

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION
Minutes of the 213th Meeting
January 29, 2013

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Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
Minutes of the 213th Meeting
(Approved at the 214th Meeting)

Rochester Public Library
1 Community Drive
Rochester, IL 62563

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

213-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

At a.m., pursuant to the Call to Order of Chair Thomas, the meeting began.

Randy Heidorn read the roll call.

Members present: Dennis Clark, Donnie Dann, Pen DauBauch, William McClain, Mare Payne, Jill Riddell, and David Thomas.

Members absent: George Covington and Lauren Rosenthal.

Others present: Steven Byers, Bob Edgin, Tom Lerczak, Angella Moorehouse, Kelly Neal, John Nelson, Debbie Newman, Debbie Reider, Kim Roman, and Jenny Skufca, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); Jeanne Barnes, Tara Kieninger, Don McFall, Penny Snyder, and John Wilker, Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); Glen Kruse and Anne Mankowski, Endangered Species Protection Board (ESPB), IDNR; Thomas Bumgardner, Tracy Evans, Kathy Davis, Nathan Grider, Hal Hassen, Heather Ryan, and Connie Waggoner, Office of Realty and Environmental Planning (OREP), IDNR; Tracy Boutelle Fidler, Stacy Iwancki, and Nancy Williamson, IDNR; Sue Dees Hargrove, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); Dr. Thomas Emerson, Illinois State Archaeological Survey and INPC Advisor; Fran Harty, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and INPC Consultant; Joe Roth, Openlands and INPC Consultant; Robert Kosin, Village of Barrington Hills; Jim Anderson and Gary Glowacki, Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) representing the proposed Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve, the proposed Sun Lake Nature Preserve, and the request for meso-predator control at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve; Tom Clay, Illinois Audubon Society and INPC Consultant, representing the proposed Loy Prairie Land and Water Reserve; Elizabeth Kessler and Kent Krautstrunk, McHenry County Conservation District, representing the proposed Slough Creek Fen Nature Preserve; Erik Neidy, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC), representing the proposed Belleau Woods Land and Water Reserve, the proposed Springbrook Marsh Land and Water Reserve, and the proposed Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve; Catherine and Willie Spraggins, and Dorothy Spraggins representing the proposed Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna Nature Preserve; Tim Grimscheid, Conserve Lake County, representing the proposed William G. Wells buffer addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve; John Sentell, Lake Forest Open Lands Association, representing the proposed buffer addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve; and George Rose.

213-2) Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Riddell, and carried that the Agenda be adopted as presented.

213-3) Approval the 212th Meeting Minutes, September 11, 2012

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Riddell, and carried that the 212th Meeting Minutes, September 11, 2012 be approved as presented.

213-4) 2013 Meeting Schedule

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

Randy Heidorn stated that it is the Commission's 50th anniversary, as well as the 50th anniversary of Openlands. There are plans to have coordinated celebration with Openlands in May.

Chair Thomas stated that the Governor has appointed Pen DauBach as an INPC Commissioner. She has replaced Dr. Richard Keating.

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

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission wishes to recognize the contributions of Dr. Richard Keating during his tenure as a Commissioner from 2004 to 2012. He will be remembered for his thoughtful perspective applying his years of experience as an ecologist and teacher to conservation of natural areas. His years of service with the Commission and his continuing commitment to and advocacy for the Commission will always be greatly appreciated.

(Resolution 2215)

Chair Thomas stated that a former member of the INPC staff, Patti Malmborg Reilly, passed away recently. The Commission would like to recognize her life and efforts for the conservation community.

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

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission wishes to recognize and commend the lasting contributions made by conservation leader Patti Malmborg Reilly, who was a former Commission staff person and a tireless advocate for conservation of animals, plants, and natural areas throughout Illinois.

Patti's love of nature and especially birds fostered her long-term commitment to protect natural areas. Her skill as an ornithologist and natural areas ecologist combined with her passionate and joyful approach to her work resulted in the advancement of conservation in Illinois. We recognize Patti's original contributions to conservation through her work on raptors and other birds during her tenure as an ornithologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey. We also appreciate Patti's efforts in her position as Natural Areas Program Manager in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, updating and developing comprehensive revisions to the Natural Areas Program. We also recognize her support of Natural Heritage education efforts by 10 years of designing the Step Into The Wild buttons. Her

enthusiasm for the natural world and her talent for evoking nature in art will endure through her outstanding and elegantly designed buttons.

We especially recognize Patti's legacy to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission as the first staff person devoted to full-time defense of nature preserves, land and water reserves and other natural areas. Her leadership and vision resulted in the development of programs and protocol that will continue to conserve the State's most rare natural areas.

Be it resolved that on this day, January 29, 2013, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, on behalf of all Illinois citizens, publicly recognizes and expresses our sincere gratitude to Patti Malmberg Reilly for her lifetime of contributions that helped advance the mission and success of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. Her legacy will endure for all time in the form of the native prairies, forests, wetlands, and all their plant and animal inhabitants which she helped preserve for future generations to experience and enjoy.

(Resolution 2216)

213-5) INPC Staff Report

The INPC staff report is attached as Exhibit A.

Kelly Neal highlighted a few of the stewardship and monitoring efforts contained in the staff report.

Jenny Skufca highlighted a few defense items contained in the staff report.

213-6) IDNR Staff Report

Don McFall presented the IDNR staff report which is attached as Exhibit B.

213-7) Endangered Species Protection Board Report

Anne Mankowski presented the Endangered Species Protection Board report which is attached as Exhibit C.

Chair Thomas reported that at the 212th Meeting of the INPC, held on September 11, 2012, at the Monroe County Annex in Waterloo, legal protection was completed by the Commission for five tracts of land totaling 158.111 acres. Four of these areas are owned by private individuals or not-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 dollar value of the tract of private land is \$381,000 based on conservative estimates of the fair market value of the land. The private sites protected without state acquisition at INPC's 212th Meeting were Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve, Coles County; addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Kankakee County; addition to Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve, Cook County; and buffer addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, Marshall County. Protection of this land came about because the Commission has eight staff in the field working with private landowners. There are now 363 dedicated nature preserves in 83 counties totaling 52,229.176 acres and 167 land and water reserves in 67 counties totaling 47,784.256 acres.

Randy Heidorn stated that the registration agreements for today's land and water reserve presentations have been signed and executed by the landowners as required by administrative rule.

213-8) DuPage Co. – Belleau Woods Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf the FPDDC for the registration of Belleau Woods as an Illinois land and water reserve. The FPDDC wishes to register 122 acres of the 123-acre Belleau Woods Forest Preserve. This site consists largely of a grade C/D mesic upland forest dominated by oaks (*Quercus* spp.) and an old field cultural community that is being restored to a floodplain forest. Belleau Woods qualifies as a land and water reserve because the forested communities at this site exceed the minimum threshold of at least 100 acres and supports breeding populations of area sensitive forest birds. In addition, these forested communities support an array of native plants (309 native species), 72 nonvascular plant species, and 50 bird species. Of the bird species recorded within the last 10 years, the blue-winged warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) are considered species in greatest need of conservation. There are also seven species considered either highly or moderately sensitive to forest fragmentation; including the blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*), hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), hooded warbler (*Setophaga citrine*), red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), scarlet tanager (*Piranga olivacea*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), and wood thrush, have been recorded from the site as summer residents during the last two years. The site is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central DuPage County. The site has undergone management and habitat restoration by the FPDDC since 1995, with an emphasis on removal of invasive woody species, reintroduction of appropriate species via seeding, and control of invasive species. Protection and stewardship of Belleau Woods as a land and water reserve supports several action steps identified in the Forest Campaign section of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) and provides habitat for four birds (with observations less than 10 years ago) identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation.

Mr. Neidy presented the allowable uses and reserved rights for the site which are explained in detail in the registration proposal.

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Payne, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Belleau Woods in DuPage County as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2217)

213-9) DuPage Co. – Springbrook Marsh Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC to register 52 acres of the Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve as Springbrook Marsh Land and Water Reserve. This site consists largely of restored prairies and wetlands and lies adjacent to the 1616-acre Springbrook Prairie that received preliminary

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

Mr. Neidy presented the allowable uses for the site which are explained in detail in the registration proposal.

It was moved by DauBach, seconded by Clark, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for registration of Springbrook Marsh in DuPage County as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2218)

213-10) Marion Co. – Loy Prairie Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Bob Edgin presented a proposal on behalf of the IAS to register 215.95 acres as Loy Prairie Land and Water Reserve. The site, located in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division, was purchased by the IAS on December 20, 2010 with funding assistance provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and the Grand Victoria Foundation. Restoration of the site was initiated the following spring. The proposed land and water reserve consists of two tracts. Tract 1 contains 191.65 acres of managed grasslands consisting of non-native cool-season grasses and native warm-season grasses, 11.9 acres of grade D mesic floodplain forest, two ponds totaling 3.9 acres, 4.9 acres of grade D dry-mesic upland forest, 1.7 acres of developed land and is an introduction site for the state-endangered royal catchfly (*Silene regia*). Tract 2 is 1.62 acres of managed grassland consisting of a fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) field with a few native forbs and a black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) thicket. Additionally, over 100 bird species including 15 listed as in greatest need of conservation in the IWAP have been observed on the proposed land and water reserve. Registration of Loy Prairie will support the IWAP through the Prairie and Farmland and Land and Water Stewardship Campaigns.

Mr. Edgin presented the allowable uses and reserved rights for the site which are explained in detail in the registration proposal.

Tom Clay stated that the Illinois Audubon Society acquired this property, and at some point will transfer the site to the IDNR.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by Clark, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for registration of Loy Prairie in Marion County as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2219)

213-11) Kankakee Co. – Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

Ms. Roman explained the existing pipeline easement and presented the allowable uses and reserved rights for the site which are explained in detail in the dedication proposal.

Mr. Spraggins thanked the Commission, Kim Roman, and Fran Harty for working with his family.

Commissioner Dann stated that he strongly commends the Spraggins' family for their action. The Commission is appreciative of their attitude and willingness to dedicate their magnificent piece of land in perpetuity. This sets a marvelous example to other landowners throughout the state.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by Payne, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Callie Mae Spraggins Savanna in Kankakee County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2220)

213-12) Lake Co. – Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve, Dedication

Jim Anderson presented a proposal on behalf of the LCFPD to dedicate 1092.45 acres of the 1238.7-acre Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve as Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is a mosaic of natural communities (grade C/D freshwater marsh, grade C/D dry-mesic upland forest, grade C/D dry-mesic savanna, and a medium-gradient stream) interspersed with formerly agricultural lands undergoing habitat restoration. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in north-central Lake County. The proposed nature preserve supports populations of seven state-endangered bird species, including the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), king rail (*Rallus elegans*), yellow-headed black bird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*); and three state-threatened species including the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), and Iowa darter (*Etheostoma exile*). The proposed nature preserve also supports one state-endangered plant, the small yellow sedge (*Carex cryptolepis*). The site has undergone habitat restoration by the LCFPD since 1995, with an emphasis on restoring the surface hydrology, reintroduction of appropriate seed, controlled burning, and control of invasive species. Protection and stewardship of Rollins Savanna supports several action steps identified in the Farmland and Prairie, Wetlands, and Forest Campaign sections of the IWAP and provides habitat for 30 birds, two mammals, one amphibian, and four fish described in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. The site also lies within the Lake-McHenry Wetland Complex Conservation Opportunity Area identified in the IWAP. At least seven sites of archeological interest occur within the proposed Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve. The LCFPD has requested approval for use of motorized vehicles (snowmobiles and regional snowmobile trail) in a portion of the proposed Rollins Savanna Nature Preserve which is outlined in the dedication proposal.

