south 800 feet of the right-of-way should have reverted to the Village when the property was vacated by ICR. IDNR legal counsel is disputing this claim as the Village of Ramsey did not own the property in question when it was purchased by the ICR. Communications between IDNR legal counsel and the Village are continuing.

Bliss Woods NP, Kane County – Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa

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

Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa

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

Middlefork Savanna NP, Lake County – Steven Byers

- **Issue:** Construction and operation of helipad adjacent to NP.
- **Threat:** Disruption of wildlife and visitor use of NP. Tree clearing for flight approaches.
- **Status:** Concluded. Petitioner has withdrawn application (at this time) to construct a helipad.

Reed-Turner Woodland NP, Kildeer Creek and Woodland LWR, Lake County – Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa

- **Issue:** Herbicide applied to Salem Lake by adjacent property owner without approval of owners of NP & LWR (Long Grove PD, Lake County FPD) or INPC. A portion of Salem Lake is located within Reed-Turner Woodland NP (Long Grove PD) and within the Kildeer Creek and Woodland LWR (Lake County FPD).
- **Threat:** Herbicide application killed all the aquatic plants in Salem Lake, secondary impact on wildlife.
- **Status:** Ongoing. Lake County FPD conducted initial investigation and referred their investigation to IDNR Conservation Police. A copy of that investigation was released in December 2014. INPC coordinating with IDNR Legal Counsel, Lake County FPD, and Long Grove PD, regarding referral to Attorney General's Office.

Spring Bluff NP, Lake County – Steven Byers and Brad Semel/IDNR

- **Issue:** Paint spill near Skipper Buds facility.
- **Threat:** Release of potentially harmful substances into Spring Bluff NP.
- **Status:** Concluded. INPC coordinating with Lake County FPD and IDNR to evaluate spill/prevent future spills.

Sun Lake NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Kelly Neal

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

Elizabeth Lake NP, McHenry County – Steven Byers, Valerie Njapa

- **Issue:** Herbicide to kill aquatic plants applied in NP in August 2014 without permission of owner (McHenry County CD) or INPC.
- **Threat:** Herbicide killed aquatic plants in linear corridor through NP.
- **Status:** Ongoing. INPC staff coordinated with Mc Henry County CD Conservation Police. IDNR Conservation Police asked by McHenry CD to complete the investigation (completed December 2014). INPC staff met with McHenry County CD Board and presented options. INPC has coordinated with IDNR Legal Counsel, and the Attorney General’s Office has accepted the request to assist with enforcement action.

Fel-Pro RRR Fen NP (Detrana Fen NP Addition), McHenry County – Steven Byers

- **Issue:** Proposed development could affect surface and/or groundwater hydrology.
- **Threat:** Fens are dependent upon uninterrupted and unaltered flows of groundwater. Development could impact groundwater flow and/or otherwise affect surface water infiltration and increase surface water runoff.
- **Status:** New. INPC coordinating with IDNR, McHenry County CD to review project and potential impact to fen wetlands.

Angela’s Prairie LWR, Brickey-Gonterman Memorial Hill Prairie NP, Brickey-Gonterman at Renault Bluffs LWR & William A. DeMint Memorial Hill Prairie NP, Monroe County; Blufftop Acres LWR, Prairie of the Rock NP & Prairie of the Rock Overlook LWR, Randolph County – Valerie Njapa

- **Issue:** Proposed new facility with two industrial kilns to be fueled by coal or pet-coke (or both).
- **Threat:** Emissions from processing of limestone into calcinated lime for use in cement manufacturing will likely result in cumulative and continuous adverse impacts to seven NPs sites.
- **Status:** New. Submitted to IDNR for Consultation by Illinois EPA, pertaining to the issuance of a Clean Air Act permit to Mississippi Lime Kilns for emissions from proposed facility. Consultation staff and IDNR Legal Counsel are coordinating review and response with INPC.

Crevecoeur NP, Tazewell County – Tom Lerczak, Valerie Njapa

- **Issue:** Neighbor encroachments.
- **Threat:** Disturbance of NP features, dumping, unauthorized activities.
- **Status:** Ongoing. Numerous encroachments (several fences, above-ground pool, garage addition, storage of personal items) have been removed with the exception of a garage foundation that is slightly over the NP property boundary and dumped materials, most of which have been in place for years. NAAF funds have been secured for clean-up and fence construction in 2015. Options are being investigated for the eventual removal of the garage foundation.

Independence Park Woods LWR, Tazewell County – Tom Lerczak, Valerie Njapa

- **Issue:** Existing Ameren easements across registered reserve related to gas pipeline replacement.
- **Threat:** Disturbance of LWR features outside of existing specified easement widths.
- **Status:** Ongoing. Ameren holds an easement of specific width for an existing gas pipeline corridor across Independence Park Woods LWR. Plans are in place to replace this pipeline. Proposed construction limits would extend disturbance beyond the existing easement corridor. Ameren is planning to request permission from the landowner and INPC/IDNR to disturb limited areas outside of existing easements (construction planned for the fourth quarter of 2015 and first quarter of 2016). A mitigation package will be proposed.

Edgewood Farm LWR, Vermilion and Champaign Counties; Larimore’s Salt Fork of the Vermilion River LWR, Vermilion County - Mary Kay Solecki

- **Issue:** Proposed Bulldog Mine near Homer may impact LWRs, NHL, and other conservation areas, including State-listed mussels and fish, on Salt Fork of Vermilion River INAI site.
- **Threat:** Possible pollution from mine discharge and mine activities.
- **Status:** Ongoing. INPC submitted letter stating concerns to IDNR Office of Mine and Minerals (OMM). OMM issued modification letter to mine owner on March 20th asking for substantially more information, including information on threatened or endangered species.

