

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

Minutes of the 234th Meeting
(Subject to approval at the 236th Meeting)
*235th Meeting Cancelled

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702

January 22, 2020

234-1) **Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees**

Commissioner Covington called the meeting to order at 10:02am and Valerie Njapa read the roll call.

Commissioners Present: George Covington, Pen DauBach, Deborah Stone, William McClain, Charles Ruffner, David Thomas, Jo-Elle Mogerman

Commissioners Absent: Abigail Derby Lewis

Commissioners by Phone: Donnie Dann

Commission Advisors Present: Eric Schaubert, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS); Joyce Hofmann, Endangered Species Protection Board (ESPB)

Commission Consultants Present: Fran Harty, The Nature Conservancy (TNC); Kerry Leigh, Natural Land Institute (NLI); Bruce Ross-Shannon, Joe Roth

Others Present: John Rogner, Assistant Director IDNR, Valerie Njapa, Kelly Neal, Stacy Burkett, Steve Byers, John Griesbaum, Angella Moorehouse, Kim Roman, Sami Childerson, John Nelson, Debbie Newman, Byron Paulsen, Kevin Sierzega Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); Justin Dillard, Brian Willard, Dawn Cobb, IDNR Office of Realty and Capital Planning (ORCP); Ann Holtrop, Todd Strole, Jenny Skufca, John Wilker, Anna Fraileg, Bridget Henning, Phil Cox, Mark Alessi, Michelle Simone, Wade Ulrey, Jeannie Barnes, Christina Feng, Marissa Jones, Eric Smith, IDNR Division of Natural Heritage (DNH); Maureen Hurd, IDNR; Angelo Capparella, Endangered Species Protection Board (ESPB); Susan Dee-Hargrove, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); Nancy Williamson, Natural Lands Institute (NLI); Lindsay Keeney, IEC; Austin Owen, Illinois Farm Board (IFB); Elizabeth Kessler, McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD); Justin Vonder Haar and John Wieter, HMG Engineers; Shawn Kennedy, Tim Birk and Tom Smith, City of Waterloo; Dennis Knoblock, Village of Valmeyer; Roger Beadles and Joe & Billie Stephens, Private Landowners.

234-2) **Adoption of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner DauBach, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, and carried that the Agenda be adopted.

Commissioner Covington read a Resolution in Recognition of Steven Byers for 30 years of service as a Natural Areas Protection Specialist and Field Representative for the Commission upon his recent retirement. SEE ATTACHED

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Mogerman, and carried that the Resolution in Recognition of Steven Byers be adopted.

John Rogner addressed the group regarding Steve Byers and his remarkable career. He stated that for people like Steve, this business of bio-diversity conservation is not a joke, it is a calling. It is vocation and advocacy and a seamless transition in many ways. John shared that it is a great privilege for him to send a friend and colleague into the next chapter of conservation work. For as long as John has known Steve, the words conservation leader come to mind because that is the role that Steve has played his entire career. John's association with Steve goes back at least 30 years with his name popping up in conservation circles throughout Illinois. John said he remembers first hearing about Steve while reading a report that Steve co-authored with George Burdger. John said he started working with Steve most consistently in the Chicago Wilderness years, where Steve served as Co-Chair of the Natural Resources Management Team. Steve also served as President of the Fox Valley Land Foundation for seven years. The word leader pops up time and time again when talking about Steve and the role he has played.

John commented that "he would be remiss" if he didn't mention Steve's role in the establishment of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge along with his life partner Nancy Williamson and other. John explained that the refuge would not have happened without Steve's efforts and years of upfront work that built the support. A tag line that a colleague of John's shared is "endless pressure, endlessly applied" and that speaks volumes to the work Steve has put into his accomplishments.

John finished up by wishing Steve the best as he seamlessly falls into unpaid conservation leadership. John also shared that he looks forward to continuing to work with Steve in many, many roles and capacities.

Steve Byers addressed the group and stated that it has been an honor and privilege to work with the Commission, develop partners and promote conservation. Steve said it has been a calling and a love of his and he thanked everyone for this opportunity that was given to him in his life.

234-3) **Approval of Minutes for the 233rd Meeting, September 10, 2019**

Commissioner Covington asked for a motion and approval of the 233rd Meeting minutes.

It was moved by Commissioner McClain, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, and carried that the minutes from the 233rd Meeting be approved.

Amendment to AMENDED Minutes for the 232nd Meeting, May 14, 2019

Commissioner Covington asked for a motion and approval of the amended 232nd Meeting minutes.

It was moved by Commissioner McClain, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, and carried that the amended minutes from the 232nd Meeting be approved.

Commissioner Covington read the following:

At the 233rd Meeting of the INPC, held on September 10, 2019, at Douglas-Hart Nature Center, Mattoon, Illinois, legal protection was completed by the Commission for 7 tracts of land totaling 1,241 acres. Five of the seven tracts are privately owned, and two are publicly owned. The individuals and organizations who own the private sites donated the value of the protection agreement to the public. Lands protected include the addition to Warbler Bottoms North Land and Water Reserve; Warbler Landing Land and Water Reserve; Grisley Woods Land and Water Reserve; Harms Woods Nature Preserve; Wright Woods Nature Preserve; Milles Fleurs Nature Preserve; and Round Pond South Addition to Round Pond Nature Preserve.

Protection of these lands came about because the Commission had nine staff in the field working with private and public landowners. There are 401 dedicated nature preserves totaling approximately 60,910 acres; and there are 195 land and water reserves totaling approximately 54,041 acres.

234-4) **Next meeting dates and locations**

Special Meeting 234 th Meeting	January 21, 2020 – Tues. January 22, 2020 – Wed.	Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, IL Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, IL
235 th Meeting	May 12, 2020	Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Oglesby, IL
236 th Meeting	September 15, 2020	Olney Central College, Olney, IL

234-5) **INPC Staff Report**

APPENDIX I

Valerie Njapa presented the INPC staff report.

234-6) **IDNR Staff Report**

Ann Holtrop, Chief, Division of Natural Heritage, presented the IDNR staff report.

234-7) **Endangered Species Protection Board Report**

APPENDIX II

Joyce Hofmann presented the ESPB staff report.

