

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

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Lake Level Conference Room  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, Illinois 62702

January 28, 2025, 10:00 AM  
In-person meeting with WebEx option

\*Documentary Material Enclosed

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

**Item 2:\* Adoption of Agenda**

**Item 3:\* Approval of Minutes for the 248<sup>th</sup> Meeting on September 10, 2024**

*Note: Share Accomplishments Summary of the 248th INPC Meeting*

*At the 248th Meeting of the INPC, held on September 10, 2024, at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, in Marion, Illinois, legal protection was completed by the Commission for six tracts of land totaling 658.75 acres. Four of these tracts are privately owned, one is owned by IDNR and one owned by a not-for-profit organization. The owners of the private sites donated the value of the protection agreement to the public. Four sites were protected as Land and Water Reserves: Fountain Bluff, Guiding Star Savanna, Quiver Sand Prairies and Dunes, and Sherwood's Forest Addition to Nachusa Grasslands Land and Water Reserve. Two nature preserves (NP) sites were dedicated: Heather's Hollow NP and Sandra Miller Bellrose NP Buffer Addition.*

*There are now 420 dedicated nature preserves with 64,011 acres; and 213 registered land and water reserves totaling 59,653 acres. Altogether, there are 633 sites with 123,664 acres protected in the Illinois Nature Preserves System.*

*Note: Share Resolution for Commissioner George Covington*

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

250	May 13, 2025	Vermilion County Conservation District 22296-A Henning Road Danville, IL 61834
251	September 9, 2025	Byron Forest Preserve 7993 N River Rd Byron, IL 61010

**Item 5:\* INPC Staff Report**

REPORT  
Todd Strole, Assistant Director  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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

REPORT  
Ann Marie Holtrop, Chief  
Division of Natural Heritage

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

REPORT  
Joyce Hoffman  
Endangered Species Protection Board

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

REPORT  
Amy Doll, Director  
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves

**Item 9: Committee of the Whole Meeting to Propose Nominations for Illinois Nature Preserves Commission Consultants**

**Committee Chair:** Commissioner Clay

**Current Consultants:**

Gerald Adelman	Jill Allread	Alan Branhagen
Amy Doll	Harry Drucker	Kim Erndt-Pitcher
Jo Fessett	Fran Harty	Randy Heidorn
Dr. Jim Herkert	Cynthia Kanner	Kerry Leigh
Bill McClain	Jill Riddell	Lauren Rosenthal
Bruce Ross-Shannon	Joseph Roth	Dr. Charles Ruffner
John Schwegman	Deborah Stone	Dr. David Thomas
Dr. Jeff Walk	John White	

**Item 10:\* Adams County – Additions to Allendale Spring Land and Water Reserve**

Dr. Anna K. (Kay) Behrensmeyer requests the approval of a 9.2-acre addition to Allendale Spring Land and Water Reserve. The existing 20-acre Allendale Spring Land and Water Reserve (LWR) owned by Edward Behrensemeyer was registered at the Commission’s 231<sup>st</sup> Meeting in January 2019 (Resolution #2442). The site lies on the border of the Western Forest-Prairie Division, Galesburg Section and the Middle

Mississippi Border Division, Glaciated Section, and contains moderate quality dry mesic woods and a stream that contributes to Pigeon Creek. This site is within the Mississippi River Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) identified by the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) and supports two listed species of bats - Indiana bat, (*Myotis sodalist*, state and federally endangered) and Northern long-eared bat, (*Myotis septentrionalis*, state and federally threatened), and at least five Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Protection and management of this reserve will help meet the goals of two IWAP campaigns: Forest and Woodlands, and Streams. This addition is located immediately west of the current reserve and includes additional forest, grassland, and pond habitat to support the two species of bats, both of which are known to use the area for breeding and wintering, respectively. The current reserve is recognized by the Illinois Nature Areas Inventory (INAI #1967) for the LWR registration (Category III) and providing suitable habitat for the two federally listed species. While not currently on the INAI as a Cat. II site, it could potentially qualify for having habitat supporting the two listed bats. Protection of this and a 2nd addition (17.2 acres; owned by Kay's brother Edward Behrensmeyer) will increase the size of the registered reserve to 46.2 acres.

**REPORT**

Angella Moorehouse  
 Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Registration Approval

Edward (Ned) Behrensmeyer requests the approval of a 17.2-acre addition to Allendale Spring LWR. This addition is located northeast and east of the current reserve and will connect the registered reserve to Allendale Spring Nature Preserve (7.42 acres). This addition is located immediately west of the current reserve and includes additional forest, grassland, and pond habitat to support two federally listed bats: both of which are known to use the area for breeding and wintering, respectively. Protection of this and Kay's addition (9.2 acres) will increase the size of the registered reserve to 46.2 acres.