Romeoville Prairie NP, Will County – Kim Roman

- **Issue:** In 2009, an Enbridge pipeline adjacent to the NP had a break in its line, resulting in the release of crude oil.
- **Threat:** While most of the spill was contained, constituents of crude oil were detected in the NP.
- **Status:** Resolved. INPC, IDNR, the Illinois Attorney General’s Office and Defendant, Enbridge Energy LP, agreed to settle the complaint for violations to INAPA, and a Consent Order carrying no penalty was finalized and approved by the 12th Judicial Circuit Court in Will County on February 20, 2015.



**Illinois
Nature
Preserves
Commission**

memorandum

To: Commissioners

From: Kelly Neal ¹

Date: April 17, 2015

Subject: Staff recommendation regarding Item 13 – a proposal submitted by Elk Grove Village for approval to modify a fixed concrete dam on Salt Creek to alleviate downstream flooding potentially impacting Busse Forest Nature Preserve, Cook County.

Background:

Busse Forest Nature Preserve was dedicated on January 5, 1965, as the 3rd Illinois nature preserve. The 440-acre Nature Preserve, owned by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC), is recognized on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (#0534) due to the presence of dry-mesic and mesic upland forest, freshwater marsh, northern flatwoods, and shrub swamp natural communities harboring nine state-listed species. The site has been recognized since 1980 by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a National Natural Landmark due to its status as one of the best remaining examples of mesic and dry-mesic upland forest in the eastern Central Lowlands biophysiological province. Busse Forest Nature Preserve lies approximately 8,500 feet upstream of the existing dam and lies within the FPDCC's Ned Brown Preserve, also known as Busse Woods. Busse Reservoir serves as the Nature Preserve's southwestern boundary.

Proposal:

Elk Grove Village, through its consultant, Wills Burke Kelsey Associates, Ltd. (WBK), proposes to replace the existing fixed concrete dam with a pair of hinged gates that can be lowered and raised to alleviate downstream flooding along Salt Creek by taking advantage of the flood storage availability in the Busse Reservoir. The dam is owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Water Resources (IDNR-OWR) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The land adjacent to the dam is owned by the FPDCC. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) received a letter dated August 2, 2013, wherein the FPDCC with IDNR-OWR requests that NRCS review the dam modification plans. The letter notes that the parties concur that the proposed modification has

“...the potential to provide beneficial improvements to the reservoir for both flood control and recreational use...while also minimizing the potential for negative impacts to...Busse Woods Preserve.”

In their 86-page Design Memorandum for Busse Woods Dam, Elk Grove Village, Cook County, Illinois (Design Memo) dated November 15, 2012, WBK provides an analysis of alternatives, a summary of findings, and a presentation of recommendations. On Page 29 of the Design Memo, WBK describes their modeling effort to forecast conditions as if the proposed conventional hinge gate were in place. A summary of that description includes the assumption that the dam modification will keep intact the existing two-span bridge and replace the existing weir between the piers with gates. The gates were modeled as 5-foot-high with a normal opening at an elevation of 685.5 feet. When the model sensed the elevation in the Busse Reservoir rising, the gate began to open (lower) to an elevation of 683.0 feet. By opening the gate, it allows the release of water downstream early in the storm, so that storage is available in the Reservoir when the peak of the storm hits. Next, when the elevations at Arlington Heights Road (downstream) approach 684.3 feet, the gate begins to close (raise) to an elevation of 688.0 feet. The capacity of the channel downstream of the Reservoir (and where damages occur in Elk Grove Village, also referred to as the damaging flow threshold) is approximately 1000 cubic feet per second. This flow roughly corresponds to an elevation of $684.3 \pm$ feet. Therefore, by closing the gate at this elevation, the proposed dam would allow access to the storage created in the Reservoir to prevent further damages downstream. Finally, if the **elevation in the Busse Reservoir approaches 689.5 feet**, the gate then begins to open again. This prevents elevations in the Reservoir from increasing beyond those experienced during existing conditions.

Elk Grove Village contracted with Stantec to perform biological investigations including soil borings, floristic and herpetological surveys, and hydrologic features mapping. A 162-page report entitled Busse Woods Biological Investigations, dated January 23, 2013, was provided to the INPC. Soil borings were taken up to elevation 692.0 feet and revealed no sand seams, tight soils, low infiltration, and high runoff. The soil profile at Busse Woods Nature Preserve allows for no lateral or vertical water movement limiting the chance for inundation of plant root systems above the high water mark. This finding is supported by the existence of perching surface water in vernal pools and is also a characteristic of northern flatwoods natural communities. Floristic surveys confirmed that the immediate perimeter of the Reservoir to approximately 688.0 feet is a degraded plant community comprised of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), hybrid cattail (*Typha x glauca*), and American elm (*Ulmus americana*). This finding is indicative of an area that receives floodwater at least once every two to ten years. The surveyors reported that rare species occurrences increased with elevation. Natural communities at and above 692.0 feet were characterized as high quality. Occurrences of the state-threatened Wood's stiff sedge (*Carex woodii*) were found at elevation 691.0 feet and in greatest abundance at elevation 696.0 feet. All other state-listed species occurrences within Busse Forest Nature Preserve were found at elevation 692.0 feet and above. No state-listed species were located during the herpetological surveys.

