

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

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

May 14, 2024, 10:00 AM

In-person meeting with WebEx option

*Documentary Material Enclosed

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

Commission Vice Chair Michelle Parker called the meeting to order at 10:09am and read the roll call.

Commissioners Present: Michelle Parker, Radhika Miraglia, George Covington, Toni Oplt, Tom Clay, Robert Szafoni and Adam Kessel (Marcella DeMauro-Roth was present on WebEx)

Commissioners Absent: Dr. Abigail Derby Lewis

Consultants Present: Amy Doll, Joe Roth, Kerry Leigh, Cynthia Kanner, Randy Heidorn

Others Present: Todd Strole, IDNR Assistant Director; Kim Roman, Sami Childerson, Heather McLean, John Nelson, Claire Gregory, Kevin Sierzega, Kelly Neal, John Griesbaum, Debbie S. Newman, Valerie Njapa, Emily Taylor, Angella Moorehouse Kaleb Baker, Lorraine Foelske and Byron Paulsen, INPC; Natalia Maass, Dawn Cobb, Philip Cox, Jenny Skufca, Ann Holtrop, Charles O'Leary, Heather Osborn, Mark Alessi, Michelle Bloomquist IDNR; Clark Bullard, PRN; Corey Lacey, ISA; Jill Kennay, Natural Land Institute; Michelle Curby, Public;

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Please note that Item 13 was removed from the agenda at the landowner's request.

The Commission Chair requested all those in favor of adopting the agenda with the one change noted; no Commissioners opposed; and it was carried that the agenda for the 247th INPC Meeting be adopted.

Item 3:* Approval of Minutes for the 246th Meeting on January 23, 2024

It was moved by Commissioner Covington, seconded by Commissioner Szafoni, and carried that the minutes for the 246th Meeting be approved.

Commission Vice Chair then read the Accomplishments Summary for the 246th Meeting:

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

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

Item 4: Next Meeting Dates and Locations

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

REPORT
Todd Strole, Assistant Director
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

The full INPC Report is provided in Appendix I. Todd Strole's oral remarks are provided in Attachment 4.

Commissioner Miraglia requested that, on future threats reports, landowner names of the INPC sites be included when describing the issues.

Todd Strole responded that will not be an issue and the information should usually be provided. We will think about how that applies to private landowners and accommodate.

Commissioner Covington referred to the lists of transgressions on sites. Are there adequate statutory remedies against those people who intentionally commit those transgressions?

Todd Strole responded that he feels there are. There are established penalties for violations of the Act. Often, we settle, if possible, with stipulations to fix the incursion or damage. If

not, then we engage the Attorney General's office to apply penalties. We do have the statutory means to penalize violators.

Commissioner Kessel asked if we have the same means to penalize the desecration of cultural resources, especially in reference to the repatriation of Native American remains.

Todd Strole replied that we have the same statutory means as that would also be a violation of the Act.

Item 6:* IDNR Staff Report

REPORT
Ann Marie Holtrop, Chief
Division of Natural Heritage

The full IDNR Report is attached as Appendix II.

Item 7:* Endangered Species Protection Board Report

REPORT
Joyce Hofmann, Director
Endangered Species Protection Board

Joyce Hofmann was not available to deliver the report. The full ESPB Report is attached as Appendix III.

Item 8:* Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves Report

REPORT
Amy Doll, Director
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves

The full report is attached as Appendix IV.

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

This item was presented by Sami Childerson.

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

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

IDNR reserves the following rights:

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

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

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

The Commission grants approval for the registration of the Marshall Addition to Prairie Ridge State Natural Area Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 9 of the agenda for the 247th Meeting.

(Resolution 2633)

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

This item was presented by Byron Paulsen.

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

The Luginbuhl family reserves the following rights:

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

Commissioner Kessel asked if the buffer property is owned by the landowners as well.

Byron Paulsen replied yes, the remaining acreage is owned by the Luginbuhl family.

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

The Commission grants approval for the registration of Luginbuhl's Prairie Grass Hill Land and Water Reserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 10 of the agenda for the 247th Meeting.

(Resolution 2634)

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

This item was presented by Claire Gregory.

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

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

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of Dome Hill Buffer Addition to Lake in the Hills Fen Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 11 of the agenda for the 247th Meeting.

(Resolution 2635)

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

This item was presented by Kim Roman.

Sand Ridge Savanna is a 625-acre nature preserve owned and managed by the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC), located in the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. The FPDWC requested dedication in perpetuity of an adjacent 157-acre tract of Kankakee Sands Preserve as a buffer addition to Sand Ridge Savanna

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

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

The Commission grants final approval for the dedication of the Buffer Addition to Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve, as described in the proposal presented under Item 12 of the agenda for the 247th Meeting.

(Resolution 2636)

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

This item was not presented at this meeting at the request of the landowner and will be addressed in the future.

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

species are especially vulnerable to nest predation by racoons (*Procyon lotor*), skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), and opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*). A growing body of literature indicates that predation on turtle eggs and hatchlings is very high and can limit population growth, decrease recruitment and lead to population declines. Results of studies on mesopredator management demonstrate that it can be an effective method for increasing nest success. This may be especially critical for Blanding's turtle, a long-lived, late maturing, species with limited reproductive output whose populations are in decline throughout much of its range. Control of mesopredators is not currently considered a standard management practice at nature preserves, requiring review and approval by Commissioners. The Illinois Audubon Society seeks approval to control mesopredators at Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve to reduce nest predation of herpetofauna and ground nesting birds.

Item 14: Review of Closed Meeting Minute

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

It was moved by Commissioner Covington, seconded by Commissioner Clay, 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 14 of the agenda for the 247th Meeting.

(Resolution 2637)

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

Cynthia Kanner, Executive Director of Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC), thanked Todd for his acknowledgment of their wonderful conference they hosted at Starved Rock previously this year. They held a "Dining with DNR" session that went very well. She would also like to point out their upcoming conference next year will be at Pere Marquette State Park, March 5-7, 2025. It will also be PSCC's 20th anniversary. So instead of "Dining with DNR" it's going to be "Dancing with DNR." We are anticipating good things at this conference. She is privileged to be a Consultant to INPC, and always available if anyone wants to call her. Since the next INPC meeting will be held September 10th in southern Illinois, she is working on a Southern Regional PSCC Conference on September 11, 2024, at Giant City Park. More details to come.

Item 16: Other Business

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

Item 17: Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Kessel, seconded by Commissioner Covington, and carried that the meeting be adjourned.
The 247th INPC Meeting was adjourned at 11:23 am.