Mr. Anderson presented the allowable uses, including the provision of allowing dogs on leashes within the proposed nature preserve, and the provision to allow a snowmobile trail within a portion of the proposed nature preserve. The allowable uses and reserved rights for the site are explained in detail in the dedication proposal. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the provisions to allow leashed dogs in the proposed nature preserve and the snowmobile trail within a portion of the proposed nature preserve. Since the proposed uses are allowed in a land and water reserve, it was suggested that the site could be registered instead of dedicated. The possibility of dedicating the main portion of the site as a nature preserve with the portion containing the snowmobile trail being dedicated as a buffer was also discussed.

Mr. Anderson stated that the LCFPD does not want to seek the designation as a land and water reserve for this site, but it would consider dedication of the main site with the buffer area being the snowmobile trail. A third option could be to remove the trail completely from the dedication request and redraw the boundaries of the proposed nature preserve.

A motion was made by Riddell and seconded by Dann for preliminary approval for dedication; however this would not be seen as setting a precedent for allowing snowmobile trails in current or future nature preserves. A roll-call vote was taken: Riddell-yes; Dann-yes; Clark-no; DauBach-no; McClain-no; Payne-yes; Thomas-yes. With a 4-3 vote, the motion carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Rollins Savanna in Lake County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2221)

A lunch break was taken from 12:25 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.

213-13) Lake Co. – Buffer Additions to Skokie River Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

Mr. Byers discussed reserved rights and allowable uses for the site which are explained in detail in the dedication proposal.

John Sentell stated that the LFOLA greatly values the protection and the recognition that the INPC designation gives to this site. He thanked Mr. Byers for his efforts to bring this site before the Commission.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by DauBach, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of the 1.365-acre Carol Fraser buffer addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve in Lake County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 13 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2222)

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by DauBach, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of the 5.04-acre Lake Forest Open Lands Association buffer addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve in Lake County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 13 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2223)

213-14) Lake Co. – Sun Lake Nature Preserve, Dedication

Jim Anderson presented a proposal on behalf of the LCFPD for preliminary approval of 514.8 acres of Sun Lake Forest Preserve as Sun Lake Nature Preserve. This site includes the entire Sun Lake INAI site (#1248) and includes grade C/D freshwater marsh, grade C/D calcareous floating mat, grade C/D dry-mesic upland forest, open water associated with Sun Lake, and extensive habitat restoration of agricultural lands. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in north-central Lake County. Fifteen state-listed species have been recorded from the proposed Sun Lake Nature Preserve and include ten species of wildlife and five species of plants. Of these, five species have been reported in the IDNR (2012) Natural Heritage Database and ten species have been reported by staff of the LCFPD. The state-endangered wildlife species include the king rail (*Rallus elegans*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), Forster's tern (*Sterna forsteri*), a reptile, fern pondweed (*Potamogeton robbinssii*), spotted pondweed (*Potamogeton pulcher*), bog-panicked sedge (*Carex diandra*), and northern gooseberry (*Ribes hirtellum*). The state-threatened species include the least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*), starhead topminnow (*Fundulus dispar*), and grass-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*). For five of these species, the element occurrences or observations date back over ten years and additional surveys are warranted to determine their current status. It is not likely that the Forster's tern currently nests at the site. The site has undergone habitat restoration by the LCFPD since 2004, with an emphasis on restoring the surface hydrology, reintroduction of appropriate seed, controlled burning, and control of invasive species. Protection and stewardship of Sun Lake supports several action steps identified in the Farmland and Prairie, Wetlands, and Forest Campaign sections of the IWAP and provides habitat for 14 birds, one mammal, one amphibian, and one reptile described in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. The site also lies within the Lake-McHenry Wetland Complex Conservation Opportunity Area identified in the IWAP. There are also three archeological sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places within the proposed Sun Lake Nature Preserve.

Mr. Anderson presented the reserved rights and allowable uses, including the provision to allow leashed dogs in the proposed nature preserve. The reserved rights and allowable uses are explained in detail in the dedication proposal.

It was moved by Dann, seconded by Clark, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for dedication of Sun Lake in McHenry County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 14 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2224)

213-15) DuPage Co. – Springbrook Nature Preserve, Dedication

Erik Neidy presented a proposal on behalf of the FPDDC for final approval for dedication of 1,616 acres of Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve as the Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve lies within the boundary of the Springbrook Prairie INAI site (#1516) and consists largely of restored prairies and wetlands. The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in west-central DuPage County. This INAI site has been recognized as a Category II site because of the presence of endangered or threatened species that include the state-endangered northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), and black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), and state-threatened least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*). FPDDC staff has also documented the presence of 12 additional state-listed bird species that include the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), king rail (*Rallus elegans*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Mississippi kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*), cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), and yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). Suitable breeding habitat (primarily wetlands and grasslands) exists for nearly all these species, except for the cerulean warbler, and should be considered either confirmed or potential breeding birds at this site. FPDDC staff has also documented the presence of three state-listed plant species that are considered introduced to the site and include the hairy umbrellawort (*Mirabilis hirsuta*), red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*). The state-threatened slippershell (*Alasmidonta viridis*) (dead individual) and the state-threatened regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) have been recorded from the site by FPDDC staff. Protection of this large mosaic of restored wetlands and grassland at the proposed Springbrook Prairie Nature Preserve is consistent with several elements of the wetland and grassland campaigns in the IWAP and provides critical habitat for 63 species of wildlife (46 birds, two fish, two mammals, one butterfly, and three insects) identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. The site received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 212th Meeting in September, 2012 (Resolution 2200).

It was moved by Clark, seconded by Riddell, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of Springbrook Prairie in DuPage County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 15 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2225)

213-16) Lake Co. – Sarah and Robert Allgyer Prairie Buffer Addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of Sarah and Robert Allgyer for final approval for dedication of a 0.74-acre buffer addition to the 134.4-acre Skokie River Nature Preserve. Skokie River Nature Preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in

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

It was moved by McClain, seconded by Clark, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of the Sarah and Robert Allgyer Prairie buffer addition to Skokie River Nature Preserve in Lake County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 16 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2226)

213-17) Lake Co. – William G. Wells Buffer Addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of Conserve Lake County for final approval for dedication of the 7.807-acre William G. Wells buffer addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve. The Commission granted preliminary approval for dedication of this site and the Pleasant Hill Wetland buffer addition at its 212th Meeting in September 2012 (Resolution 2201); however, the Pleasant Hill Wetland buffer addition is not being presented at this time. Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve and the William G. Wells buffer addition are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in east-central Lake County. The proposed buffer addition lies within the boundary of the Oak Grove Botanical Area INAI site (#0654). This Category II INAI site has a relatively large and stable population of a state-endangered and federally listed plant species. The proposed buffer addition includes grade C/D sedge meadow and grade C/D wet-mesic and mesic prairie. The prairies at this site are ranked first (or highest tier) for conservation in the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan and the wetlands have been included on the Advanced Identification (ADID) for Lake County in recognition of their high biological and functional value. Protection of the proposed William G. Wells buffer addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve is consistent with recommendations of the "*North Branch of the Chicago River Open Space (Green Infrastructure) Plan*," with elements of the IWAP, and will increase the size of Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve from 92.76 to 100.567 acres.

Tim Grimscheid, Conserve Lake County, thanked the Commission for its consideration of this site. He acknowledged William G. Wells for his help in acquiring this parcel. The Illinois Clean Energy Foundation also assisted with the acquisition.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by DauBach, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of the William G. Wells buffer addition to Dokum Mskoda Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve in Lake County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2227)

213-18) Lee and Ogle Co. – Nachusa Grasslands Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

It was moved by McClain, seconded by DauBach, and carried, with Thomas and Dann abstaining, that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of a Nachusa Grasslands in Lee and Ogle counties as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2228)

213-19) McHenry Co. – Slough Creek Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication

Steven Byers presented a proposal on behalf of MCCD for final approval for dedication of 75.7 acres of Slough Creek Fen as an Illinois nature preserve. Slough Creek Fen received preliminary approval for dedication in two separate actions by the Commission. In September 2011, at its 209th Meeting, the Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication of 40.5 acres of Slough Creek Fen as an Illinois nature preserve (Resolution 2155). Subsequent to that action, the MCCD sought to expand the

boundary of the nature preserve to include important groundwater recharge zones and to amend the boundary slightly. In September 2012, at its 212th Meeting, the Commission granted preliminary approval for dedication of an addition of 34.5 acres to the proposed Slough Creek Fen Nature Preserve (Resolution 2203). The MCCD has now combined the legal description to include both parcels of land. Slough Creek Fen is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in central McHenry County. The proposed nature preserve encompasses most of the Standlee Fen INAI site (INAI # 1614) and consists of grade B calcareous floating mat, grade B shrub fen, grade C mesic savanna, grade C/D sedge meadow, a grade C/D low-gradient small stream, and a cultural community (managed grassland). To date, 226 plant species have been recorded from the proposed nature preserve including a federally-listed plant species. Protection and stewardship of the proposed nature preserve supports two of the IWAP Campaigns that include "... to improve the condition of existing and artificial wetlands" and to promote "...ecological connectivity among forests and other habitat patches." Slough Creek Fen is also located within the Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex Conservation Opportunity Area and MCCD's Queen Anne Macrosite. This proposal reserves the right for the MCCD to conduct a master planning process to determine appropriate public access and recreation opportunities in accordance with INPC guidelines.

Elizabeth Kessler stated that on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the MCCD, she would like to thank the Commission for consideration of this site. MCCD has been making a great effort to dedicate its properties over the years, and she thanked Mr. Byers for his help in doing that.

It was moved by Riddell, seconded by Payne, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of a Slough Creek Fen in McHenry County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 19 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2229)

213-20) Saline Co. – Pruett Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

It was moved by Clark, seconded by McClain, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants final approval for dedication of a Pruett Woods in Saline County as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 20 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting.

(Resolution 2230)

213-21) Lake Co. – Proposal for Meso-Predator Control at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve

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

Kelly Neal presented the INPC staff recommendation, and it is attached as Exhibit D.

It was moved by DauBach, seconded by McClain, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for meso-predator control at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve in Lake County, as described in the proposal presented under Item 21 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting, subject to the stipulations outlined in the staff recommendation.

(Resolution 2231)

213-22) Lake Co. – Proposal for an Outdoor Educational Area at Volo Bog State Natural Area and Volo Bog Nature Preserve

Stacy Iwanicki, site interpreter at Volo Bog State Natural Area, presented a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of the IDNR, landowner of Volo Bog Nature Preserve. She stated that the IDNR proposes to establish an outdoor education area to be known as Chipmunk Woods which would utilize less than one

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

Jenny Skufca presented the INPC staff recommendation, and it is attached as Exhibit E.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the placement of the educational center within the dedicated portion of the Nature Preserve.