The goal of the current proposal is to provide additional flood mitigation without inundating the Busse Forest Nature Preserve either more frequently or for a greater duration. To this end and after conducting infrastructure alternative analysis and considering Stantec’s biological investigations, WBK recommends the conventional hinge gate alternative.

Legal Authorities and Responsibilities:

The Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act provides that a nature preserve is “...to be maintained as nearly as possible in its natural condition...under limitations consistent with its continued preservation, without impairment, disturbance or artificial development, for the public purposes of ...research, education, esthetic enjoyment and providing habitat for plant and animal species and communities and other natural objects.” [525 ILCS 30/3.11]

In Administrative Rule, the “management, development, or uses of a specific preserve, not otherwise allowed under the rules, may be allowed as a provision of the master plan for the site, or may be approved by the Commission under Section 4000.160 of this Part.” [17 Ill. Adm. Code 4000.120(c)]

However, Section 4000.160 specifically states that the Commission shall approve the request if it is determined “...that the proposed activity will enhance the natural features of the preserve, consistent with the proposal for dedication...” This Section is silent on uses that do not enhance the natural features.

Since in this case the use was approved (at initial dam installation) by the Commission at its 49th Meeting, the current legal authorities may more appropriately apply under the Administrative Rules related to emergency situations and/or water level control:

“Emergency situations that require immediate action to prevent injury to persons or damage to property as determined by the custodian, the Commission, or the Department shall be handled in such manner as to cause minimal damage to natural conditions.” [17 Ill. Adm. 4000.180(b)]

(This is indeed a situation where approval by the INPC may alleviate downstream flooding and damage to property. It can, however, be argued that the Administrative Rule language should be interpreted to mean damage to dedicated property only.)

“Natural water levels shall not be altered. Water levels which have been altered by artificial means which include, but are not limited to, installation of drain tiles and creation of ditches, may be changed if identified in the master plan or management schedule as essential for the maintenance and restoration of natural conditions or to protect significant or notable features.” [17 Ill. Adm. 4000.440]

(The current dam modification proposal would decrease the amount of time that the Nature Preserve experiences inundation as compared to existing conditions.)

Analysis:

The original dam installation in the vicinity of Busse Forest Nature Preserve was discussed by Commissioners on twelve occasions between January 1969 (24th Meeting) and October 1973 (49th Meeting). Prior to the installation of the existing dam, the INPC's files reflect consideration of an amendment to the original dedication whereby the FPDCC recommended excluding 248 acres of the Nature Preserve or all land west of elevation 691.0 feet. The Commissioners ultimately decided that any de-dedication would establish an undesirable precedent. In 1973, George B. Fell referred to the inundation of the Nature Preserve as "inconsistent with law" and "the most critical problem in protecting the integrity of a nature preserve that the Commission has faced to date." However, William Klimstra, then-Chair of the Commission, expressed in correspondence that this was a "management problem," and, further, in another correspondence that an "impoundment can be created without any substantial damage to the Nature Preserve." References throughout the file at this time period reflect that Commissioners believed that the high-quality areas for which the site was dedicated to protect were not to be impacted. Minutes of the 27th Meeting state that the proposed inundation area had "...no natural area significance and serves only as a buffer for the natural portion." Buffer dedication was not yet an option. **At the 49th Meeting, the Commission affirmed the FPDCC's opinion to support the dam and approved the permanent inundation of 17.4 acres of formerly cultivated meadow and woodland of Busse Forest Nature Preserve (Resolution 310).** The dam was constructed in 1975.

In 2004, the Commission began deliberations (182nd, 186th, 187th, and 188th Meetings) on a proposed modification to the dam in the form of an inflatable rubber bladder that would restrict water flow out of the Busse Reservoir during heavy rain events thereby reducing flood damage downstream. The INPC staff recommended approval, not based on management as Administrative Rule requires that any approved management action enhance the natural features, but rather based on an emergency situation as downstream communities were experiencing damage to property. **At the 188th Meeting in October 2005, the Commission approved the dam modification subject to operational conditions contained in an Applied Ecological Services (AES) report (Resolution 1852).** The INPC approval included the following conditions:

- Adherence to the Proposed Decision Matrix (outlining acceptable storm event inundation elevations and durations during periods crucial to plant growth and reproduction):
 - Do not have a storm event that exceeds elevation 688.0 for more than 48 hours during the early growing season of March 15 – June 30.
 - Do not exceed a duration of 120 hours above elevation 688.0 from July 1 – October 31.
 - Do not exceed the existing period of record flood limit of 691.8.
- Approval of the modification by the landowner, FPDCC.
- Written acknowledgement by the project sponsor, the DuPage County Board, that a fine would be assessed for each day that the approved AES recommendations were violated.

The funding for this dam modification was never realized, therefore the action did not occur.

The current proposal was presented to the Commission at its 215th meeting in September 2013. In that proposal, WBK provided a memo dated July 31, 2013, wherein a detailed comparison is provided to the approved AES recommendations of 2005. In the memo it is noted that due to more extensive biological investigation, it is believed that the critical elevation as it relates to the Nature Preserve's herbaceous communities is more likely 690.0 feet. WBK uses elevation 689.0 feet as a trigger to buffer the existing state-listed species. Overall, though, the currently proposed operation reduces the cumulative flood duration above elevation 688.0 feet from 3,272 hours under existing conditions to 1,390 in the proposed condition substantially complying with the previously approved AES Decision Matrix. WBK's proposal states that, "Both the frequency and duration of flooding in the transition zone between the frequently inundated/degraded band and the high quality ecological communities is reduced."

