

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

Minutes of the 228th Meeting
(Subject to approval at the 229th Meeting)

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

228-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

Commissioner Covington called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and Tom Lerczak read the roll call.

Commissioners Present: George Covington, Pen Daubach, Abigail Derby Lewis, Bill McClain, Jo-Elle Mogerman, Charles Ruffner, Deborah Stone and Dave Thomas. Donnie Dann via teleconference.

Commission Advisors Present: Thomas Emerson and Richard Berg

Commission Consultants Present: Jim Herkert, Fran Harty and Joe Roth

Others Present: Marni English, John Nelson, Steven Byers, Justin Dillard, Valerie Njapa, Tom Lerczak, Kelly Neal, Angella Moorehouse, Heather Osborn, Kim Roman, Kevin Sierzega and Debbie Newman, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); Christina Feng, Morgan Walder, Tara Kieninger, Michelle Simone, Ann Holtrop, Leigh Ann Henline, Roger Jansen, John Wilker, Eric Smith, Terry Esker, Bob Gillespie, Liz Harney, Beth Kramer, Alexis King and Brad Hayes, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Natural Heritage (DNH); Keith Shank, IDNR, Office of Realty and Environmental Planning; Connie Waggoner and Brandon Jackson, IDNR, Office of Realty and Capital Planning (ORCP); Charles Good, IDNR, Office of Resource Conservation, Operations Section; Scott Schirmer and Nancy C. Johnson, Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA); Jeannie Barnes and Bridget Henning, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS); Susan Dees Hargrove, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); Rita Renwick, Will County Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society; Katie Zaban, Pilcher Park; Mike Miller, Peoria Park District; Tracy Evans, Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board (IESPB); Brett Burkhart, Macon County Conservation District (MCCD); Allison Kearney and Lindsay Keeney, Illinois Environmental Council (IEC); George Rose, Friends of the Sangamon Valley; Jim Arbuthnot, Save the Prairie Society; Bob Eshom and Gertie Eshom, Petitioners; Ed White and Dave Easter, Grand Prairie Friends; Dennis Fitzwilliam, Mark Kaempf, Harry Reichart and Charlotte Hooch, Eagle Cliff Prairie; Dave Monk, Heartland Pathways, Terry Wunderle, Mason County.

228-2) Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Daubach, seconded by Commissioner Derby Lewis, and carried that the Agenda be adopted.

228-3) Approval of Minutes for the 227th Meeting, September 12, 2017

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, and carried to allow Commissioner Dann to attend the meeting via telephone.

Commissioner Dann thanked the other Commissioners and asked if everyone could speak into a microphone so he could hear.

Commissioner Daubach requested that Commissioner Lewis be added as present to the 227th Minutes and the minutes were unanimously approved without a motion or a second.

Commissioner Covington omitted reading the following:

At the 227th Meeting of the INPC, held on September 12, 2017, at the Noble Center, Peoria Park District, Peoria, Illinois, legal protection was completed by the Commission for 4 tracts of land totaling 133.2 acres. These areas are privately owned by individuals, corporations or not-for-profit groups 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. Lands protected included Glenview Naval Air Station Prairie Nature Preserve, an addition and buffer addition to Kennicott's Grove Nature Preserve, the Donnelley Buffer Addition to Almond Marsh Nature Preserve and an addition to Stubblefield Woodlots Nature Preserve.

Protection of these lands came about because the Commission had eight staff in the field working with private and public landowners. There are now 389 dedicated nature preserves totaling nearly 58,879 acres and 184 land and water reserves totaling nearly 51,900 acres.

228-4) Next meeting date and location

May 8, 2018	The DeSoto House, Galena, IL
September 11, 2018	Cache River Wetlands Center, Cypress, IL

Commissioner Covington read the following:
Resolution in Recognition of
Bob Edgin

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission wishes to recognize the leadership and contributions of Bob Edgin upon retirement after 22 years of service as a Natural Areas Preservation Specialist for the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. During his tenure Bob was instrumental in the permanent protection of 11 Nature Preserves, in which he nominated four for inclusion on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory and facilitated the donation of two to the State of Illinois; as well as 35 Land and Water Reserves and 3 Natural Heritage Landmarks, in all totaling 5,832 acres. Bob's contributions included updating the vegetation management guidelines and publishing 31 manuscripts in peer-reviewed scientific journals documenting vascular inventories, endangered plant species in nature preserves and ecological changes through management of natural areas. He

was a leader in prescribed burn management, serving as a member of the Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Board in which he was instrumental in developing the task book for assisting with prescribed burn certification. Bob's continuing commitment to and advocacy for the Commission's Programs is greatly appreciated while his legacy of land protection and stewardship will continue for generations.

By resolution of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, January 23, 2018.

It was moved by Commissioner Ruffner, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, and carried that the minutes from the 227th Meeting be approved.

(Resolution 2407)

Commissioner McClain commented that Bob Edgin represented the persistence and determination in maintaining natural areas and diversity.

228-5) INPC Staff Report

(APPENDIX I)

Tom Lerczak reported:

- Angella has been making progress working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and IDOT discussing and monitoring bumble bees and other pollinators. She has been the point of contact at IDNR for this. Her new intern, Heather Osborn, will start February 13. Heather has a master's degree from Western Illinois University and is working on a PhD at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Her focus is mainly in Botany.
- Steve Byers presented a 5-year update on the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge at the first Southeastern Wisconsin Conservation Summit held at Port Washington, Wisconsin on November 4th.
- Valerie Njapa has been working on a groundwater geochemical monitoring project with the Illinois State Geological Survey for a couple of years at Bluff Springs Fen NP and Lake in the Hill Fen NP. She was able to accomplish this by utilizing \$24,899 from INPC Operating funds since NAAF funds have been frozen due to the lack of a capital budget.
- Debbie Newman has focused on the tree health issues in Southern Illinois due to possible herbicide damage and led a field trip to Knobloch Woods NP with 6 IDNR Springfield staff to look at the situation there.
- Bob Gillespie took Bob Edgin's position with INPC Area 8. Previously he had been a stewardship coordinator at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area and had worked a lot with Bob Edgin.
- Kevin Sierzega has been working with district foresters and the Shawnee National Forest (SNF) and has visited and conducted surveillance on many SNF natural areas.
- Justin Dillard, Tom's intern, will complete his internship on February 5th. Justin has presented 3 proposals to the Commission during his internship.