A motion was made by McClain and seconded by Dann for approval. A roll-call vote was taken: McClain-yes; Dann-yes; Clark-yes; DauBach-yes; Payne-yes; Riddell-no; Thomas-yes. With a 6-1 vote, the motion carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission grants approval for the placement of an outdoor educational area at Volo Bog State Natural Area and Volo Bog Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 22 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting, subject to the stipulations outlined in the staff recommendation.

(Resolution 2232)

213-23) Administrative Rule Establishing Fees to Recover the Cost of the Natural Heritage Database

Randy Heidorn stated that the sustainability package was approved by the legislature in December, 2012. One of the Commission's authorities in the Natural Areas Preservation Act was modified, and the Commission was given the authority to set and charge fees for data collected under the Natural Areas Preservation Act. The Natural Heritage Database contains data collected for the Commission's use. A rule has been drafted to meet the criteria of the Act, and the Commission will need to approve the proposed rule.

Tara Kieninger presented the proposed administrative rule to recover costs associated with the Natural Heritage Database. Changes to the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act precipitated by the approval

of the IDNR sustainability legislation (P. A. 97-1136 formerly known as Senate Bill 1566) require that the Commission establish fees, by rule, to recover the actual cost of collecting, storing, managing, compiling, and providing access to natural heritage data including inventories, registers, and records compiled and maintained on behalf of the Commission. Staff of the IDNR's Division of Natural Heritage and IDNR Legal Counsel Office, in cooperation with Commission staff, have prepared a draft rule for Commission consideration. This new Part (17 IL Admin Code 4020) is being promulgated pursuant to the revision of Section 6.01 of the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (525 ILCS 30/6.01). This Part defines the inventories, registers and records of nature preserves, other natural areas and features, and species of plants and animals and their habitats maintained on behalf of the INPC, develops procedural and fee framework for providing this data to potential users, and sets the initial fee rates. The Commission is further charged to review these fees and procedures every five years to determine if the fees and procedures generate enough revenue to recover the costs of maintaining the database and then revise the rule accordingly. Once approved by the Commission and the Director of the IDNR, this rule will be submitted to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules for publication, public review, and final approval.

It was moved by Dann, seconded by DauBach, and carried that the following resolution be adopted:

The Commission approves the draft rule for submission to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, with the understanding that the rule will attempt to maximize revenue generated based on the fair market value of the service, as described in the proposal presented under Item 23 of the Agenda for the 213th Meeting, subject to the stipulations outlined in the staff recommendation. In addition, the Commission authorizes the Nature Preserves Commission's Director to approve changes that result from further discussion with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

(Resolution 2233)

213-24) Public Comment Period

Robert Kosin, Director of Administration for the Village of Barrington Hills, stated that he was here as a staff person. He commended the Commission for keeping reciprocity for an open source data exchange in the administrative rules. Data must be scalable, and it must include the new things. The Village of Barrington Hills is in four counties, and it has long recognized that political boundaries are in some ways an illusion especially to natural features. He also stated that the Village of Barrington Hills has an extreme interest in pursuing Class III designation for two Illinois natural areas in their jurisdiction. One is Waggoner Fen, also known as Tower Lakes Fen; and the other is Barrington Bog. The Village looks forward to working with the staff of the INPC, as well as with others who are charged with the dispensation of that program going forward.

213-25) Other Business

There was no other business.

213-26) Adjournment

It was moved by Dann, seconded by Clark, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702
217/785-8686

**STAFF REPORT FOR THE 213TH MEETING OF THE
ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION**
Reporting Period: August 7, 2012 - December 21, 2012

KEY

NP = Nature Preserve
SP = State Park
LWR = Land and Water Reserve
COA = Conservation Opportunity Area
NHL = Natural Heritage Landmark
FPD = Forest Preserve District
INAI = Illinois Natural Areas Inventory
IDOT = Illinois Department of Transportation
INPC = Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
IDNR = Illinois Department of Natural Resources
NAA = Natural Areas Association

AREAS

Area 1 - John Nelson
Area 2 - Steven Byers
Area 3 - Kim Roman
Area 4 - Angella Moorehouse
Area 5 - Thomas Lerczak
Area 6 - Mary Kay Solecki
Area 7 - Debbie Newman
Area 8 - Bob Edgin

INPC OPERATIONS

- Randy Heidorn was appointed Director of the INPC.
- Mary Kay Solecki continued to review protection proposals for inclusion on the INPC agenda.
- Randy Heidorn, Jenny Skufca and Kelly Neal have been coordinating with Office of Realty and Environmental Planning on review of changes to the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (as it relates to consultation) and the Administrative Rule for Consultation.

OUTREACH/PARTNERSHIP/VOLUNTEER COORDINATION/MEETINGS ATTENDED

INPC staff prepared for and participated in:

- Randy Heidorn attended the 39th Natural Areas Conference in Norfolk, Virginia and the quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors of the NAA. Mr. Heidorn was re-elected Vice President of NAA.
- Mr. Heidorn is working with NAA and member organizations of the Chicago Wilderness to host the 40th Natural Areas Conference at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza in Chicago, October 1-4, 2013.
- Mr. Heidorn and Kelly Neal attended the Vital Lands Summit.
- Mr. Heidorn, Ms. Neal, and Jenny Skufca attended a meeting with the consultant working on a Midwest Wind Habitat Conservation Plan.
- Steven Byers and Kim Roman attended the 2nd annual Northeastern Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership meeting.

Area 2

- Represented the INPC at an Openlands luncheon.
- Represented the INPC and Friends of Hackmatack at a Department of the Interior Partners in Conservation awards ceremony.
- Gave a PowerPoint presentation at the Chicago Wilderness Congress on Green Infrastructure and Creation of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge was given formal approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on November 6, 2012.

Area 3

- Represented the INPC at a Chicago Wilderness Executive Council meeting.
- Attended the Chicago Wilderness/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ceremony for the Conservation and Landscaping Award, and the Friends of the Kankakee organization received an awarded for its work at Iroquois Sands LWR.

Area 4

- Attended meetings with Interstate Resource Conservation and Development, Riverbend Stewards, Leopold Working Group, Pheasants Forever, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- Attended meetings with partners within the Upper Mississippi River COA.
- Assisted a Western Illinois University botany class with a seed collection project at Indian Bluff Hill Prairie INAI site.

Area 6

- Attended the community representative forum for the Ameren Transmission Illinois Rivers Project regarding potential impacts on numerous INPC sites and INAI sites.
- Attended the local Landsavers of Champaign and Piatt county community forum.
- Attended a Land Conservation Foundation meeting to celebrate acquisition of a strategic riparian tract on the Sangamon River INAI between two LWRs on the Sangamon River.

Area 7

- Attended the IDNR Volunteer of the Year ceremony at the Illinois State Fair with a nominee.
- Wrote an article about the INPC Volunteer of the Year.
- Gave a PowerPoint presentation on exotics at a Stemler Cave Woods NP Honeysuckle Volunteer Day.
- Attended the Southern Illinois Volunteer Stewardship Network annual meeting.
- Attended the Southwestern Illinois Wildlife Action Plan partnership annual meeting.
- Attended a Large Carnivore Workshop.
- Wrote a letter of support for the Salt Lick Point LWR Committee's nomination for the Governor's Hometown Award.
- Taught a Master Naturalist Class on Introduction to Prairies.
- Attended a Salt Lick Point LWR committee meeting.

PROTECTION

Discussion of protection options with landowners or potential funders

Area 2

- Attended meetings with Conserve Lake County regarding the goal of protecting 20% of Lake County as open space.
- Gave a PowerPoint presentation to an Openlands committee on Land Protection regarding the dedication of portion of Lakeshore Preserve as a NP.
- Attended a meeting with Mayor Kaptain, City of Elgin, regarding protection and stewardship of Trout Park and the nearby Fox River Country Day School site.
- Attended a meeting with The Conservation Foundation regarding opportunities to protect the Forested Fen at Fox River County Day School which has foreclosed.

Area 8

- Shelby Woods NHL has been purchased by a new landowner who is not interested in continuing enrollment in the NHL program. The site will no longer be designated as an NHL but still qualifies as a Category II INAI.
- Discussed terms of protection with potential buyers of one NHL and one LWR.

OTHER LANDOWNER CONTACTS – includes acquisition

Area 1

Black-Crown Marsh LWR

Area 2

Deer Grove West Woodland and Wetland NP
 Baker's Lake NP
 Shoe Factory Road Prairie NP
 Wolf Road Prairie NP
 Spring Lake NP
 McMahan Woods and Fen NP
 Barber Fen NP
 Oakwood Hills Fen NP
 Skokie River NP
 Liberty Prairie NP

Hybernia NP

Area 2 continued

MacArthur Woods NP
 Ferson's Creek NP
 Trout Park NP
 Forested Fen
 Openlands Lakeshore Preserve
 Thatcher Gar Forest
 Fort Sheridan
 Alden Sedge Meadow
Area 3
 Landowners adjacent to Sweet Fern Savanna LWR
 Leesville Savanna INAI

Area 4

Black Hawk Forest NP
 Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP
 Stony Hills NP
 Cedar Glen NP
 Fall Creek Gorge LWR
 Grubb Hollow Prairie NP
 Short Fork Seep NP
 Thistle Hills LWR
 Forest Park South NP
 Detweiller Woods NP
 Brownlee Cemetery Prairie NP
 Spring Grove Cemetery Prairie NP
 Brimfield Railroad Restoration Prairie NP
 Cecil White Prairie LWR
 Jamar Haven LWR
 Nenawakwa LWR
 Samuel Barnum Mead Savanna NP
 Geissler Savanna LWR
 McFarland Hill LWR
 Springdale Cemetery NHL
 New Crystal Lake Club NHL
 Landowner near Burton Creek Natural Area INAI
 Cedar Glen Kibbe INAI
 Mississippi River - Andalusia Slough INAI
 Geneseo Fen INAI
 Rocky Glen INAI

Area 5

Illinois River Sand Areas LWR
 Anderson Prairie LWR
 Fon du Lac Seep LWR
 Bennett's Terraqueous Gardens NP
 Carpenter Park NP
 Baugher Hill Prairie NHL
 Oak Bluff Savanna NP
 Thaddeus Stubblefield Grove NP
 Charles "Chinee" Colvin Sand Prairie LWR
 Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR
 Independence Park Woods LWR
 Black Partridge Park Woods LWR
 Crevecoeur NP
 Sandra Miller Bellrose NP
 Hopewell Hill Prairies NP
 North Elkhart Hill Grove LWR
 Bois du Sangamon NP
 Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep NP
 Sandy Creek Bluffs LWR

Area 3 continued

Newly nominated hill prairie INAI

Area 5 continued

Mackinaw River LWR
 Chinguapin Bluffs LWR
 Funks Grove LWR
 Quiver Prairies INAI
 Fon du Lac Seep LWR
 Matanzas Sand Prairie NHL
 Fern Ridge
 River Hill Seep