The following is the staff recommendation that was presented at the 215th meeting: "INPC staff believes that as the dam was an approved use as of the Commission's 49th Meeting in 1973, the current review should consider how any proposed modification would impact existing conditions. The INPC staff opinion of 2005 pertained to a proposal to increase both the frequency and the duration of flooding in the Nature Preserve. This is no longer the proposed scenario. Duration of flooding is reduced under the currently proposed alternative. However, many of the same recommendations apply. Staff recommends that Commissioners refrain from endorsement of the currently proposed dam modification until the following considerations have been fulfilled:

- 1.) Require correspondence from the Busse Forest Nature Preserve landowner, FPDCC, documenting their approval.
- 2.) Require that the requests of the FPDCC be met – including, in part, the establishment of a fish barrier and removal of sediment.
- 3.) Require that the project sponsors provide the INPC with the final operational plan identifying the responsibilities of each of the partner communities.
- 4.) Require that an Intergovernmental Agreement provide assurances of the operational responsibilities and specifically identify who will be held liable if the Nature Preserve experiences impact beyond what is proposed stating that failure to comply with the agreed parameters is a violation of the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act and confirming responsibility for penalties (specifically, \$10,000/day per 525 ILCS 30/22).
- 5.) Require that the project sponsors acquire all other necessary permits."

The FPDCC has provided a letter of concurrence to Elk Grove Village (above Item 1). A final Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) has been prepared, all parties have reviewed and approved the IGA and it is in the process of receiving all signatures. Detail of operational water level parameters are listed in the IGA. The IGA addresses the above remaining considerations in the following manner:

- Item 2.) Elk Grove Village will provide FPDCC with \$ 100,000 in funding that may be utilized for any and all studies, design, permitting and construction necessary to erect a fish barrier at Busse Lake's main dam, as well as studies, design and permitting necessary for dredging the north basin of Busse Lake. The money may also be utilized for time and materials to prepare and apply for grant funding, or any other use that

would improve the quality of Busse Woods/Busse Lake.

- Item 3.) Operational responsibilities are outlined for all partners.
- Item 4.) “If the VILLAGE fails to operate the gates within the approved parameters set forth in Section 9.3 and causes detrimental impact to the Nature Preserve, the VILLAGE will be found liable for damages in the amount of \$10,000/day per 525 ILCS 30/22 for each day the VILLAGE operates the gates in said manner causing detrimental impacts.” (Section 9.3 details water level parameters).
- Item 5.) “The VILLAGE shall prior to construction, and acting as the agent for any and all Parties when necessary, obtain the required permits for said dam modifications, from appropriate federal, state and local governmental agencies. The execution of this Agreement does not relieve the VILLAGE of an obligation to obtain any required permits from the STATE.”

Staff Recommendation – 220th Meeting

Having met all considerations requested by INPC at the 215th meeting, staff recommends approval of the proposed dam modifications contingent on all parties signing the IGA.

Acknowledgements

¹Jenny Skufca prepared much of the background documentation and analysis contained in this staff recommendation for the 215th INPC meeting.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (Draft) with Implementation Objectives.

Background

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) was established over 50 years ago through acts of the legislature that have become to be known as the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (INAPA). The INPC was established to conserve nature in a system of protected lands. Since formed the INPC has protected 560 sites in 84 counties totaling 107,602 acres as nature preserves (NP) or land and water reserves (LWR). The INPC, made up of nine governor-appointed, unpaid commissioners protects lands for landowners of all types including state and local governmental agencies such as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and forest preserve and park districts, non-profit corporations and land trusts, for-profit corporations and individuals. The INPC, a great example of a public-private partnership, is supported by staff which is provided by the IDNR.

The success of the INPC in protecting land can be attributed in part to regular planning and targeting of staff and commissioner resources. INPC was a major supporter of the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI). After the INAI was completed in 1978, INPC was instrumental in the development, approval and promotion of the Illinois Natural Areas Plan. (1980), the IDNR, Division of Natural Heritage First Meeting Plan (1985), Strategic Plan for Endangered Resources of Illinois(1997), INPC Five Year Strategic Plan (2002), Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (2005), INPC Implementation Plan for the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (2006) and Stewardship Task Force (2012). This plan is a continuation of this tradition of planning.

The INPC is at an important cross road precipitated by unprecedented situations. The NP System has grown rapidly. Current staff does not have the capacity both steward and protect all of the lands. This problem is compounded by an ageing workforce, many of which are at or near retirement. The INPC is supported by a bureaucracy that has been hit by the same conditions. Filling of vacancies has been non-existent for retirees. Administrative capacity has been decimated. Currently, no middle management, who would be the focus of programmatic reform, exist within the INPC staff. A single director, who will be retiring soon, supervises all staff, coordinates the commissioners and maintains the INPC's relationship with IDNR administration. Field and project staffs have been filling in on the statewide programmatic efforts for over a decade. The commission has been trying to do more with less so long that now it needs to better focus to only do what is possible, letting other non-essential go. It is in this context this plan is being developed, with an understanding that the INPC is going to need to depend more on its partners to get things accomplished.