Tom stated that in spite of not having upper level administrative staff in Springfield, field staff and Springfield staff have continued to work towards supporting the mission of the INPC, in protection, stewardship and defense of lands. They are doing what they know how to do and are doing it very well. Unfortunately, the tracking of this work with reference to the INPC strategic plan has languished since there is not an administrator dedicated to doing that.

The ORC Assistant Director position is still being reviewed by CMS and the INPC Area 6 position should be posted soon.

Scott Schirmer and Nancy Johnson, IDOA, gave a presentation on the gypsy moth.
(APPENDIX II)

Commissioner Covington asked what the significance was of the quarantine.

Mr. Schirmer answered that the quarantine establishes regulations that restrict or prohibit the movement of regulated articles like logging and campers, a way to prevent the artificial spread.

Commissioner McClain asked how long the traps are deployed.

Mr. Schirmer answered they are put out late spring to early summer until the end of summer.

Commissioner Lewis asked what other lepidoptera species are affected by Btk.

Mr. Schirmer and Ms. Johnson answered that most lepidopteran have not emerged at the time Btk is applied and probably would not be affected. Mr. Schirmer explained that rebound of native moths is much quicker than that of the gypsy moth after treatment with Btk.

Commissioner Lewis asked if there was any monitoring of the impacts on native lepidopteran.

Mr. Schirmer answered that with the timing of treatment it has been difficult to monitor but is something that could be discussed.

Commissioner Lewis suggested IDOA work with a point person at INPC, possibly Angella Moorehouse, to create some type of criteria and monitoring.

Commissioner McClain asked when the treatment for gypsy moth would be needed again if they were just treated for.

Mr. Schirmer answered that it is not projected but is based on the number of trap catches.

Commissioner McClain commented that there are types of lepidoptera that have a restricted range and may be more affected. Monitoring for what is there might be helpful as to when and where in determining treatment.

Mr. Schirmer answered that he agreed that working together to get better information will help in treatment.

Ann Holtrop, Division of Natural Heritage Chief, presented a written and oral report to Commissioners.

Commissioner Thomas asked who from the Commission are the designees for drafting the administrative rules for the Illinois Natural Areas Stewardship Act.

Commissioner Daubach indicated that Commissioner Dann had asked her and Fran Harty to work with IDNR on this. She also requested an IDNR contact during the writing period.

Chief Holtrop answered that she would be the main contact for the drafting of the rules.

Chief Holtrop explained the proposed re-organization of the Division of Natural Heritage and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission that the IDNR Administration is pursuing. She indicated that she and Chris Young were continuing to seek input and address comments as they are provided.

Commissioner Covington asked what the timing would be before you could bring something to the Commission.

Chief Holtrop answered that the deadline given to draft a new organization chart is the end of February 2018.

Joe Roth asked if Commissioners and Consultants would be asked to review and comment on this re-organization and what are the changes and how would they make the Commission function better.

Chris Young answered that it is intended to provide information to the Commissioners and Consultants and seek their feedback.

Joe Roth asked how does IDNR think this will be better.

Chris Young answered by integrating staff we can improve communication and provide better support for staff in the field. With new staff coming aboard we want to make sure we have mentoring and good communication. He felt it important to pull together as a team and this was a positive change for the Commission and IDNR. Chief Holtrop's information will be provided via email after the meeting.

Commissioner Covington commented that the concern is if this is a first step in taking away the Commission's independence and would be inconsistent with the legislation and the INAPA.

Commissioner Daubach asked if Chief Holtrop could name the changes to help the Commission understand.

Chief Holtrop answered that instead of having an INPC Director, the main point of contact for INPC would be the Assistant ORC Director, who would be directly under the ORC Director. The

Assistant ORC Director would not be supervisory so day-to-day direction of the Commission field staff and program staff would be under the DNH. The nine INPC field staff would be divided to report to a DNH regional team. It is something that can be looked at further to see if there is something that would work better.

Commissioner Daubach commented that this is a significant change.

Joe Roth encouraged the Commission to be active and push back with Governor Rauner's administration wanting to reduce commissions. It brings the question as to why and how is this going to make the Commission better.

Chris Young answered that it is partly because we have experienced staff preparing to retire and new staff coming in. He felt preserving the institutional knowledge across a larger group of people and have support for the new staff coming in.

Commissioner Thomas found it interesting after finishing the book on George Fell's life and how hard he worked to make the Commission and INPC separate entity. He felt that the Commissioners' concern was with maintaining the independence of the INPC as administrations change.

Commissioner Daubach expressed concerns and asked that the Commission be kept informed.

Commissioner Stone commented that she is concerned about the conflict of roles between IDNR and INPC staff. She asked for a simplified organizational chart and understanding the roles of staff. She is concerned about creating a structure based on the people that are around and vacancies now since those people will change but the structure may not and asked that this be kept in mind. She asked for clarity with the process for Commissioner questions and responses to this reorganization.

Chris Young answered that each Commissioner will be emailed separately so that each can provide feedback separately to himself and Chief Holtrop. He felt that we needed to protect George Fell's vision but we also need to work in today's framework and climate to make a strong organization that will survive into the future.

Commissioner Covington thanked Chris and looked forward to having a meaningful role in this.

228-7) Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

(APPENDIX IV)

Tracy Evans presented the Endangered Species Protection Board staff report.