234-8) **Hancock Co. – Crystal Glen Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

Angella Moorehouse, on behalf of Duane and Joyce Taylor, purposes to permanently register 79.1 acres as the Crystal Glen Land and Water Reserve. The Crystal Glen Land and Water Reserve (LWR), owned by Duane and Joyce Taylor, is a 79.1-acre site located 2.5 miles northeast of Warsaw and just east of Cedar Glen LWR. The property, which has remained in the Taylor family for 140 years, lies entirely within the Cedar Glen Kibbe Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Macrosite (INAI #565). This INAI site is 3,845 acres in size and includes three nature preserves sites owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources: Cedar Glen Nature Preserve (NP) which is 616.9 acres, Mississippi River Sand Hills NP (45 acres), and Cedar Glen LWR (269.5 acres). The INAI site is recognized for its Category I high quality communities including sand seep, sand hill prairie, limestone cliff, dry-mesic barren, dry barren, and dry-mesic sand savanna; Category II for the presence of nine State-listed species; Category III for the existing NPs and LWR; Category IV for outstanding exposure of Keokuk Limestone; and Category VI for a high diversity mussel bed. The proposed LWR lies in the Glaciated Section of the Middle Mississippi Border Natural Division of Illinois and is characterized by steep limestone bluffs, wide rocky creeks, geodiferous rocks and forested uplands with scattered hill prairie, barrens, and savanna communities. While there are no listed species known at the Crystal Glen site, its addition to the nature preserves system will expand the large block of protected forested lands for the benefit of forest-sensitive wildlife and maintain the scenic limestone cliffs. Registration of the proposed site will increase the number of INPC-protected acres in the INAI site from 931.4 to 1,010.5. INPC staff recommends approval for this LWR.

Commissioner Thomas said that a discussion came up the night before about photographs of sites. He then asked Angella if there is a requirement for photos of sites.

Angella Moorehouse said they do not have any requirements for photographs of sites. Angella stated she was told to go out to visit sites at least three times a year or try to see it in two different seasons, but because of time we have tried to cut back what we present.

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner DauBach, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Crystal Glen as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 8 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2483)

234-9) **Perry Co.- Sawyer-Coffel Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

Kevin Sierzega, on behalf of HARRISS LAKE TRUST #1, purposes to permanently register 101 acres of natural land in perpetuity as Sawyer-Coffel Land and Water Reserve. Harriss Lake Trust #1 wants to ensure that their portion of Harriss Lake is kept in natural quality while maintaining recreational waterfowl-hunting opportunities. The reserve is in the Mount Vernon Hill Country Section of the Southern Till Plain Natural Division of Illinois. It is in the Pickneyville Township of central Perry County. It is comprised of 81 acres (60 acres of Grade B shrub swamp and 21 acres of Grade C wet-floodplain forest) of the Harriss Lake Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Site (INAI; Category I site) #1959 and 20 acres of Grade C wet-floodplain forest with shrub swamp inclusions.

The reserve supports wetland and aquatic habitats that once dominated the landscape along the Big and Little Muddy River tributaries in Perry & Jackson Counties. Despite the disturbance associated with land clearing, modern drainage improvements, and strip-mining operations, the quality of this wetland is exceptional and represents the last and best remaining habitats of this kind in the region. Highly conservative wetland-dependent plants such as mosquito fern (*Azolla mexicana*), frog's bit (*Limnobium spongia*), hairy primrose willow (*Ludwigia leptocarpa*), humped bladderwort (*Utricularia gibba*), nipped water meal (*Wolffia braziliensis*), and blade duckweed (*Wolffiella gladiata*) are found within the shrub swamp.

Qualifying features include:

1. Permanent protection of 81 acres of INAI#1959;
2. Two state-listed wetland bird species breed in the reserve, the state-threatened (ST) least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) and state-endangered (SE) common gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*);
3. Wetland-dependent avian Species in Greatest Need of Conservation (SGNC), as identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP), breed in the reserve, namely the prothonotary warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) and pied-billed grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*);
4. Permanent protection of >100 acres of wetland complex; and
5. Support of the Wetland and Invasive Species Campaigns of the IWAP.

Joe Stephens addressed the group by stating he is very happy that we can preserve this site. As far as the maintenance of the water levels, we realize and have for a long time, that fluctuation of water levels is what keeps it alive. It is something we have always wanted, and thanks to INPC, we have a vehicle so it can be preserved for future generations. We have wonderful diversity; it is one big wonderful living creature and we want to keep it that way. Thank you.

Commissioner DauBach commented that she had the opportunity to meet Joe and Billie Stephens this morning and thanked them for being there. Pen stated she and her husband visited that area 30+ years ago and were astonished by the diversity. She also thanked the Stephens for preserving the site and shared that Sawyer-Coffel LWR was the first site to enter nature preserve protection in Perry County.

Commissioner Thomas asked at what point does a species go from incidental to threatened or endangered on the species list.

Joyce Hofmann answered that on the endangered/threatened species list they only count things that are known to be breeding populations.

It was moved by Commissioner DauBach, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Sawyer-Coffel as an Illinois land and water reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2484)

234-10) **Cook Co. – Elizabeth Conkey Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication**

Kim Roman, on behalf of The Forest Preserves of Cook County, seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 180 acres in perpetuity as the Elizabeth Conkey Woods Nature Preserve. This site is found near Palos Heights in southwest Cook County, and it straddles the Chicago Lake Plain and Morainal Sections of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois. Elizabeth Conkey Woods contains one of the region's most important archaeological sites, the Huber site, which contains examples of human habitation dating back 10,000 years, including important cultural resources from the Huber Phase, the time of earliest contact between native peoples and European trappers/traders. Additionally, Elizabeth Conkey Woods contains mesic woodlands, mesic floodplain forest, and a creek that contain seven Species in Greatest Need of Conservation identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. It is connected to an additional 3,500 acres of Forest Preserve lands, including an extensive band of woodlands and forest along the banks of Tinley Creek. Dedication of this site as a nature preserve will help ensure the protection of the vital cultural and natural resources contained within its boundaries for future generations.

Commissioner Thomas asked Kim with a site like this, where cultural resources are primary, what kind of management would she foresee. And are there some areas that can be enhanced for their natural features?

Kim Roman responded that primary management is as a high-quality natural area. There will be excavations that will take place in consultation with Dawn Cobb.

Commissioner Ruffner stated that when dealing with archeology sites, you don't want trees growing on the site as the tree roots disturb the underground features. Suggested clear cutting where the village is located.