Area 6

Rocky Branch NP
 Prospect Cemetery Prairie NP
 Jasmine Hollow LWR
 Upper Sangamon River LWR
 Upper Embarras Woods LWR
 Embarras Bluffs NHL
 Miller's Rocky Branch LWR
 Sibley Grove NP
 Riverbend LWR
 Edgewood Farm LWR
 Little Vermilion River LWR
 Sangamon River INAI
 Mahomet Botanical Area INAI
 Salt Fork Vermilion River INAI
 Walnut Point INAI
 Rock Cut Road Botanical Area INAI

Area 7

DesPain Wetlands LWR
 Katelyn's Woods LWR
 Chip-O-Will LWR
 Salt Lick Point LWR
 White Rock LWR & NP
 Martha and Michelle Prairie LWR
 Wieland Woods LWR
 John M. Olin NP
 E. Dora Bohm Memorial NP
 William and Emma Bohm Memorial NP
 Harry's Prairie NHL
 Storment Hauss NP
 Fults Hill Prairie NP
 Swayne Hollow NP
 Piney Creek Ravine NP
 Horse Creek Glade NHL
 Heather's Hollow NHL
 Luella Schaefer Memorial Hill Prairies LWR
 Stemler Cave NP
 Prairie du Rocher South INAI

Area 8

Beadles Barrens NP
 Robeson Hills LWR
 Horn Prairie Grove LWR
 Marjorie J. Brines White Oak Woods LWR
 Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR
 Padgett Brothers Sweet Gum Woods LWR
 Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR
 Fayette County Wetland

Area 8 continued

Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR
 Edward V. Price Woods LWR
 Wade Heiser Woods NHL
 Shelby Woods NHL
 Robeson Hills NP
 Burnside Forest INAI
 Loy Prairie

EASEMENT/DEDICATION MONITORING/BOUNDARY SURVEYS

Area 1

Boone Creek Fen NP
 Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow NP
 Harlem Hills NP
 Wilson Prairie NP
 Temperance Hill Cemetery Prairie NP
 Beach Cemetery Prairie NP
 Pine Rock NP
 Kettle Moraine NP
 Freeport Prairie NP
 Black-Crown Marsh LWR
 Wapello LWR

Area 2

Dixie Fromm Briggs Prairie NP
 Bluff Spring Fen NP
 Trout Park NP
 Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP
 Skokie River NP
 Liberty Prairie NP
 Sterne's Fen NP
 Brewster Creek Fen NP
 Almond Marsh NP
 Glacial Park NP
 Oakwood Hills Fen NP

Area 3

Carl N. Becker Savanna NP
 Goose Lake Prairie NP
 Sandy Ford LWR
 Mskoda LWR

Area 4

Short Fork Seep NP
 Mississippi River Sand Hills NP
 Cedar Glen NP
 Stony Hills NP
 Brownlee Cemetery Prairie NP
 Josua Lindahl Hill Prairie NP
 Black Hawk Forest NP

Area 4 continued

Nenawakwa LWR
 Jamar Haven LWR
 Cedar Glen LWR

Area 6

Rocky Branch NP

Area 7

John M. Olin NP
 Swayne Hollow NP
 Storment Hauss NP
 Brickey-Gonterman Memorial Hill Prairie NP
 Prairie of the Rock NP
 Angela's Prairie LWR
 Luella Schaefer Memorial Hill Prairies LWR
 Salt Lick Point LWR
 DesPain Wetlands LWR
 Chip-O-Will LWR

Area 8

Red Hills Woods NP
 Big Creek Woods Memorial NP
 Beadles Barrens NP
 Chauncey Marsh NP
 Robert Ridgway Grasslands NP
 Flag Pond LWR
 Chauncey Marsh LWR
 Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR
 Padgett Brothers Sweet Gum Woods LWR
 Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR
 Edward V. Price Woods LWR
 Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR
 Robeson Hills LWR
 Horn Prairie Grove LWR
 Prairie Ridge LWR – Jasper County
 Prairie Ridge LWR – Marion County
 Marjorie J. Brines White Oak Woods LWR
 Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR

BIOLOGICAL INVENTORIES

Area 1

Pecumsaugan Creek/Blackball Mines NP

Area 2

Berkeley Prairie

Area 3

Hooper Branch Savanna NP

Sweet Fern Savanna LWR

Nominated hill prairie INAI site

Nominated savanna INAI sites

Pecumsaugen/Blackball Mines Creek NP

Area 4

Cedar Glen NP

Mississippi River Sand Hills NP

Mississippi River – Nauvoo

Geode Glen Geological Area INAI

Edgewood Farm LWR

Area 6

Edgewood Farm LWR

Area 6 continued

Barnhart Prairie Restoration NP

Salt Fork Vermilion River INAI

Rock Cut Road Botanical Area INAI

Middle Fork of the Vermilion River INAI

Coordinated volunteer monitoring of bald eagle nest and activity on Middle Fork of Vermilion River

Area 8

Beadles Barrens NP

Robert Ridgway Grasslands NP

Robeson Hills LWR

Richard R. and Jean W. Graber Grasslands LWR

Chauncey Marsh LWR

Prairie Ridge LWR - Jasper County

Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR

Embarras Bottoms State Habitat Area

INAI UPDATE

Area 4

Mississippi River – Pool 19 (INAI evaluation)

Area 6

Ford County 03

Ford County 07

Piatt County 16, Bement Woods

Area 7

Flatwoods (3), St. Clair County

STEWARDSHIP – Planning

Stewardship Program, Springfield

- INPC staff was informed by the landowner of Edgewood Farm LWR that biologists from the Illinois Natural History Survey translocated federally and state-endangered northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma rangiana*) and clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) mussels in the Salt Fork River within the boundaries of the LWR. Animal translocations require review and approval from the INPC, a retro-active request for approval will be given at the May 2013 Commission Meeting.
- Continued to coordinate with IDNR’s Office of Resource Conservation and Office of Strategic Services to finalize a web-based permit system. The programming has been completed, and the program is pending server availability and installation.
- Participated in the Volunteer Stewardship Network annual meetings in northeastern, northwestern, central, and southern Illinois.
- Participated in a meeting to discuss hydrologic and management issues at McMahon Woods and Fen NP.
- Kelly Neal and Tom Lerczak met with IDNR District Heritage Biologist Roger Jansen met at Spittle Woods NP to discuss routes of access for bridge replacements at the site.
- Review of management schedules and unscheduled management activities prepared by, or in coordination with, appropriate INPC staff at:

White Rock LWR

Loda Cemetery Prairie NP

Rocky Branch NP

Upper Sangamon River LWR

Martha and Michelle Prairie LWR

Freeman Kame NP

Spring Bluff NP

Merwin Savanna NP

Tallmadge Sand Forest LWR
Short Fork Seep NP
Upper Embarras Woods NP
Munson Township Cemetery Prairie NP
Greenlee Cemetery Prairie NP
Storment Hauss NP
Section 8 Woods NP
Truitt-Hoff NP
Mackinaw River LWR
Lockport Prairie NP
Palatine Prairie NP
Braidwood Dunes and Savanna NP

Churchill Prairie NP
Dixie Fromm Briggs Prairie NP
Middlefork Savanna NP
McAdams Peak LWR
Denby Prairie NP
Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR
Independence Park Woods LWR
Grassy Slough LWR
Paintbrush Prairie NP
Sundrop Prairie NP
Dropseed Prairie NP

Area 2

- Site visit with The Conservation Foundation staff regarding prioritization and allocation of funds for management of several NPs.
- Met with a Village of Oakwood Hills Trustee regarding management and protection Oakwood Hills Fen NP.
- Met with Conserve Lake County on the update of the Liberty Prairie Reserve protection/management plan.

Area 3

- Participated in a Long Run Watershed planning meeting.

Area 6

Edgewood Farm LWR

Area 7

Salt Lick Point LWR
White Rock NP
Horse Creek Glade NHL
Storment Hauss NP
Harry's Prairie NHL
Stemler Cave Woods NP
Stemler Cave NP

Area 6

INPC permit reviews - Edgewood Farm LWR

STEWARDSHIP - Consulting, contract work conducted, administered, or completed

Area 4

Contractor/Project Administration: Quad Cities
Hazardous Fuels Project
· Black Hawk Forest NP
· Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP

Area 6

Riverbend LWR exotics control

Area 7

Horse Creek Glade
Harry's Prairie NHL
Martha and Michelle Prairie LWR
Salt Lick Point LWR
Brickey-Gonterman Memorial Hill Prairie NP
Angela's Prairie LWR
Prairie of the Rock NP
Salt Lick Point LWR

STEWARDSHIP – Land management conducted by staff

Area 1

Harlem Hills NP
Freeport Prairie NP
Wilson Prairie NP
Boone Creek Fen NP

Area 2

Trout Park NP
Queen Anne Cemetery NHL
Bluff Spring Fen NP
Sleepy Hollow Ravine NP
Wingate Prairie NP
Sterne's Fen NP

Area 3

Superior Street Prairie LWR
Sand Ridge NP
Sweet Fern Savanna LWR
Iroquois County State Wildlife Area LWR
Long Run Seep NP
Des Plaines Dolomite Prairies LWR
Hildy Prairie NP
Goose Lake Prairie NP
Millhurst Fen NP
Voight Pauper Cemetery Prairie LWR
Lockport Prairie NP

Area 4

Black Hawk Forest NP
Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP
Stony Hills NP
Jamar Haven LWR
Cedar Glen NP
Samuel Barnum Mead Savanna NP
Geissler Savanna LWR
Brownlee Cemetery Prairie NP
Root Cemetery Savanna NP
Mississippi River Sand Hills NP
Allison Savanna LWR

Area 6

Rocky Branch NP
Barnhart Prairie Restoration NP
Prospect Cemetery Prairie NP
Orchid Hill NHL
Middle Fork Woods NP
Upper Embarras Woods NP and LWR
Loda Cemetery Prairie NP
Sibley Grove NP
Embarras Bluffs NHL
Riverbend LWR
Woodyard Memorial Conservation Area LWR
Robert Allerton Park INAI

Area 7

Swayne Hollow NP
Salt Lick Point LWR
Stemler Cave Woods NP
Angela's Prairie LWR
Brickey-Gonterman Memorial Hill Prairie NP
Prairie of the Rock NP

Area 8

Horn Prairie Grove LWR
Beadles Barrens NP
Robeson Hills LWR

STEWARDSHIP - Prescribed Burning**Area 1**

Kettle Moraine NP
 Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow NP
 Illinois Beach NP
 Harlem Hills NP
 Volo Bog NP
 Boone Creek Fen NP

Area 2

Boone Creek Fen NP
 Queen Anne Cemetery NHL

Area 3

Illinois Beach NP
 Moraine Hills SP
 Boone Creek Fen NP
 Goose Lake Prairie NP

Area 4

Black Hawk Forest NP
 Josua Lindahl Hill Prairies NP
 Samuel Barnum Mead Savanna NP
 Geissler Savanna LWR

Area 5

Hopewell Hill Prairies NP
 Crevecoeur NP
 Walden West LWR
 Spring Lake Sand Prairie
 Miller-Anderson Woods NP

Area 6

Upper Embarras Woods NP and LWR
 Upper Sangamon River LWR
 Jasmine Hollow LWR

Area 7

Katelyn's Woods LWR

Area 8

Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR
 Embarras River LWR
 Chauncey Marsh LWR
 Upper Embarras Woods LWR
 Burnside Forest INAI
 Flag Pond LWR
 Mulberry Grove Railroad Prairie INAI
 Beaver Dam SP
 Lincoln Trail SP
 Ramsey Lake SP
 Stephen Forbes SP
 Harmon Cemetery

DEFENSE

- On November 19, 2012, the INPC provided comments to the Illinois Pollution Control Board related to the Proposed Amendments to Clean Construction or Demolition Debris Fill Operations due to the concern that some of the sites implementing the use of this material as quarry fill are in close proximity to INPC-protected natural areas that depend on maintaining groundwater quality. The INPC supports a groundwater monitoring requirement.
- The INPC provided comments to the IDNR's legislative staff for consideration of inclusion in the development of the statute and administrative rules pertaining to hydraulic fracturing. The INPC comments supported a permitting program with the following stipulations: projects would be reviewed; there would be adjacent landowner contact; and there would be full disclosure of water withdrawal amounts and chemical constituents utilized. Comments included that there should be no hydraulic fracturing within INPC sites or Class III groundwater areas, and there should be a drill site setback of one-half mile (2,640 feet) from an INPC site boundary due to the potential for surface water and groundwater impacts, as well as erosion, sedimentation, and other land disturbance impacts that can occur over acres in the vicinity of the drill pad.

