

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

Black Hawk State Historic Site
The Watchtower Lodge
1510 46th Avenue
Rock Island, IL 61201

September 15, 2015, 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 Special Meeting, January 26, 2015 and the 219th Meeting, January 27, 2015 and 220th Meeting, May 5, 2015

Item 4: Next meeting date and location

January 26, 2016, 10:00 a.m. Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, IL
May 3, 2016, 10:00 a.m. University of Illinois Extension Office, Waterloo, IL
September 13, 2016, 10:00 a.m. Danada House, Wheaton, IL

Item 5: Committee of the Whole Meeting to propose nominations for Illinois Nature Preserves Commission Advisors, Consultants and Officers. (Committee Chair: William E. McClain)

A. Nomination of Advisors

Current Advisors:

Wayne A. Rosenthal IL Department of Natural Resources (Statutory Advisor)	Dr. Brian Anderson IL Natural History Survey (Statutory Advisor)	Dr. Bonnie Styles IL State Museum (Statutory Advisor)
Dr. Misganaw Demissie IL State Water Survey	Dr. Thomas E. Emerson Illinois State Archaeological Survey	Alyson Grady Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
Dr. E. Donald McKay, III Illinois State Geological Survey	Dr. Gary Miller Prairie Research Institute	Dr. William W. Shilts Prairie Research Institute
Anne Mankowski Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board	Marc Miller, Former Director IDNR	

B. Nomination of Consultants

Current Consultants:

Gerald Adelman	Jill Allread	Michelle Carr
Tom Clay	Harry Drucker	Kenneth Fiske
Dr. Ronald Flemal	Fran Harty	Kerry Leigh
James Mann	Jerry Paulson	Jill Riddell
Lauren Rosenthal	Bruce Ross-Shannon	Joseph Roth
John Schwegman	Valerie Spale	John White

C. Nomination of Officers

Current Officers:

Chair: Dr. David Thomas

Vice Chair: Donald Dann

Secretary: George Covington

Item 6:* INPC Staff Report

REPORT

Randy Heidorn

Nature Preserves Commission

Item 7: IDNR Staff Report

REPORT

Ann Holtrop

Department of Natural Resources

Item 8: Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

REPORT

Anne Mankowski

Endangered Species Protection Board

Item 9:* Champaign County – Edna Edwards Burnett Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The proposed Edna Edwards Burnett Land and Water Reserve is a 20.327-acre site located about thirteen miles south of Urbana that is owned by Grand Prairie Friends. The site was donated to Grand Prairie Friends by Mr. Ralph Burnett in 2014 for conservation purposes in honor of Mr. Burnett's Mother, Edna Edwards Burnett. This site conserves an approximately 1250 foot (0.24 mile) portion of the Embarras River that is recognized by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI # 1808 Embarras River – Nanney Research Reach). It is within the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Several land and water reserves and other protected areas conserve segments of the Embarras River downstream of the proposed Burnett Land and Water Reserve with the nearest sites being the Nanney Research Area owned by the University of Illinois and Upper Embarras Woods Land and Water Reserve in Walnut Point State Park. The proposed reserve is within the Embarras Ecosystem Partnership. Protection of this site helps fulfill the goals of the Ecosystem Partnership as well as those of the Embarras River Watershed Resource Management Plan and supports action steps identified for the Forest Campaign and the Streams Campaign in the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy. Conservation of the river and its corridor at the proposed reserve supplies watershed protection to the river, maintains the riparian corridor for the benefit of wildlife, and conserves stream habitat for many aquatic species including at least one fish in Greatest Need of Conservation as determined by the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy.