Commissioner Stone recused herself as Cook County and Cook County Forest Preserves are separate governments, but they share the same board. She doesn't want there to be an appearance of conflict.

Commissioner DauBach stated that it seems to her from reading the proposal, that there are many natural features and communities here. Given that the archeological site is so very important, and the Nature Preserves Act does allow for an archeological site, Pen felt excellent work has been done. Pen asked if the site raised any red flags for staff members (Valerie, Kelly). Staff members said it does not raise any red flags for them.

Commissioner Covington asked what it is about this site that caused people to live there.

Chip O'Leary with the Forest Preserves of Cook County stated that a lot of villages in that time were situated on creeks for transport and communication systems. Also, the soil is part sand which made for easy digging.

Commissioner McClain commented that he is always delighted to see properties like this that contain habitat for wildlife that are continuous to larger tracts. He is especially happy about the cultural features. When you pick up on this era where the traders are interfacing with the native people and the potential of learning yet more about that time, it is exquisite to him.

It was moved by Commissioner DauBach, seconded by Commissioner Mogergerman, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Elizabeth Conkey Woods as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2485)

234-11) **Kane Co. – Powers Road Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication**

Steven Byers, on behalf of Linda LaGod, seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 27.6 acres as the Powers Road Fen Nature Preserve. The proposed Powers Road Fen Nature Preserve was included on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI # 1576) initially as a Category II site in 2000 because of the presence of a State-endangered plant. The INAI was upgraded in 2004 to include Category I status because of the presence of Grade B and Grade C graminoid fen and sedge meadow wetlands. The site also supports Grade C freshwater marsh, dry-mesic savanna, mesic prairie, and wet-mesic prairie communities. Collectively, these natural communities support 205 plant species. The proposed Powers Road Fen Nature Preserve lies within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in the northern part of Kane County. The site is in close proximity to the 1269-acre Freeman Kame-Meagher Forest Preserve owned by the Kane County Forest Preserve District. Protection and management of Powers Road Fen supports elements of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, including a key element of the Wetlands Campaign: "...to improve the condition of existing natural and artificial wetlands." The owner reserves the right to continue adaptive management strategies for the site and to monitor and implement projects designed to maintain or improve surface and groundwater hydrology. The owner further reserves the right for her, or a future owner, to develop an unpaved walking trail and to provide trail modifications and amenities as may be necessary with the approval of the Commission. Protection of Powers Road Fen as part of the Illinois Nature Preserves System is consistent with the recommendations of the Illinois Sustainable Natural Areas Vision that calls for "...a new conservation of connectivity paradigm...from an individual site protection approach to one that connects core natural areas to the landscape around them, enlarging them to sustain greater biodiversity, and resilient enough to adapt to climate change and other ecological and cultural threats." INPC staff acknowledges the long-term interest and support of Ms. Linda LaGod and recommended dedication of Powers Road Fen as an Illinois Nature Preserve.

It was moved by Commissioner Ruffner, seconded by Commissioner Mogerman, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Powers Road Fen as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2486)

234-12) **Kankakee Co. – Guiding Star Savanna Nature Preserve, Dedication**

Kim Roman, on behalf of The Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 82.5 acres of the Guiding Star Savanna Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Site (INAI#974) in perpetuity as the Guiding Star Savanna Nature Preserve. Guiding Star Savanna, located in Kankakee County and lying in the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois, is recognized on the INAI for its high-quality dry and dry-mesic sand

savanna. It is also known to provide habitat for the state-threatened regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria regalia*). Dedication of this natural area promotes the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan by targeting conservation efforts on habitat for the red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and other wildlife Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. It is also located in the Kankakee Sands Conservation Opportunity Area and lies in close proximity to many other high-quality natural areas. Guiding Star Savanna INAI site is one of the best quality natural areas in the State of Illinois, and is a key conservation holding in the Kankakee Sands. Dedication of this site as a nature preserve will help ensure its natural character is protected and managed for future generations.

It was moved by Commissioner DauBach, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Guiding Star Savanna as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2487)

234-13) **Lake Co. – Sturm Woods Buffer Addition to Wright Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication**

Steven Byers, on behalf of William and Angelica Sturm, seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 5.0 acres as the Sturm Woods Buffer Addition to Wright Woods Nature Preserve. The proposed addition is part of a much larger 4000-acre wooded corridor extending along the east bank of the Des Plaines River in Lake County. Virtually all that corridor has been protected by the Lake County Forest Preserve District. The proposed Sturm Woods Buffer Addition lies immediately adjacent to Wright Woods Nature Preserve owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District. The proposed addition includes dry-mesic upland forest, elements of a northern flatwoods, and a cultural community being restored to prairie. Collectively, these plant communities support 123 native plant species. The proposed Sturm Woods Buffer Addition to Wright Woods Nature Preserve lies within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in southeastern Lake County. The large block of forest arrayed along the east bank of the Des Plaines River, of which this proposed addition is a part, is critically important to migratory and resident avifauna. Surveys of the adjacent Captain Daniel Wright Forest Preserve reveal the following wildlife assemblages: 173 bird species, 22 mammal species, 8 reptile species, 9 amphibian species, and an extensive list of invertebrate species. It is very likely that many of these species utilize the natural communities within the proposed addition. Protection of the proposed nature preserve buffer addition to Wright Woods Nature Preserve supports elements of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, most notably elements of the Forest Campaign that call for “ecological connectivity among forests.” William and Angelica Sturm reserve the right to maintain the existing trail network and to provide trail amenities as deemed appropriate with approval of the Commission. In addition, the owners reserve the right to maintain/replace the existing drive, buried infrastructure (electric, natural gas, water, cable) located adjacent to the drive, and a septic field. The owners also reserve the right to continue an adaptive management strategy. The owners first implemented management (control of invasive species) over 20 years ago and the proposal includes management priorities. Protection of the 5.0-acre Sturm Woods Buffer Addition to Wright Woods Nature Preserve is consistent with the Illinois Sustainable Natural Areas Vision that calls for “...a new conservation of connectivity paradigm...from an individual site protection approach to one that connects core natural areas to the landscape around them, enlarging them to sustain greater biodiversity, and resilient enough to adapt to climate change and other ecological and cultural threats.” The proposed Sturm Woods Buffer Addition will increase

the size of Wright Woods Nature Preserve from 287.8 to 292.8 acres in size. INPC staff acknowledges the long-term interest and support of William and Angelica Sturm in protecting and managing their privately-owned portion of the extensive forests that extend along the Des Plaines River. Ken Klick, with the Lake County Forest Preserve District staff, is acknowledged for assisting with plant surveys.

