

**ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
TWO HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

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

May 11, 2021, 10:00 a.m.
WebEx meeting due to Covid-19 pandemic

*Documentary Material Enclosed

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

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3: Approval of Minutes for the 237th Meeting January 26, 2021

Item 4: Next meeting date and location

September 14, 2021 Olney Central College, Olney, IL

Item 5:* INPC Staff Report

REPORT
Leon Hinz
Nature Preserves Commission

Amy Doll, Director
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves

Item 6:* IDNR Staff Report

REPORT
Ann Marie Holtrop
Division of Natural Heritage

Item 7:* Endangered Species Protection Board Report

REPORT
Joyce Hofmann
Endangered Species Protection Board

Item 8:* Kankakee Co. – Addition to Tallmadge Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Tallmadge Savanna is a 312.6-acre land and water reserve located within the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois and is owned and managed by the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The original land and water reserve acres were registered in 2004 as “Tallmadge Sand Forest”; the landowner has changed its name to “Tallmadge Savanna” to more accurately reflect the significant feature of this land and water reserve. This site is comprised of sand savanna, sand forest, sand flatwoods, and old field communities, and provides habitat for five state-listed species: crowded oval sedge (*Carex cumulata*), Carey’s heartsease (*Polygonum careyi*), primrose violet (*Viola primulifolia*), bristly blackberry (*Rubus schneideri*), and regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*). Additionally, it lies within the Kankakee Sands Conservation Opportunity Area, and provides habitat for at least four wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need. The Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy wishes to register in perpetuity three individual parcels, which total 223.5 acres, and adjoin the existing 312.6-acre land and water reserve. The 223.5-acre proposed addition includes a 125-acre Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site, shares many of the same natural features and communities as the existing land and water reserve, and is primarily comprised of dry sand savanna, dry-mesic sand savanna, dry-mesic sand forest, and old field communities. Registration of the three tracts as an addition to Tallmadge Savanna Land and Water Reserve will protect an INAI site in its entirety, additional acreage of plant and animal habitat in a regionally important landscape, buffer habitat of known occurrences of endangered and threatened plant species within the existing land and water reserve, and help complete good reserve design by nearly doubling its size. It is therefore recommended by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission field staff that the three parcels totaling 223.5 acres be registered in perpetuity as an addition to Tallmadge Savanna Land and Water Reserve. Registration of these tracts will bring the total registered acreage of this site to approximately 536 acres.

REPORT

Kim Roman

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval for Registration

Item 9:* Lee and Ogle Cos. – Addition to Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication

The Nature Conservancy seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 124.49 acres as nature preserve addition to the existing 987.76-acre Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve. The nature preserve is located within the Oregon Section of the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division of Illinois and was first dedicated in January 2013. Upon approval of this proposed addition, the total area of this nature preserve will increase to 1,112.25-acres. The Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve and proposed addition represent a “core area” of a much larger functionally restored prairie ecosystem that is managed by the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and its volunteers. This larger area currently encompasses 4,000 acres of restored prairies, oak savannas, woodlands, and wetlands. Together, these lands represent one of the largest prairie landscapes in Illinois. The land proposed as nature preserve addition herein is located within the Nachusa Grasslands Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site (INAI #0685) which encompasses over 5,000 acres of natural communities and agricultural lands. This INAI site is recognized for its numerous high-quality relict natural communities, extensive grassland habitat, and

suitable habitat for several state-listed plants and animals. The site is especially important habitat for numerous grassland dependent bird species which are in severe decline throughout much of Illinois and beyond. The existing nature preserve and proposed addition contain a rich diversity of plant species found in several restored high-quality relict natural communities and also within outstanding examples of re-created prairies. The preserve owes much of its restoration success to the many volunteer stewards who donate thousands of hours of personal time every year to help manage and restore this impressive native prairie landscape.

The original dedication of the Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve was unique for the Illinois Nature Preserves System as it represented the first time bison grazing was approved as part of a nature preserve dedication. The land proposed herein as nature preserve addition will likewise be available to the Nachusa bison herd.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission staff recommends preliminary approval for dedication of this addition to the Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve.

REPORT
Bill Kleiman
The Nature Conservancy of Illinois

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 10:* McHenry Co. – John C. Wilson Woods Addition to Elizabeth Lake Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) seeks preliminary approval for dedication of the 52.5-acre John C. Wilson Woods Addition to Elizabeth Lake Nature Preserve, located within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. The existing 213-acre nature preserve is owned and managed by the McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD). The proposed addition contains 16 acres of Elizabeth Lake INAI#1014; and provides protection to Grade C dry-mesic savanna and wetland communities on site, as well as provides buffer to adjacent protected wetlands. The Elizabeth Lake INAI site is recognized as Category I due to its large, diverse, high-quality wetland, pond, and lake natural communities; and Category II due to the presence of state-listed species. The MCCD will perform management and restoration activities for the addition under an INPC-approved management plan and Memorandum of Understanding between landowners. The proposed addition lies within the contribution area for the Elizabeth Lake Nature Preserve’s Class III Special Resource Groundwater Area. If approved, this addition to Elizabeth Lake Nature Preserve will bring the total acreage of protected land at this site to 265.5 acres.

