ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION
TWO HUNDRED FIFTY-THIRD MEETING MINUTES

Peoria Park District
Noble Center
1125 W. Lake Ave.
Peoria IL 61614

May 19, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
In-person meeting with WebEx option

*Documentary Material Enclosed

(253-1): Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

Commission Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:08 am and read the roll call.

Commissioners Present:	Michelle Parker, Radhika Miraglia, Adam Kessel, Tom Clay, Chris Evans, Marcella DeMauro-Roth, John Rogner, Connie Carroll-Cunningham, and Toni Oplt.
Advisors Present:	Alleen Betzenhauser and Philip Willink
Consultants Present:	Amy Doll, Kim Erndt-Pitcher, Jo Fessett, Cynthia Kanner, Deborah Stone, Joe Roth, Michelle Uting, Jeff Walk, Randy Heidorn, Alan Branhagen, Abigail Derby Lewis, Kerry Leigh, and Fran Harty.
Others Present:	Kelly Neal, Valerie Njapa, John Nelson, Angella Moorehouse, Byron Paulsen, Kaleb Baker, Nick Foster, Debbie Newman, Sami Childerson, Kevin Sierzega, John Griesbaum, Lorraine Foelske and Emily Taylor, INPC; Mark Alessi, Michelle Bloomquist, Teya Broyles, Alysha Davis, Heather Osborn, Ann Holtrop, Natalia Maass, Josh Nickelson, Brian Metzke, Christina Feng, Dawn Cobb, Kristi Dodson and Stephen Tillman; Kristi Shoemaker and Jacob Mol, Peoria Park District; Becky Blankenship and Juli Mason, Forest Preserve District of Will County; Mike Dreslik, David Zaya and Randy Locke, Prairie Research Institute; Bob Weck and Joann

Fricke, Clifftop; Shreya Mahajan, Illinois Environmental Council; Nathan Goldberg and Jamie Arntzen, Illinois Audubon Society; Jason Beverlin, The Nature Conservancy; Katie Kucera and Peter Goodspeed, The Wetlands Initiative; Jill Kennay, The Natural Lands Institute; Anna McAtee and Mary Vandevord, Heartlands Conservancy; Jessica Villarreal, Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves; Monica Millburg, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Hannah Hogshead, SIUC; Rowyn Wilker, Public

(253-2):* Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Clay made the motion to adopt the Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Rogner, and carried that the Agenda for the 253rd Meeting be approved.

(253-3):* Approval of Minutes for the 252nd Meeting, held on February 3rd, 2026 and the Minutes for the Special Meeting, held on February 2nd, 2026

It was moved by Commissioner Kessel, seconded by Commissioner Evans, and carried that the minutes of the Special Meeting and the 252nd Meeting be approved.

Commission Chair Parker then read the Accomplishments Summary for the 252nd Meeting:

At the 252nd Meeting of the INPC, held on February 3, 2026, at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in Springfield, Illinois, legal protection was completed for six tracts of land totaling 537 acres. Of the six tracts, one is publicly owned, one is owned by a not-for-profit organization, and four are privately owned. The owners of the private sites donated the value of the protection agreements to the public. Three tracts were registered as land and water reserves, including Salt Fork River, Addition to Kedzior Woodlands, and Resilience Ridge. The other three tracts were dedicated as nature preserves or nature preserve buffer, including Buffer Addition to Oak Bluff Savanna, Buffer Addition to Spivey's Valley Glade, and Coon Hill Prairie.

There are now 425 dedicated nature preserves with 65,389 acres and 218 registered land and water reserves with 60,558 acres. Altogether, there are 643 sites in the Illinois Nature Preserves System, totaling 125,947 acres.

Commission Chair Parker commented on the millions of migrating birds who utilize the nature preserve system to complete their journey.

(253-4): Next Meeting Date and Location

(253-5):* <u>INPC Staff Report</u>

REPORT
Kelly Neal, Programs Manager
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

The full INPC Report is provided in Appendix I.

Kelly Neal highlighted accomplishments and personnel updates. Brooke Thurau accepted a position with Trees Forever and left the Commission in early May. The INPC Director position was posted in March, and interviews still needed to be scheduled.

Neal noted staff were very busy this burn season and commented on the hectic nature of unpredictable weather conditions, so it is notable that they were able to accomplish so much.

Neal noted Kim Roman presented to the Governor's Office Peer-to-Peer Exchange Equity Group on the work accomplished in Pembroke Township. A recording is available to share.

Neal commented on Angella Moorehouse's work on insect surveys, publications, and work with the endangered species list update in 2025.

Neal commented on Debbie Newman and an event held at Salt Like Point to celebrate a trail reroute at the site. AmeriCorps volunteers were instrumental in the completion of the trail. Neal noted the importance of the site and the importance of being a part of something that will be protected in perpetuity.

Neal discussed reinterment guidance progress and how staff continued to evaluate sites for appropriate inclusion of reinterment guidelines in the management plan.

Valerie Njapa provided an update on Resolution 2701, approved by the Commission, that a biennial report on INPC sites be completed by May 2027. She reported that good progress is being made. INPC and Heritage staff continue to meet. Offers of assistance by Commissioners, Consultants, Advisors and others have not been forgotten and will be addressed as they continue to develop the process. A draft survey to collect data has been completed. Sections will include management activities, primary resources for stewardship projects, invasive species assessment, herbicide drift damage assessments and threats. The final report will provide a story of the incredible nature preserves system in Illinois, facing significant challenges.

Njapa continued, discussing highlights of the State Geological Survey and their work to help oppose a project that would have had significant groundwater impact. They provided a technical letter to the City of Woodstock, which ultimately served its purpose, and the petitioner of the project withdrew.

Njapa commented on the "Friends of Prairie Research Institute" award that was presented to INPC and the Division of Natural Heritage. It recognized decades of hard work by team members both past and present, including the support of Commissioners, Advisors, and Consultants.

Debbie Newman provided information on a long-term land acquisition project. TCF, IAS, and Clifftop teamed together to do an historic acquisition of two INAI sites in Monroe County. The parcel of 965 acres includes 16 loess hill prairies and limestone glades, several thousand feet of Grade A limestone cliff, a large block of forest for breeding birds, and part of the Mississippi Flyway corridor for migrating birds. The site contains numerous threatened and endangered plant and animal species. The site will connect seven nature preserves and land and water reserves to create a large block of protected lands.