Commissioner DauBach commented that she is very uncomfortable with preserving a septic field. She does not believe the commission has done so in the past as this is essentially a built human structure.

Steve Byers responded by reading from the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (INAPA), that defines what a buffer area means. Even though it is a septic field, it is being managed as a grassland that provides additional biological diversity. Steve believes they are consistent with the INAPA as it defines a nature preserve buffer as an adjunct to an existing nature preserve, and in this case, Steve believes it does.

Commissioner DauBach commented that the INAPA states that nature preserves, and nature preserves buffers enjoy the same status and essential rights. Pen does not believe the intent of the INAPA was to preserve, in perpetuity, elements of human infrastructure that in the case of a septic field, every one of us knows will undergo at several points, disturbance by machinery. Pen also stated that we have an even more strongly vested interest in preserving the entire nature preserves system and I believe the Commission would be subject to a great deal of criticism if we are putting nature preserve boundary signs for the protection of a septic field. Pen said she must rely on her fellow Commissioners and on staff for comments and opinions.

Commissioner Thomas stated he looks at this as a better way of protecting the nature preserve and not so much trying to protect the buffer itself. He also stated that he does not know what the long-term maintenance of the septic field would require but looking down the road if this is dedicated as a buffer, there is a better chance we can protect the area from what could be future development or other activities. Dave said he understands Pen's concern, but he looks at it more that these buffers are protecting the nature preserve itself by adding another layer of protection.

Commissioner Mogergerman stated that she also has concerns about the septic field but was pleased to see it was planted and managed as a natural area. However, besides going back to the INAPA itself, about 8 -12 years ago there was work done which resulted in a set of criteria for a buffer. She then asked if anyone else remembers that? And if that is indeed true, going back and looking at that and the INAPA itself might be helpful.

Kim Roman commented that Brian Anderson worked on that.

Steve Byers commented that this septic field is a pre-existing use. It is not unlike an easement that pre-exists where an agency, municipality, or company has the right to go in and repair or maintain that existing infrastructure.

Kim Roman stated that she has one site in her area that has a septic field in a land and water reserve, but it is a reconstructed prairie. The Commission accepted that as an allowable use.

Commissioner DauBach acknowledged that the notion of dedication to prevent development at Wright Woods Nature Preserve. However, she does not believe that with the septic field or managed

grassland, that development could ever occur on that site due to its current use. Pen suggested for protection of the overall nature preserves system, that we consider excluding that acre of grassland.

Steve Byers said the septic field is about 1/5 of an acre.

Commissioner DauBach said all of it would be subject to disturbance or even if the septic field had to be replaced at some point in time, another portion of this managed grassland could become septic field. Pen asked fellow Commissioners for that acre to be excluded so that the Commission does not extend nature preserve dedication status to human infrastructure.

Commissioner Ruffner commented that he doesn't see it any different than the roads, the picnic groves, information kiosks, etc. in other areas. He stated he does not like the idea of a septic system there and it may fail, but it's like every other infrastructure we must maintain in perpetuity.

Commissioner Covington commented that this is a buffer and not a nature preserve. It is intended to protect the nature preserve and he thinks this accomplishes that. He knows certain rights have been reserved in previous buffers similar to a buffer he dedicated and reserved the right to build a shed. George said there are a lot of easements running through nature preserves, nature preserves buffers and land and water reserves. Occasionally work has to be done and he doesn't see this as any different than the septic field.

Fran Harty read from a report he had on his phone from Randy that outlined buffer recommendations. Continue to have staff think outside the buffer in developing new strategies and share the information. Explore legal flexibilities of existing statutes to allow specialized buffer requirements. Fran said there are a lot of reasons for a buffer and he feels this is one the Commission should consider seriously

It was moved by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, that the following resolution be approved:

Roll call was taken resulting in 6-yes (Covington, McClain, Mogerma, Ruffner, Stone and Thomas); 1-no (DauBach).

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Sturm Woods Buffer Addition to Wright Woods as an Illinois nature preserve buffer, as described in the proposal presented under Item 13 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2488)

William Sturm shared that he and his wife moved back to the area about 30 years ago and they have had the blessing of having people from all over the world come to their home and each one has been impressed by the setting. Although a couple of times they were close to subdividing, they decided to keep it the way it is and let other people enjoy it. It is a gift and we invite anybody to our front door to enjoy it with them.

Angelica Sturm thanked everyone for their service and dedication and for being champions, stewards and advocates for our natural environment. So, it is no small surprise that we stay healthy in our body, mind and spirit. She thanked everyone for their hard work.

Break for lunch from 12:15 – 1:30

234-14) **Lee Co. – John Husar Memorial Addition to Franklin Creek Nature Preserve, Dedication**

John Nelson, on behalf of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 62.8 acres as an addition to the Franklin Creek Nature Preserve. Both Franklin Creek Nature Preserve and the proposed addition are located within the 945-acre Franklin Creek State Natural Area. The proposed addition is located in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division and is eligible for dedication by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) due to its designation as part of the Franklin Creek Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) Site (#1068) as a Category II due to the presence of State-listed plant species, Category III due to the prior Franklin Creek Nature Preserve dedication, and Category IV due to the presence of outstanding geological features. The INAI consists of moderate quality dry-mesic and mesic upland forest, wet-mesic floodplain forest, forested seep, dry dolomite prairie, and cliff communities. The proposed addition has natural areas of similar quality to those found in the original nature preserve. If approved, this addition to Franklin Creek Nature Preserve will bring the total acreage of protected land at this site to 260.1 acres. It is recommended by the INPC field staff that this 62.8-acre parcel be dedicated in perpetuity as the John Husar Memorial Addition to Franklin Creek Nature Preserve.

Commissioner Stone wanted to recognize IDNR’s special responsibility under law to seek dedicated sites and thanked IDNR for doing this, it is great to see.