REPORT

Mary Kay Solecki

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Registration Approval

Item 10:* Coles County – Ambraw Woods Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The proposed Ambraw Woods Land and Water Reserve conserves an approximately 0.5-mile segment of the Embarras River that is recognized by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI # 1427). This privately owned 75.5-acre site is located about 0.6 miles south of Charleston and lies within the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. Natural communities found at Ambraw Woods include grade C mesic and dry-mesic upland forest, dry woodland, wet floodplain forest, and old field. A state-threatened sedge occurs in the forest here, and a state-threatened fish has been reported from the river along Ambraw Woods. An astonishing 72 species of fish have been recorded from this part of the Embarras River. Ambraw Woods provide habitat for at least fifteen Species in Greatest Need of Conservation as identified in the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy including seven fish, a turtle, two types of mussels, and five bird species. This area is part of an extensive woodland corridor covering over eight miles of dissected hills that flank the Embarras River starting north of Charleston and continuing on south past Fox Ridge State Park. Ambraw Woods is an important link in this chain of conservation lands, providing habitat for forest-interior birds and additional watershed protection to the river. It is within the Embarras Ecosystem Partnership. In addition, the middle and lower part of the Embarras River watershed is recognized as a Resource Rich Area by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Conservation 2000 Ecosystem Program. Conservation of Ambraw Woods helps fulfill the goals of the Ecosystem Partnership as well as those of the Embarras River Watershed Resource Management Plan which recognizes the loss of natural character in the watershed as a problem and encourages protecting the natural integrity of the river system. Conservation of this important natural area is consistent with the goals of the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy and supports action steps identified for the Forest Campaign and the Streams Campaign in the Plan.

REPORT

Mary Kay Solecki
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Registration Approval

Item 11:* McHenry County – Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve Addition and Buffer, Dedication

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County seeks preliminary approval of dedication of approximately 25.3 acres as addition and 3.9 acres as buffer addition to Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve. If approved, this dedication will protect another significant portion of the West Woodstock Prairie Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site (INAI #1568) and provide important buffer to the high-quality natural communities therein. Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve is currently 103.9 acres in size and owned by the Land Conservancy of McHenry County and the City of Woodstock and is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. The existing nature preserve and the proposed addition and buffer are part of a larger natural wetland complex covering approximately 260 acres and consisting of a mosaic of relict prairies, wetlands, and oak savannas. While the wetland complex as a whole suffers from invasive species and lack of management, the area still supports significant relict natural communities and offers unique opportunities for restoration of some of Illinois' most rare natural communities – particularly, wet-mesic prairie and mesic oak savanna. The entire natural area has a rich diversity of plant species and habitat that

support local populations of wildlife, including one state-endangered reptile. The best quality natural community for which the INAI site was established is a Grade B wet-mesic prairie located within the boundary of the original nature preserve dedication. Since then, the Land Conservancy of McHenry County has implemented an impressive restoration and management plan for the preserve. The results of those efforts are unfolding today as the entire site is restored to a prairie and savanna landscape through tree and brush clearing, exotics control, and reintroduction of fire. The proposed addition, located on the west side of the preserve, contains 14.5 acres of the West Woodstock Prairie INAI site. The proposed buffer addition, located on the east side of the preserve, consists of degraded wetlands and woodlands that border the existing nature preserve and a residential area. The dedication of the proposed addition and buffer addition to Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve will help protect a relict natural community included on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory and at least one state-listed animal. Restoration and management of this natural area will benefit area sensitive grassland dependent birds and other wildlife identified as in Greatest Need of Conservation in the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy. To-date, twelve animal species listed in the action plan have been observed at Yonder Prairie. If approved, the lands protected at Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve will increase from 103.9 acres to 133.1 acres.

REPORT
John C. Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 12:* Kane County – Meissner-Corrn Prairie and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County seeks final approval for dedication of the Meissner-Corrn Prairie and Sedge Meadow as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The proposed 114.9-acre nature preserve encompasses the Russell Prairie INAI site (INAI # 1442) and is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Elgin, Illinois. The proposed nature preserve, consisting of 34.2 acres as nature preserve and 80.7 acres as nature preserve buffer, is located within the larger 229-acre Meissner-Corrn Forest Preserve owned by the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. The proposed nature preserve encompasses Grade A wet-mesic prairie, Grade C/D sedge meadow and a population of a state-threatened plant. The proposed nature preserve buffer was formerly farmland and is now being restored to prairie. Meissner-Corrn Prairie and Sedge Meadow received preliminary approval for dedication at the Commission's 198th Meeting in May 2008 (Resolution No. 1991). Dedication of the proposed nature preserve will protect a remnant of high-quality wet-mesic prairie (only 125 acres of this prairie community survive Satewide) and is consistent with the recommendations of the "*Biodiversity Recovery Plan for the Chicago Wilderness Region*" and elements of the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy; specifically action steps to restore and manage high-quality wetland and prairie communities. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission staff recommends dedication of the 114.9-acre Meissner-Corrn Prairie and Sedge Meadow as an Illinois Nature Preserve.