228-8) Coles Co. – Warbler Woods North Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Roger Janson, on behalf of Grand Prairie Friends, requested approval for the permanent registration of the 90-acre Warbler Woods North as a land and water reserve. Warbler Woods North is located in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Natural communities found at Warbler Woods North include Grade C dry-mesic upland forest and Grade C mesic upland forest. Warbler Woods North qualifies as a land and water reserve because it provides a significant ecological function between two permanently protected parcels, Warbler Woods Nature Preserve and Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve, to create a contiguous 431-acre forest. Results of a breeding bird survey at Warbler Woods North conducted on May 30, 2016 and June 7, 2016 listed 29 species, of which five are recognized as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. At least 57 species of birds inhabit the adjacent Warbler Woods Nature Preserve during the breeding season, including 11 Species in Greatest Need of Conservation, and it is likely that many of these birds also occur at Warbler Woods North. Finally, the wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*) is a Species in Greatest Need of Conservation that also occurs at Warbler Woods North. Currently, there is a maintained hiking trail system consisting of a four-foot-wide dirt base and small aggregate rock placed in key locations to minimize and reduce erosion. A small parking lot consists of a 50-foot by 40-foot area with a rock base and 45-foot access rock road to Bypass Road, which forms the northern boundary of the site. Warbler Woods North will be managed in accordance with the site management plan that provides detailed planned management activities. Removal of invasive plant species and prescribed fire are the main strategies that will be employed to maintain biodiversity and forest structure.

Commissioner McClain asked if there was any trouble with pawpaw in Warbler Woods.

Roger Jansen there is none.

It was moved by Commissioner Daubach, seconded by Commissioner McClain, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the registration of Warbler Woods as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2408)

228-9) Hardin Co. – Lafarge Barker Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Re-Registration

Kevin Sierzega, on behalf of Lafarge Midwest Inc., requested approval to re-register Lafarge Barker Bluff Land and Water Reserve from a 5-year recurring term to a permanent registration. The reserve was initially registered at the 206th INPC meeting (Resolution #2094). It is within the Lesser Shawnee Hills Section of the Shawnee Hills Natural Division in southeast Hardin County, located roughly one mile east of the town of Cave in Rock. The reserve is 77.21 acres total and comprises a large portion (48 acres) of the Barker Bluff INAI site (INAI#33 Categories I, II, and III; 123 total acres). Within these 48 acres are 9.25 acres of Grade A limestone glade, 10.25 acres of Grade B limestone glade/dry upland forest complex, and 28.5 acres of Grade C dry upland forest, in addition to two state-listed endangered plant species (ovate catchfly [*Silene ovata*] and a rare plant species). The glade communities contain many regionally-uncommon plant species such as obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*), white prairie clover (*Petalostemum candidum*), yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), and hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*). Dry upland forest is characterized by mature second-

growth stands composed of oak/hickory species (e.g. chinkapin oak [*Quercus muhlenbergii*] and post oak [*Quercus stellata*]). The remaining 29 acres of the reserve are young second-growth forest in which a third listed species, state-threatened squirting cucumber (*Melothria pendula*) occurs. The reserve is bordered by U.S. Forest Service to the north. This section of the INAI is designated as a Federal Research Natural Area and contains a fourth listed species, state-endangered Ravenel's panic grass [*Dichanthelium ravenelii*]. Barker Bluff and the Collier Limestone Glade (INAI#22), located 1.5 miles due east, represent what was historically the largest contiguous limestone glade system found in Illinois. Recurring management activities (i.e. prescribed fire, brush cutting, and exotics control) at Barker Bluff LWR over recent years have benefitted the natural communities and associated flora. For example, population estimates of state-endangered ovate catchfly increased from 18 individuals in 1998 to >400 individuals in 2014 following prescribed fire. General management goals are to conduct annual surveillance of the endangered and threatened plant species known to occur on or near the reserve to determine presence and estimate population size(s), and to maintain and restore the natural structure and characteristics of the unique natural communities with prescribed fire and selective woody-species removal to mimic natural disturbance regimes. The Commission staff commends Lafarge Midwest Inc. for their commitment to preserving Illinois' natural heritage.

Commissioner Covington asked why the owner decided to make this a permanent registration.

Kevin answered that he believed due to mitigation required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Commissioner Thomas asked if there was much data on vertebrates at this site.

Kevin answered there have not been any surveys done but that he would interested in getting vertebrate and bird surveys.

Commissioner McClain commented it would be beneficial if you could get someone to do quantitative studies of the plant communities which would provide a template for the future.

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

The Commission grants approval for the re-registration of Lafarge Barker Bluff Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2409)

228-10) Kankakee Co. – Addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Kim Roman, on behalf of Dr. Marianne Hahn, requested registration of an addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, located in the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division in Kankakee County. Sixty-two acres were originally registered by Dr. Marianne Hahn as a land and water reserve in 2001. Subsequent additions to the reserve, registered by both Dr. Hahn and the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (occurring in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016), have increased the size of the reserve to approximately 160 acres. Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve is recognized on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI # 1581) for its high-quality dry-mesic sand savanna and for the habitat it provides for 15 state-threatened or endangered plants, and the state-threatened black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), a reptile, and

regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*). Sweet Fern Savanna also provides habitat for an additional 23 insect species and 10 vertebrate species listed as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation on the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. This proposal is for the registration of 2 lots totaling 3.3 acres comprised of Grade B and C dry-mesic sand savanna, sand flatwoods, and former agricultural fields succeeding to sand prairie, as additions to Sweet Fern Savanna. The registration of these additions will buffer habitat for many Species in Greatest Need of Conservation, protect known occurrences of the state-endangered crowded oval sedge (*Carex cumulata*), buffer high-quality natural communities, and promote more efficient management of the reserve. Registration of these tracts will bring the total registered acreage of this site to approximately 163 acres.

Commissioner Lewis asked the Commission about having a conversation regarding engaging the communities versus just the landowner to learn more about the landscape.

Kim answered that we focus on the landowner because we are so limited but that she is trying.