**213TH MEETING - ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION (INPC)
REVIEW OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (IDNR) ECOLOGICAL COMPLIANCE
AND ASSESSMENT TOOL (ECOCAT) CONSULTATIONS
AND COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROGRAM (CERP) SUBMITTALS**

Reporting period: August 7, 2012 - January 17, 2013

EcoCAT Consultations:

<u>Site</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Proposed project under review</u>	<u>INPC recommendation or resolution</u>
Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve (NP)	Ogle	Proposed replacement of two golf course equipment maintenance buildings adjacent to the NP boundary.	Proposed structures will not encroach on the NP boundary. No impact to NP is expected.
Middlefork Savanna NP	Lake	Proposed building and parking lot additions at Chicago Bears training facility.	Recommendations provided regarding stormwater detention and filtration prior to release to adjacent NP. No adverse impacts to the NP are expected.
Barber Fen NP	McHenry	Proposed streambank stabilization and wetland restoration on Nippersink Creek.	Recommendations of best management practices were provided. The project is expected to benefit the NP.
Somme Prairie NP	Cook	Village of Northbrook proposed conversion of recreational park to a dog park adjacent to the NP.	Recommendations submitted to ensure no impact to the NP or to threatened or endangered species. No changes to hydrology, no erosion, no introduction of invasive species, and no staging of equipment on the NP. Interpretive sign to be placed at fence between the NP and the park identifying the NP and the prohibition of dogs.
Romeoville Prairie NP Class III Groundwater Area	Will	Proposed construction of an industrial building, truck docks, detention ponds and all associated paving and utilities.	Determination was made that the proposal is unlikely to adversely modify the Class III Area in quantity or quality of groundwater.

<u>Site</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Proposed project under review</u>	<u>INPC recommendation or resolution</u>
Theodore Marsh Land and Water Reserve (LWR)	Will	Proposed bridge and culvert replacement downstream and adjacent to LWR.	All work will remain within the Illinois Department of Transportation's right-of-way. Stipulations included no impact to LWR, specifically no changes to hydrology, no sedimentation, no impact to protected species, and no staging of equipment on LWR.
Stony Hills NP / Jamar Haven LWR	Hancock	Proposed upgrade including the raising of IL Route 96 to reduce flooding.	All work will remain within IDOT's right-of-way. Recommendations were provided in case threatened or endangered species are encountered.
Cache River LWR	Pulaski	Proposed creation of parking lot for memorial and kiosk adjacent to LWR boundary.	Proposed project will not adversely impact the LWR. Recommended best management practices were included.
CERP submittals:			
<u>Site</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Proposed project under review</u>	<u>INPC recommendation or resolution</u>
Thomson-Fulton Sand Prairie NP	Whiteside	Proposed trail crossing location within the NP for railroad employees to change shifts.	Site was mapped by legal description and area proposed for the exchange of railroad employees is outside of NP boundary.
Spring Bluff and North Dunes NPs	Lake	Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant to modify and enhance stormwater drainage, modify culverts, and reduce impervious surface.	Proposed project would benefit the NPs.

<u>Site</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Proposed project under review</u>	<u>INPC recommendation or resolution</u>
Red Wing Slough/Deer Lake LWR	Lake	Proposed pipeline maintenance through wetland and within easement.	Field meeting was held to determine limits of construction and areas of concern. Pipeline company has provided assurances in writing to avoid all identified concerns.
Goose Lake Prairie NP	Grundy	Proposed abandonment of railroad corridor directly adjacent to NP boundary.	INPC/IDNR staff provided recommendations for abandonment conditions, including removal of rails and ties, grading of ballast, and appropriate surfacing for vehicular travel for management.
Singing Woods NP	Peoria	Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) project - proposed nature center development adjacent to the NP.	No adverse impact to NP is expected. Landowner agreed to work closely with local INPC staff during development stage.
Spitler Woods NP	Macon	Proposed replacement of trail bridges and accompanying trail work due to aging infrastructure.	Strict recommendations for access and best management practices have been provided. The proposal is necessary for public safety.
Sparks Pond LWR	Mason	Proposed wetland construction.	Recommendations were provided to ensure sensitivity to the protected site. The proposed project will benefit state-listed species.
Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR	Wayne	Proposed IDNR timber harvest near LWR utilizing access road south of and adjacent to LWR boundary.	INPC staff field-checked boundary sign placement. No adverse impact to LWR is expected.

**THREATS TO SITES REPORT FOR THE 213th MEETING OF THE
ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION
(Reporting period: August 7, 2012 – January 17, 2013)**

Foley Sand Prairie NP, Lee County – John Nelson, Jenny Skufca

Issue: Proposed wind farm construction and operation. Mainstream Power USA proposes to construct a major wind energy generation facility in Lee, Whiteside, and Bureau counties.

Threat: Wind turbines (up to 520 feet high) are proposed for locations which will result in shadow flicker, noise, ground vibration, and obtrusive visibility within the NP. Flicker, noise, and vibration have the potential to alter animal behaviors which could shift the existing balance of flora and fauna within the NP.

Status: Ongoing. Mainstream Power USA has verbally agreed in a public hearing to relocate or remove the three wind turbines of concern to the INPC.

Bluff Spring Fen NP, Cook County – Steven Byers, John Nelson, Jenny Skufca

Issue: The Bluff Spring Fen Protection Plan (approved June 30, 2003) between the INPC and Bluff City Materials, Inc. calls for conveyance of surface water from Gifford Lake to Poplar Creek through proposed stormwater piping.

Threat: Surface water represents a threat to this groundwater-dependent wetland.

Status: Ongoing. A meeting with INPC staff, Illinois State Geological Survey, Forest Preserve District of Cook County (landowner of the NP), Bluff City Materials, and Vulcan Materials was held on September 25, 2012, to discuss the status of: construction permitting and associated expirations; current groundwater monitoring efforts; any outstanding monitoring and modeling issues; the stormwater piping project timeline, cost estimates, and potential constraints. The stormwater piping project is expected to begin in February 2013.

Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid NP, Lake County – Steven Byers

Issue: The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) intends to widen Route 22. The proposal for dedication of this site provided for this construction.

Threat: Indirect threat posed by sedimentation and subsequent increase in reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) threatens the long-term viability of the federally-threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*). The IDOT biological opinion states that the project is likely to impact the orchid population.

Status: Ongoing. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit for the IDOT to begin construction with the provision that the IDOT acquire the privately-owned NP and adjacent property.

Middlefork Savanna NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca

Issue: An adjacent landowner, Knollwood Golf Club, dredged a golf course pond and piped sediment into the NP owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD).

Threat: Direct and indirect impact to aquatic resources/ephemeral ponds in the NP and at the Knollwood Club.

Status: Ongoing. The Office of the Attorney General is engaged in settlement negotiation with the alleged responsible party based on the Complaint for Injunction and Civil Penalties filed on October 31, 2012, and citing six counts based on violations to the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (INAPA) and one count based on a violation of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act. The INPC continues to coordinate with the LCFPD.

Trout Park Nature Preserve, Kane County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca

Issue #1: The Tollway Authority will be widening I-90 (one additional lane each direction) and will be constructing a new bridge over the Fox River.

Threat #1: Direct impacts to woody cover adjacent to the NP. The right-of-way will be much wider than suggested by current boundary fences and will be impacted during bridge construction. Indirect impacts from additional salt and contaminants from widened road.

Status #1: Ongoing. The INPC staff has met with the Tollway Authority regarding the bridge design features and the need to monitor groundwater. Groundwater monitoring wells have been installed by the Illinois State Geological Survey.

Issue #2: Proposed construction of an auto auction facility within the Class III groundwater for Trout Park NP.

Threat #2: Potential for pollutants from facility to adversely impact groundwater quality.

Status #2: New. The INPC submitted a letter on November 30, 2012, to the Village of East Dundee outlining our concerns. The INPC staff is coordinating with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) regarding design features (liners, etc.) and a groundwater monitoring program to eliminate or reduce the threat to groundwater.

Bliss Woods NP, Kane County – Steven Byers, Jenny Skufca

Issue: An unknown amount of lead shot has been deposited in the NP by years of trap/skeet shooting at nearby former Aurora Sportsman's Club.

Threat: Lead shot poses a threat to humans and the environment.

Status: Ongoing. The INPC staff hosted a phone conference on December 14, 2012, regarding recommendations for remediation with the NP landowner (Forest Preserve District of Kane County), the IEPA, and the Office of the Attorney General. The IEPA submitted Violation Notices to the alleged responsible parties on January 10, 2013, citing a threat to groundwater and open dumping.

North Dunes NP, Lake County – Steven Byers, Randy Heidorn

Issue: The Lake County Public Water District proposes using a portion of the NP for water distribution infrastructure. The NP is owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

Threat: Actions as proposed would constitute a taking of the NP.

Status: Ongoing. The INPC and IDNR staff will participate in a meeting to be held on January 31, 2013, with representatives of the Lake County Public Water District. The INPC staff believes that viable options exist that would not require the taking of dedicated areas.

Tallmadge Sand Forest LWR, Kankakee County – Kim Roman, Jenny Skufca

Issue: Eighty-eight white oak trees were removed from within the LWR.

Threat: Direct impact to the LWR. Unauthorized removal of trees, over 4,000 feet of up to 18-inch ruts were created throughout the interior of the LWR; unauthorized removal of signs.

Status: Ongoing. The Office of the Attorney General is representing INPC as a plaintiff and intervenor (with the LWR landowner, The Nature Conservancy) in a Complaint for Injunction and Civil Penalties filed October 29, 2012, citing four counts based on violations to the INAPA.

Short Fork Seep NP, McDonough County – Angella Moorehouse, Jenny Skufca

Issue: The private landowner discovered that herbicide associated with power line vegetative maintenance had been used within the NP.

