

**ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA  
TWO HUNDRED FORTY-SEVENTH MEETING**

Putnam County Conservation District  
4526 E 1000th St  
Hennepin, Illinois

May 14, 2024, 10:00 AM

In-person meeting with WebEx option

\*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 246<sup>th</sup> Meeting on January 23, 2024**

*Accomplishment Summary:*

*At the 246<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the INPC, held on January 23, 2024, at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, Illinois, legal protection was completed by the Commission for eight tracts of land totaling 610.38 acres. Six of the eight tracts are privately owned, and two are publicly owned. The owners of the private sites donated the value of the protection agreements to the public. Lands protected include Addition to Edna Edwards Burnett Land and Water Reserve, Marseilles Hill Prairie Land and Water Reserve, Vesely Prairie Land and Water Reserve, Addition and Buffer Addition to Paintbrush Prairie Nature Preserve, Addition and Buffer Addition to Sundrop Prairie Nature Preserve, Birks Prairie Nature Preserve, Addition to White Rock Nature Preserve and Lost Flora Fen on Raccoon Creek Nature Preserve.*

*Protection of these lands came about because the Commission had staff in the field working with public and private landowners. There are 419 dedicated nature preserves with 63,532 acres: and there are 209 registered land and water reserves totaling 59,267 acres. Altogether, there are 628 sites with 122,799 acres protected in the Illinois Nature Preserves System.*

**Item 4: Next Meeting Dates and Locations**

248	September 10, 2024	Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center Marion, Illinois
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**Item 5:\* INPC Staff Report**

REPORT  
Todd Strole, Assistant Director  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

**Item 6:\* IDNR Staff Report**

REPORT  
Ann Marie Holtrop, Chief  
Division of Natural Heritage

**Item 7:\* Endangered Species Protection Board Report**

REPORT  
Joyce Hofmann, Director  
Endangered Species Protection Board

**Item 8:\* Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves Report**

REPORT  
Amy Doll, Director  
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves

**Item 9:\* Jasper County – Marshall Addition to Prairie Ridge State Natural Area Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

The proposed Marshall Addition to the Prairie Ridge State Natural Area Land and Water Reserve would permanently protect 40 acres located within the Prairie Ridge - Jasper County Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #0754) site boundary. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources-owned property is located in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division of Illinois. The proposed Addition would provide protected habitat for 14 State-endangered and threatened species and numerous grassland-dependent species known to occur at the INAI, also known as the Prairie Ridge State Natural Area (PRNSA) complex in Jasper County.

The Marshall Addition to the Prairie Ridge State Natural Area Land and Water Reserve would increase the amount of permanently protected property at the Jasper County complex of PRSNA to 2843 acres.

IDNR reserves the following rights:

- Install a small gravel parking lot in a location that will not adversely impact natural features or rare species in consultation with other Office of Resource Conservation biologists, IDNR Impact Assessment, and INPC.
- Construct vernal pools in the lower lying drainage areas that will not adversely impact natural features or rare species in consultation with other Office of Resource Conservation biologists, IDNR Impact Assessment, and INPC.

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission staff and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources staff recommend the registration of 40 acres as the Marshall Addition to the Prairie Ridge State Natural Area Land and Water Reserve.

**REPORT**  
Sami Childerson  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**  
Approval for Registration

**Item 10:\* Woodford County - Luginbuhl's Prairie Grass Hill Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

The proposed 4.72-acre Luginbuhl's Prairie Grass Hill Land and Water Reserve is owned by Les and Judy Luginbuhl. The site was previously owned by Wayne and Rosemary Wiegand who had enrolled the site in INPC's Natural Heritage Landmark Program in 1984 and was known as Wiegand Prairie Natural Heritage Landmark. The Luginbuhl's are seeking approval for Registration of the proposed Land and Water Reserve as a perpetual easement. The proposed Luginbuhl's Prairie Grass Hill Land and Water Reserve is located in Woodford County in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. The site was recognized on the INAI (#250) for 0.2 acres of Grade A Glacial Drift Hill Prairie. The proposed Land and Water Reserve includes the Glacial Drift Hill Prairie, dry-mesic upland forest, bottomland forest and a portion of the Mackinaw River.

The Luginbuhl family reserves the following rights:

- Use the property for hunting, trapping, fishing and hiking.
- Manage the forest, including timber harvest under a forest management plan.
- Maintain a mowed area at the southern edge of the LWR as a parking area for access to the river and picnicking. One portable table will be located in this area. It will also be used by INPC and IDNR staff as a parking/staging area for inspection and management purposes.