Reserved rights for the addition include those approved with the current reserve: the maintenance of a UTV service lane, harvest of sugar maple syrup, primitive campsite, and deer and turkey hunting. The grassland portion of the addition includes a 6.4-acre hayfield which will continue to be harvested annually until ownership changes and/or the increasing cost of harvest is no longer cost effective for the tenant.

**REPORT**

Angella Moorehouse  
 Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Registration Approval

**Item 11:\* McHenry County – Barefoot Ridge Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County (TLCMC) proposes to permanently register 89.4 acres as Barefoot Ridge Land and Water Reserve. The proposed LWR will protect approximately 35 acres of dry-mesic upland forest, 3.3 acres of vernal pools, 35.7 acres of reconstructed prairie, and 15.4 acres of old field grassland. The site

is not currently on the INAI, nor does it contain any known archaeological resources. The site contains a mosaic of natural communities that have been committed to a program of restoration management for over 20 years. The vernal pools in particular provide high-value habitat for several unique species of plants and animals. These pools are unique in the region as most have been excavated for ponds, filled, or drained for agriculture. The site is located at the top of the Marengo Moraine and is a headwater feature to the North Branch of the Kishwaukee River. The Kishwaukee River is listed on the INAI as a High-Value Aquatic Resource that supports high-diversity freshwater mussel populations. If approved for registration, TLMCMC plans to increase restoration efforts at Barefoot Ridge and open the site to the public in the future. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission has authority to approve this registration under Administrative Rule Title 17, Chapter 5, Part 4010, Section 150 b “areas determined by the Commission and Department to be appropriate to register as land and water reserves.”

**REPORT**

Claire Gregory  
Land Conservancy of McHenry County

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Registration Approval

John Nelson  
Illinois Nature Preserve Commission

**Item 12:\* McLean County – Lexington Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

The proposed 151.13-acre Lexington Land and Water Reserve is owned by The Parklands Foundation. The Parklands Foundation is seeking approval for Registration as a perpetual easement. The proposed Lexington LWR is located in McLean County in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. The site includes a 1.9 mile stretch of the Mackinaw River which is located within the Mackinaw River INAI (#0788). This stretch of the Mackinaw River was listed on the INAI as a medium-gradient river, a high-quality natural area due to the unusual concentration of mussels. Suitable habitat for and occurrences of the state-threatened mudpuppy were documented in 2013. The proposed LWR includes approximately 59.2 acres of forest, 56.9 acres of reforestation, 16.4 acres of reconstructed mesic prairie and 18.6 acres of old field. Reserved rights include the ability to maintain existing trails and allow deer hunting on the property.

**REPORT**

Byron Paulsen  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Registration Approval

**Item 13:\* Union County – Addition to Cedar-Draper’s Bluff Land and Water Reserve, Registration**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) seeks permanent registration of the 40.0-acre Sonnenschein parcel as an Addition to the 741.1-acre Cedar/Draper’s Bluff LWR. The parcel is contained within the Draper’s Bluff INAI (#0967) and completes protection of a Category IV, 0.6-mi bluff exposure of a Pennsylvanian sandstone escarpment at the boundary of the Greater and Lesser Shawnee Hills Sections of the Shawnee Hills Natural Division. Protection of the proposed Addition

will also facilitate management of a continuous corridor of sandstone glade, dry barrens, dry woodland, and dry sandstone cliff communities of good to excellent quality. Additionally, the parcel contains suitable habitat for three state-listed species found on the broader site and multiple SGCN.

Allowable uses for the proposed Addition will be consistent with those of Cedar/Draper's Bluff LWR. IDNR additionally reserves the right to maintain an existing old field, to convert a portion of this currently landlocked area to a parking lot if a public access route is ever acquired and to install a primitive foot trail connecting the lot to established trails.

IDNR and INPC recommend permanent protection of the proposed Sonnenschein Addition, which will expand the Cedar/Draper's Bluff Land and Water Reserve to 781.1 acres.