Newman commented on the longevity of the project, in which INPC first met with the owners 29 years ago, and has been a goal of Clifftop since the early days.

Consultant Jo Fessett noted the connections made during the acquisition process. Illinois Audubon Society is connected to the site by a deal made in 2006. They were able to help the Village of Valmeyer purchase a conservation easement at that time. Fast forward 20 years, and thanks to the connection between three great partners, TCF, Clifftop, and IAS, they were blessed to be able to help this come together.

Bob Weck, President of Clifftop, noted that TCF will be transferring ownership of the site to Clifftop. He noted they are honored to become the long-term stewards of the property. He reiterated Newman's role in facilitating this project and thanked her.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth asked about total acreage of the site, including the connecting properties.

Newman replied 2300 acres.

Commissioner Rogner commented on the need to start every meeting with great stories like the ones already presented today. He noted that at the 245th INPC meeting, he was able to visit the Frickes' property and commented on the quality of it. He commended the hard work of Newman and everyone involved.

Commissioner Rogner commented on the progress made on the biennial report and commended the staff for the work they have put in to begin the report. He noted that he and Commissioner DeMauro-Roth serve as the liaisons to this effort, and it has been

great to follow the progress being made through Todd Strole. Commissioner Rogner stated that he looks forward to more progress in the future.

Commissioner Rogner continued, noting that the nature preserve has grown and the Commission staff have not. He noted the importance of utilizing outside organizations to protect these sites. He asked that staff keep that in mind as they move forward with the reporting process.

Commissioner Rogner emphasized the systemic problem of degradation that natural areas are experiencing, and therefore not a negative reflection on INPC staff. He expressed gratitude that herbicide drift will be included in the reporting tool.

Commission Chair Parker noted the importance of the "long game" in conservation, as previously stated by Commissioner Rogner. She pointed to the 29-year process that Newman engaged in to acquire a 2300-acre expanse of land. She reiterated that sticking with it matters.

Commissioner Chair Parker thanked staff for being responsive to the Commission, noting the initial report from Amy Doll that led to the resolution for the biennial report and current progress. She reiterated that what is said at these meetings matters.

(253-6):* <u>IDNR Staff Report</u>

REPORT
Ann Marie Holtrop, Chief
Division of Natural Heritage

The full IDNR Report is attached as Appendix II.

(253-7):* <u>Endangered Species Protection Board Report</u>

REPORT
Dr. Philip Willink, Chair
Endangered Species Protection Board

The full ESPB Report is attached as Appendix III.

(253-8):* <u>Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves Report</u>

REPORT
Amy Doll, Director
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves

The full report is attached as Appendix IV.

(253-9):* **Lake County – Bowers Trust Addition to Cuba Marsh Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

This item was presented by John C. Nelson.

The 8.26-acre addition to Cuba Marsh Land and Water Reserve (LWR) is proposed for registration and owned and managed by the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD), located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. In February 2011, the LCFPD registered 761.0 acres as the Cuba Marsh LWR. The site was on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI #1238) as a Category II site for suitable habitat for and presence of the state endangered yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*); the site also qualified as a LWR for providing forest habitat of at least 100 acres in size that support breeding populations of area sensitive forest wildlife species, grasslands over 80 acres in size supporting breeding populations of area sensitive grassland wildlife species, and wetlands in excess of 50-acres. The registration encompasses most of the land contained within the existing Cuba Marsh Forest Preserve. Named the Bower Trust Addition to Cuba Marsh LWR, the addition consists of two former homesites that are being converted to native vegetation/wildlife habitat and will function as a buffer to the adjacent higher quality natural areas. The homes and buildings have been razed, and the area is in the process of being enhanced/restored to native grassland and savanna. While much of the area remains degraded, the addition is contiguous to higher-quality prairies, grasslands, and wetlands within the existing LWR. The current condition of the Bower Trust Addition would best be described as consisting of unassociated trees such as boxelder (*Acer negundo*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), and occasional hills oak (*Quercus hilli).* The understory has been cleared of invasive brush and consists of cool-season grasses, native rye (*Elymus spp.)* and an approximate 1.5-acre prairie planting. Over time, LCFPD staff will expand and improve the native prairie on the addition. The addition provides access for management purposes and will restrict incompatible development in proximity to existing protected natural resources. While not ecologically significant on its own merit, the Bowers Trust Addition to Cuba Marsh LWR represents a good opportunity to improve the overall design of the existing reserve, while increasing the available habitat for native plants and animals in a landscape where such opportunities are rapidly declining or, arguably, nonexistent. This addition will enhance hydrologic restoration efforts and make it easier to carry out prescribed burns and other land management activities at Cuba Marsh LWR.

Reserved rights will follow best management practices for conservation of a wooded landscape/ecosystem. The Lake County Forest Preserves District reserves the right to follow the allowable uses granted under Rules for Register of Land and Water Reserves (17 Ill. Adm. Code Ch. V. Sec. 4010.250) including: hiking, bird watching, nature observation and study, scientific research, hunting, photography, and picnicking. Off-road vehicles will be allowed only for the purposes of site management or maintenance.

Changes to the allowable uses or reserved rights must be approved by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission.

The Bowers Trust Addition to Cuba Marsh LWR will also satisfy a legal obligation of the LCFPD to seek permanent legal protection of the site within the Illinois Nature Preserves System. Such obligation was a term of the sale of the parcel to LCFPD. The sale contract states that the Forest Preserves will apply for the parcel to be designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve, buffer, or Illinois Land and Water Reserve. Though it will be open to the public, a deed restriction prohibits the construction of trails, parking lots, ball fields, golf facilities, or dog exercise areas. The LCFPD and INPC staff recommended approval of this addition, which will increase the reserve size from 761.0 acres to 769.26 acres.

Commissioner Evans asked about the specific plan for clearing invasive woody vegetation.

Nelson responded that there are open hills on this tract, so those will not be removed. The fenced rose trees will be worked into the prairie. It will be difficult to restore a site with homes on it, but the resources are available.

It was moved by Commissioner Rogner, seconded by Commissioner DeMauro-Roth, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Bowers Trust Addition to Cuba Marsh Land and Water Reserve, owned by Lake County Forest Preserve District, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2714)

(253-10):* <u>Effingham County – Lake Sara Flatwood Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication</u>

This item was presented by Sami Childerson.