It was moved by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of an addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2410)

228-11) Macon Co. – Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Justin Dillard, on behalf of the Macon County Conservation District, requested approval for a 421.4-acre tract of land as the Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve. The proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve is a part of the greater Rock Springs Conservation Area, which is located immediately southwest of Decatur, in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Rock Springs Conservation Area is owned and managed by the Macon County Conservation District. The majority (380+ acres) of the proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve is comprised of a contiguous gradient of wet-mesic floodplain forest to dry-mesic upland forest situated along a 1.88-mile stretch of the Sangamon River, in addition to several prairie restoration tracts and old fields succeeding to forest. Canopies of the wet-mesic floodplain forest include sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), and silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*); with the forest floor component dominated by nettle species. Major components of the dry-mesic upland forest canopies include black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), and red oak (*Quercus rubra*); supplemented by a variety of forest floor species including sunflower species (*Helianthus*), *Polygonum* species (e.g. smartweed and knotweed), *Eupatorium* species (e.g. bonesets and snakeroots), and other wildflowers (e.g. *Spiranthes*, *Campanula*, and *Liparis*). There are records of 16 bird species sensitive to forest fragmentation observed on the proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve during the breeding season: Acadian flycatcher (*Empidonax vireescens*), Kentucky warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*), wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), yellow-throated vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*), red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), tufted titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*), yellow-throated warbler (*Dendroica dominica*), northern parula (*Parula Americana*), Louisiana waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*), scarlet tanager (*Piranga olivacea*), summer tanager (*Piranga rubra*). The red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), also breeds at the site. There are also

breeding season records of 13 bird Species in Greatest Need of Conservation, as defined by the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Collectively, 369 plant species have been identified in the greater Rock Springs Conservation area. Some notable, conservative, plant species include: wild leek (*Allium tricoccum*), pale green sedge (*Carex pallescens*), pale gentian (*Gentiana alba*), Shumard's oak (*Quercus shumardii*), Virginia spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*), bellflower (*Uvularia grandiflora*), yellow violet (*Viola pubescens*), and sugar grape (*Vitis rupestris*). The proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve, as part of the Rock Springs Conservation Area, will be open to the public for nature observation, hiking, and biking, as administered by the Macon County Conservation District, across their established trail system, which includes several paved stretches that may be expanded. Macon County Conservation District currently allows bow-only, doe-first deer hunting at Rock Springs. Management of the site will focus on controlling exotic species, in addition to fostering habitat for rare species found on the site.

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

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Rock Springs as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2411)

228-12) Will Co. – Pilcher Park Land and Water Reserve, Registration and Nature Preserve, Dedication

Kim Roman, on behalf of the Joliet Park District (JPD), requested approval to register 110 acres of Pilcher Park as a land and water reserve and preliminary approval of 293 acres of Pilcher Park as a nature preserve. JPD owns and manages Pilcher Park Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #937) site, located on the east side of Joliet in Will County. Pilcher Park is a large and diverse forest complex recognized on the INAI for its high-quality mesic upland forest, wet-mesic upland forest, and seep communities representative of the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. Other significant features include a Native American burial mound and a reburial site. Pilcher Park is one of northeastern Illinois' premiere woodlands with outstanding spring wildflower displays and old-growth trees. More than 270 native plant species have been documented within Pilcher Park, and at least 11 species of birds with moderate to high sensitivity to habitat fragmentation breed on site. The Joliet Park District wishes to protect the natural and archaeological features of this 403-acre site in perpetuity by dedicating 293 acres as nature preserve and registering 110 acres as land and water reserve. Pilcher Park is a well-established urban natural area, with miles of hiking trails and roads, outdoor recreation, and a nature center with many park district-sponsored activities and education programs. Allowable uses throughout both the proposed nature preserve and land and water reserve include maintenance of existing roads and parking areas, trails, geocaching, Joliet Park District sponsored 5K races on surfaced trails, bicycling, leashed dogs on trails, and cross-country skiing. Allowable uses in the proposed land and water reserve include maintenance of all existing structures and play areas in the nature center complex, fishing, catch and release of wildlife for educational purposes, mushroom collection, maple syrup production, non-motorized boats, picnicking, primitive camping, teaching of primitive survival skills, and off-trail play. These uses support the mission of the Joliet Park District by engaging children and adults with nature, and are compatible with the long-term preservation of Pilcher Park. Future management and stewardship will promote the high-quality natural communities and resources of statewide significance. Pilcher Park was conveyed to the City of Joliet in 1920 by Robert and Nora Pilcher, with the stipulation that it be left in its "wild and natural state." The inclusion of this site in the Illinois Nature Preserves System

formalizes that wish, and is a fitting tribute to the Pilchers. With its high-quality biological communities and its long-standing traditional uses, it is recommended by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission field staff that Pilcher Park be permanently protected as dedicated nature preserve and registered land and water reserve.

Katie Zaban thanked the Commission for considering this site, Kim for her assistance and work at the site, as well as the partnership with the Grant's who obtained the property.

Commissioner Thomas asked if there were plans and space to build a wetland or retention pond at the headwaters of the run off.

Kim answered that she did not think there was space offsite so it would have to be onsite. She wrote the reserved right to look at the big picture, consider everything and as a last resort with not feasible alternatives they can engineer something in the nature preserve.

It was moved by Commissioner McClain, seconded by Commissioner Mogerma, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Pilcher Park as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2412)

It was moved by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Pilcher Park as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2413)

228-13) Monroe Co. – Eagle Cliff Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Debbie Newman, on behalf of Monroe County, requested preliminary approval of the proposed Eagle Cliff Prairie Nature Preserve (NP) and Nature Preserve Buffer. A one-acre site comprised of 0.7 acres of Grade A loess hill prairie and an approximately 0.3-acre access road. There is a small section of Grade A cliff associated with the hill prairie. The site contains a listed species, the state-threatened sand prairie flat sedge (*Cyperus grayoides*). The proposed preserve includes more than half of the main Grade A loess hill prairie in the 89-acre Miles Prairie Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site (#202) located in the Northern Section of the Ozark Natural Division. Besides protecting the loess hill prairie and limestone glade natural communities and a state-listed species, dedication of the proposed Eagle Cliff Prairie NP supports several campaigns identified in the IWAP, including the Farmland and Prairies Campaign, the Invasive Species Campaign, and the Land & Water Stewardship Campaign. The site is located within IWAP's Bluff Corridor Conservation Opportunity Area, and the Southwestern Illinois Wildlife Action Plan partnership. The proposed preserve is part of a 25-mile corridor of numerous preserved lands in the bluffs of Monroe and Randolph Counties. The site is adjacent to the historic Miles Cemetery.