Planning Methods

INPC Director Randy Heidorn facilitated the development of the Strategic Plan. INPC Staff were convened on January 20-21, 2015 to review the current INPC mission statement and conduct a SWOT analysis of INPC efforts. SWOT analysis looks at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to an organization. In an effort to include all of the activities conducted by the INPC, staff systematically analyzed the phases of natural areas conservation (identification, protection, stewardship and defense) and INPC operations. These issues were organized by themes and staff members were provided with fifteen sticky dots to vote on the themes they thought were the most important. The results of the SWOT analysis (Appendix 1.) were presented to the Commissioners and partners present at a Special Meeting of the INPC on January 26, 2015. Commissioners, consultants and advisors to the commission and INPC and IDNR staff reviewed the mission statement and broke into work groups to develop and draft goals for the Strategic Plan. Based on earlier discussion of the SWOT analysis work groups were established for Stewardship, Protection, Defense, Identification and Partner/Outreach/operations. Goals were defined as generally how the INPC accomplishes its mission. At the 219th Meeting of the INPC on January 27, 2015, those work groups once again met and developed strategies to meet the goals. Strategies were defined as the methods the INPC plan to employ during the time period of the plan. Work groups presented their draft strategies at the meeting. After discussion, all persons present were provided seven stickers to vote providing direction on priorities for the strategies. INPC Staff summarized this information and it is provided in Appendix 2.

After editing, combining and slightly resorting for consistency, a group of staff were asked to draft implementation objectives for the draft strategies. Drafters included Kelly Neal (Stewardship), Kim Roman (Protection), Bob Edgin (Identification) Valerie Njapa (Defense) and Randy Heidorn (Operations, Partners and Outreach). These objectives were in SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time limited). These were edited for consistency and capacity. A final draft plan was produced dividing the objectives into those items that can be accomplished with current on-board staff, and those that need to wait until additional staff are available.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission is to protect and steward high quality natural areas, habitats of endangered and threatened species, and other significant areas in perpetuity, by assisting landowners in the voluntary dedication or registration and management of such public and private lands in the Illinois Nature Preserves System.

Goal 1: Improve or maintain the condition of natural areas within the NP System.

Strategy 1.1: Engage our partners, landowners and the public to increase stewardship in the NP System by leveraging funding, activities and other assistance from those partners. (See also Strategy 7.1)

Objective 1.11: INPC Natural Areas Preservation Specialists (NAPS) meet annually with all landowners/custodians of NP System, discuss management needs of the site(s) capturing those needs (see Objective 1.31) and threats to the site, develop the plan of work for stewardship activities to be conducted by owners/custodians and staff.(see also 2.23, 4.21 and 7.11)

Objective 1.12: Continue to coordinate and support the Volunteer Stewardship Network (VSN), landowners and partners who work with volunteers and individuals interested in volunteering, meeting with leaders at least twice annually.(See also 7.12)

The following modified or additional objectives for Strategy 1.1 are contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Objective 1.12 Extended: Continue to coordinate and support the VSN, landowners and partners who work with volunteers and individuals interested in volunteering meeting with leaders at least twice annually and share 1.13 outreach information on a monthly basis. (See also 7.12)

Objective 1.13: Utilizing INPC website and social media, prepare monthly outreach materials to engage the public, partners, landowners and volunteers to increase awareness regarding stewardship issues and needs. (See also 7.15)

Strategy 1.2: With assistance from landowners, partners, volunteers and students, develop a systematic, prioritized approach to gather local baseline information that can be useful for monitoring, and documenting the success of land stewardship or impacts of unplanned stressors during enforcement actions. (See also Strategy 3.1, 5.1 and 7.2)

Objective 1.21: Working with Natural Heritage and a contractor, develop, deploy and implement an on-line management planning, tracking and reporting system supporting mobile technology to track baseline stewardship information by the end of 2020. (See also 1.31 and 4.65)

Objective 1.22: Develop a written research agenda that helps support adaptive management and circulate it to staff, partners and potential funders. Facilitate at least five research projects through this process by 2020 (see also 1.32)

Objective 1.23: Change permit reporting requirements to include entering data and associated geographic locations into on-line management system by 2020. (See also 7.23)

Objective 1.24: In a joint effort by the NAPS, IDNR staff, landowners, and other partners, complete baseline data forms developed under 3.11 for 40-45 dedicated NP sites by 2020. (See also 5.12 and 7.22)

Objective 1.25: Ensure that the boundaries of all sites legally protected in the NP System are viewed once every three years by staff or partners in person or using the most recent imagery, documenting this surveillance in the management tracking system or in writing through 2020. (See also 7.24)

The following modified or additional objectives for Strategy 1.2 are contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Objective 1.25 Extended: Ensure that the boundaries of all sites legally protected in the NP System are viewed annually by staff or partners in person or using the most recent imagery, documenting this surveillance in the management tracking system or in writing through 2020. (See also 7.24)

Objective 1.26: Publish on the INPC website using social media and other methods current natural resource information needs for sites in the NP System annually, highlighting the top ten needs in each INPC Area. (See also Objective 7.25)

Strategy 1.3: Integrate best science available into the development and implementation of management plans for nature preserves and land and water reserves.

Objective 1.31: Working with Natural Heritage and a contractor, develop, deploy and Implement an on-line management planning, tracking and reporting system supporting mobile technology to track baseline stewardship information by the end of 2020. (See also 1.21 and 4.65)

Objective 1.32: Develop a written research agenda that helps support adaptive management and circulate it to staff, partners and potential funders. Facilitate at least five research projects through this process by 2020 (See also 1.22)

Objective 1.33: Annually update 90 percent of the management schedules that are expired or will expire during that year.

Objective 1.34: Beginning in 2016 prepare a written evaluation of all specific land management actions conducted or contracted by INPC staff and record the evaluation in a database that ultimately can be incorporated into the on line database described in 1.31.

Strategy 1.4: Maintain or increase management and restoration of natural areas in the Nature Preserve System.