Effingham Water Authority, owners of Lake Sara Flatwoods (INAI #1434), requested preliminary approval for the dedication of approximately 7.4 acres of Grade B southern flatwoods and 9.1 acres of Grade B dry-mesic woodlands as Lake Sara Flatwoods Nature Preserve (NP). The proposed nature preserve is located in the Effingham Plain Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division in Effingham County. The proposed nature preserve will provide permanent protection of the post oak-dominated southern flatwood natural community and associated native species. The condition of the proposed Lake Sara Flatwoods NP has been strongly shaped by a long history of active stewardship centered on prescribed fire, making it one of the best-studied and most intentionally managed flatwoods remnants in Illinois. Dedication will ensure long-term protection, providing crucial habitat for several Species of Greatest Conservation Need of Conservation (SGCN) and supports goals of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP

-including the Forest, Invasive Species and Land & Water Stewardship Campaigns). This preliminary approval represents the initial step in securing protection as part of the broader preserve design for the Lake Sara area. The landowners requested the following reserved rights:

- Use of all-terrain vehicles and mowers at the site for management purposes.
- Cutting and removal of hazardous trees within the NP
  - Hazardous trees located along the adjacent trail may be felled and removed without prior notification to INPC staff.
  - Felling and removal of all other hazardous trees shall be conducted in consultation and coordination with INPC staff.

On behalf of the Effingham Water Authority, INPC staff recommended preliminary approval for the dedication of approximately 16.5 acres of Lake Sara Flatwoods as an Illinois Nature Preserve.

Commissioner Evans referred to the map, specifically the mesic woodlands, and asked what the reason was for separating those areas out.

Childerson responded that the trail placement contributed. She noted that they discussed registering the entire site, but the board felt it was a good distinction when planning for future use. The landowner still wanted access to the road but does not plan to add trails and intends to leave it untouched and open to the public.

It was moved by Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Kessel, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Lake Sara Flatwoods Nature Preserve, owned by the Effingham Water Authority, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2715)

(253-11):* <u>Jackson County – Joan's Little Kinkaid Creek Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication</u>

This item was presented by Kevin Sierzega.

Joan E. Steele requested preliminary approval of 54 acres of Nature Preserve and 1.5 acres of NP buffer as Joan's Little Kinkaid Creek NP in northern Jackson County. The proposed preserve is in the Mt. Vernon Hill Country Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division. It protects 55.5 acres of the currently unprotected 70.21-acre Little Kinkaid Creek INAI site #1996 (Categories I and II) in perpetuity. This includes 9.56 acres of Grade B mesic woodland. Additional significant features of the proposed NP consist of specific suitable habitat for two state-threatened species, including two large populations of Eastern featherbells

(*Stenanthium gramineum*) and breeding habitat for cerulean warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*). The site supports 22 SGCN as identified in the IWAP and provides habitat for 23 avian species categorized as area-sensitive and susceptible to forest fragmentation, including 17 avian species that are confirmed as breeding on the proposed preserve. Natural communities at the site include mesic woodland, dry-mesic woodland, dry woodland, mesic upland forest, dry-mesic upland forest, mesic floodplain forest, wet-mesic floodplain forest, low-gradient medium stream, and cultural (i.e., old field and managed grassland). About 0.25 miles of Little Kinkaid Creek, a spring-fed system with high biodiversity, is within the proposed preserve. Across the site, botanical diversity is extremely high (4.6 native mean coefficient of conservatism [c-value], and native floristic quality index [FQI] = 82.3), especially in the mesic woodland (4.4 native mean c-value, native FQI = 67.5) natural community.

The landowner reserves the right to:

1. Maintain access lanes, mowed trails, and tractor/UTV-accessible roads and trails for management purposes.
2. Construct ephemeral ponds in cultural or lower-quality floodplain forest communities.
3. Control streambank erosion of Little Kinkaid Creek as needed.
4. Collect and remove downed woody material for firewood to decrease fuel loads within the natural communities.

Within the proposed Nature Preserve buffer, the landowner reserves the right to:

1. Allow current and future owners to use the gravel access driveway.
2. Maintain the gravel driveway via tractor grading or addition of rock to ensure access to the excluded 0.5-acre trailer site inclusion.
3. Allow current and future owners to maintain utilities along the gravel driveway, including water line, telephone line, and electrical line.
4. Allow current and future owners to remove select branches or trees within 50 feet of the boundary of the excluded trailer site, with prior INPC Natural Areas Preservation Specialist (NAPS) consultation, for protection of the structure.
5. Maintain the barn within its existing footprint.
6. Create a small parking area for access, equipment storage, parking, and turn-around.

Dedication of the proposed site as an Illinois Nature Preserve should be considered for the following qualifying features and/or reasons:

1. Permanent protection of 55.5 acres of the Little Kinkaid Creek INAI site #1996,
2. Permanent protection of 9.56 acres of Category I high-quality natural communities,
3. Provides specific suitable habitat for verified extant populations of two state-threatened species: Eastern featherbells (*Stenanthium gramineum*) and cerulean warbler (*Setophaga cerulea).*
4. Provides habitat for 22 SGCN, including 17 avian species that are confirmed as breeding on the proposed preserve, and
5. Supports various IWAP Campaigns.

Commissioner Evans asked about the recently farmed agricultural field and why it is included in the proposed site.

Sierzega replied that the landowner requested to include it. In addition, Sierzega stated it's important to protect as much land as possible and provide a buffer to the higher quality areas. Also, dedication of this portion will allow more flexibility of resources in the restoration process.

Sierzega answered that it is common to include degraded areas in larger nature preserve designs, which can provide a buffer for site protection. He noted that in a couple of years, after planting, it will likely be difficult to tell where the old field was.

Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham asked Sierzega to elaborate on plans to restore the old field.

Sierzega stated that he wrote flexibility into the management plan. He commented that woodland or forested areas are what this site needs, given its location in the stream corridor.

Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham asked where the seed for the restoration will be sourced from.

Sierzega replied that all seed will be local from Jackson County. He reiterated that the sourcing of seed from the local region is top of mind in this project.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth asked for more information on the pull barn referenced in the proposal document.

Sierzega answered that the structure will be in the buffer area. There are no permanent plans to maintain the structure.

Commissioner Miraglia asked about the previous restoration activities the landowner had done before approaching Sierzega.