Debbie introduced the landowners Harry Reichart and Charlotte Hoock.

Ms. Hoock thanked Debbie Newman for her hard work in preparing this proposal and Dennis Fitzwilliam for his past work. As county appointed trustees we are dedicated to preserve and maintain the cemetery and it would be ideal if IDNR would protect the prairie in front of the cemetery.

Commissioner Thomas asked since part of the prairie is not included in the dedication, if it created problems when trying to manage.

Debbie answered that Dennis Fitzwilliam has worked with the adjacent landowners and get permission to manage the entire area.

Commissioner Ruffner asked if we are not allowed to set aside lands that have some sort of quarry or rock underneath them.

Debbie answered that we have done that at White Rock NP and Salt Lick Point LWR which have former quarries underneath them that have reserved mineral rights. The Commission prefers to have easements that include mineral rights.

Commissioner Daubach thanked Dennis Fitzwilliam for all the attention he has given this prairie. She also thanked the Cemetery Trustees and Monroe County for moving ahead with this dedication.

Commissioner McClain commented that reducing the grass biomass would encourage the wildflowers.

It was moved by Commissioner McClain, seconded by Commissioner Daubach, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of a buffer addition to Eagle Cliff Prairie Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 13 of the Agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2414)

Lunch Break 12:39 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

228-14) Monroe Co. – Renault Karst Nature Preserve, Dedication

Debbie Newman, on behalf of Robert Eshom, requested preliminary approval to dedicate 28 acres as the Renault Karst Nature Preserve and 1 acre as a nature preserve buffer. The proposed Renault Karst Nature Preserve (NP) and Nature Preserve Buffer is a 29-acre site owned by Robert Eshom. The site is located in the heart of southwestern Illinois' Sinkhole Plain karst region, and is part of the Collier Springs Recharge Area and the area defined by karst/cave biologists and geologists as the Renault Karst. The site is located approximately 600 feet from the current boundary of the 10,467-acre Renault Karst Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (#1597). Cave passage has not yet been documented in the Collier Spring Recharge Area, but the recharge area is hydrologically connected to the Fogelpole Cave system, Illinois' largest and most biologically diverse cave, listed in the INAI as having Grade A, B, and C terrestrial cave communities and a Grade B aquatic cave community. The Fogelpole Cave System, along with the other cave systems in the Renault Karst INAI site (Illinois Caverns, Dry-Run Cave), contain populations of the federally and state-endangered Illinois cave amphipod (*Gammarus acherondytes*), and Fogelpole contains large populations of the federally and state-endangered Indiana bat, (*Myotis sodalis*) and gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*), and the federally-

and state-threatened Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), as well as a host of globally rare cave invertebrates. One of the main entrances to Fogelpole Cave is located one mile from the proposed Renault Karst NP, making the proposed preserve likely used as summer roost/maternity habitat of two of the listed bat species. The site is located in the Northern Section of the Ozark Natural Division and supports several campaigns identified in the IWAP, including the Forests Campaign, the Invasive Species Campaign, and the Land & Water Stewardship Campaign. The site is located within IWAP's Karst Conservation Opportunity Area, and the Southwestern Illinois Wildlife Action Plan partnership. The proposed preserve is located in between and 1-3 miles from over 2300 acres of protected or conservation-managed lands. The proposed preserve consists of approximately 22 acres of mature and undisturbed dry-mesic upland forest containing more than 20 sinkholes. The site also contains a 7-acre old field. The 1 acre buffer is where two structures exist on the property.

Bob Eshom commended Debbie Newman on her dedication and commitment. He would really like to see this dedication go forward and happen.

Commissioner Daubach thanked the landowners, Bob and Gertie Eshom.

It was moved by Commissioner Daubach, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Renault Karst as an Illinois Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 14 of the Agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2415)

228-15) Cook Co. – Addition to Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steve Byers requested final approval for dedication of 37.28 acres as an addition to Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources vacated and filed with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds in December 2016 a Plat of Vacation at Wolf Road Prairie totaling 37.28 acres. That Plat of Vacation included 11.15 acres of streets and alleys at Wolf Road Prairie not previously dedicated as part of Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve and 26.13 acres (consisting of 303 lots) previously dedicated as part of Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve. The Commission granted preliminary approval for dedication of Wolf Road Prairie (including the streets and alleys subject to the Plat of Vacation) at its 111th Meeting in July 1986 (Resolution No. 898). Wolf Road Prairie is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central Cook County, Illinois. The proposed addition to Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve is located within the Wolf Road Prairie INAI site (INAI #0251) that includes Grade A, B, and C mesic prairie and Grade C freshwater marsh. Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve is owned in part by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (37.28 acres), the Forest Preserves of Cook County (40.51 acres) and Save the Prairie Society (4.71 acres). The Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Preserves of Cook County each own 4 lots located along Hickory Lane to the west of Wolf Road Prairie. These 8 lots, totaling 40 acres, are not part of the Nature Preserve. Protection and stewardship of Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve and the proposed addition support several elements of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Granting final approval of this agenda item will provide formal protection for 11.15 additional acres, consisting of streets and alleys, that were vacated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and increase the size of Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve from 71.35 acres to 82.50 acres. Granting final approval of the 26.13 acres (consisting of 303 lots) included in the Plat of Vacation that are already part of Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve will not negate previous

dedications of land at Wolf Road Prairie executed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Commissioner Thomas thanked Steve for the amount of effort and work that goes into these dedications.

