

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA  
TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Lake Level Conference Rooms A, B & C  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62702

January 23, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

\*Documentary Material Enclosed

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

Item 2:\* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3:\* Approval of Minutes for the 227<sup>th</sup> Meeting September 12, 2017

Item 4: Next meeting dates and locations

May 8, 2018

The DeSoto House, Galena, IL

September 11, 2018

Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center, Cypress, IL

Item 5:\* INPC Staff Report

REPORT

Tom Lerczak

Nature Preserves Commission

Item 6: IDNR Staff Report

REPORT

Ann Holtrop

Department of Natural Resources

Item 7\*: Endangered Species Protection Board Report

REPORT

Joyce Hofmann

Endangered Species Protection Board

Item 8\*: Coles Co. – Warbler Woods North Land and Water Reserve, Registration

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

REPORT

Roger Jansen

Division of Natural Heritage

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval for Registration

Item 9\*: Hardin Co. – Lafarge Barker Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Re-Registration

Lafarge Midwest Inc. proposes to re-register Lafarge Barker Bluff Land and Water Reserve from a 5-year recurring term to a permanent registration. The reserve was initially registered at the 206<sup>th</sup> INPC meeting (Resolution #2094). It is within the Lesser Shawnee Hills Section of the Shawnee Hills Natural Division in southeast Hardin County, located roughly one mile east of the town of Cave in Rock. The reserve is 77.21 acres total and comprises a large portion (48 acres) of the Barker Bluff INAI site (INAI#33 Categories I, II, and III; 123 total acres). Within these 48 acres are 9.25 acres of Grade A limestone glade, 10.25 acres of Grade B limestone glade/dry upland forest complex, and 28.5 acres of Grade C dry upland forest, in addition to two state-listed endangered plant species (ovate catchfly [*Silene ovata*] and a rare plant species). The glade communities contain many regionally-uncommon plant species such as obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*), white prairie clover (*Petalostemum candidum*), yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), and hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*). Dry upland forest is characterized by mature second-growth stands composed of oak/hickory species (e.g. chinkapin oak [*Quercus muhlenbergii*] and post oak [*Quercus stellata*]). The remaining 29 acres of the reserve are young second-growth forest in which a third listed species, state-threatened squirting cucumber (*Melothria pendula*) occurs. The reserve is bordered by U.S. Forest Service to the north. This section of the INAI is designated as a Federal Research Natural Area and contains a fourth listed species, state-endangered Ravenel's panic grass [*Dichanthelium ravenelii*]. Barker Bluff and the Collier Limestone Glade (INAI#22), located 1.5 miles due east, represent what was historically the largest contiguous limestone glade system found in Illinois. Recurring management activities (i.e. prescribed fire, brush cutting, and exotics control) at Barker Bluff LWR over recent years have benefitted the natural communities and associated flora. For example, population estimates of state-endangered ovate catchfly increased from 18 individuals in 1998 to >400 individuals in 2014 following prescribed fire. General management goals are to conduct annual

surveillance of the endangered and threatened plant species known to occur on or near the reserve to determine presence and estimate population size(s), and to maintain and restore the natural structure and characteristics of the unique natural communities with prescribed fire and selective woody-species removal to mimic natural disturbance regimes. The Commission staff commends Lafarge Midwest Inc. for their commitment to preserving Illinois' natural heritage.

REPORT  
Kevin Sierzega  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval for Re-Registration

Item 10:\* Kankakee Co. – Addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, Registration

Sweet Fern Savanna, located in the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division in Kankakee County, was originally registered by Dr. Marianne Hahn as a land and water reserve in 2001, and was 62 acres in size. Subsequent additions to the reserve, registered by both Dr. Hahn and the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (occurring in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016), have increased the size of the reserve to approximately 160 acres. Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve is recognized on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI # 1581) for its high-quality dry-mesic sand savanna and for the habitat it provides for 15 state-threatened or endangered plants, and the state-threatened black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), a reptile, and regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*). Sweet Fern Savanna also provides habitat for an additional 23 insect species and 10 vertebrate species listed as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation on the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. This proposal is for the registration of 2 lots totaling 3.3 acres comprised of Grade B and C dry-mesic sand savanna, sand flatwoods, and former agricultural fields succeeding to sand prairie, as additions to Sweet Fern Savanna. The registration of these additions will buffer habitat for many Species in Greatest Need of Conservation, protect known occurrences of the state-endangered crowded oval sedge (*Carex cumulata*), buffer high-quality natural communities, and promote more efficient management of the reserve. Registration of these tracts will bring the total registered acreage of this site to approximately 163 acres.