Sierzega stated that the landowner has done a lot of work on removing bush honeysuckle, exotic species, and paid for prescribed burns to be done on the land. She is very interested in restoring the site.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth asked about the historic context of the land.

Sierzega replied that the 1938 data show mature canopies along the stream bed, which tells him there were probably very large white oaks. He noted there was some floodplain in there, which would have contributed to the forest structure with other species.

It was moved by Commissioner Rogner, seconded by Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Joan's Little Kinkaid Creek Nature Preserve, owned by Joan E. Steele, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2716)

(253-12):* <u>Massac County – West Barrens Nature Preserve Addition to Horsefly Ridge Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication</u>

This item was presented by Kevin Sierzega.

Robert Shapiro requested preliminary approval of 128.25 acres of Nature Preserve as the West Barrens NP addition to Horsefly Ridge NP in Massac County, Illinois. The proposed addition is in the Cretaceous Hills Section of the Coastal Plain Natural Division of Illinois. It adds to the 49-acre Horsefly Ridge NP (#343) which received final approval for dedication in October 2008 at the 200th INPC meeting (Resolution 2005). The Horsefly Ridge INAI site (#1786, Categories I and III) is in the process of being updated from 56 to 260 acres which will include the 128.25-acre proposed addition. A Category I feature for mesic barrens (Grade B) and a feature change from Best-of-Kind barrens communities to Grade B dry woodland will be added. These natural communities were graded and inventoried in summer 2025. A Category II feature for suitable habitat for the state-endangered river cooter (*Pseudemys concinna*) will be added as well. Additional state-listed species found in the proposed addition include an adult black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*), identified in late August 2025. This location likely serves as a post-breeding habitat.

The proposed addition protects 8.61 acres of Grade B mesic barrens. This natural community is one of the rarest on the Illinois landscape, with the only other notable location at Cretaceous Hills NP in Pope County, three miles east of Horsefly Ridge NP. The high-quality mesic barrens within the proposed addition are incredibly diverse botanically, containing 122 native species, a 4.9 native mean c-value, and 54.1 native FQI, considered exceptional for the natural community. There are four distinct high-quality mesic barrens remnants in the proposed addition. Each remnant is slightly different in plant composition. The largest of the four remnants is most like the historic Big Barrens natural community of western Kentucky.

Additional natural communities within the proposed addition include dry woodland, dry-mesic woodland, mesic woodland, low-gradient small stream, and cultural (i.e., managed grassland, old field, and artificial impoundment). Sections of the west fork of Seven Mile Creek and its tributaries are within the boundaries as well. Two hundred ninety-six (296) native plant species have been documented across the site and botanical diversity is very high (4.6 native mean c-value, native

FQI=79). Of these, 16.6% are highly conservative and reliant on high-quality natural communities.

Within the proposed West Barrens NP addition, the landowner reserves the right to:

1. Maintain access lanes, mowed trails, prescribed fire breaks, UTV accessible trails for management purposes, and creek crossings.
2. Create a single-wide trail system that includes bench locations with prior INPC NAPS approval.
3. Construct a future parking area for up to six vehicles along Fritz Korte Road in cultural communities.
   - This location may house a portable outhouse.
4. Construct ephemeral ponds and/or wetlands in cultural communities with mechanical methods to benefit the SE river cooter and wetland-dependent SGCN.
5. Install barn owl (*Tyto alba*) nest boxes throughout cultural communities.
6. Control streambank erosion of the west fork of Seven Mile Creek and its tributaries using rip rap or other measures as needed. Maintain artificial impoundments.
7. Collect and remove downed woody material for firewood to decrease fuel loads within the natural communities.
8. Continue enrollment in CRP programs until respective contract end dates. Work with the local NRCS office to satisfy requirements.

Dedication of the proposed West Barrens NP addition should be considered for the following qualifying features and/or reasons:

1. Permanent protection of 128.25 acres of the Horsefly Ridge INAI site #1786,
2. Permanent protection of 8.61 acres of Category I high-quality natural communities,
3. Provides specific suitable habitat for verified extant populations of two state-endangered species: River cooter (*Pseudemys concinna*) and black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*),
4. Provides habitat for 28 SGCN including 21 avian species that are confirmed as breeding on the proposed addition, and
5. Supports various IWAP Campaigns.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth appreciated the reasons for including the parking area but asked if there were more specifics on where it will be located. She noted that parking lots may be well suited to a buffer.

Sierzega replied that it would be reasonable for him to define a buffer area and a more specific location for the parking lot and proposed latrine.

Consultant Joe Roth noted that, for the sake of consistency, the parking lot should be in the buffer. He noted the language of “single wide track” and “pedestrian footpath” and the intent of both terms. He also commented on the construction of the ephemeral pond and where the spoils would go.

Sierzega replied that the spoils have been considered in planning the pond, which will be located in a lower quality area of the Nature Preserve.

Commissioner Evans requested more information on the soil used for the pond and whether more soil would need to be added.

Consultant Joe Roth noted the importance of the underlying soil.

Sierzega noted that it would need to be studied and can be clarified at the final presentation.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth recommended looking at the soil profile, since there are already examples of standing water.

Sierzega noted they would consult experts before the construction of the pond and will clarify these stipulations in the reserved rights.

Consultant Amy Doll asked if landowners are asking about how to handle chemical trespass and if Sierzega had an answer for them.

Sierzega replied that yes, landowners are asking, but no, he does not have an answer. The Illinois Department of Agriculture has called findings inconclusive, which makes action difficult. He noted that, in terms of human health and the environment, it is not good. He has attempted to assist landowners, but action is difficult to take without a larger change in the chemicals being sold. It is disheartening to be unable to offer resources to landowners.

Commissioner Oplt commented that there is a form that landowners can fill out on herbicide damage, but they must name a culprit, such as a neighboring farmer. She asked if having to name a culprit is the real hindrance.

Sierzega said yes, it is an issue. You might be able to pull the logs of a neighboring farmer to identify a source, but even then, no real action is taken. He noted that Illinois Department of Agriculture representatives have come out in response to a complaint, but all they did was issue warnings.

Sierzega continued, noting that a lot of the issue with chemical trespass is on a much larger scale with the chemicals themselves in terms of temperature inversions and volatilization. So, the blame can be assigned to many entities. He noted that he does not believe there will be change until there is a change in the market.