Objective 1.41: Annually within each INPC Area prepare a prioritize list of management needs and associated projects; select the projects that will be targeted for completion and resources identified to complete the work. Use this list to develop an INPC Area plan of work.

Objective 1.42: In coordination with landowners, partners and VSN, ensure the implementation of management including prescribed fire, brush and invasive species control at 33% of INPC sites annually.

The following additional Strategy and associated Objectives are contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Strategy 1.5: Conduct a needs assessment to determine the scope of management needed within the NP system.

Objective 1.51: Conduct survey of landowners, partners, volunteers and staff to assess management needed at INPC sites by the end of 2017.

Objective 1.52: If survey not feasible, establish "baseline" condition information at 20% of sites annually where this information is lacking.

Goal 2: To protect more of Illinois' high quality natural areas and other significant lands.

Strategy 2.1: Promote good preserve system design by filling the gaps in the system and protecting the lands with the most significant natural areas conservation value.

Objective 2.11: Conduct gap analysis for high-quality natural communities not or under-represented in the NP System by the end of 2016.

Objective 2.12: Develop an INPC Protection Guideline describing current policies and procedures that determine what sites qualify for dedication and registration by 2017.

Objective 2.13: Contact for owners of all newly designated INAI sites and high priority unprotected existing INAI sites through 2020.

Objective 2.14: Protect 40 parcels including 20 sites completing implementing preserve designs developed under 2.21 and 20 INAI sites in new nature preserves or land and water reserves through 2020.

Strategy 2.2: Promote good preserve design, connectivity, and long-term sustainability of individual preserves/reserves.

Objective 2.21: Create a preserve design/protection plan for 50 existing nature preserves or land and water reserves in Conservation Opportunity Areas or other priority sites through 2020.

Objective 2.22: Contact landowners of sites within preserve design plan and discuss conservation through 2020 resulting in protection of 20 sites.

Objective 2.23: During annual contacts with owners of privately-owned sites in the NP System discuss options for the landowner to transfer fee to conservation organizations. (See 1.11)

Goal 3: Identify suitable areas of significant natural resources to assure comprehensive representation of Illinois biodiversity.

Strategy 3.1: With assistance from landowners, partners, volunteers and students, develop a systematic, prioritized approach to gather local baseline information that can be useful for monitoring, and documenting the success of land stewardship or impacts of unplanned stressors during enforcement actions. (See also Strategy 1.2, 5.1 and 7.2)

Objective 3.11: By the end of June 2017, develop baseline data and monitoring protocols and forms to provide standard information and information specific to unique aspects or significant qualifying features of each site in the NP System. (See also 5.11)

Objective 3.12: By 2017, develop standardized protocols for easement monitoring of sites enrolled in INPC programs.

Objective 3.13: Working with Natural Heritage and a contractor, develop, deploy and implement an on-line management planning, tracking and reporting system supporting mobile technology to be used to track baseline stewardship information by the end of 2020. (See also 1.31 and 4.65)

Strategy 3.2: Better define lands that qualify for inclusion in INPC System.

Objective 3.21: Distribute the remainder of INAI update nominations to field staff for review by 2017.

Objective 3.22: Natural Areas Evaluation Committee act on sites recommended for addition or deletion from the INAI by field staff within three months of submission to Natural Heritage staff in Springfield.

Objective 3.23: By 2018, develop database of funding sources, landowners, volunteers and professional staff who are qualified and willing to assist with collection of biological data necessary for evaluating sites' eligibility for inclusion in the NP System.

Objective 3.24: Beginning in 2017, ensure accuracy of legal descriptions, mapping of boundaries, natural communities, and qualifying feature locations for sites presented for dedication or registration.

Objective 3.25: By 2017, develop standardized qualification guidelines for sites with known threatened and/or endangered species occurrences.

Strategy 3.3: Systematically collect and archive basic natural resource data on sites and species to support decisions to include sites into the Nature Preserves System.

Objective 3.31: By 2017, develop list of available databases which could be utilized to identify sites that could be suitable for inclusion in INPC programs.

Objective 3.32: Beginning in 2016, coordinate with IDNR Fisheries, Illinois Natural History Survey, and United States Geological Survey Long Term Monitoring Program to identify aquatic resources suitable for inclusion in INPC programs.

Objective 3.33: By end of 2019, develop protocols that more clearly define “unusual concentrations of wildlife” for LWR eligibility.

Goal 4: Increase agency efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategy 4.1: Obtain dedicated funding for biological inventories, land acquisition, stewardship and defense.

Objective 4.11: Using Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) and other acquisition funding acquire a minimum of two million dollars of land annually during the period of the plan, by direct IDNR purchase or through land trust grants.

Objective 4.12: Using NAAF including the INPC budget and NAAF Capitol and land trust grants, contract a minimum of \$750 thousand in projects per year for land stewardship.

Objective 4.13: Using up to \$300 thousand of NAAF continue to fund the Groundwater information (e.g. Class 3) project and hire needed technical experts as may be required to address threats.

Objective 4.14: Establish a minimum of \$50 thousand annually in the NAAF Capital funding biological inventories of sites in or proposed to be added into the NP System by 2018.

Strategy 4.2: Leverage partnerships to meet agency goals.

Objective 4.21: INPC NAPS meet annually with all landowners/custodians of NP System, discuss management needs of the site(s) capturing those needs (see Objective 1.31) and threats to the site, develop the plan of work for stewardship activities to be conducted by owners/custodians and staff.(see also 1.11, 2.23 and 7.11)

Objective 4.22: Participate in regular meetings of the organizations representing major partners (Park Districts, Conservation Districts, Forest Preserves Districts, Land trusts).