**REPORT**

Byron Paulsen  
Illinois Nature Preserve Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Approval for Registration

**Item 11:\* McHenry County – Dome Hill Buffer Addition to Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

The Village of Lake in the Hills proposes dedication of 4.1 acres as a preserve buffer addition to Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve. This nature preserve is part of the 540.8-acre Lake in the Hills Fen Conservation Area. The Village of Lake in the Hills, the McHenry County Conservation District, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources each own portions of the existing nature preserve which is currently 347.9-acres. The proposed 4.1-acre Dome Hill buffer addition is adjacent to Lake in the Hills Fen Nature preserve and offers an impressive view of the entire preserve. The eastern boundary of the Lake in the Hills Fen INAI site (#1011) runs through the proposed buffer addition. The INAI site is recognized for its high-quality calcareous floating mat, calcareous seep, dry gravel prairie, graminoid fen, sedge meadow, and shrub fen. Also present are low-gradient creek, freshwater marsh, and mesic gravel prairie. The INAI site also supports populations of 14 plant species that are currently endangered or threatened. A subpopulation of one of these species occurs within the boundaries of the proposed addition. Formal dedication of Dome Hill as a buffer addition will increase the total size of the nature preserve to 352.09 acres.

**REPORT**

Claire Gregory and John C. Nelson  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 12:\* Will County – Buffer Addition to Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

Sand Ridge Savanna is a 625-acre nature preserve owned and managed by the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC), located in the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. The FPDWC wishes to dedicate in perpetuity an adjacent 157-acre tract of Kankakee Sands Preserve as a buffer addition to Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve. Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve abuts Wilmington Shrub Prairie Nature Preserve and Vesely Prairie Land and Water Reserve; it is also within one mile of Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve. The proposed buffer addition includes approximately 23.5 acres of remnant natural communities, 127 acres of prairie plantings, and an approximate 6.5-acre zone designated as an access area which includes user facilities such as a parking lot, outhouse, and a picnic shelter. The proposed buffer addition lies west of the north unit of Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve and its prairie plantings support the state-threatened eryngium stem borer moth (*Papaipema eryngii*) and the state-threatened ornate box turtle (*Terrepena ornata*). The state endangered short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*) and northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) have been observed using the proposed buffer addition during winter months. Conservative plant species such as winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), green fringed orchid (*Habenaria lacera*), and lady fern (*Athyrium filix femina*) are among the 314 species of native flora documented on site. An existing 2.5-mile limestone chip loop-trail leads from the access area within the proposed buffer addition to the north unit of Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve. Approximately 1.3 miles of trail and two bridges are within the proposed dedicated buffer addition; the trail and its mowed shoulders occupy approximately 4.5 acres. A 6.5-acre zone in and around the access area is designated by the Forest Preserve District for possible future development of user amenities consistent with the Rules for Management of Illinois Nature Preserves. The dedication of this buffer addition helps to preserve the region's biota, complete good preserve design for Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve, and promote contiguity of the natural landscape of a large complex of sites within the Illinois Nature Preserves system.

**REPORT**

Kim Roman  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 13:\* Lee County – Proposal to Allow Control of Mesopredators at Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve**

The 291-acre Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve owned by the Illinois Audubon Society is located in the approximately 1100-acre Green River Lowland Illinois INAI site (#1621). The site is within the Green River Lowland Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. The INAI was added in 2002 as a Category II for the state-endangered Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*). There are also historic records (greater than 10 years since last observed) for the state-threatened western hog-nosed snake (*Heterodon nasicus*) and ornate box turtle (*Terrapene ornata*). When the nature preserve was dedicated in 2015, 24 SGCN had been observed at the site, including slender glass lizard (*Ophisaurus attenuatus*) and smooth green snake (*Opheodrys vernalis*). Many of these at-risk species have become progressively restricted in range and reduced in numbers as their essential habitats are lost or degraded due to anthropogenic changes. Conversely, highly adaptable mesopredators have been able to exploit these changes resulting in artificially high populations. Herpetofauna and ground-nesting avian species are especially vulnerable to nest predation by raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), and opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*). A growing body of literature indicates that predation on turtle eggs and hatchlings is very high and can limit population growth, decrease

recruitment and lead to population declines. Results of studies on mesopredator management demonstrate that it can be an effective method for increasing nest success. This may be especially critical for Blanding's turtle, a long-lived, late maturing, species with limited reproductive output whose populations are in decline throughout much of its range. Control of mesopredators is not currently considered a standard management practice at nature preserves, requiring review and approval by Commissioners. The Illinois Audubon Society seeks approval to control mesopredators at Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve to reduce nest predation of herpetofauna and ground nesting birds.

**REPORT**

Jamie Arntzen  
Illinois Audubon Society

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Approval of Mesopredator Control

Kelly Neal  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 14: Review of Closed Meeting Minute**

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

**REPORT**

Todd Strole  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Determination if closed minutes  
should remain closed

**Item 15: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)**

**Item 16: Other Business**

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

**Item 17: Adjournment**