Commissioner Oplt noted that the nature of the complaint form forces neighbor against neighbor.

Sierzega agreed, assuming their neighbor is even the culprit, which makes it even messier.

Commission Chair Parker noted that Consultants and Commissioners are eager to be of assistance.

It was moved by Commissioner Clay, seconded by Commissioner Evans, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of West Barrens Nature Preserve Addition to Horsefly Ridge Nature Preserve, owned by Robert Shapiro, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2717)

The motion was amended by Commissioner DeMauro-Roth, seconded by Commissioner Rogner, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of West Barrens Nature Preserve Addition to Horsefly Ridge Nature Preserve, owned by Robert Shapiro, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting, amended, to include a Nature Preserve buffer, for the purpose of constructing a parking lot and associated facilities, including a latrine.

(Resolution 2718)

(253-13):* <u>Monroe County – Trout Hollow Hill Prairie Nature Preserve, Final Dedication</u>

This item was presented by Debbie Scott Newman.

Heartlands Conservancy requested final approval for dedication of the 14-acre Trout Hollow Hill Prairie Nature Preserve. Preliminary approval was granted at the 252nd INPC meeting (Resolution 2706). The proposed preserve is located in the southwest bluff corridor, north of the Village of Valmeyer, in the Northern Section of the Ozark Natural Division. Dedication of the property will protect the Category II Trout Hollow Hill Prairie INAI site (#1997). The site is on the INAI for the presence of, and providing suitable habitat for, the endangered crested coralroot orchid (*Hexalectris spicata*) which represents the northernmost population in Illinois. The site contains loess hill prairie, limestone glade, dry upland woodland, and dry-mesic upland forest communities. The preserve also contains significant cultural resources. The site fits into a larger forested bluff corridor that provides important migration stopover habitat for birds in the Mississippi River Flyway. Dedication of Trout Hollow Hill Prairie supports several campaigns of the IWAP including the Forest and Woodland, Invasive Species, and Land and Water Stewardship Campaigns. Action items in the Forest and Woodland Campaign supported by this dedication include maintaining and enhancing the composition of Illinois forests, ecological connectivity and reducing fragmentation. Additionally, the site is located within the Bluff Corridor/Karst Conservation

Opportunity Area. Dedicating this site is the culmination of a major collaborative effort to raise funds to save it from development. HeartLands Conservancy staff managed to raise the money needed in 65 days, with 841 donors coming from 42 states, and 4 countries.

The landowner reserves the following rights:

1. Install a small parking area for visitors along Trout Hollow Road, utilizing the already disturbed area around the power line corridor.
2. Install a bridge over the creek if needed for the parking area.
3. Install one trail, either loop or in-and-out, in the preserve.
4. Install a viewing platform near the prairie to protect the prairie and the cultural resources from visitor entry and trampling.
5. Install sitting benches along the trail or near the prairie, and interpretive signs or kiosk.
6. Use cut cedars from the restoration efforts for visitor benches, a kiosk, or signposts. INPC and HC staff would prefer to have cedars removed, when possible, to reduce fire fuel loads during prescribed burns. This reserved right will complement restoration efforts. In addition to the removal of cedars, the owners reserve the right to remove any wood along designated firebreaks to reduce fuel loads, including if needed for firewood for HC events.
7. Heartlands Conservancy will work with INPC staff for approval of locations and placement of above structures.

The preservation of this site accomplishes important conservation goals for the area. INPC and many partners have been working tirelessly to protect as many of the rapidly disappearing loess hill prairies and limestone glades and their associated species along the 30-mile bluff corridor in Monroe and Randolph Counties. Several units of government, non-profits, and private landowners have permanently protected their hill prairie properties. Final dedication of Trout Hollow Hill Prairie NP provides protection for a rare hill prairie and serves as an important habitat bridge between Eagle Cliff Prairie NP 1.5 miles to the north and Salt Lick Point LWR 1 mile to the south.

It was moved by Commissioner Oplt, seconded by Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of Trout Hollow Hill Prairie Nature Preserve, owned by HeartLands Conservancy, as described in the proposal presented under Item 13 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2719)

(253-14):* <u>Putnam County – Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep Nature Preserve Buffer Addition (Sandy Hollow), Final Dedication</u>

This item was presented by Peter Goodspeed and Katie Kucera.

The Wetlands Initiative (TWI) requested final approval for the dedication of the 352.14-acre Sandy Hollow nature preserve buffer addition to Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep NP. Preliminary approval was granted at the 252nd INPC meeting (Resolution 2708). The site is in Putnam County and is part of the Sue and Wes Dixon Waterfowl Refuge, which is managed by TWI. The area straddles the border of the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois River Bottomlands Natural Division and the Illinois River and Mississippi River Sand Areas Natural Division. Sandy Hollow contains native ecosystems, including restored sand prairie, restored sand savanna, restored mesic prairie, oak-hickory woodland, and floodplain forest. Sandy Hollow is bordered to the west by Hennepin Hopper Lakes INAI site (#0825). This site is on the INAI as Category I for having a Grade B seep, Category II for the presence of and providing suitable habitat for the king rail (*Rallus elegans*), yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), and least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), and Category VI for having an unusual concentration of herptile species with 25 species documented. The buffer addition shares a border with the Dore Seep NP, protecting much of the upland recharge zone for the seep features found within the nature preserve. Furthermore, Sandy Hollow contains several state-listed plant species that have been introduced to the site through restoration efforts. The site is accessible to the public via a gravel driveway, gravel parking lot, and a network of mowed trails that wind throughout the diverse habitats.

Within the proposed Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep Nature Preserve Buffer Addition (Sandy Hollow), TWI requested to reserve the following listed rights, related to the management and future low-impact development of the site to maintain this high-quality restoration and facilitate public access well into the future.

Reserved Rights:

1. Introduce native plant material (i.e., trees, shrubs, plugs, and seed) to the site to meet ongoing ecological restoration goals.
2. Maintain or improve the 1,250-foot gravel driveway from IL Route 26 to the parking lot with the same material or a low-impact paving alternative.
3. Maintain or improve the 5,100-square-foot gravel parking lot using the same material or a low-impact paving alternative.
4. Expand the existing gravel parking area by up to three times its current footprint.
5. Install a picnic pavilion at the parking lot.
6. Install a vault toilet structure at the parking lot.
7. Maintain or improve existing trails (totaling approximately 4.4 miles) with current surfaces (turfgrass, gravel, sand, cobble) or resurface with low-impact paving material.
8. Install additional spur trails to connect the existing trail network to trails on adjacent parcels that may be acquired and restored in the future.
9. Maintain, improve, or replace two concrete vehicle/equipment fords across the intermittent stream (tributary of the Illinois River), using the same or a lower-impact surface material.