Steve recognized and thanked Jim Arbuthnot, Save the Prairie Society, for being present. He also recognized Valerie Spale who gave her regards.

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

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of an addition to Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 15 of the Agenda for the 228th meeting.

(Resolution 2416)

228-16) Marshall Co. – Lot# 341 Addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, Dedication

Justin Dillard, on behalf of Dr. Maury Brucker and Ms. Emiko Yang, requested final approval for Lot#341, a 5.09-acre tract of land as a nature preserve addition to the 11.0-acre Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, in Hopewell IL. The current preserve consists of grade A glacial drift hill prairie, grade B glacial drift hill prairie, and grade C mesic-upland forest. The proposed addition consists of grade C mesic-upland forest and the eastern boundary of the original INAI grade A glacial drift hill prairie community. The entirety of the current preserve, and approximately 34% of the proposed addition, are within the 78-acre Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural Area (INAI # 231), which is also included within the Peoria Wilds Resource Rich Area and Middle Illinois River Conservation Opportunity Area. The Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural Area is located west of the Illinois River valley in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. The proposed addition abuts lot #117 of the current preserve, on which the largest patch of grade A glacial drift hill prairie of the entire natural area can be found. Notable species present on lot #341 include: great Indian plantain (*Cacalia muhlenbergii*), rough false foxglove (*Agalinis aspera*), American spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*), smooth aster (*Aster laevis*), large yellow lady's-slipper orchid (*Cypripedium pubescens*), New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), and silvery spleenwort (*Athyrium thelypteroides*). Great Indian plantain, squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*), and Bishop's cap (*Mitella diphylla*), among other species, are present on the proposed addition, but have not been found elsewhere in the current preserve. The state-threatened fibrous-rooted sedge (*Carex communis*) is present on nearby lot #119, and likely to occur on the proposed addition, which contains the same ravine habitat on which the nearby population exists. Eleven bird species in Greatest Need of Conservation have been observed at the Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural Area. The dedication of the proposed addition would further the campaign of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan to "restore and manage high-quality examples of all prairie communities." Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve is privately owned, and permission is required for entry. Management of the proposed addition will continue to focus on controlling non-native, invasive, and opportunistic woody species; to collectively foster oak regeneration on the upland forests and encourage expansion of the adjacent grade-A glacial drift hill prairie community.

It was moved by Commissioner Daubach, seconded by Commissioner Mogergerman, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of Lot #341 Addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 16 of the Agenda for the 228th Meeting.

(Resolution 2417)

228-17) Ogle Co./Winnebago Co. – Hall Creek Buffer Addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson, on behalf of the Byron Forest Preserve District (BFPD), requested final approval for the dedication of the 195.2-acre Hall Creek Buffer Addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve (INAI 0931). BFPD owns and manages the Howard Colman Hall Creek Preserve that is located adjacent to the Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve owned and managed by the Natural Land Institute. The existing nature preserve owned by the NLI is 54.69 acres and is located in Winnebago County. In a separate proposal, the NLI seeks dedication of approximately 37.86 acres as buffer addition on their adjacent property located in Ogle County. If both dedication proposals are approved, the existing Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve will increase to 287.75 acres. The proposed buffer addition consists of restored dry-mesic upland forest, former agricultural fields planted to dry-mesic prairie, high-gradient small stream, old fields, oak savanna, and wet-mesic prairie. This buffer addition to the Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve represents a unique opportunity to further protect the dells geologic feature, its groundwater resource, and natural communities important to a wide variety of native plants and animals. This dedication proposal is being presented to the INPC in conjunction with dedication proposals from two other adjacent landowners – the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District and the Natural Land Institute. With approval and execution of these three separate landowner dedications, the total acreage of nature preserve land legally protected at the Severson-Colman Dells Nature Preserve complex will increase from 94.5 acres to 361.1 acres.

It was moved by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Stone, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of the Hall Creek Buffer Addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the Agenda for the 228th Meeting.

(Resolution 2418)

228-18) Ogle Co./Winnebago Co. – Buffer Addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson, on behalf of the Natural Land Institute (NLI), requested final approval for a 37.86-acre buffer addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve in Ogle County. NLI owns and manages the Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve. The existing nature preserve is 54.69 acres in size and is located in Winnebago County adjacent to Severson Dells Nature Preserve (INAI 0931). If approved, this dedication will result in a 92.55-acre nature preserve. The existing Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve protects a series of dolomite cliffs, or dells, that rise nearly 50 feet above the narrow floodplain of Hall Creek. Extant boreal species of native white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Canada yew (*Taxus Canadensis*) still persist at this natural area due to the cool and moist micro-climate provided by natural springs in association with the narrow canyons of the dells. The general character of the proposed buffer addition is native oak woodlands and planted prairie on gently rolling uplands. Hall Creek flows through the northeast portion of the proposed buffer addition. This dedication proposal is being presented to the INPC in conjunction with dedication proposals from two other adjacent landowners – the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District and the Byron Forest Preserves District. With approval and execution of these three separate landowner dedications, the total acreage of nature preserve land legally protected at the Severson-Colman Dells Nature Preserve complex will increase from 94.5 acres to 361.1 acres.

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Stone, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of a buffer addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the Agenda for the 228th Meeting.