It was moved by Commissioner Ruffner, seconded by Commissioner Stone, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of the John Husar Memorial Addition to Franklin Creek as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 14 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2489)

234-15) **Monroe Co. – Addition to Storment Hauss Nature Preserve, Dedication**

Debbie Newman, on behalf of James Storment, seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 10 acres as an addition to the Storment Hauss Nature Preserve. The Storment Hauss Nature Preserve is a 64.5-acre site in Monroe County dedicated March 1, 2002 (Resolution #1641). The site includes all of the Storment Hauss Woods Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site (INAI #1617). The site is listed on the INAI as a Category I for high-quality upland forest and Category VI for the presence of snake hibernacula. The preserve’s previous owner, the late David Storment, proposed to add an adjacent 10 acres to the preserve in 2007, when a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract expired on that field. Those 10 acres were given preliminary approval for dedication at the 194th meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission on May 1, 2007 (Resolution #1950—see Appendix A). David Storment intended to eventually dedicate another 10 acres of CRP when the contract on that parcel expired. David passed away in the summer of 2019. In his will, he left provisions for the two 10-acre parcels to be added to the Storment Hauss Nature Preserve. David’s son, James Storment, seeks to fulfill the provisions of the will and dedicate the additional 20 acres to the preserve. This proposal primarily covers the second 10-acre parcel, with some mention of updated status of the 10 acres

given preliminary approval in 2007. If preliminary approval is given for the second 10 acres, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Staff will provide one Instrument of Dedication at a later INPC meeting to include the entire 20 acres. The proposed addition and previous preliminarily approved addition will square off the boundaries of the existing nature preserve. The fields are comprised of native prairie and non-native pasture grasses, old field native and exotic herbaceous plants, and native tree plantings. The long-term goals of the late landowner were to convert the early-successional fields to dry-mesic upland forest, providing a larger and seamless forest community in the future. INPC staff plans to continue forest restoration of the sites.

Commissioner McClain said not to assume that all hill prairie are the same because they are not. Keeping that in mind you will find them faunistically and floristically different. Bill asked Debbie how much of the acreage is glade. Debbie said there is about 1 ½ acres, but it has succumbed to woody encroachment. Bill said limestone glades, also known as Xeric Limestone Prairies, are present within that natural division and some of those grow in a relatively unique soil type known as Crescent Celtic Clay Lome, which is a very rare soil type. Equally rare are the plants that are in it. This glade or former glade may be worthy of resurrection and you may find some of these plants, along with this rare soil. Another very rare plant that may be found is the stickleaf, which is found only on a cliffs edge or a very narrow zone with very thin moss.

It was moved by Commissioner DauBach, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of the Addition to Storment Hauss as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 15 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2490)

234-16) **Monroe Co. – Maher’s Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication**

Debbie Newman, on behalf of Gertrude “Sue” Parada, seeks preliminary approval for dedication of 25 acres as Maher’s Woods Nature Preserve (NP). Maher’s Woods Nature Preserve is a 25-acre site in the bluffs of southwestern Illinois, south of St. Louis. Maher’s Woods is part of the 724-acre Potato Hill Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (#200). The proposed preserve consists of 1.0 acre of Grade A loess hill prairie intermingled with approximately 24 acres of Grade C mature, second-growth dry woodland, and Grade A limestone cliff community. The proposed preserve contains a small population of the state-endangered stickleaf (*Mentzelia oligosperma*). The site supports several campaigns identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP), including the Forests Campaign, the Invasive Species Campaign, and the Land & Water Stewardship Campaign. The site is located within the IWAP’s Bluff Corridor/Karst Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), and the Southwestern Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (SWIWAP) partnership area. Dedication of the proposed preserve would assist in fulfilling the goals of the partnership’s strategic plan. These include preserving and stewarding additional acres of hill prairie, glade and forest and their associated species in the COA; addressing invasive species in the COA; encouraging landholders and policy makers to adopt sound land and wildlife management practices; and seeking resources and funding to implement goals of the SWIWAP. The proposed Maher’s Woods Nature Preserve is owned by Gertrude ‘Sue’ Parada. The proposed preserve has been in Mrs. Parada’s family for many decades. Mrs. Parada is committed to permanently protecting her family’s land and excited about preserving and managing the significant natural resources found on the property.

It was moved by Commissioner DauBach, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants preliminary approval for the dedication of Maher's Woods as an Illinois nature preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 16 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2491)

234-17) **McHenry Co.– Buffer Addition to Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve, Dedication**

Steven Byers, on behalf of The McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD), seeks final approval for dedication of 137.9 acres as a nature preserve buffer addition to the 211.65-acre Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve. Both the nature preserve, and proposed addition are located within the 577.8-acre Lake in the Hills Fen Conservation Area. Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve is owned in part by the Village of Lake in the Hills (133.8 acres), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (73.3 acres), and MCCD (4.55 acres). The entire site, however, is subject to an agreement designating MCCD as the primary land management agency. The existing nature preserve, and a portion of the proposed addition encompass the Lake-in-the-Hills Fen INAI site (INAI # 1011). The hallmark of Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve is the array of graminoid fen, calcareous seep, sedge meadow wetlands, and dry gravel prairies that collectively support 17 State-listed plant species and four State-listed wildlife species. The proposed addition, however, includes Grade C dry gravel prairie, a low-gradient stream, and three cultural communities. The cultural communities include a prairie restoration, an old field being restored to prairie, and an artificial pond. No State-listed plant or animal species have been recorded from the proposed addition. The proposed addition, however, does lie within the Class III – Special Resource Groundwater Area identified for Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve. Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve and the proposed buffer addition are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Division in the southeastern part of McHenry County. Protection of the proposed addition supports elements of the updated Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Additionally, the site provides suitable nesting habitat for 13 bird species, one fish species, and two reptile species identified as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. A hiking trail, with a primitive overlook, currently exists within the proposed addition. MCCD reserves the right to continue with a master planning process for the site to determine appropriate public access and passive recreational opportunities. The proposal also reserves the right for MCCD to route a regional bike trail along and outside the western border of the proposed addition and across (and just inside) the northern perimeter of the proposed addition. Finally, MCCD reserves the right to continue with an adaptive management strategy, to include measures to control whitetail deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), and to maintain or restore both surface and groundwater hydrology. INPC staff acknowledges the long-term interest and support of MCCD in protecting and managing Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve. Those management efforts date back to 1987. The MCCD Board of Trustees, Executive Director Elizabeth Kessler, and staff (including Ed Collins, Brad Woodson, Jeff Murray, Laurie Ryan, Gail Brown, and Cindy Rindel) are acknowledged. The proposed addition will increase the size of Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve from 211.65 to 349.55 acres.