10. Maintain, improve, or replace the existing small wooden pedestrian bridge over the intermittent stream (a tributary of the Illinois River).
11. Improve and maintain the informal pedestrian ford on the north side of the property, using concrete, riprap, pavers, or a low-impact pedestrian bridge.
12. Maintain, improve, or replace the Pyott Pavilion shelter.
13. Maintain, improve, or replace existing benches or low-impact bench platforms.
14. Install additional benches, low-impact bench platforms, or seating areas where appropriate.
15. Maintain, improve, replace, or install picnic tables where appropriate.
16. Maintain, improve, replace, or install signage for interpretation, donor recognition, wayfinding, rules and regulations, and visitor information. This includes maintenance of surrounding areas using mulch, gravel, herbicide, or other weed suppression methods.
17. Install and maintain low-impact wildlife observation platforms and/or towers.
18. Maintain, improve, replace, or install artificial wildlife structures, including bird boxes, bat boxes, bird nesting platforms, and herptile hibernacula.
19. Permit visitors to walk dogs on leashes not to exceed 10 feet.
20. Allow construction of a future multi-use bridge and/or multi-use recreational trail in the southwest section of the preserve buffer to connect a potential future levee-top trail at the Sue and Wes Dixon Waterfowl Refuge to a trail on an adjacent parcel south of Sandy Hollow. While no such access currently exists, this right would preserve long-term regional trail connectivity options.
21. Allow permitted hunting, fishing, and trapping solely for the management of nuisance wildlife species that cause ecological harm within the nature preserve buffer.

    Aside from deer, control of over-abundant native animals has not yet been approved by INPC as a standard management practice at nature preserves. There are significant examples in scientific literature documenting that overpopulation of common, generalist animal species (such as mesopredators) can negatively impact conservative, rare, threatened, or endangered species. Anthropogenic influences and limited habitat availability exacerbate negative impacts to rare native species. Control of overabundant animals is becoming standard practice by land managers of natural habitat throughout Illinois on non-INPC lands. In consideration that the acres proposed for dedication were formerly agriculture (not INAI quality) and will be buffer - INPC staff recommend that the control as described be allowed as a reserved right within the buffer with INPC staff level coordination and review prior to implementation.

Staff of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission recommended final dedication of 352.14 acres of nature preserve buffer as the Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep Nature Preserve Buffer Addition (Sandy Hollow).

It was moved by Commissioner Clay, seconded by Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep Nature Preserve Buffer Addition (Sandy Hollow), owned by the The

Wetlands Initiative, as described in the proposal presented under Item 14 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2720)

(253-15):* <u>Kankakee County – Pembroke Savanna Nature Preserve, Expansion of Parking Lot and Visitor Amenities</u>

This item was presented by Jason Beverlin, Kelly Neal and Kim Roman.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns and manages Pembroke Savanna Nature Preserve in Kankakee County. It is found on the west side of Pembroke Township and is representative of the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. At the time of this preserve's first dedication in 2005, TNC had considered a minimally developed foot trail and placement of benches and signs, but no formal parking areas were considered at this location. Public visitation and local programming have increased over the past 20 years and now there is insufficient parking and accessibility is limited. TNC wishes to create a safe and welcoming entrance for its visitors by expanding the current parking area, including a single ADA parking spot and two additional gravel parking spaces that can also accommodate bus parking. TNC also wishes to install an ADA-compliant walkway which leads to a small pavilion with interpretive signs immediately adjacent to the existing trailhead. The best location to create and improve user amenities at the site is the current location of the parking area and trailhead to avoid impacting a new area of the preserve. The footprint of disturbance from this project is approximately 2500 ft^2 and it occupies a degraded area of the preserve, immediately adjacent to the road.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth asked if the construction of the parking lot was contingent on a permit to build on the road right-of-way.

Beverlin replied yes, they will need a permit but do not anticipate that being problematic.

Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham asked if this was within the proper nature preserve boundaries or if there is a need to define a buffer area.

Beverlin replied that it is already dedicated.

Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham asked if it needed to be redefined as a buffer.

Neal noted the justification in the proposal, including visitor safety. Even though it is not within a buffer, it was not considered when it was originally dedicated. The issue of parking lots continues to come up in older sites. She does not anticipate negative impacts for this site specifically.

Commission Chair Parker expanded on Commissioner Carroll-Cunningham's question, which was whether this area can be rededicated as buffer.

Neal replied that to rededicate a property, it would be a very complicated process and would likely not be worth the effort.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth noted that the legal instrument has already been approved, easements written, and already conveyed to the state. To change it to buffer would be a very involved process.

Commissioner Miraglia thanked Beverlin for involving the community in the design of this space. She asked how this would prevent ATV use and the community involvement in that.

Beverlin replied that the original intent of this project was not to stop ATV use. The local community wanted the parking area, and TNC saw this as an opportunity to also solve the ATV problem.

Beverlin continued. Somewhere between 300-500 ATV users ascend on this area and use their equipment without permission. It is a law enforcement issue that is being addressed, but this project can help solve the issue. The local community is very supportive.

Commissioner Miraglia clarified that the ATV community is separate from the local community.

Beverlin said yes, most of theATV users comes from outside Pembroke Township.

Commissioner Rogner noted the historical context of the ATV use problem, despite law enforcement intervention. He noted that he sees the most unauthorized ATV use in areas that look neglected, and this parking lot project will not make it look abandoned.

Commissioner Evans thanked Neal for the memorandum that laid out the context and rules regarding this specific issue.

It was moved by Commissioner Clay, seconded by Commissioner DeMauro-Roth, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the Pembroke Savanna Nature Preserve, Expansion of Parking Lot and Visitor Amenities, as described in the proposal presented under Item 15 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2721)

(253-16):* <u>Request to Allow INPC Staff Level Review and Approval of Parking Lot Construction or Expansions at INPC Sites</u>

This item was presented by Kelly Neal.