(Resolution 2419)

228-20) Winnebago Co. – Buffer Addition to Severson Dells Nature Preserve, Dedication

John Nelson, on behalf of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, requested dedication of 88.3 acres as buffer addition to their existing Severson Dells Nature Preserve (39.8 acres). If approved, the Severson Dells Nature Preserve will encompass a total of 128.1 acres. The existing Severson Dells Nature Preserve was dedicated in 1982 and protects a series of dolomite cliffs, or dells, that rise nearly 50 feet above the narrow floodplain of Hall Creek (INAI 0931). Extant boreal species of native white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Canada yew (*Taxus Canadensis*) still persist here due to the cool and moist micro-climate provided by natural springs in association with the narrow canyons of the dells. The Severson Dells Nature Preserve is open to the public and is used as part of outdoor education programs offered at the Severson Dells Environmental Education Center, which is also located within the Severson Dells Forest Preserve. The general character of the proposed buffer addition is native oak woodland and planted prairie on gently rolling uplands. Hall Creek meanders along gentle terrain on the northern portion of the proposed buffer addition, before entering the dells. Dedication of the proposed buffer addition to Severson Dells Nature Preserve is recommended to further protect the dells geologic feature, the groundwater resource, and potential recharge zones for springs and seeps that sustain the unique flora of the area. Adjacent to the Severson Dells Nature Preserve is the Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve (54.7 acres) which is owned and managed by the Natural Land

Institute. This dedication proposal is being presented to the INPC in conjunction with dedication proposals from two other adjacent landowners – the Natural Land Institute and the Byron Forest Preserves District. With approval and execution of these three separate landowner dedications, the total acreage of nature preserve land legally protected at the Severson-Colman Dells Nature Preserve complex will increase from 94.5 acres to 361.1 acres.

Commissioner Ruffner commented that this is what Commissioner Lewis’ was talking about earlier about working with community based natural resource management and shows a lot of integration and cooperation. He also commended John on his work.

John commented that we have three different landowners working very closely together trying to protect the same geologic features and that is was wonderful to be a part of it and see it happen so quickly.

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

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of a buffer addition to Severson Dells Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 20 of the Agenda for the 228th Meeting.

(Resolution 2420)

228-19) Peoria Co. – Buffer Addition to Singing Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

Angella Moorehouse, on behalf of the Peoria Park District, requested final approval for a 40-acre proposed buffer addition to Singing Woods Nature Preserve. The existing Singing Woods Nature Preserve (695.85 acres) is also owned by the Peoria Park District and was dedicated in May 2001. While none of the proposed buffer addition is included within the Singing Woods Natural Area (INAI #1634) the area consists of low grade C mesic and dry-mesic upland forest habitat and provides valuable buffer to the southwestern portion of the existing preserve. Singing Woods Nature Preserve is located on the western edge of the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. The nature preserve protects a large block of oak forest considered significant for its size, one acre of grade B glacial drift hill prairie, and provides habitat for two state-listed species: downy arrowwood (*Viburnum molle*) and black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). The buffer addition contains contiguous forested habitat and will expand the amount of protected forest which currently supports 32 wildlife “Species in Greatest Need of Conservation”. The proposed buffer will be open to public visitation but there are no existing trails or plans for the development of trails. Currently there primitive hiking trails located within the unprotected Tawny Oaks portion of the park district land (south and east of the proposed buffer) extend into the current nature preserve.

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Stone, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of a buffer addition to Singing Woods Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 19 of the Agenda for the 228th Meeting.

(Resolution 2421)

228-21) Adoption of Strategy to Correct Legal Descriptions

Valerie Njapa, on behalf of INPC Staff, requested approval to adopt a strategy for completing legal description corrections for dedicated nature preserves and registered land and water reserves. While it is always the intent of INPC staff to present accurate pictorial delineations and written legal descriptions when proposing property for inclusion in Illinois' nature preserves system to the Commission for approval, there are cases where discrepancies or errors are discovered after the legal documents for dedication or registration are executed and recorded. In cases where legal description corrections are needed, and where the corrections are consistent with the original intent of the nature preserve dedication or land and water reserve registration, INPC staff would like to implement a strategy to make the needed corrections at the administrative staff level, with no further action required by the Commission. The strategy will consist of developing a corrected legal description, verifying the correction, and then recording and archiving the corrected legal description. Legal description corrections will be reported to the Commission in the staff report in a manner similar to the threats report.

Commissioner Stone asked Valerie if the urgency with retiring staff is to work through sites after a commission meeting, before they retire before the next commission meeting.

Valerie answered that it would be helpful for her to work with them through the verification process because they are more familiar with the sites that need corrections.

Commissioner Stone asked what harm would it be bringing the corrections to the commission after they have retired and after they have transmitted their information to Valerie.

Valerie commented she didn't think there was any harm as long as it is clear what correction is needed, why it is needed and what the path is to get the correction completed.

Commissioner Stone asked that there is no harm in waiting to bring them to the Commission meeting until after the staff has retired.

Valerie answered that is correct.

Commissioner Stone commented that she was having trouble understanding the timeliness of getting the correction done and the clarity because these seem to be cases involving conflict.

Valerie answered that getting them completed in a timely manner is the issue. Many of these have been sitting for many years and were dedicated decades ago. Errors or discrepancies have been discovered.

Commissioner Stone commented that she did not see any harm in waiting to bring these to the Commission for approval unless there is something she is missing about the proposed process.

Valerie asked Commissioner Stone if she has an interest in seeing all the corrections come before the Commissioner regardless if the correction is made to affirm the original intent.

Commissioner Stone answered that “made to affirm the original intent” is not a clear cut description that a piece of property is on the list. She does not feel she has heard enough to be persuaded.

Valerie answered that part of this was to see what the Commission’s comfort level was with passing on the responsibility to INPC staff where we can take the information that was provided in the proposal to the Commission and upon which the Commission approved the site for inclusion.

Commissioner Thomas commented that his interpretation of this was that if it reaffirms what the Commission has already approved it would not need brought to the Commission for approval, only those with substantial changes. He asked if Commissioners would want to see a summary or report of those with minor changes after the corrections have been made.

Commissioner Covington commented that he thought Valerie was suggesting they be in the staff report.

Valerie answered that she would be happy to present a summary of the ones completed during the staff report.

Commissioner Ruffner commented that from a surveyor’s perspective, he was surprised there were not see more of these on every agenda. The quality of deeds in the Midwest is poor. He trusted the INPC staff to come to the Commission with recommendations if we are moving forward or this is 17-20 acres off of what the original deed read.

Commissioner Daubach commented that the strategy included this being presented in the staff report and that it was more efficient use of staff time.