REPORT
Steve Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 13:* Lee County – Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Illinois Audubon Society proposes to permanently protect approximately 291.2 acres as the Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve. The INPC granted preliminary approval for this dedication at the 220th meeting. The proposed nature preserve is located within the Green River Lowland Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (#1621) site in the Green River Lowland Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. This is a Category II site that provides critical habitat for at least three state-listed reptiles. Presently, the Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary is also documented to provide habitat for 27 faunal species listed in the Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy as being in Greatest Need of Conservation, as well as one state-threatened plant, pinweed (*Lechea intermedia*). The faunal species include thirteen birds (nine breeding), five reptiles, one mammal, and eight moths. An abundance of eolian sand dune deposits, located in close association with numerous wetlands, make this site an ideal breeding and nesting area for reptiles and amphibians. Historically, the Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary consisted of dry sand savanna, wet-mesic sand prairie, dry-mesic savanna, and wetland basins consisting of marsh, sedge meadow and wet-prairies. These communities still exist at Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, but in degraded condition due to invasive woody vegetation and lack of fire disturbance. The site is located in what was once the largest grove of timber in Lee County. This is the first property within the Green River Lowland INAI site (#1621) to be proposed for dedication. Thanks to the Illinois Audubon Society, its members and volunteers, this dedication likely represents a “first-step” in protecting what will someday be an even larger nature preserve and an incredible example of ecological restoration.

REPORT
John C. Nelson
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 14:* Marshall County – Fern Ridge Nature Preserve, Dedication

Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang seek final approval for dedication of 3.25 acres within Fern Ridge Natural Area (INAI# 1836) as the Fern Ridge Nature Preserve. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication of Fern Ridge at its 220th meeting (Resolution #2326) on May 5, 2015. Fern Ridge is located within the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division along the Illinois River bluffs. The significant feature of this site is a large population of the state-threatened fibrous-rooted sedge (*Carex communis* Bailey), in which flowering and fruiting individuals have been documented. This population of several hundred clumps is one of only eighteen that have been documented throughout the state. Natural communities at Fern Ridge are Grade C and consist of dry-mesic upland forest, mesic upland forest, mesic floodplain forest, and an intermittent high-gradient small stream. Upland forests are dominated by species such as white oak (*Quercus alba*), red oak (*Q. rubra*), shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), sassafras

(*Sassafras albidum*), and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Floodplain forest species include bur oak (*Q. macrocarpa*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), and American basswood (*Tilia americana*). Notable plants at Fern Ridge include several fern species, including the conservative silvery spleenwort (*Athyrium thelypteroides*); blue beech (*Carpinus caroliniana*); smooth forked aster (*Aster schreberi*); and ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*). The primary threat to this site is invasion by non-native species, which the landowners have already addressed. The Illinois Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy would be supported by this dedication through the Forest, Land and Water Stewardship, and Invasive Species campaigns.

REPORT
Thomas V. Lerczak
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 15:* Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Fiscal Year 2016 Stewardship Proposals

The Natural Areas Stewardship project uses monies provided by the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund [NAAF] to support management activities on both state and non-state-owned nature preserves and land and water reserves. The FY16 NAAF Stewardship allocation is projected to be \$1,000,000. Additional funds may be available from unallocated monies from past FYs but the amount is unknown at this time. IDNR requests approval of the submitted FY16 NAAF Stewardship Proposal list in anticipation of available funding.

REPORT
Bob Szafoni
Department of Natural Resources
Randy Heidorn
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Commission Approval

Item 16:* Illinois Nature Preserves Commission – Policy and Procedures for Translocation of Animal Species

Currently the procedure for review of requests for animal translocations into sites in the nature preserves system involves a staff level review in consultation with the IDNR and Endangered Species Protection Board (ESPB), with final review and approval by Commissioners at a Commission meeting. After a species or cohort of species have been reviewed and approved for translocation by Commissioners three times, it is considered that a precedent has been set and future requests for that species/cohort's translocation can be reviewed and approved at the staff level. For example, butterfly translocations have been reviewed more than three times and now can be reviewed at the staff level only. At the 214th Meeting of the Commission on May 7, 2013, Commissioners reviewed a request for retroactive approval of a mussel translocation into a land and water reserve that occurred in 2012 without prior approval by INPC. This translocation issue made apparent the conflict between the sometimes quick turnaround that may be needed in order to safely translocate animals to ensure their survival and the constraints of INPC's three times per year meeting time table. The Commissioners directed staff to work on an animal translocation policy that would allow for staff level review and potential approval of requests to translocate animals into INPC sites. Given this directive, staff believed that development of such a policy should