It was moved by Commissioner Mogerma, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, that the following resolution be approved:

The Commission grants final approval for the Buffer Addition to Lake in the Hills Fen, as an Illinois nature preserve buffer, as described in the proposal presented under Item 17 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2492)

Elizabeth Kessler, Executive Director with the McHenry County Conservation District (MCDD) Board of Trustees thanked Steve for his service and dedication to taking care and protecting the many important places that they have. Elizabeth mentioned that as Steve retires, John Nelson will be coming over and it is their privilege to provide space for him. She thanked everyone for all their hard work and effort as public lands need that extra effort with lots of love and care to ensure they are kept safe in perpetuity and here for future generations.

Commissioner Covington thanked the District as they have been a great partner over the years. He looks forward to more dedications in the future.

234-18) **Monroe Co. – Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve, Request for New Waterline Easement**

Valerie Njapa stated she will introduce the next agenda item and will then turn it over to Justin Vonder Haar who is with HMG Engineers as a consultant for the City of Waterloo who is making the request for a new waterline through Salt Lick Point. The Land and Water Reserve (LWR) landowner is the Village of Valmeyer and there are representatives here from the consultant group, HMG Engineers, the City of Waterloo and the Village of Valmeyer. There is a staff recommendation that was included in the large agenda packets. A couple of points regarding the background. This land and water reserve was originally registered in 2005 and an addition registered in 2008. At the time of the original dedication, an existing utility corridor was there and subject to the land and water reserve. At the time of the addition in 2008, the City of Valmeyer reserved a right for additional utilities at some location within the land and water reserve. That same future right was not reserved when the original registration was made. The request is to put a new waterline through the existing utility corridor which is 60 – 80 feet wide, the new waterline easement is 20 feet wide. In your packet there is a letter of support and approval by the Village of Valmeyer, a consultation letter that was completed by the Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), our staff recommendation and the proposal from HMG Engineers. They considered 3 different routes for the waterline. The preferred route goes through the existing utility corridor. The recommendation by Valerie is to approve with certain required conditions attached to that approval and those are included in the staff recommendation as well.

Justin Vonder Haar addressed the group and explained that the study for this project began about 2 years ago to try and locate an alternative water source to compare costs with their current purchasing costs from Illinois American. Current contract is up in December of 2022. That lead HMG Engineers to the nearest water source being the groundwater reservoir, aquifer in lower Valmeyer. Currently Fountain Water District has a water plant in lower Valmeyer that serves the rural Monroe county residents and the Village of Valmeyer. HMG Engineers' proposed plant will serve Waterloo and potentially other communities in Eastern Monroe county as well as being a secondary water source for Fountain Water District. Three routes were considered and shown in detail via a PowerPoint. The preferred route is to follow the current utility corridor and approval is needed from the Commission. The existing land and water reserve was found in 2005 and an addition in 2008. There is approximately a 7100-foot easement corridor already in use that we would essentially be piggybacking on. There will be no straying from that corridor, it is maintained and mowed by

Ameren who has two electrical lines and a gas line going up the bluff through Salt Lick Point. There are two alternatives, but they are concerning due to access and visibility and landowners would not accommodate use of their land for an easement. Justin presented the alternatives pointing out the concerns. Justin also presented an overview of the easement that would be requested from the Village of Valmeyer and with the Board's approval. Construction would be limited to November 1 – March 20 to minimize impact to the surrounding area. The contractor will be informed at the pre-bid and at the pre-construction meeting of the Salt Lick Point LWR portion of the project and the effects and side effects of what not following our procedures and guidelines would cause. Additionally, a wash down pit will be offered. The equipment will be required to come to the site washed and clean of debris to eliminate the introduction of invasive species. Justin also offered, on behalf of the City of Waterloo, a \$5,000 onetime payment to help eradicate invasive species and maintenance of the future corridor going forward.

Commissioner Covington asked if the entire length of the proposed waterline is in that utility corridor.

Justin Vonder Haar answered yes, and the easement requested from the Village of Valmeyer will not impede at all on protected hill prairie.

Joe Roth, INPC Consultant, stated this had a special interest to him as he lives up in Northeastern Illinois in the City of Joliet where they have been looking for an alternate water supply and he has been working with that for 18 months. Joe recommended a 3-year monitoring and maintenance period as this type of disturbance makes it very hard to get revegetated. Joe just wants to ensure that all the bases are covered as far as management and precedent before the new legal right is granted. Why was the other well site a mile away not suitable to use?

Justin Vonder Haar responded that water quality up there showed Chlorides being high which would add approximately \$1,000,000 to construction costs at the plant and it is also a more expensive treatment process to maintain and produce water upon completion. Debbie and Valerie recommended a seeding mix that the contractor will be held to.

Joe Roth mentioned that when the landowner is receiving a benefit, he felt it was a good point to look at the existing management plan. Have they been adequate to maintain or increase the ecological quality of the land and water reserve? If not, is this a chance to reset the wider management plan and protocol considering the benefit the new waterline would give the village? Is there invasive control, is there a burn schedule?

Debbie Newman stated that this part of the 600-acre reserve is certainly lower quality in the sense of the utility corridor. Debbie said they have had a lot of problems with Ameren regarding invasives that have been brought in and it has not been resolved. By moving forward, we will have another entity to work with, however it is in an area that already has disturbance. We are not doing any prescribed burning at this site which is problematic but more reason why we need to have some follow up immediately on doing exotics control. Recommendation made that it must be seed sourced by IDNR or possibly sourced on the site. Burning will need to be re-implemented at this site which will be very critical to the management of this site.

Joe Roth stated that gaining some management is imperative now. If not taken care of now, it will fail.

Commissioner DauBach stated that in the report Valerie and Debbie prepared, were the recommendations met or do you want to add further recommendations about management goals for the overall site. Is the offer of \$5,000 for invasives control enough to cover what needs to be done or would you like to take a closer look at that to determine that it is good?