Commission Resolutions 1246 and 1318, passed in 1994, authorize INPC staff to approve management activities that are consistent with approved management guidelines, or accepted management actions. An accepted management action is an activity that complies with specifications in the Rules for Management of Illinois Nature Preserves or that has been previously approved by the Commission *at least three times*. Staff should bring to the Commission for their review and approval all proposed management actions that are not covered by the Rules for Management of an Illinois Nature Preserve (or the Land and Water Reserve Rule); a management guideline; or that have not been approved at least three times by the Commission.

Requests to install or expand parking areas at INPC sites have regularly been presented to the Commission. Most recently, the Commission approved a request from Clifftop NFP to construct a 6-vehicle parking area at Storment Hauss NP (Resolution 2543) and a request from ParkLands to double the size of a parking area at Mackinaw River LWR (Resolution 2649). TNC's request to expand the parking lot at Pembroke Savanna NP is the third since September 2021. If TNC's request is approved -- INPC staff requests Commission approval to allow staff-level review and approval of parking area expansions or new parking at nature preserves or land and water reserves as part of an approved management plan or amendment. Staff would continue to present to the Commission for approval any requests that are questionable, for a specific INPC site.

Commission Chair Parker clarified the process for moving an issue from Commissioner review to staff-level review. When a specific issue comes before the Commission three times, there can be a discussion on whether the issue can be moved to staff approval rather than coming before the Commission. In this instance, the issue is that of new parking lots and expansions on existing sites. The issue of Pembroke was the third time, which is why it is now up for discussion.

Commissioner Kessel noted that this presents a few opportunities. First, to trust staff and their expertise. Second, to be responsive to the community and to build community, which requires safe access points to these sites.

Neal noted that sites open to the public seem to be getting more use.

Commissioner Miraglia asked if community involvement in the design of these spaces could be made a best practice or at least recommended to staff.

Commissioner Rogner pointed out that the recommendation in Neal's memorandum outlines a series of conditions that must be met to approve these projects, which may be the best place to house Commissioner Miraglia's suggestion.

Commission Chair Parker clarified that the addition would be adding a condition of community engagement.

Commissioner Miraglia replied yes, she is proposing that community engagement be proposed as a best practice.

Consultant Randy Heidorn commented that he did not envision the "three-time rule" would be used in this situation, as he was the original author of the rule. He went on to note that he does think this is an appropriate use.

Consultant Heidorn continued, noting that landowner intent is not always the same as the Commission's intent in terms of protection. To protect staff from getting stuck in between landowners and the Commission, he recommends rewriting the conditions as management guidelines for more standard use.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth commented that she has no problem with a parking lot that was already outlined in a reserved right or the need to update for de facto parking for safety, as was seen today. However, she noted that the approval of new parking, which has never been proposed in any form, should come before the Commission.

Kim Roman commented that in terms of engaging the public, these parking lot projects are important. She questioned if it is staff's role to approve these projects. Roman noted concerns that public meetings could generate suggestions from the public that might not align with the protection of the Nature Preserve.

Roman continued. She does not believe coordinating community engagement on these projects falls to INPC staff; rather, it is on the landowner.

Commission Chair Parker clarified Roman's comments. In the instance of Pembroke Savanna Nature Preserve, TNC managed public comment and brought forth the plan to present to the Commission rather than staff coordinating community feedback.

Roman replied yes, the example of TNC handling community feedback rather than INPC staff was ideal.

Commission Chair Parker asked Neal if the current guidelines were for the landowner or INPC staff.

Neal replied that they are for everyone involved. A guideline could recommend a landowner engage the community in terms of design.

Commissioner Rogner asked at what point Commission staff get involved. After the landowner has received community feedback and proposed a design, when do staff provide feedback on whether the project is compatible with protection?

Neal replied that it would be similar to what was brought forward today, but rather than being brought to the Commission, it would be reviewed by staff.

Commissioner Evans asked if the community engagement condition would apply to private landowners who just want to expand their own access.

Neal replied that it would likely be on a case-by-case basis. She noted it would be equated to approval for a private sewer line for a home, which would be brought forth to the Commission. A private landowner would be different than a public entity trying to provide better public access.

Commissioner Evans noted that he agreed with Commissioner DeMauro-Roth. A parking structure is a significant deviation from what would have originally been proposed for a nature preserve.

Neal noted that these guidelines are for a new parking lot, not what was proposed in reserved rights.

Commissioner Kessel asked if a list of properties this applies to would be possible to produce. Rather than a blanket approval, a list of properties for which staff can manage without Commission oversight might be a better answer rather than placing the entire burden on Commission staff.

Commissioner Evans noted that situations can change over time, and a site might become very popular without staff anticipating it. A list may be hard to predict and generate.

Neal noted an example of a previously privately owned property which is now owned by a public entity, who had funds to expand access to the site for the public. Neal noted that a list of sites approved before reserved rights could be generated, but a narrower scope would be difficult.

Commissioner Clay asked if this could be tabled for better developed guidelines.

Neal replied that draft guidelines could potentially be completed by the September meeting to address what was discussed today.

Commissioner Miraglia asked if staff have discussed and agreed to take on this responsibility.

Neal replied that staff proposed this to better serve landowners expeditiously, rather than take on additional responsibilities.

Debbie Newman noted the importance of access not only for the public, but also for staff for management purposes.

Sierzega commented that there may be some situations where staff do not want to be the decision makers on these projects. Staff work closely with landowners, so an option to leave approval up to the Commission would be beneficial.

Neal noted that it is written into the memorandum. Staff can still bring proposals to the Commission if needed.

Roman noted that approval at the staff level could put them in a difficult position. An approval before the Commission required well-thought-out proposals that align with the Commission goals, which is what a parking lot project would need.

Neal responded that approval would be a two-level process, at the field level and then with staff in Springfield. If Springfield staff were to deny it, it could potentially be brought to the Commission.

Consultant Heidorn noted taking the time to write specific guidelines would be worth the long-term benefits.

Commissioner Evans noted that guidelines would be appropriate, even if approval remains at the Commission level.

It was moved by Commissioner Rogner, seconded by Commissioner DeMauro-Roth, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

Commissioner Staff will draft guidelines to be presented to the Commission for approval regarding whether INPC Staff should be granted the ability to approve new parking structures or if the Commission shall retain authority based on the conversation at the 253rd meeting, item 16.