be in coordination with IDNR and ESPB for a “joint” policy similar to the existing Joint Plant Translocation Policy. Throughout 2013 and early 2014 INPC, IDNR and ESPB staff met to work on this policy. The group determined that prior to approval of a joint policy it would be necessary to make changes to the administrative rules for possession of endangered or threatened species. Draft changes of these rules were begun, but limited staff capacity and other priorities have not allowed further progress by IDNR staff. Because this administrative rule does not directly involve INPC, staff decided to proceed with, and have developed an INPC animal translocation policy which would allow staff level review and potential approval of requests to translocate animal species. The proposed INPC policy will follow closely the policy previously discussed as a joint policy, using the 1989 “Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board Policy on Translocation of Endangered and Threatened Animal Species” as a framework for the criteria required to be included in proposals submitted to translocate animals at INPC sites. The proposed INPC policy continues to include coordination of review and consultation with both IDNR and ESPB.

REPORT

Kelly Neal
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval of Animal Translocation Policy

Item 17:* Champaign and Vermilion Counties – Correction of Legal Description for Edgewood Farm Land and Water Reserve

James and Eleanor Smith received final approval for dedication of 156.7 acres as Edgewood Farm Land and Water Reserve at the Commission’s 169th meeting in October 2000 (Resolution 1555). The registration was recorded in Champaign County on December 8, 2000 and in Vermilion County on December 6, 2000. Errors in the legal description have been found for tracts in Vermilion County. The landowner has requested that the Commission record the corrected legal description.

REPORT

Mary Kay Solecki and Valerie Njapa
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval of Corrected Legal Description

Item 18:* Kankakee and Iroquois Counties – Report on the Status of the Proposed Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area

The Midwest Region of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is taking steps to establish the Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area (NWR&CA) within two focal areas in Illinois. A planning process that concluded with an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) authorized the Grand Kankakee Marsh National Wildlife Refuge in 1999 in both Illinois and Indiana. Due to lack of funding and other planning priorities, this project was put on hold until recently. Re-engaging in this effort now, acknowledges the Service’s continued recognition of the biological importance of the Kankakee River Basin and ongoing commitment to conservation in the area. Since 1999 the Service has been supporting habitat restoration on private lands, encouraging conservation activities by partners, building relationships, and fostering support for conservation in this area. The new name – Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area – better reflects the partnership approach to this project. Establishment of

the Kankakee NWR&CA will complement existing conservation efforts in the basin by restoring and conserving priority wetland, oak savanna, and grassland habitats.

The Service intends to formally establish the NWR&CA in Illinois by accepting a donation of land from the Friends of the Kankakee. The Friends group formed shortly after the Refuge was approved. Since then, they have been acquiring property for conservation with the intent of transferring it to the Service to establish the refuge at the appropriate time. The Friends of the Kankakee protected 70 acres in 11/14/2006 and 1.5 acres on 02/7/2008 as the Iroquois Sands Land and Water Reserve. The USFWS believes that this designation is compatible with the designation of the refuge.

Any future effort in Indiana would focus on a partnership-driven “conservation area” concept, following the State’s lead. This concept incorporates future conservation land into existing land-use patterns to maintain a healthy balance of ecological, economic, and social needs.

REPORT
John Rogner
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Report only, no action to be considered.

Item 19:* INPC Strategic Plan for 2015-2020, Final Draft

REPORT
Randy Heidorn
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of Plan

Item 20: Election of Officers of the INPC

REPORT
William E. McClain, Chair
Committee of the Whole for Nominations

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Election of Officers

Item 21: Election of Advisors and Consultants of the INPC

REPORT
William E. McClain, Chair
Committee of the Whole for Nominations

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Election of Advisor and Consultants

Item 22: Review of Closed meeting minutes

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Commissioners must review closed minutes at least twice a year to determine if they must still 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; and September 10, 2013.

REPORT
Randy Heidorn
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Determination if closed minutes
remain closed

Item 23: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 24: Other Business

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

Item 25: Adjournment