Valeri Njapa explained that Debbie has done that already. She looked in a little more detail at the seeding and potential cost of the total acreage to be affected by the new waterline easement which would be about 2 ½ - 3 acres and \$5,000 would be sufficient for invasives control for a three year period and that is aside and separate from the seeding itself and the grading post installation of the waterline. Valerie briefly touched on the recommendations that have been or will be met as a condition of approval to put the waterline through the existing corridor. Most important is the future of maintenance needs and prior contact of the Commission to do those activities to ensure that adequate protections and best management practices are taken so that there is not any unnecessary disturbance in that area. Valerie explained that she and Debbie put together a proposal so when the easement document is put together where the Village of Valmeyer will convey the easement rights to the City of Waterloo, that that would be one piece of conveying those easement rights. The City of Waterloo would commit to the \$5,000 payment as a condition of granting the easement by the village. As to the bigger question about burning on the site, the Commission understands the ecological importance of doing this. There is recognition that this needs to be done. In terms of how to tie that specifically to what the request is for the waterline through the existing utility corridor may be difficult, but it is an ongoing concern and the Commission hopes that is something an agreement can be reached on to reinstate prescribed burning. It is necessary for long-term management.

Commissioner Covington stated that the staff is recommending approval of the waterline, finding it is in the public interest, subject to the nine conditions written in the letter.

Commissioner Mogergerman asked how long this is a viable solution for water.

Justin Vonder Haar said plant life expectancy under the current proposal would be 40-50 years and upgrades would be required. A pipeline without any services with minimal pressures would require minor maintenance. Unless there is a main break, it won't require any maintenance at all. Commissioner Mogergerman asked how things like main breaks are monitored.

Justin Vonder Haar said they will show a significant pressure drop and will also show a major water drop.

Commissioner Mogergerman asked if we know the implications of that on the natural areas.

Debbie Newman explained that the area where it is going to be traversing from the old town to the new treatment plant is groundwater and is not chemically treated water.

Justin Vonder Haar explained that the plant will be staffed anytime the plant is running. Wells can be shut down quickly and plans will be in place to minimize negative impacts.

Debbie Newman and Valerie Njapa, on behalf of the City of Waterloo, requested approval for a new waterline easement within an existing utility corridor at Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve

(LWR). The new waterline is needed to meet the demands associated with development and population growth in western Monroe County, where the LWR is located. The 594.5-acre LWR is part of the Columbia Hill Prairies Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Site (INAI # 201) and was registered (original in 2005 with addition in 2008) to protect a mosaic of high-quality natural communities including loess hill prairie, limestone glade, limestone cliffs, upland forest, and additionally, several State-listed species. At the time of the original registration, there were pre-existing easements for powerlines, a waterline, and a natural gas pipeline within the existing utility corridor. When registering the LWR addition in 2008, the Village of Valmeyer (Village) reserved the right to install future underground utilities. However, this same future right was not reserved when the original LWR was registered. HMG Engineers, Inc., Consultant for the City of Waterloo, analyzed three location options with the preferred route being within the existing utility corridor. The preferred route is not expected to adversely impact any of the high-quality plant communities within the LWR, but there are some native plants interspersed with invasives in the location where the new waterline is proposed. Given the likelihood of disturbance to natural vegetation during installation, the Commission, in conjunction with approval consideration, must also make a finding that the proposed action is in the public interest. The Village has approved the request from the City of Waterloo, and INPC staff also support the request and believe the new waterline is in the public interest and will benefit the City of Waterloo, the Village and other nearby communities.

It was moved by Commissioner Daubach, finding that this is in the public interest subject to the nine recommendations, seconded by Commissioner Ruffner, that the following request be approved:

The Commission granted approval for the City of Waterloo's new waterline easement, through an existing utility corridor at Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 18 of the Agenda for the 234th Meeting.

(Resolution 2493)

234-19) **Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)**

Fran Harty addressed the group stating he is there representing the Friends of Nature Preserves Group, which was just incorporated a few months ago. The President of the group is Matt Evans and the Secretary is Steve Packard and Fran is the Treasurer. This group formed to address challenges such as political interest, partner interest, limited staff resources and defense. The group would like to do fundraising, training and workshops and support is needed and there is a lot of interest out there. Fran said they hope to affect all of those positively and work with the Commission and IDNR to get things going and get off on the right foot and start doing good things.

Commissioner Thomas asked if Fran could communicate with everyone on what is going on and to keep us abreast of what is happening.

Commissioner Stone requested that at the next meeting, an update be provided on what is happening at Illinois Beach State Park with the lake levels and erosion.

Commissioner Thomas would like to go on record that the INPC Director position needs to be filled. We need to convince hire ups that this position is valuable and is extremely important. Suggestion made to make this an agenda item and have a presentation on where we are with this. Commissioner

Thomas also stated he may draft a letter to all the Commissioners to think about. We need to go on record as to how we feel, and we need to do it sooner rather than later.

234-20) **Other Business**

234-21) **Adjournment**

Commissioner Ruffner motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Stone and approved.

The INPC 234th meeting adjourned at 2:42 pm

Resolution in Recognition of Steven Byers

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission wishes to recognize the leadership and contributions of Steven Byers during 30 years of service as a Natural Areas Protection Specialist and Field Representative for the Commission upon his recent retirement. During his tenure, Steve was instrumental in the permanent protection of 104 nature preserves and 21 land and water reserves encompassing more than 18,000 acres. Steve's exemplary skill in partnership building has been integral to natural areas conservation and protection of sites throughout northeastern Illinois. Steve's tireless efforts working with a diversity of landowners, including private individuals, land trusts and local governments has resulted in protection of more sites and more acreage than anyone else in the history of the nature preserves system. Steve has worked on at least 237 nature preserve dedications, land and water reserve registrations or buffers/additions to sites in the INPC system. He was instrumental in the establishment of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge in 2012, serving as a founding member and now Chair of Friends of Hackmatack. He represented the Commission as a member of the Chicago Wilderness alliance, serving as Co-Chair of the Natural Resources Management Team. He also served as President of the Fox Valley Land Foundation (now The Conservation Foundation) for seven years. Steve's commitment to and advocacy for the Commission's programs is greatly appreciated and his legacy of land protection and stewardship will continue for generations.

By resolution of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, January 22, 2020.