Objective 4.23: Conduct a minimum of one planned event per INPC Area per year inviting land trusts, conservation and forest preserve district boards, landowners and other interested parties highlighting an INPC protected site and the INPC.

Objective 4.24: Develop a land trust grant program to provide for acquisition, protection and stewardship of natural areas awarding the first grants in FY2017. (See also 7.13)

Objective 4.25: Produce six @ORC articles annually for distribution within IDNR.

The following modified or additional objectives for Strategy 4.2 are contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Objective 4.26: Sponsor a session at a conference or conduct a biannual conference championing and providing sessions on natural areas stewardship, protection and defense. (See 7.32)

Strategy 4.3: Support, promote and regularly review the INPC's Strategic Plan to promote progress and ensure it is aligned with the current situation.

Objective 4.31: Complete, review and submit staff evaluations annually that include and evaluate work objectives directly related to the strategic plan or other plans drafted as a result of the strategic plan.

Objective 4.32: Develop dashboard report to track progress on strategic plan, prepare and present report at the January 2016 meeting of the INPC.

Objective 4.33: Beginning in May 2016 update dash board report for each meeting of the INPC and provide it to commissioners.

Objective 4.34: Beginning in January 2017, annually review the progress on the Strategic Plan at the January Meeting of the INPC and make adjustments as Commissioners believe are appropriate.

Strategy 4.4: Develop and implement a succession strategy.

Objective 4.41: Fill currently vacant INPC Operations Manager, and Nature Preserve Protection Manager, and Area 9 Natural Areas Protection Specialist positions by the end of 2015.

Objective 4.42: Fill vacancies that occur due to retirements or transfers within 6 months of the vacancy being created.

Objective 4.43: Continue to support a minimum of three Natural Heritage Resident Interns, one Graduate Public Service Intern, and the SIU undergraduate intern program annually.

Objective 4.44: Draft a staff succession plan that addresses, activities required to maintain continuity of operations before, during and after staff changes resulting from retirements or other personnel moves by the end of 2015.

Strategy 4.5: Establish a Natural Areas Training Academy to provide training for staff, commissioners, IDNR, landowners and other partners.

Objective 4.51: Develop a staff training plan with emphasis on teaching real estate laws, land protection methods, stewardship of protected lands and related tax laws by the end of 2017.

The following additional objective for Strategy 4.5 is contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Objective 4.52: Investigate and develop the concept of a "Natural Areas Training Academy" brand as an umbrella concept to help provide and market training for INPC/IDNR staff, volunteers, landowners, land trusts and other partners in natural areas conservation by the end of 2016. (see 7.31)

Strategy 4.6: Meet technology needs to realize agency goals.

Objective 4.61: Central staff query field staff about internet capabilities in field offices and upgrade the systems that cannot handle current IT applications by January 2015.

Objective 4.62: Deploy annual report system by the end of 2015 and annually collect data on 70 % of the NP and LWR requiring a report.

Objective 4.63: Complete and deploy the permit tracking system by the end of 2016.

Objective 4.64: Participating with Natural Heritage, deploy Smart Phone technology for GIS for NAPS and provide training for use by end of 2016.

Objective 4.65: Working with Natural Heritage and a contractor, develop, deploy and Implement an on-line management planning, tracking and reporting system supporting mobile technology to track baseline stewardship information by the end of 2020. (See 1.21 and 1.31)

Goal 5: Pro-actively avert threats to sites protected in the Nature Preserves System to prevent adverse impacts; and increase efficiency in responding to incidents and enforcing with INAPA when violations occur.

Strategy 5.1: With assistance from landowners, partners, volunteers and students, develop a systematic, prioritized approach to gather local baseline information that can be useful for monitoring, and documenting the success of land stewardship or impacts of unplanned stressors during enforcement actions. (See Strategy 1.2, 3.1 and 7.2)

Objective 5.11: By the end of June 2017, develop baseline data and monitoring protocols and forms to provide standard information and information specific to unique aspects/significant qualifying features of each site in the NP System. (See also 3.11)

Objective 5.12: In a joint effort by the NAPS, IDNR staff, landowners, and other partners, complete baseline data forms developed under 3.11 for 40-45 dedicated NP sites by 2020. (See 1.24 and 7.22)

Objective 5.13: Maintain a spreadsheet of known or suspected discrepancies of legal descriptions of boundaries and bring 3 sites to the meetings annually to correct them.

The following modified or additional objectives for Strategy 5.1 are contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Objective 5.12 Extended: In a joint effort by the NAPS, IDNR staff, landowners, and other partners, complete baseline data forms developed under 3.11 for 80-90 dedicated nature preserve sites by 2020. (See also 1.24 and 7.22)

Objective 5.13 Extended: Develop spreadsheet and verify the accuracy of boundaries and legal descriptions for 20% of sites in the NP System annually, including identification of appropriate course of action for sites with suspected discrepancies.

Strategy 5.2: Develop and implement response protocols (standard operating procedure [SOP] and work flow chart by incident type).

Objective 5.21: Develop an SOP work flow and performance standards to expedite response actions when a violation to a site protected in the NP System is suspected or can reasonably be assumed by the end of 2016 with input from INPC, IDNR and other partners.

Objective 5.22: In 2017, implement response actions pursuant to the SOP, work flow chart, and performance standard(s) for INPC staff based on Objective 5.21.

Strategy 5.3: Strengthen coordination and communication with IDNR and partners, and use available tools to avert threats.