REPORT
Melissa Grycan
Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 11:* Cook Co. – Somme Prairie Grove Nature Preserve, Final Dedication

The Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) requests final approval for dedication of the Somme Prairie Grove Nature Preserve. The Somme Prairie Grove Nature Preserve (~85 acres) is part of a larger complex of preserves (approx. 730-acres) found along the west fork of the

North Branch of the Chicago River near Northbrook, IL. The nature preserve includes a small amount of remnant prairie and savanna, along with one of the oldest and most comprehensive savanna and woodland restorations in the Midwest, portions of which have been graded B by the Illinois Natural History Survey.

Somme Prairie Grove is included within the Somme Prairie Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #0245) site and is located within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. The western 70 acres of the Somme Prairie INAI site were dedicated as Somme Prairie Nature Preserve in September 1981 for Grade A and B dry-mesic, mesic, and wet-mesic prairie. This is one of the finest examples of a mesic prairie in Illinois. The original Somme Prairie INAI site was first evaluated in July 1976. It was then described as an 81-acre natural area with 12 acres of Grade A and B mesic prairie. Mesic prairie is the rarest prairie community type in Illinois. The site was expanded to its current size (408.5 total acres) in 2000 to include Somme Prairie Grove and suitable habitat supporting three state-endangered plants. While the current INAI does not list the presence of high-quality plant communities within the proposed Somme Prairie Grove Nature Preserve, surveys by the Illinois Natural History Survey in 2015-2016 determined the site now supports high-quality (Grade B) mesic savanna and dry-mesic woodland. At the time of survey, 8.25 acres of mesic savanna and 9.35 acres of dry-mesic woodland were graded B. Another 63.79 acres of mesic savanna was graded C+, a descriptor used for an area with high potential to be restored to Grade B. Another 0.8 acres of C+ sedge meadow also occurs within the proposed nature preserve.

The only change to this dedication since preliminary approval is a finding during the legal survey of the existence of a very old platted roadway that was never constructed (see plat of survey in instrument of dedication). The FPCC will be seeking to have this roadway legally vacated.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission staff and staff of the Forest Preserves of Cook County recommend final dedication of ~ 85 acres as the Somme Prairie Grove Nature Preserve.

REPORT
John C. Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 12:* Lake Co. – Schreiber Lake Bog Nature Preserve, Final Dedication

The Lake County Forest Preserve District requests final approval to dedicate 355.4 acres of the 2,835.1-acre Lakewood Forest Preserve as the Schreiber Lake Bog Nature Preserve. The site is located within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. The rolling kettle and moraine topography of the proposed nature preserve is a direct result of glacial influences, creating strong physical relief terrain. The site consists of a mosaic of upland oak/hickory woodlands, sedge meadow and wet prairie communities, cultural fields containing 30+year old reforestation plantings, successional fields, and prairie restoration plantings. A significant feature of this dedication is the 5.36-acre glacial lake (Schreiber Lake) and its narrow fringe of floating sedge and willow hummocks that line portions of the lake's edge. These floating vegetative mats provide habitat for six state-listed northern relict bog plant

species. Additionally, two state-listed aquatic emergent macrophytes occur in the regionally noted exceptionally clear waters of Schreiber Lake. Schreiber Lake and the downstream artificial impoundments of Owen and Davis Lakes encompass two Lake County Advanced Identification (ADID) wetlands (ADID #124 & #125) and Illinois Natural Inventory Site (INAI #1502) Schreiber Lake Bog. The proposed nature preserve also provides habitat to 67 bird species, of which at least seven are state-endangered.

There are currently three nature preserves located within Lakewood Forest Preserve owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District: Wauconda Bog Nature Preserve, McLean Woods and Wetlands Nature Preserve, and Broberg Marsh Nature Preserve. Along with the final dedication of Schreiber Lake Bog, these four nature preserves will encompass an impressive 1,317 acres.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission staff and staff of the Lake County Forest Preserve District recommend dedication of 355.4 acres of the Lakewood Forest Preserve as the Schreiber Lake Bog Nature Preserve.

REPORT
Jim Anderson
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 13:* McHenry Co. – Irish Oaks Savanna Nature Preserve, Final Dedication

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County requests final approval to dedicate approximately 40 acres as the Irish Oaks Savanna Nature Preserve. The nature preserve includes a portion of the Harvard Savanna Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (#1268) site. The qualifying feature is a Grade C dry-mesic savanna, best of its kind within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. Presently, the Irish Oaks Savanna INAI site provides habitat for seven bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, and one bird species on the watch list. This list is likely to grow over the next few years since the property was acquired only a few years ago, and the savanna and associated wetlands are being restored. The Irish Oaks Savanna is unique today as it represents one of the best remaining examples of the oak savanna natural communities that once existed within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. While the site suffers from a proliferation of trees and other associated woody vegetation, its relatively limited land conversion history makes this preserve a remarkable opportunity for restoration that will benefit many species of wildlife. Volunteers and staff of The Land Conservancy of McHenry County have already cleared woody vegetation on approximately half of the site. Once fully restored, Irish Oaks Savanna Nature Preserve will be a fine example of the oak savanna and associated wetlands that once dominated this landscape.