Threat: Direct impact to flora in the NP causing damage to the vegetation and soils within the high quality portion of seep/sedge meadow of the NP.

Status: Ongoing. The Office of the Attorney General continues to conduct settlement negotiations with the alleged responsible party based on a Complaint for Injunctive and Other Relief filed December 7, 2011.

Stony Hills NP / Jamar Haven LWR, Hancock County – Angella Moorehouse

Issue: A neighbor has bulldozed approximately 1.5 acres of a corner that was understood to belong to the NP/LWR landowner and was considered dedicated/registered.

Threat: Direct impact to flora potentially within dedicated NP, which was formerly LWR.

Status: New. Due to inaccuracies in the legal description, the INPC staff has been unable to determine legal ownership of the corner. The investigation is ongoing.

Carpenter Park NP, Sangamon County – Thomas Lerczak

Issue: Spray-painted graffiti on the sandstone bluffs along the Sangamon River within the NP.

Threat: Unauthorized intrusion to the NP.

Status: New. The INPC staff photo-documented the intrusion on January 16, 2013, and reported the incident to the landowner, Springfield Park District. Park District law enforcement will investigate.

Crevecoeur NP, Tazewell County – Thomas Lerczak

Issue: At least three adjacent landowners are potentially encroaching on the NP boundary.

Threat: Unauthorized use of the NP.

Status: Ongoing. The INPC staff has submitted an IDNR Contract Request for a land surveying company to conduct a boundary survey of the NP's southern boundaries this winter and place special markers at areas with encroachments.

Gillespie Prairie LWR, Macoupin and Montgomery counties – Thomas Lerczak, Jenny Skufca

Issue: Ditch clearing has occurred on 0.9 acres of the IDNR-owned LWR, a portion of which lies on property leased to Aladdin Steel.

Threat: Unauthorized vegetation removal within the LWR.

Status: New. The IDNR staff has been in contact with Aladdin Steel. The INPC staff is coordinating a written response to Aladdin Steel with the IDNR District Heritage Biologist and IDNR Leases and Concessions staff.

Funks Grove LWR, McLean County and Sandra Miller Bellrose NP, Logan County – Thomas Lerczak, Jenny Skufca

Issue: The City of Bloomington is proposing to install wells into the shallow, alluvial groundwater connected to Sugar Creek.

Threat: A potential withdrawal of five million gallons per day threatens the ecological health of Sugar Creek through possible effects to base flow and groundwater recharge, which could impact the LWR and the NP downstream.

Status: New. The INPC submitted correspondence to the City of Bloomington on November 20, 2012, requesting further study and modeling of the potential impacts to Sugar Creek base flow and groundwater recharge. The INPC has also requested that the City engage in formal consultation with the IDNR related to the proposed project.

Kinney's Ford Seep LWR, Vermilion County – Mary Kay Solecki, Kelly Neal, Jenny Skufca

Issue: Under a 2008 agreement with the IDNR (landowner of the LWR), a local township road commissioner was permitted to stockpile soil in a designated location within Middle Fork State Fish and Wildlife Area for retrieval at a later date.

Threat: The designated location was inadvertently within the LWR. Placement of the soil within the site was an unauthorized use. The lack of erosion control has the potential to impact the habitat of a state-threatened species.

Status: Ongoing. The IDNR has agreed to move the soil pile outside of the LWR. The plan for removal will be resubmitted through the IDNR Comprehensive Environmental Review Program (CERP) and the INPC will have another opportunity to review the proposal at that time.

Jasmine Hollow LWR, Piatt County – Mary Kay Solecki, Jenny Skufca

Issue: A grassy air strip on property in close proximity to the LWR is positioned such that crop dusting planes take off and land at a low altitude over the LWR.

Threat: Potential unknown indirect impact to populations due to noise. Potential to affect breeding and nesting activity of avian species.

Status: New. The INPC submitted correspondence to the Piatt County Zoning Officer on January 15, 2013. A public hearing was held on January 17, 2013, with the County Board voting unanimously in favor of the special use permit for the air strip.

John M. Olin NP, Madison County – Debbie Newman, Jenny Skufca

Issue: Neighboring landowner has cleared approximately three acres of timber along Hop Hollow Creek, which forms a portion of the NP boundary.

Threat: Changes to the surface hydrology of the NP may occur when precipitation returns due to large piles of timber placed along the Creek and across the Creek. Within a short distance of the clearing, the Creek outfalls to the Mississippi River.

Status: Ongoing. The INPC is in receipt of correspondence from the attorney of the neighboring landowner claiming that their survey reveals a different boundary; and as a result, they believe there has not been an encroachment on the NP. The INPC is investigating further. The IDNR's Office of Legal Council has been alerted of the potential encroachment.

Stemler Cave Woods NP, St. Clair County – Debbie Newman

Issue: Graffiti was spray-painted on the specialized INPC entrance sign. A deer stand may be located within the NP boundary.

Threat: Damage to property. Potential unauthorized hunting within the NP.

Status: New. The INPC staff is working with the IDNR Superintendent to replace the entrance sign. Investigation is ongoing related to deer stand.

Prairie Ridge LWR, Marion County – Bob Edgin

Issue: An herbicide encroachment on 15-20 acres of the Bainbridge Tract of the LWR.

Threat: Direct impact to vegetation.

Status: Ongoing. The matter remains under investigation.

**Illinois Department of Natural Resources
report to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
at the 213th meeting, January 29, 2013**

Personnel

Joe Kath was hired as DNRs Endangered Species Program Manager, effective in February. This is the position formerly held by Glen Kruse. It has been vacant since Glen became the Natural Heritage Division Chief in 2005.

Karen Witter retired December 31 after 35 years of state service. Karen was the Director of the Nature Preserves Commission from 1982-1985, the first staff director when the Commission headquarters was relocated to Springfield. She was the primary author of the Natural Areas Plan in 1980. She and her husband Randy own and manage Witter's Bobtown Hill Prairie Nature Preserve, a 5.5 acre preserve in Menard County.

Natural Areas Acquisition Fund

The capital component of the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund has been set at \$2,000,000 for FY'13. The specific allocation is \$1,000,000 for natural area land acquisition, administered by DNRs Realty division, \$750,000 for natural area stewardship, administered by DNRs Natural Heritage division and \$250,000 for natural area defense, administered by the Nature Preserves Commission. The natural area acquisition and natural area defense projects were reviewed and approved by the Commission at the May meeting. The natural area stewardship projects were reviewed and approved by the Commission at the September meeting.

Illinois Invasive Plant Species Council

Chris Evans was named chair of the Illinois Invasive Plant Species Council effective January 1. Chris is also the Invasive Species Campaign Coordinator for the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.

Northwest Illinois Exotic Plant Strike Team

The Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation hired a two-person, full-time team to control exotic and invasive plant species in forested areas in an 11 county area of northwestern Illinois. The priority treatment areas are high quality INAI sites, Nature Preserves, Land and Water Reserves and local non-profit parks and preserves. The strike team is funded by the US Forest Service, Northeastern Area, State and Private Forestry, Forest Health Protection Program with support from the DNR.

Ren-Dill Shale Glade Nature Preserve

The Nature Conservancy acquired the 40 acre Ren-Dill Shale Glade Nature Preserve in Union County in December 2012. The previous owner was Vicki Miles, who dedicated it as a nature preserve in 2001.

Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI)

NAEC

The 63rd Natural Areas Evaluation Committee (NAEC) meeting was held on November 20th and the 64th meeting on December 18th. At these meetings, Category I designation was approved for 5 new sites and 1 existing Category II site as a result of the INAI Update. This represents an additional 8.6 acres of high quality natural communities added to the INAI in 3 different community classes.

Other actions taken at the NAEC included boundary expansions for 3 river segments to include new sample locations with high mussel diversity. A discussion was initiated at the 63rd meeting and discussed at greater length at the 64th meeting related to removing Category II (specific suitable habitat for listed species) designation. Upon direction from the committee, new guidelines are currently being developed for the purpose of providing better guidance to the field for information necessary to allow more informed decisions at the NAEC. Removal of Cat II designation may result in a deletion of a site from the INAI. This discussion underscored the need for better annual surveillance as that is the best indication of long term trends at a site.

INAI Update

Last year, the Division of Natural Heritage made review of nominations from the recently completed INAI Update a priority workload item for the field season. The NAPS were also directed to make assisting in the review of the nomination packets a work priority. That effort was largely successful. The same guidance has been given to the field staffs this year. A successful review of up to 81 nominations this season will complete the IDNR review of sites resulting from the recently completed INAI Update.



ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Illinois 62702 - 1271, (217) 785-8687; FAX (217) 785-2438

Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board report for the January 29, 2013 Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting

Submitted by Anne Mankowski, Director

The Board held its 156th meeting on November 9, 2012. Board actions from that meeting and other activities, included:

1. Five-year review and revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

The Board is working on its required 5-year review of the Illinois List. The Board is required by law to base its listing decisions on scientific evidence. The process usually takes about two years and should conclude in 2014. The current schedule is to review List revision recommendations for approximately one taxonomic group at each Board meeting through 2013. The Board may make preliminary approvals as we move through the process and will conduct a confirming preliminary approval for the entire List when all groups have been completed and prior to holding its required public hearing, which is anticipated for sometime at the end of CY2013 or beginning of CY2014. Following the public hearing, the Board considers comments and evidence received, makes any adjustments to the List that it feels necessary based on those comments and evidence, and approves a final List. The List then moves to the Illinois Administrative Rule amendment process at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The Board reviewed birds in May, mammals in August, and reptiles and amphibians in November. Fish and mussels are scheduled for review at the Board's February meeting.

2. ESPB-lead project to update endangered and threatened animal occurrence records that are greater than 10 years old

Ms. Mankowski continued working on State Wildlife Grant FFY2012 materials for the subject project. As of May 2012, there were 2,958 endangered and threatened species animal occurrences in the Database and more than 25% had not been re-visited/re-surveyed within the last 10 years. The project will address IDNR administrative regions 1- 4 (Region 5 is being addressed under a separate project) and may update as many as 500 records. The project will not initiate survey work until the 2013 field season or later.

3. ESPB review and comment on IDNR and INPC proposed new and amended Illinois Administrative Rules related to endangered and threatened species

Ms. Mankowski provided review and comment to IDNR and INPC on a proposed new rule under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act related to the IDNR sustainability and fees package. The proposed amendments address addition of a fee for Natural Heritage (Biotics 4) Database data requests. Over 70% of records in the Database are for endangered and threatened species occurrences and over 90% of data requests to the Database are for endangered and threatened species information.

Ms. Mankowski provided comments to IDNR in advance of ESPB receipt of IDNR draft proposed amendments to Title 17, Part 1075 (*Consultation procedures for assessing impacts of agency actions on endangered and threatened species and natural areas*). Ms. Mankowski made recommendations to IDNR for improvements to several elements of process and procedure related to evaluation of possible take, maintenance of a record of decision for such, clarifying agency authorities for allowing take, and the progression or transition of project review from the IDNR Consultation Program to the IDNR Incidental Take Authorization program.