REPORT  
Kim Roman  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval for Registration

Item 11:\* Macon Co. – Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve, Registration

A 421.4-acre tract of land is being proposed as the Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve. The proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve is a part of the greater Rock Springs Conservation Area, which is located immediately southwest of Decatur, in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Rock Springs Conservation Area is owned and managed by the Macon County Conservation District. The majority (380+ acres) of the proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve is comprised of a contiguous gradient of wet-mesic floodplain forest to dry-mesic upland forest situated along a 1.88-mile stretch of the Sangamon River, in addition to several prairie restoration tracts and old fields succeeding to forest. Canopies of the wet-mesic floodplain forest include sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), and silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*); with the forest floor component dominated by nettle species. Major components of the dry-mesic upland forest canopies include black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), and red oak (*Quercus rubra*); supplemented by a variety of forest floor species including sunflower species (*Helianthus*), *Polygonum* species (e.g. smartweed and knotweed), *Eupatorium* species (e.g. bonesets and snakeroots), and other wildflowers (e.g. *Spiranthes*, *Campanula*, and *Liparis*). There are records of 16 bird species sensitive to forest fragmentation observed on the proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve during the breeding season: Acadian

flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*), Kentucky warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*), wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), yellow-throated vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*), red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), tufted titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*), yellow-throated warbler (*Dendroica dominica*), northern parula (*Parula Americana*), Louisiana waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*), scarlet tanager (*Piranga olivacea*), summer tanager (*Piranga rubra*). The red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), also breeds at the site. There are also breeding season records of 13 bird Species in Greatest Need of Conservation, as defined by the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Collectively, 369 plant species have been identified in the greater Rock Springs Conservation area. Some notable, conservative, plant species include: wild leek (*Allium tricoccum*), pale green sedge (*Carex pallescens*), pale gentian (*Gentiana alba*), Shumard's oak (*Quercus shumardii*), Virginia spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*), bellflower (*Uvularia grandiflora*), yellow violet (*Viola pubescens*), and sugar grape (*Vitis rupestris*).

The proposed Rock Springs Land and Water Reserve, as part of the Rock Springs Conservation Area, will be open to the public for nature observation, hiking, and biking, as administered by the Macon County Conservation District, across their established trail system, which includes several paved stretches that may be expanded. Macon County Conservation District currently allows bow-only, doe-first deer hunting at Rock Springs. Management of the site will focus on controlling exotic species, in addition to fostering habitat for rare species found on the site.

REPORT  
Justin Dillard  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval for Registration

Item 12:\* Will Co. – Pilcher Park Land and Water Reserve, Registration and Nature Preserve, Dedication

Joliet Park District (JPD) owns and manages Pilcher Park Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #937) site, located on the east side of Joliet in Will County. Pilcher Park is a large and diverse forest complex recognized on the INAI for its high-quality mesic upland forest, wet-mesic upland forest, and seep communities representative of the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. Other significant features include a Native American burial mound and a reburial site. Pilcher Park is one of northeastern Illinois' premiere woodlands with outstanding spring wildflower displays and old-growth trees. More than 270 native plant species have been documented within Pilcher Park, and at least 11 species of birds with moderate to high sensitivity to habitat fragmentation breed on site. The Joliet Park District wishes to protect the natural and archaeological features of this 403-acre site in perpetuity by dedicating 293 acres as nature preserve and registering 110 acres as land and water reserve.