The INPC granted preliminary approval for dedication at the 237th meeting on January 26, 2021. Since that meeting, a state-endangered reptile was found on-site, confirming this site has suitable habitat for a listed species.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission staff recommends final approval for dedication of the Irish Oaks Savanna Nature Preserve.

REPORT
John C. Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 14:* Monroe Co. – Maher’s Woods Nature Preserve, Final Dedication

The proposed Maher’s Woods Nature Preserve (NP) is a 16.49-acre site in the bluffs of southwestern Illinois, south of St. Louis, located within the Northern Section of the Ozark Natural Division. Maher’s Woods is part of the 724-acre Potato Hill Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (#200). The proposed preserve consists of 0.5 acre of Grade A loess hill prairie intermingled with approximately 16 acres of Grade C mature, second-growth dry woodland, and Grade A limestone cliff community. The proposed preserve contains a small population of the state-endangered stickleaf (*Mentzelia oligosperma*) and contains habitat for a listed snake species.

The site supports several campaigns identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP), including the Forests Campaign, the Invasive Species Campaign, and the Land & Water Stewardship Campaign. The site is located within IWAP’s Bluff Corridor/Karst Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), and the Southwestern Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (SWIWAP) partnership area. Dedication of the proposed preserve would assist in fulfilling the partnership’s strategic plan goals. These include preserving and stewarding additional acres of hill prairie, glade and forest and their associated species in the COA; addressing invasive species in the COA; encouraging landholders and policy makers to adopt sound land and wildlife management practices; and seeking resources and funding to implement goals of the SWIWAP.

The proposed Maher’s Woods Nature Preserve is owned by Gertrude ‘Sue’ Parada. The proposed preserve has been in Mrs. Parada’s family for many decades. Mrs. Parada is committed to permanently protecting her family’s land and excited about preserving and managing the significant natural resources found on the property.

Preliminary approval for dedication was given to Maher’s Woods at the 234th meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission on January 22, 2020 (Resolution #2491). Note: the site was given preliminary approval at the 234th meeting as a 25-acre site; since that time, our boundary survey found the site to be comprised of 16.49 acres. A portion of the Grade A hill prairie was found to be on the neighbor’s property, thus the amount of prairie on Maher’s Woods has been revised to include 0.5 acre.

REPORT
Debbie S. Newman
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 15:* Winnebago Co. – Burr Oak Valley Nature Preserve, Final Dedication

The Natural Land Institute (NLI) requests final approval to dedicate approximately 98.93 acres as the Burr Oak Valley Nature Preserve. The site is located within the Winnebago Drift Section of the Eastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. The qualifying features for dedication as a nature preserve are suitable habitat for four state-listed plant species and one federally listed insect. A Grade C dry dolomite prairie is also a significant feature. The dolomite prairie has been nominated for inclusion on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) as a Category I, best of its kind and as a Category II, for the presence of state-listed species. Burr Oak Valley is also documented to provide habitat for 13 faunal species listed in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) as Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as well as three state-threatened plants. One state endangered plant has been successfully re-introduced to the site. The state endangered and federally endangered Rusty patched bumble bee was documented on-site in 2018. The site is used by a variety of bird species, 13 of which are listed in the IWAP as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Of these 13 species, nine are documented to actively breed on site. Formal surveys for butterflies, dragonflies, and damselflies reveal a high diversity of insect fauna with some species being rare and habitat specific.

The INPC granted preliminary approval for dedication at the 237th meeting in January 2021.

Staff of the NLI and INPC recommend final dedication of 98.93 acres as the Burr Oak Valley Nature Preserve.

REPORT
John C. Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 16:* Hancock Co. – Martha Anderson Estate

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) was included in the Last Will and Testament of Martha Anderson, to consider acceptance of fee simple ownership of a 160-acre land donation and enrollment into the Land and Water Reserve Program. A regional review was conducted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and based on that review; the recommendation was to decline the offer. It was determined that the property does not presently qualify for inclusion as a land and water reserve, and the INPC does not currently have the ability to pursue fee simple ownership. Both IDNR and INPC were requested by the Estate’s attorney to sign a disclaimer. The Commission Chair drafted a letter to the attorney for Martha Anderson’s Estate, on behalf of the Commission as a whole, to provide support for securing a conservation alternative that fulfills Ms. Anderson’s charitable intentions in Article Fifth of her will.

REPORT
Valerie Njapa
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of the letter to be finalized and sent to the attorney for the Estate of Martha Anderson

Item 17:* Review of Closed Meeting Minutes

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Commissioners must review closed minutes at least twice a year to determine if they must remain closed. The following meetings had closed minutes and need to be reviewed: August 2, 2005; May 2, 2006; May 6, 2008; May 5, 2009; May 7, 2013; September 10, 2013; and September 10, 2019.

REPORT

Valerie Njapa
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Determination if closed minutes remain closed

Item 18: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 19: Other Business

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

Item 20: Adjournment