Chair

Secretary

234th INPC Meeting – INPC Staff Report – January 22, 2020

INPC Staffing Update

- The Area 2 Natural Areas Preservation Specialist position in northeast Illinois, which is the position Steve Byers retired from on June 30, 2019, was filled by John Nelson (former Area 1 NAPS), effective January 1, 2020. Steve will remain on contract until mid-March. We will miss Steve but know that he will continue to be a strong advocate for the work of the Commission. And we welcome John and wish him luck as he transitions to his new work area. The Area 1 field position is now vacant, and we are making efforts to backfill it.
- The three INPC management positions remain vacant. These include the INPC Director, and the Operations and Protection Program Managers. I believe one or more of these positions is moving closer to getting posted and am optimistic we will see at least one of the management positions filled this calendar year.

INPC Protection Programs

- In 2019, INPC field staff worked hard to permanently protect 20 sites, including 10 new nature preserves, two additions to existing nature preserves, six new land and water reserves, and two additions to existing land and water reserves. The total acreage dedicated was 1,655.4 and the total registered 732.4 acres, for a combined total of 2,387.8 acres. This is impressive!
- Today, we have 10 sites to be presented for inclusion in INPC's land protection programs. Two are land and water reserve registration proposals, seven are nature preserve preliminary approval proposals and one is a final nature preserve dedication.
- Toward the end of October, staff attended a joint Heritage and INPC Meeting in Columbia, Illinois, during which staff learned a lot and worked on several important topics that apply to core job responsibilities. The three-day meeting also provided the opportunity to get to know one another better and create stronger working relationships.
- During a break out session at the meeting, INPC staff were able to discuss current workloads and associated challenges. Over the past 15 years or so, the number of sites permanently protected by the Commission has nearly doubled, without increasing staff resources. In fact, staff resources now are less than they were 15 years ago. Significantly more staff time is now spent on administrative tasks (including management plans, prescribed burn plans, research permits, fiscal processes, and proposal documents), invasive species control, and addressing an increasing number of threats. Keeping up seems to be almost an impossibility and is cause for concern, particularly knowing that several field staff have a waiting list of landowners interested in permanently protecting their land. Important to the continued success of INPC's voluntary land protection programs is the timely delivery of "customer service" and the ability to maintain the ecological health of protected sites. With an ever-increasing number of sites coming into the nature preserves system, it becomes ever more challenging for staff to complete primary job responsibilities. And yet, the accomplishments year after year are commendable. We should all be proud of the strong and steady commitment to the work of the Commission and the landowners we serve. But with more staff, with more resources, so much more could be accomplished, and we could move the needle back towards keeping up, perhaps even getting out ahead of the workload.

INPC Staff Report – Accomplishments and Highlights

- In thinking about the full staff report, which was included in the large agenda packet, it's clear that hard work resulted in many successes over the past few months, with a lot of time spent working on stewardship activities on the ground and new project procurement packets, getting prescribed burn plans onto the newest form, and of course quality time spent on outreach to landowners of both protected and unprotected sites.
- Kelly Neal reviewed and signed off on 88 burn plans for INPC staff that were transferred to a new form required for prescribed fire beginning in 2020. Weather-willing, staff are planning for dozens of burns this year.
- Sami Childerson represented INPC at the Annual Natural Areas Conference in Pittsburgh, PA for a week in October, and she completed 29 burn plans.
- In December, John Nelson completed a two-week long NAAF-funded tree removal project at Ryan Wetland and Sand Prairie LWR in Lee County.
- Byron Paulsen completed initial site visits and meetings with landowners and partners for all NP and LWR sites in his work area and is working with new owners interested in registering their properties.
- Debbie Newman co-organized and spoke at a public event to commemorate the new Eagle Cliff Prairie NP in Monroe County and co-led with the Natural Heritage Biologist a field trip to Bohm Woods NP for the SIUE Forest Ecology class. Debbie also gave two presentations at the joint Heritage and INPC meeting and provided good insight into the landowner contact work by INPC staff, which involves a whole lot more than what one sees on the surface.
- Angella Moorehouse prepared an annual report for Heritage and INPC staff on pollinator surveys conducted on INPC sites.
- While some staff did not send in a particular highlight to share, the work accomplished and reflected in the staff report speaks for itself.

Last week, Maggie Cole shared a memo she came across that was written almost 30 years ago by Carl Becker. Carl devoted his career to conservation and will always be remembered for his lasting contributions. In 1992, around the time of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Carl sent a memo to staff, many of whom are sitting in this room now or still work for the Department. He said: "We are all so intensively involved with our work that we sometimes do not notice the significance of what we do. Other states often look to Illinois for direction; the cutting edge if you will, on natural heritage protection and management issues. After the U.N. Rio Conference, we learned that Illinois' nature preserves, and natural heritage programs were held up to the world by the President as the best state example on preserving and managing our biodiversity. This case study is a tribute to you." Certainly relevant almost 30 years ago, these words are still relevant today, and Illinois should continue to lead. We should take notice of the successes we have achieved and we should continue the hard work we are all doing to ensure Illinois remains a state respected for the strength of its nature preserves and natural heritage programs.



ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Illinois 62702 - 1271; dnr.espb@illinois.gov

Report to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission's 234th Meeting Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, IL

22 January 2020

Prepared by Dr. Joyce Hofmann, IESPB Chair

- A public hearing was held on the Board's preliminary list of proposed changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) building in Springfield on 11 October 2019. No comments were made during the hearing. The comment period remained open for two weeks and several written comments were received.
- The Board held its 184th meeting on 15 November 2019 at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington. Board members reviewed the written comments on the proposed listing changes and directed Dr. Hofmann to send a response to each person or organization that submitted a comment. The Board then gave final approval to the proposed changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species.
- In collaboration with Dr. Bridget Henning of IDNR, the two Administrative Rules containing the lists of Illinois endangered and threatened fauna and flora were revised and submitted to IDNR Legal Counsel.
- Three species (one animal, two plants) were removed for the endangered list and eight species (seven animals, one plant) were removed from the threatened list. Four animal species were moved from the endangered to threatened list. Thirteen species (four animals, nine plants) were reclassified from threatened to endangered. Seven species (one animal, six plants) were added to the endangered list, while seven species (four animals, three plants) were added to the threatened list. There was no change in status for 453 listed species (140 animals, 313 plants). There were changes to the scientific or common names of thirty eight species.
- The Board's next meeting will be 21 February 2020 at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Visitor Center in Wilmington, beginning at 10 am.