Valerie commented that the Commissioner’s time went into the consideration of the second approval not be required and we would not include them as formal agenda items.

Commissioner Covington asked if procedures have been improved where we get title insurance with every proposal.

Valerie answered yes and title searches are done.

Tom Lerczak answered that sites owned privately do get title insurance.

Valerie answered the source documents, the landowner deed or survey, are used to produce the legal description. She felt past practices created the errors or discrepancies are no longer being used.

Commission Covington asked that the likelihood in the future to the extent of errors might be minor scribner errors, like describing east instead of west.

Valerie answered there may be boundary line disputes, errors in deeds but the errors by INPC staff would be minimized if not eliminated.

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

The Commission grants approval for adopting a strategy for completing legal description corrections, as described in the proposal presented under Item 21 of the Agenda for the 228th Meeting.

(Resolution 2422)

228-22) Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Dave Monk commented that he enjoys coming to the meetings and appreciates what the Commission does and why. His concerns were the loss of prairies along railroad lines and would like to see rail trails reduced to a 10-foot wide trail and would like to see the Commission support this.

Terry Wunderle thanked the Commission to express his views and concerns about deer hunting at Revis Springs Hill Prairie Nature Preserve. He feels deer hunters have shown little to no regard for this preserve and do more damage than the deer. As a hunter, he did not feel deer hunting should be allowed at Revis Springs Hill Prairie Nature Preserve.

Commissioner Thomas thought that when a nature preserve was dedicated if there was going to be hunting or any other activities it had to be part of the approval by the Commission.

Commissioner Daubach answered that it can only be done when deer predation on native plants is a serious enough issue that management becomes necessary. She asked Tom Lerczak if he had any comments.

Tom answered that he didn't have the numbers to debate the issue and indicated he had spoken with Mr. Wunderle about this issue in the past. He also indicated that Mr. Wunderle and he had each spoken to the State Deer Biologists and they felt the deer hunting program should continue. It was instituted after dedication, based on guidelines that INPC had established statewide for deer hunting, from studies done at other sites to establish an over population trend that native flora was being impacted by over browsing. Enough cases were made that it did not seem every site needed to be brought to the Commission for permission to establish a deer hunting program. Since the problem was significantly known, if the biologist felt that it was needed, it could be added to the management plan. Deer Management was added to the management plan for Revis Springs Hill Prairie NP. It was set up as a management tool not another recreational site for deer hunting.

Commissioner Thomas asked if deer stands in trees are allowed as part of this hunting.

Tom answered that they do put stands in trees but everything is supposed to be removed. He also indicated not everyone will follow the rules and was sure people were doing things that should not be done at all of our preserves, which becomes a law enforcement issue. In the conversation he had a year and a half ago, the biologists felt they should continue the deer hunting program and that the activities of the hunters would be addressed by the site managers and law enforcement, if necessary.

Commissioner Lewis asked if the biologists' decision was based on the statewide assessment or impact at the site, is this something that can this be revisited or has it been revisited.

Tom answered that the decision to have deer hunting was based on a statewide trend. There have been plenty of observations of deer browse and anecdotal information but no detailed, scientific study at Revis. Ending deer hunting was revisited a couple years ago when this came up before. Since there was so much effort in getting deer management started, it was better to keep it going rather than reinstitute it in a few years. The number of deer being harvested at Revis is being monitored by deer biologists.

Kelly commented that the INPC's deer management guidelines lay out all the criteria needed to allow for deer management. It is a management activity not a recreational activity. It was determined from the impacts to the flora at that site that deer management should be implemented. The biologist for the site could better address the issue.

Chris Young suggested that maybe one of our biologists could make a presentation at our next meeting to talk about our statewide effort. Deer are managed on the county level and there are goals for each county which is tied to an index of deer/vehicle accidents. It is found that our harvest trends and deer/vehicle accidents correlate very closely. It gives us good trends whether we are going up or down in each county. There has been a reduction of deer since 2010 to bring down the numbers of deer/vehicle accidents. There are specific goals being managed for multiple stakeholders. He would be happy to have staff give a more detailed presentation on deer management.

Commissioner Covington indicated it would be very helpful and that a decision would not be made today. It was an issue of concern to many people. A blanket approach seemed a little troubling and he would like to hear a presentation at our May meeting.

Commissioner McClain commented that there is a far greater, more subtle danger to Revis Hill Prairie and other hill prairies by woody invasion. We need to look at woody invasive management as well as deer management.

Tracy Evans commented that she has spent decades believing that nature preserves protected everything in them. This was a concern to her because she spends time hiking in nature preserves during hunting season. Since hunting seasons have expanded, that from October through January it is not safe to go anywhere else to hike in the woods and did not feel the non-hunting public was aware.

Michelle Simone commented that she has been involved in implementing deer hunting at other nature preserves where we studied the deer browse before and deer hunting. Some of these sites the amount of deer browse was not sustainable and it was causing permanent problems for the natural community. We have seen recovery after using deer management. What got us here was not hunting and the deer refuge here during hunting season. She felt the nature preserves where it was absolutely necessary to preserve the natural community that deer hunting should continue so we are maintaining the deer population low enough that we are not sustaining the damage again.

Commissioner Lewis thanked Michelle and thought maybe having a balance for full recovery is what is needed.

Tom Lerczak commented that the deer hunting program should be continued as a management tool to control the populations at Revis. There could be a better job done managing the hunters and if they are breaking the law then law enforcement should get involved.

Commission Daubach asked if the Commissioners, Consultants and Advisors could have a way of discussing the staffing changes without violating the Open Meetings Act.

Commissioner Thomas asked if they could set a time before or in place of a field trip.

Others agreed.

228-23) Other Business

No other business.

Commissioner Ruffner asked for attendance at the Illinois Prescribed Fire Council Meeting at Giant City State Park, February 6-7, 2018.

228-24) Adjournment

Commissioner Thomas motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Ruffner and approved. The INPC adjourned at 2:40 PM.