Objective 5.31: Develop and/or update threats analysis when any management schedules are written or updated.

Objective 5.32: Annually, review rough drafts of Class III, Special Resource Groundwater technical reports for three nature preserve sites; provide feedback to ISGS; review final reports; and prepare and submit formal petitions for Class III groundwater designations for the three sites to Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, landowners and other INPC and IDNR staff as appropriate.

Objective 5.33: Working closely with IDNR staff responsible for the Consultation and Comprehensive Environmental Review programs, review and provide feedback on all projects that may potentially impact sites in the nature preserves system providing comments within two weeks through 2020.

Goal 6: Increase public awareness, support and understanding of INPC, its partners, and their impact.

Strategy 6.1 Work with partners with expertise in communication to increase public awareness and support of INPC, its partners and their impact.

Objective 6.11: Review and describe current INPC communication strategies and methods preparing a white paper for commissioners by the end of 2016.

Objective 6.12: Convene a work group from staff, commissioners and partners, to discuss strategies for improving communications and develop a communication plan by the end of the 2018.

Strategy 6.2: Examine the effectiveness of how bilingual/bicultural communication could enhance the public profile of INPC and its partners.

Objective 6.21: INPC staff identifies regions where Spanish speaking populations could be significant users of sites within the NP System by 2016.

Objective 6.22: INPC staff discusses with public owners and partners identified in 6.21 what efforts and successes they have had with bilingual communications and develops objectives and a list of best practices that could be applied to the NP System for areas identified in 6.21 by 2018.

Objective 6.23: Guided by the objectives and best practices identified in 6.22, implement bilingual communication in targeted areas and evaluate their success at meeting the goals by 2020.

The following additional Strategy and associated Objectives are contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Strategy 6.3 Establish a Natural Areas training academy to provide training for staff, commissioners, IDNR, landowners and other partners.

Objective 6.31: Investigate and develop the concept of a "Natural Areas Training Academy" brand as an umbrella concept to help provide and market training for INPC/IDNR staff, volunteers, landowners, land trusts and other partners in natural areas conservation by the end of 2016. (See also 4.52 and 7.31)

Objective 6.32: Sponsor a session at a conference or conduct a biannual conference championing and providing sessions of Natural Areas Stewardship, Protection and defense.

Goal 7: Enhance partnering opportunities using innovative approaches as a model in preserving biodiversity in Illinois.

Strategy 7.1: Engage our partners, landowners and the public to increase stewardship in the NP System by leveraging funding, activities and other assistance from those partners. (See also Strategy 1.1)

Objective 7.11: INPC NAPS meet annually with all landowners/custodians NP System, discuss management needs of the site(s) capturing those needs (see Objective 1.31) and threats to the site, develop the plan of work for stewardship activities to be conducted by owners/custodians and staff (see also 1.11, 2.23, and 4.21)

Objective 7.12: Continue to coordinate and support the Volunteer Stewardship Network (VSN), landowners and partners who work with volunteers and individuals interested in volunteering, meeting with leaders at least twice annually. (See also Objective 1.12)

Objective 7.13: Develop a land trust grant program to provide for acquisition, protection and stewardship of natural areas awarding the first grants in FY2017. (See also Objective 4.24)

Objective 7.14: Sponsor, coordinate and implement at least one volunteer workday per INPC Area per year at a site protected in the NP System where there are no professional managers.

The following additional objective for Strategy 7.1 is contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Objective 7.15: Utilizing INPC website and social media, prepare monthly outreach materials to engage the public, partners, landowners and volunteers to increase awareness regarding stewardship issues and needs. (See also 1.13)

Strategy 7.2: With assistance from landowners, partners, volunteers and students, develop a systematic, prioritized approach to gather local baseline information that can be useful for monitoring, and documenting the success of land stewardship or impacts of unplanned stressors during enforcement actions. (See also Strategy 1.2, 3.1, and 5.1)

Objective 7.21: Review gaps in area covered by regular monitoring (significant feature and real estate) and develop a plan using staff, volunteers and contractors to fill the gaps in coverage by 2017.

Objective 7.22: In a joint effort by the NAPS, IDNR staff, landowners, and other partners, complete baseline data forms developed under 3.11 for 40-45 dedicated nature preserve sites by 2020. (See also 1.25 and 5.12)

Objective 7.23: Change permit reporting requirements to include entering data and associated geographic locations into on-line management system by 2020. (See also 1.23)

Objective 7.24: Ensure that the boundaries of all sites legally protected in the NP System are viewed once every three years by staff or partners in person or using the most recent imagery, documenting this surveillance in the management tracking system or in writing through 2020.(See also 1.25)

The following additional objective for Strategy 7.2 is contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Objective 7.25: Publish on the INPC website using social media and other methods current natural resource information needs for sites in the Nature Preserves System annually, highlighting the top 10 needs in each INPC Area. (See also 1.26)

The following additional Strategy and associated Objectives are contingent on having additional staff resources or will need to be delayed till after 2020:

Strategy 7.3: Establish a Natural Areas training academy to provide training for staff, commissioners, IDNR, landowners and other partners.

Objective 7.31: Investigate and develop the concept of a “Natural Areas Training Academy” brand as an umbrella concept to help provide and market training for INPC/IDNR staff, volunteers, landowners, land trusts and other partners in natural areas conservation by the end of 2016. (see also 6.31 and 4.52)

Objective 7.32: Sponsor a session at a conference or conduct a biennial conference championing and providing sessions of Natural Areas Stewardship, Protection and defense. (See 4.26)

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