4. ESPB initial review and comment on IDNR draft proposed amendments to the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act

Ms. Mankowski provided initial review and comment to IDNR regarding proposed amendments that mostly focus on 520 ILCS 10/11 (b) (the section related to the IDNR consultation process), of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act. The IDNR is also working on proposed amendments to Title 17, Part 1075 (*Consultation procedures for assessing impacts of agency actions on endangered and threatened species and natural areas*), but has not yet provided the Board opportunity for review of its draft changes to that rule. Ms. Mankowski advised the IDNR that the Board recommends against a piecemeal development and review of amendments to the ESPA and supporting Ad Rules and that she would engage in further consultation and review at a time when the IDNR is able to provide the Board a comprehensive package of related proposed amendments for review.

5. ESPB reminder to INPC and IDNR regarding translocations of Illinois endangered and threatened species

Ms. Mankowski recently provided comment as reminder to INPC and IDNR that while the Board is open to further evaluating the topic of endangered and threatened species translocations, in general, the Board does not 1) support/endorse/approve translocations of E&T that are not specifically described and prescribed for within a Board-approved, species-specific, state-level recovery plan or outline, or project-level translocation proposal (and as per agreed upon ESPB/ORC coordination process), or 2) recognize as part of “recovery”, “conservation”, or “research/scientific purpose” translocations that take place absent of respective planning documents.

6. Meetings and Presentations

Ms. Mankowski participates in IDNR ORC twice-monthly administrative meetings.

Ms. Mankowski participated in the 63rd and 64th Natural Areas Evaluation Committee (NAEC) meetings held at IDNR headquarters November 20 and December 18, 2012, respectively. The ESPB is a voting member of the NAEC.

Ms. Mankowski participated in the November 28, 2012 meeting of the Illinois Wildlife Action Team held at IDNR Headquarters in Springfield, Illinois. The Board is a voting member of the team.

Ms. Mankowski met January 23, 2013 with ESPB Members, Laurel Ross and Jeff Walk, to discuss various Board business including elements of the ESPA at 40 review and several issues related to ESPB/IDNR coordination and communication.

Ms. Mankowski, along with Terry Esker (District Natural Heritage Biologist), held an annual planning meeting for the Illinois Barn Owl recovery project on January 8, 2013 at IDNR headquarters.

Ms. Mankowski prepared and distributed the annual “ESPB Season’s Greetings” email to the Board’s email notification distribution list. The email reviews major Board accomplishments and activities from the current year, make note of some planned for the upcoming year, and announces the posting of the Board’s next year meeting schedule.

7. Coordination with IDNR and INPC:

Ms. Mankowski coordinated with the IDNR and INPC, on multiple matters, including:

- Met with IDNR Assistant Director, John Rogner, to discuss ESPB 2014 Illinois E&T List reviews for fish and mussels and recommendations for diminishing potential negative impacts to species from vouchering and relocation/translocation activities. Ms. Mankowski also met with IDNR ORC Fisheries Assistant Chief, Dan Stephenson, to discuss the same.
- Provided recommendation to IDNR Assistant Director, John Rogner, for establishment of endangered and threatened species consultation process/comprehensive environmental review process training for IDNR staff.
- Provided IDNR OCR Director, Jim Herkert, a summary of the status of IDNR/ESPB coordination for review and approval of the IDNR Alligator Snapping Turtle recovery plan and plan element

- recommendations for IDNR consideration prior to presenting it to the Board for consideration as a final, jointly-approved, Illinois recovery plan.
- Provided to IDNR Fisheries information about IDNR/ESPB recovery planning and the endangered and threatened species translocation approval coordination process between IDNR and ESPB that is supposed to precede issuance of an IDNR Endangered and Threatened Species Possession Permit for projects involving translocation.
 - Developed draft revised endangered and threatened species element occurrence reporting forms for use by the IDNR Natural Heritage (Biotics 4) Database. The revisions address some information gaps and terminology discrepancies and are intended to improve the robustness of data reported to the Database. Ms. Mankowski will work with Database staff to finalize the forms, which will replace those currently available via the Board's website.
 - Met with and provided assistance to IDNR OLC in reviewing the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act and the administrative rules that support it as they relate to various endangered and threatened species issues.
 - Provided recommendations to IDNR regarding issues related to authorizations for incidental taking of endangered and threatened species and permits for possession of specimens or products of endangered or threatened species.
 - Provided review and comments to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission regarding proposed translocation of Woolly Milkweed (*Asclepias lanuginosa*).
 - Provided recommendations to Natural Heritage Biologist, Mark Guetersloh, regarding proposed reintroduction of formerly listed Powdery Thalia (*Thalia dealbata*).
 - Continued project management for the development of a Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) recovery plan. The status and distribution of the species and large amount of species-specific data and literature, combined with many years of ongoing activities by multiple partners in Illinois, makes development of a recovery plan for this species very complicated. After several meetings of the recovery planning team and consultation with IDNR ORC Director, Jim Herkert, Ms. Mankowski revised the schedule for developing a recovery plan where the current effort will produce a conservation assessment that will be used in developing a recovery plan after a time when the ESPB and IDNR reconcile some procedural and regulatory elements.
 - Provided review, comments, and questions to IDNR on one draft incidental take authorization: City of Edwardsville water main project in Monroe County, involving Illinois Chorus Frog (*Pseudacris illinoensis*).
 - Handled over 100 phone and email requests for ESPB and E&T information from the public and other state and federal agencies including referring those related to IDNR E&T consultation, incidental take, data, and permit programs, etc.

8. Coordination with other Agencies

Ms. Mankowski provided the Illinois Audubon Society information and review of a Grand Victoria – Vital Lands grant proposal for protection of a site in Lee County that harbors several listed species.

Ms. Mankowski attended an October 25, 2012, US Fish and Wildlife Service regional workshop in St. Louis, MO, involving the use of a surrogate species approach in implementing Strategic Habitat Conservation.

Ms. Mankowski conducted an interview with *Illinois Issues* magazine involving the Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) and a recent acquisition of habitat for the Blanding's Turtle and several other listed species in Lee County by Illinois Audubon Society.

9. 157th meeting of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

The 157th meeting of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board will be at 9:30 A.M. on February 8, 2013 at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.



memorandum

Exhibit D

To: Commissioners
From: Kelly Neal and Jenny Skufca
Date: 17 January 2013
Subject: Staff Recommendation Regarding Item 21 – Meso-predator Control and Determination of Efficacy on Increasing Blanding’s Turtle Recruitment at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve

Background:

Spring Bluff Nature Preserve (SBNP) owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) is a 285.3-acre site located in the Lake Michigan Dunes Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. The site was recognized on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #1066, as part of Illinois Dunes North) for its high to very high quality natural communities: dry-mesic sand prairie, mesic sand prairie, wet sand prairie, wet prairie, dry-mesic sand savanna, marsh and graminoid fen.

The February, 2000 proposal for dedication of an addition to SBNP stated that the “expanse and variety of plant communities at Spring Bluff and North Dunes provide habitat for a great variety of wildlife.” and it was noted that the (then) state-threatened Blanding’s turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) had recently been recorded at the site. The Blanding’s turtle is currently designated as state-endangered (17 Ill. Adm. Code 1010).

The LCFPD has been monitoring the Blanding’s turtle population at SBNP, the adjacent Chiwaukee Prairie (located at the Wisconsin/Illinois border), and Illinois Beach State Park (SBNP macrosite) since 2004. The SBNP macrosite represents one of the largest and most well-studied populations (N=165) in the state.

The Blanding’s turtle is a long-lived, semi-aquatic turtle whose populations are in decline throughout much of its range. Blanding’s turtles use open savanna and sand prairie with sparse herbaceous vegetation cover for nesting. Due to historic fire suppression, invasive shrub encroachment is a significant threat to Blanding’s turtle nesting habitat. Since 2008, over 75 acres of prairie and savanna in the SBNP macrosite adjacent to nesting grounds have been cleared of invasive shrubs. This work has helped expand available nesting habitat and reduced edge habitat frequently used as travel corridors by nest predators. Shrub encroachment of nesting habitat is not the only threat to Blanding’s turtle population viability in this area - nest depredation is also a significant threat. Numerous studies have shown that predation on Blanding’s turtle eggs and hatchling is high and could limit population sustainability. Since nest research efforts began in 2006, 100% of unprotected, monitored Blanding’s turtle nests in SBNP and adjacent Chiwaukee Prairie have been depredated annually by meso-predators (medium size predators). Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are known to be the number one predator of turtle nests. To offset this loss of young cohorts, conservation efforts have included head-starting as a technique to improve recruitment (currently implemented by the LCFPD). However, head-starting programs require tracking gravid

females to nest within hours of eggs being laid and the efficacy on long-term population viability has been questioned. An alternative strategy is to reduce the population of meso-predators in areas where turtles occur. This strategy has shown to be a more effective, efficient means of increasing nest success and achieving population viability. In Engeman et al. 2005, researchers found predation rates on turtle nests dropped from 95% with no meso-predator control, to levels ranging from 9.4 to 50% following removal at varied intensity.

Proposal/Request:

The LCFPD is seeking approval to control meso-predators at SBNP as part of a two-year study funded through the Sustain Our Great Lakes Stewardship Program. Control of meso-predators (raccoons) would be conducted in an effort to determine the efficacy of such management in increasing the recruitment and overall population viability of the Blanding's turtle. The results of the study would be evaluated to determine if continued meso-predator control was warranted to secure one of the largest and most important populations of Blanding's turtles in the state.

The objectives of the study are:

1. Estimate and reduce the density of meso-predators (raccoons) at SBNP.
2. Locate and monitor natural, unprotected Blanding's turtle nests.
3. Determine the fate of each natural, unprotected Blanding's turtle nest.
4. Determine efficacy of control activities on increasing juvenile recruitment.

Legal Authorities and Responsibilities:

The Natural Areas Preservation Act (Act) states: "Any person who, directly or through an employee or agent, (a) willfully kills, injures, disturbs or removes any animal or plant or willfully damages, destroys or removes any object, or attempts to do any of the preceding, on a dedicated area, except as provided by rule for scientific research or for management to preserve or restore natural conditions, ... or (c) otherwise violates this Act or any rule is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor..." [525 ILCS 30/23]

Rules for Management of Nature Preserves (17 Ill. Adm. Code 4000) state:

4000.120 (c) "Management, development, or uses of 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."

4000.160 Approval of Specific Management Activities

"...If the Commission determines that the proposed activity will enhance the natural feature of the preserve, consistent with the proposal for dedication, the Commission shall approve the request. The Commission may with reasonable notice to the custodian, withdraw approval for management activities previously granted if it is subsequently determined that the activity may have an adverse impact on the nature preserve."

4000.425 (b) Control of noxious species "Species of plants and animals which are noxious in fact or law (Illinois Noxious Weed Act, 8 Ill. Adm. Code 220) shall be controlled as provided in the master plan or management schedule."

(d) Control of natural populations “There shall be no action to increase or reduce populations of native plants or animals or to restrict movement across boundaries of a preserve, except for the purposes of controlling an animal overpopulation that is altering the natural character of the preserve, or to restore degraded natural communities as provided in subsections (a) and (e) of this Section. Any such measures to be applied must be in accordance with the master plan or management schedule.”