Pilcher Park is a well-established urban natural area, with miles of hiking trails and roads, outdoor recreation, and a nature center with many park district-sponsored activities and education programs. Allowable uses throughout both the proposed nature preserve and land and water reserve include maintenance of existing roads and parking areas, trails, geocaching, Joliet Park District sponsored 5K races on surfaced trails, bicycling, leashed dogs on trails, and cross-country skiing. Allowable uses in the proposed land and water reserve include maintenance of all existing structures and play areas in the nature center complex, fishing, catch and release of wildlife for educational purposes, mushroom collection, maple syrup production, non-motorized boats, picnicking, primitive camping, teaching of primitive survival skills, and off-trail play. These uses support the mission of the Joliet Park District by engaging children and adults with nature, and are compatible with the long-term preservation of Pilcher Park. Future management and stewardship will promote the high-quality natural communities and resources of statewide significance. Pilcher Park was conveyed to the City of Joliet in 1920 by Robert and Nora Pilcher, with the stipulation that it be left in its "wild and natural

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

REPORT  
Kim Roman  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval for Registration  
ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 13:\* Monroe Co. – Eagle Cliff Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

REPORT  
Debbie Newman  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 14:\* Monroe Co. – Renault Karst Nature Preserve, Dedication

The proposed Renault Karst Nature Preserve (NP) and Nature Preserve Buffer is a 29-acre site owned by Robert Eshom. The site is located in the heart of southwestern Illinois’ Sinkhole Plain karst region, and is part of the Collier Springs Recharge Area and the area defined by karst/cave biologists and geologists as the Renault Karst. The site is located approximately 600 feet from the current boundary of the 10,467-acre Renault Karst Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (#1597). Cave passage has not yet been documented in the Collier Spring Recharge Area, but the recharge area is hydrologically connected to the Fogelpole Cave system, Illinois’ largest and most biologically diverse cave, listed in the INAI as having Grade A, B, and C terrestrial cave communities and a Grade B aquatic cave community. The Fogelpole Cave System, along with the other cave systems in the Renault Karst INAI site (Illinois Caverns, Dry-Run Cave), contain populations of the federally and state-endangered Illinois cave amphipod (*Gammarus acherondytes*), and Fogelpole contains large populations of the federally and state-endangered Indiana bat, (*Myotis sodalis*) and gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*), and the federally- and state-threatened Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), as well as a host of globally rare cave invertebrates. One of the main entrances to Fogelpole Cave is located one mile from the proposed Renault Karst NP, making the proposed preserve likely used as summer roost/maternity habitat of two of the listed bat species. The site is located in the Northern Section of the Ozark Natural Division and supports several campaigns identified in the IWAP, including the Forests Campaign, the Invasive Species Campaign, and the Land & Water Stewardship

Campaign. The site is located within IWAP's Karst Conservation Opportunity Area, and the Southwestern Illinois Wildlife Action Plan partnership. The proposed preserve is located in between and 1-3 miles from over 2300 acres of protected or conservation-managed lands. The proposed preserve consists of approximately 22 acres of mature and undisturbed dry-mesic upland forest containing more than 20 sinkholes. The site also contains a 7-acre old field. Two structures also exist on the property. Twenty-eight acres are being proposed for nature preserve dedication, and 1 acre proposed for nature preserve buffer where the structures are located.

REPORT

Debbie Newman  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 15:\* Cook Co. – Addition to Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

REPORT

Steve Byers  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Final Approval for Dedication

Item 16:\* Marshall Co. – Lot# 341 Addition to Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, Dedication

A 5.09-acre tract of land is being proposed as the lot #341 nature preserve addition to the 11.0-acre Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve, in the village of Hopewell. The preserve and the proposed addition are owned by Dr. Maury Brucker and Ms. Emiko Yang. The current preserve consists of Grade A glacial drift hill prairie, Grade B glacial drift hill prairie, and Grade C mesic-upland forest. The proposed addition consists of Grade C mesic-upland forest and the eastern boundary of the original INAI grade A glacial drift hill prairie community. The entirety of the current preserve, and approximately 34% of the proposed addition, are within the 78-acre Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural Area (INAI # 231), which is also included within the Peoria Wilds Resource Rich Area and Middle Illinois River Conservation Opportunity Area. The Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural

Area is located west of the Illinois River valley in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. The proposed addition abuts lot #117 of the current preserve, on which the largest patch of Grade A glacial drift hill prairie of the entire natural area can be found. Notable species present on lot #341 include: great Indian plantain (*Cacalia muhlenbergii*), rough false foxglove (*Agalinis aspera*), American spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*), smooth aster (*Aster laevis*), a rare plant species, New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), and silvery spleenwort (*Athyrium thelypteroides*). Great Indian plantain, squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*), and Bishop's cap (*Mitella diphylla*), among other species, are present on the proposed addition, but have not been found elsewhere in the current preserve. The state-threatened fibrous-rooted sedge (*Carex communis*) is present on nearby lot #119, and likely to occur on the proposed addition, which contains the same ravine habitat on which the nearby population exists. Eleven bird species in Greatest Need of Conservation have been observed at the Hopewell Estates Hill Prairies Natural Area. The dedication of the proposed addition would further the campaign of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan to "restore and manage high-quality examples of all prairie communities." Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve is privately owned, and permission is required for entry. Management of the proposed addition will continue to focus on controlling non-native, invasive, and opportunistic woody species; to collectively foster oak regeneration on the upland forests and encourage expansion of the adjacent Grade-A glacial drift hill prairie community.

REPORT  
Justin Dillard  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 17:\* Ogle Co. – Hall Creek Buffer Addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

REPORT  
John Nelson  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 18:\* Ogle Co. – Buffer Addition to Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve, Dedication

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

REPORT

John C. Nelson

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Final Approval for Dedication

Item 19:\* Peoria Co. – Buffer Addition to Singing Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Peoria Park District seeks preliminary approval for a 40-acre proposed buffer addition to Singing Woods Nature Preserve. The existing Singing Woods Nature Preserve (695.85 acres) is also owned by the Peoria Park District and was dedicated in May 2001. While none of the proposed buffer addition is included within the Singing Woods Natural Area (INAI #1634) the area consists of forested habitat and provides valuable buffer to the southwestern portion of the existing preserve. Singing Woods Nature Preserve is located on the western edge of the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. The preserve protects a large block of oak forest considered significant for its size, one acre of Grade B glacial drift hill prairie, and provides habitat for two state-listed species: downy arrowwood (*Viburnum molle*) and black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). The proposed buffer will be open to public visitation but there are no existing trails or plans for the development of trails. Currently there are primitive hiking trails located within the unprotected Tawny Oaks portion of the park district land (south and east of the proposed buffer) that extend into the current nature preserve.

REPORT

Angella Moorehouse

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Final Approval for Dedication

Item 20:\* Winnebago Co. – Buffer Addition to Severson Dells Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Winnebago County Forest Preserve District requests dedication of 88.3 acres as buffer addition to their existing Severson Dells Nature Preserve (39.8 acres) located in the Freeport Section of the Rock River Hill Country Natural Division. If approved, the Severson Dells Nature Preserve will encompass a total of 128.1 acres. The existing Severson Dells Nature Preserve was dedicated in 1982 and protects a series of dolomite cliffs, or dells, that rise nearly 50 feet above the narrow floodplain of Hall Creek. Extant boreal species of native white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Canada yew



(*Taxus Canadensis*) still persist here due to the cool and moist micro-climate provided by natural springs in association with the narrow canyons of the dells. The Severson Dells Nature Preserve is open to the public and is used as part of outdoor education programs offered at the Severson Dells Environmental Education Center, which is also located within the Severson Dells Forest Preserve. The general character of the proposed buffer addition is native oak woodland and planted prairie on gently rolling uplands. Hall Creek meanders along gentle terrain on the northern portion of the proposed buffer addition, before entering the dells. Dedication of the proposed buffer addition to Severson Dells Nature Preserve is recommended to further protect the dells geologic feature, the groundwater resource, and potential recharge zones for springs and seeps that sustain the unique flora of the area. Adjacent to the Severson Dells Nature Preserve is the Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve (54.7 acres) which is owned and managed by the Natural Land Institute. This dedication proposal is being presented to the INPC in conjunction with dedication proposals from two other adjacent landowners – the Natural Land Institute and the Byron Forest Preserves District. With approval and execution of these three separate landowner dedications, the total acreage of nature preserve lands legally protected at the Severson-Colman Dells Nature Preserve complex will increase from 94.5 acres to 361.1 acres.

REPORT  
John C. Nelson  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 21: Adoption of Strategy to Correct Legal Descriptions

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

REPORT  
Valerie Njapa  
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED  
Approval of Strategy

Item 22: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 23: Other Business

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

Item 24: Adjournment