(Resolution 2722)

(253-17):* **Will County – Mesopredator Control to Improve Survival Rates of Two Endangered Turtle Species at Lockport Prairie and Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserves**

This item was presented by Juli Mason, Becky Blankenship, and Kelly Neal.

The Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) owns and manages Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve (Lockport, IL; 249 acres; INAI #0932; Categories I, II, III) and Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve (Romeoville, IL; 155 acres; INAI #0936; Categories I, II, III). These sites are located in the DesPlaines River Valley, in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Both sites were dedicated as nature preserves in the early 1980's, protecting over 400 acres of globally rare dolomite prairie habitats from surrounding industrialization and development. The diversity of species documented at Lockport Prairie NP includes 54 plant and animal SGCN, many of which are listed as state threatened or endangered (ST, SE); several of these are also federally threatened or endangered (FT, FE). The highly diverse

Romeoville Prairie NP includes 46 SGCN, many of these are also listed as ST, SE, FT and/or FE.

The SE Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) and spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*) are present at both sites. The only remaining populations of spotted turtle in the entire state are located at these two NPs. Preventing the extirpation of this species from Illinois is a high priority. These at-risk turtle species have become progressively restricted in range and reduced in number as their essential habitats are degraded or lost due to anthropogenic changes. Conversely, highly adaptable mesopredators have been able to exploit these changes resulting in artificially high populations. IDNR has been tracking raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) population trends since 1918, and results show raccoon observations are more than three times greater in recent years than when the surveys began. Hunting and trapping have acted as a surrogate method of mesopredator population control, however according to IDNR, harvest of furbearers has been declining. Published research studies as well as IDNR and Illinois Natural History Survey Population Guidance documents for both species recommend that FPDWC implement a mesopredator control program. The Forest Preserve District requested INPC approval to lethally control raccoons, striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), and opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*) prior to, and during turtle nesting season in accordance with Illinois nuisance wildlife control permitting.

Commissioner Rogner asked whether there is evidence of coyotes as predators.

Blankenship replied that her evidence is anecdotal from deer management season. The coyotes go after deer quite a lot. She did not know if there was much evidence of severe turtle predation, just that they are a part of the food chain, but raccoons are currently a larger threat.

Commissioner Rogner asked if the camera traps would detect coyotes.

Blankenship replied yes.

Commissioner Miraglia asked what the minimum viable population is for these turtles.

Dreslick replied over 100 breeding females.

It was moved by Commissioner DeMauro-Roth, seconded by Commissioner Kessel, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the Mesopredator Control to Improve Survival Rates of Two Endangered Turtle Species at Lockport Prairie and Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserves, as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2723)

(253-18):* **Request to Allow INPC Staff Level Review and Approval of Mesopredator Control at Nature Preserve Sites**

This item was presented by Kelly Neal.

Commission Resolutions 1246 and 1318, passed in 1994, authorize INPC staff to approve management activities that are consistent with approved management guidelines, or accepted management actions. An accepted management action is an activity that complies with specifications in the Rules for Management of Illinois Nature Preserves or that has been previously approved by the Commission *at least three times*. Staff should bring to the Commission for their review and approval all proposed management actions that are not covered by the Rules for Management of an Illinois Nature Preserve, a management guideline, or when they have not been approved at least three times by the Commission.

Mesopredator control has become a standard and accepted practice used by land managers at sites that are not in the INPC system. The FPDWC's request to control mesopredators at Lockport Prairie and Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserves is the third time this has been brought before the Commission. The first approval was for Lake County Forest Preserve District at Spring Bluff Nature Preserve (Resolution 2231) and the second for Illinois Audubon Society at Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve (Resolution 2669). If the FPDWC's request is approved, INPC staff request Commission approval to allow staff level review and approval to control by appropriate methods raccoons, skunks and opossums at nature preserves as part of an approved management plan or amendment. Staff would continue to present to the Commission for approval any requests that are considered to be questionable or contentious for a specific nature preserve site.

It was moved by Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Clay, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the Request to Allow INPC Staff Level Review and Approval of Mesopredator Control at Nature Preserve Sites, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2724)

(253-19): Review of Closed Meeting Minutes

This item was presented by Emily Taylor.

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.

It was moved by Commissioner Clay, seconded by Commissioner Rogner, and carried that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission agrees that the closed meeting minutes from August 2, 2005; May 2, 2006; May 6, 2008; May 5, 2009; May 7, 2013; September 10, 2013; and September 10, 2019, remain closed, as described and in accordance with Item 19 of the agenda for the 253rd Meeting.

(Resolution 2725)

(253-20): Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

(253-21): Other Business

Commissioner Kessel noted that this is the closure of his first term as a commissioner, and he will not be serving a second term. Commissioner Kessel took a moment to acknowledge everybody in the room, all the hard work of staff and the landowners, and the continuing work done to build people's connections with these places and ecological spaces. He noted the work done to protect and heal cultural spaces and the huge effort to do so, which he is proud to have been a part of. He thanked staff and Commissioners for their hard work, time, and dedication.

Commission Chair Parker commented on how much she has learned working with Commissioner Kessel. She credited him as the force behind opening our sites to cultural protection and reinterment. She noted the long-term impacts of opening standard practices up to tribal communities and thanked him for his dedication.

Commissioner Miraglia noted it has been a pleasure to work with Commissioner Kessel and wished him all the best.

Commissioner DeMauro-Roth thanked Commissioner Kessel for his valuable perspective.

Commissioner Miraglia made two requests for future meetings. First, for those online to be introduced to better understand who is available for discussion. Second, for more uniformity across dedication materials in terms of section titles, such as cultural communities versus archeological resources. Headings seemed to be used interchangeably, and consistency is recommended.

Kaleb Baker noted that reinterment guidelines offer language that can be utilized.

John Griesbaum noted staff would benefit from standardization.

Advisor Alleen Betzenhauser, Illinois State Archeologist, strongly encouraged standard language across the state.

Neal commented that she would work with the IDNR's Archeologist to develop standard language.

Commission Chair Parker reminded the Commission that the May meeting marks the beginning of the process of nominating new Consultants.

Commissioner Clay asked for recommendations to be sent to him and that he would follow up.

(253-22): <u>Adjournment</u>

It was moved by Commissioner Kessel, seconded by Commissioner Clay, and carried that the meeting be adjourned.

The 253rd INPC Meeting was adjourned at 3:16 p.m.