(e) Management of endangered and threatened species and species of management concern: 1) “Habitat manipulations and protective measures in favor of particular species shall be undertaken only as provided in the master plan, management schedule, or as approved by the Commission after consultation with the Department and the Endangered Species Protection Board. Approval will be based upon evaluation of generally accepted management practices or upon a proposal submitted to the Commission which describes the proposed activities, species' life history and habitat requirements, and characteristics and objectives of the preserve.”

Analysis:

Predation is a critical threat to many endangered or locally rare species (Engemen and Smith 2007, Hecht and Nickerson 1999) the detrimental impacts are compounded by habitat loss and altered predator communities (Reynolds and Tapper 1996), such as artificially high raccoon populations. Control of meso-predators at SBNP is being considered as an effort to increase the viability of the state-endangered Blanding’s turtle. It is hoped that such control will allow for decreased nest predation.

Per Rules for Management of Nature Preserves [17 Ill. Adm. Code 4000.120 (c)] meso-predator control is listed on the current management schedule of the SBNP master plan and was approved by Commission staff with the condition that such plans would be submitted to the INPC for review and approval. Control of natural populations of animals is allowed under the Rules for Management when it is considered that an animal overpopulation is altering the natural character of a nature preserve. Since 2006, a variety of literature documents the adaptability and resultant overpopulation of raccoons in human modified environments. LCFPD has documented that 100% of unprotected, monitored Blanding’s turtle nests have been depredated annually.

Recommendation:

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) staff recommends approval of meso-predator control as proposed at SBNP for the purpose of increasing population viability of the Blanding’s turtle with the following conditions:

1. There will be no negative impacts to threatened or endangered species.
2. All required permits for trapping must be in place.
3. The LCFPD will submit annual reports to the INPC.
4. If the LCFPD determines that further meso-predator control is necessary after the completion of the two-year study, it must request INPC staff level approval for continuation of control.

Literature Cited:

Engeman, R.M. and H. T. Smith. 2007 A history of dramatic successes at protecting endangered sea turtle nests by removing predators. *Endangered Species UPDATE* Vol. 24 No. 4 2007

Engeman, R.M., R.E. Martin, H. T. Smith, J. Woolard, C.K. Crady, S. A. Shwiff, B. Constantin, M. Stahl, and J. Griner. 2005. Dramatic reduction in predation on marine turtle nests through improved predator monitoring and management. *Oryx* 39(3):318-26.

- Garmestani, A. S. and H.F. Percival. 2005.
- Hecht, A. and P. Nickerson. 1999. The need for predator management in conservation of some vulnerable species. *Endangered Species Update* 16:114-118.
- Reynolds, J.C. and S.C. Tapper. 1996. Control of mammalian predators in game management and conservation. *Mammal Review* 26:127-156.



Illinois
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Exhibit E

To: Commissioners

From: Jenny Skufca and Kelly Neal

Date: December 28, 2012

Subject: Staff recommendation regarding Item 22 - a proposal submitted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to establish an outdoor education area at Volo Bog Nature Preserve, Lake County

Background:

Volo Bog Nature Preserve was dedicated June 17, 1970, as the 25th Illinois nature preserve. The now 186-acre Nature Preserve, owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), is recognized on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #1005) and protects Illinois' only remaining open-water quaking bog exhibiting all stages of classic bog succession supporting 21 threatened or endangered species. The Nature Preserve lies within the Volo Bog State Natural Area (VBSNA).

Proposal:

The IDNR is requesting approval to establish an outdoor education area within approximately one acre of Volo Bog Nature Preserve affording children and adults an opportunity to interact with the natural environment through exploration, discovery, native plantings, and restoration. Since the early 1980s this area has been utilized for non-intrusive environmental education. The area is located directly behind the VBSNA Visitor Center and is bordered by a parking lot to the north, a portion of the Tamarack View Trail to the east, old field to the south, and a maintenance access road and degraded woodland to the west. If approved, activities encouraged within the proposed area (to be known as Chipmunk Woods) may include turning over logs and rocks, catching and releasing arthropods and other small animals, building forts from natural materials, balancing on logs, becoming buried in leaves, doing leaf rubbings, unstructured playing in the woods, or sitting quietly. Volunteers would assist site staff with creating whimsical opportunities for discovery and exploration of the natural world at a child's pace. The proposed Chipmunk Woods would also be utilized for restoration training for volunteers. The site's current management schedule allows for the control of non-native invasive plant species and the planting of appropriate native species. These stewardship activities have been ongoing to enhance this portion of the Nature Preserve, which is a degraded

upland area. The plant assemblage is dominated by garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Hungarian brome (*Brome inermis*), Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*), buckthorn (*Rhamnus spp.*), and multi-flora rose (*Rosa multiflora*). Dominant tree species include black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) and box elder (*Acer negundo*). The area proposed for Chipmunk Woods has been functionally serving as buffer to the high-quality wetland natural communities and contains small foot paths and open gathering areas. Proposed plans include the placement of rudimentary impermanent Leopold benches within the outdoor education area. Chipmunk Woods would be clearly defined by a cedar split-rail fence installed with hand tools and a gas-powered auger allowing wildlife to come and go but still acting as a visual reminder to visitors.

Legal Authorities and Responsibilities:

The Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (525 ILCS 30/2) (INAPA) states that “...Natural lands and waters together with the plants and animals living thereon in natural communities are a part of the heritage of the people. They are of value for scientific research, for teaching, as reservoirs of natural material...They also contribute generally to the public health and welfare and the environmental quality of the State.”

Further, under 525 ILCS 30/3.11, “Nature Preserve means a natural area, and land necessary for its protection...to be maintained as nearly as possible in its natural condition and to be used in a manner and under limitations consistent with its continued preservation, without impairment, disturbance or artificial development, for the public purposes of present and future scientific research, education, esthetic enjoyment and providing habitat for plant and animal species and communities and other natural objects.”

Under the Rules for Management of Nature Preserves (17 Ill. Adm. Code 4000):

4000.120(c) “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.”

4000.160 “Management activities otherwise prohibited under the rules or an approved master plan may be approved by the Commission upon written request of the owner. The request must outline the objective of the management activity, and identify the natural communities and any threatened or endangered species, or significant or notable natural features, that may be affected by the proposed activity. If the Commission determines that the proposed activity will enhance the natural features of the preserve, consistent with the proposal for dedication, the Commission shall approve the request. The Commission may, with reasonable notice to the custodian, withdraw approval for management activities previously granted if it is subsequently determined that the activity may have an adverse impact on the nature preserve.”

4000.170 “There shall be no intrusions of structures, easements, rights of way, or land uses which do not conform with this Part, except for preexisting rights which are not inconsistent with the Act, those specifically allowed as part of an approved master plan or management schedule, or approved as a deviation from the rules under Section 4000.160.”

4000.540(a) “Nature preserves are open to the public unless closed by the owner. For those preserves that are open to the public, visitor use may occur to the degree that it will not impair natural conditions or threaten the natural features of the preserve. Where trails exist within a preserve, visitors are encouraged to stay on the trails. The owner may require that visitors to the preserve restrict their movement to the trails. Persons wishing to traverse areas of a nature preserve closed to visitation may obtain permission from the custodian or owner.”

Pertinent citations from the Rules for Regulation of Public Use of Dedicated Nature Preserves (17 Ill. Adm. 4015) include:

4015.10(d) “It is unlawful for any person to cut, break, injure, destroy, take or remove any artifact, tree, shrub, timber, flower, plant, or other natural object, including rocks, soil, or water, from a dedicated nature preserve or nature preserve buffer; except that small quantities of such materials may be collected and removed for scientific or educational purposes by written permit from the owner, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, and except for management in accordance with an approved master plan.”

4015.10(h) “It is unlawful for any person to take, mutilate, deface, move, or destroy any structure, artifact, improvement, work, sign, stone, soil, or other natural object or material in any dedicated nature preserve or nature preserve buffer, except for management in accordance with an approved master plan.”

Analysis:

The Natural Resources Coordinator (NRC), also known as the Site Interpreter, at VBSNA has received guidance for the project from *A Natural Branch of Learning* in northern Wisconsin to preliminarily design a woodland area specifically suited to unstructured play for children. The location is considered by site staff to be ideal as it is a higher knob allowing good views of the site. The area chosen would benefit from further restoration and would continue to serve as an ecologically functional buffer to the high quality features (not a legal buffer, however). The proposed project will not impact the qualifying features for which the site was dedicated, nor will any impact to threatened or endangered species occur. If approved, commencement of the project is expected to occur during the spring of 2013.

No alternative undedicated upland area at VBSNA is suitable for the proposed outdoor education area due to the distance from the Visitor Center. Although the area proposed for this use is dedicated, it was never high quality as defined by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory. Buffer dedication did not exist at the time of dedication in 1970.

VBSNA is well known regionally for its innovative environmental education programs. Current research supports that active, unstructured involvement with nature nourishes a child’s physical, social, and emotional development; strengthening self-confidence, arousing the senses, improving listening and focus, enhancing empathy, and controlling impulsivity. This proposal supports a national effort to reintroduce the natural world in an interactive way to a generation disconnected

from the intrinsic value of protecting and stewarding natural areas. If approved, the Chipmunk Woods program would be formally established as a *Leave No Child Inside* Discovery Area.

Staff Recommendation:

The staff of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission recommends approval of the IDNR's request to establish an outdoor education area within Volo Bog Nature Preserve with the following stipulations:

- The Master Plan for the site shall be amended to reflect that the proposal presented herein is the extent of what is authorized by the Commission.
- No collecting (all natural materials shall remain in the outdoor educational area), unless an INPC Special Use Permit is issued.
- No impact shall occur to threatened and endangered species; if protected species are encountered, site staff shall track species and contact IDNR's District Heritage Biologist or INPC's Natural Areas Preservation Specialist for coordination of species' protection. The location of any threatened or endangered species – flora or fauna – shall be submitted as an Element Occurrence Record to the IDNR Natural Heritage Database.
- No impact shall occur to the high quality features of the Nature Preserve wetland or anywhere beyond the delineated outdoor education area boundary.
- At the entrance to/exit from the outdoor education area - all school groups, families, and volunteers shall be educated on the use restrictions and boundaries for this authorized use through an interpretive sign or kiosk.
- Non-dedicated area shall be clearly demarcated from dedicated Nature Preserve within the outdoor education area using the appropriate INPC boundary signs.
- All activities involving unnatural materials shall occur in the northern and northwestern portion of the outdoor education area (outside of the dedicated Nature Preserve), including any building of lookouts, building of step-ladders on trees, structures created from unnatural materials, rope spider webs, etc.
- All restoration activities must be included in an approved management schedule.
- Site staff shall regularly monitor the impact to the Chipmunk Woods area and adjust use accordingly (i.e. if erosion is noted, use should be decreased).
- If applicable, the Master Plan shall include a provision stating that groups larger than 25 individuals will utilize the area, per Ill. Adm. Rule 4000.570(b)(3) and 4015.10(o).
- If the Chipmunk Woods program is discontinued, the management and use of the area within the dedicated Nature Preserve shall revert back to previous authorizations under administrative rule and approved management schedule. In this case, the cedar split rail fence shall be removed.