**REPORT**  
Dalton Sharrow  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**  
Registration Approval

**Item 14:\* Cook County – Addition and Buffer Addition to Busse Forest Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication**

The Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) proposes to expand their existing 454-acre Busse Forest Nature Preserve (BFNP) by dedicating 493 acres as nature preserve addition and 274 acres as nature preserve buffer addition. This will expand Busse Forest Nature Preserve to 1,221 acres. Busse Forest NP and the proposed additions are part of a 3,542-acre block of land owned by the FPCC along Salt Creek in the northern part of Cook County, in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Busse Forest NP was third dedicated nature preserve in 1965 along with 10 other FPCC sites. These FPCC nature preserve dedications represent the beginning of the Illinois Nature Preserve System in Illinois, with the passage of the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act occurring less than two years prior in 1963. Today, the Illinois Nature Preserve System consists of over 420 nature preserves covering over 64,000 acres. If approved, Busse Forest Nature Preserve would be the 7th largest nature preserve out of the 420 in the Illinois Nature Preserve System. The proposed 493-acre nature preserve addition is located, in part, within the Busse Forest INAI site (#031) and protects grade A and B northern flatwoods, Grade B dry-mesic upland forest surrounded by mesic upland forest, dry-mesic woodland, shrub swamp, and former agricultural lands. The proposed 274-acre nature preserve buffer addition contains remnant grade C mesic upland forest, dry-mesic woodland, shrub swamp, sedge meadow, and old field communities that are part of the same remnant natural community complex. The proposed buffer would also protect populations of State-

listed plants: Tuckerman’s sedge (*Carex tuckermanii*), downy false Solomon’s seal (*Polygonatum pubescens*), purple-fringed orchid (*Platanthera psychodes*), dwarf raspberry (*Rubus pubescens*), and marsh speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*).

FPCC maintains a paved bike trail that bisects the proposed nature preserve addition. This trail is open to hikers, bikers, dogs on leash, and cross-country skiers. FPCC reserves the right for these uses to continue and to maintain and realign a portion of this bike and pedestrian trail. Maintenance activities may include patching or repaving the trail, removal of hazardous trees along the trail corridor, and maintaining sight lines for user safety. There are currently two bends in the trail that the Forest Preserves is looking to realign in 2025 or 2026 for improved user safety. Horses are not allowed. Additionally, management techniques that may be used include: tree thinning, measures to restore or maintain the surface hydrology (both quantity and quality) and a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) control program, following adaptive management strategies. The Forest Preserves will also monitor plants and animals within the proposed additions to Busse Forest Nature Preserve.

**REPORT**  
Rebecca Collings  
Forest Preserves of Cook County

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**  
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

John C. Nelson  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 15:\* Jersey County – The Chautauqua Prairie Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication**

The proposed Chautauqua Prairie Nature Preserve is a 42-acre area in two parcels located in the bluff corridor between Chautauqua and Grafton Illinois. The proposed NP is located in the Glaciated Section of the Middle Mississippi Border Natural Division. The site is within the boundaries of the Big Rivers Resource Rich Area. The property contains nearly all of the remaining unprotected portion of the former 109-acre Chautauqua Prairie INAI (#0964). Now currently known as the Principia Hill Prairies West-Chautauqua INAI site, which contains Grade A, B, and C loess hill prairie and at least four known state-listed species. The proposed Chautauqua Prairie NP contains approximately 2 acres of Grade A and B loess hill prairie and 40 acres dry and dry-mesic upland forest connected to a much larger block of several hundred acres of mature forest. The site also contains Grade A limestone cliff community that includes Outstanding Exposures of the Fern Glen Formation limestone. The two parcels comprising the proposed NP lie adjacent to the 430-acre Palisades Nature Preserve and other sites protected with conservation easements.

The properties are owned by the Great Rivers Land Trust, (GRLT), who has actively worked to protect the entire Chautauqua Prairie INAI site, including having previously negotiated the deal to purchase the Palisades site for preservation as well as surrounding lands. The GRLT also holds a conservation easement on the proposed nature preserve.

The preservation of this site accomplishes important conservation goals for the area. Within the large complex of protected lands, the Chautauqua Prairie parcel is a key piece in efforts by GRLT, INPC and partners to preserve the ecologically important Mississippi River bluff corridor along Route 100.

**REPORT**

Debbie S. Newman  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

**Item 16:\* Kankakee County – Addition to Carl N. Becker Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication**

Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve is owned and jointly managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Illinois Chapter and IDNR. It was originally dedicated in 2009, with subsequent additions dedicated in 2010 and 2012. The proposed 2025 addition is approximately 60 acres in size and owned by TNC. The previously dedicated acres owned by TNC and IDNR include the Leesville Savanna INAI site (#0638), recognized for its high-quality sand savanna communities and habitat it provides for 16 state-endangered or threatened species. The proposed 60-acre addition is partially included on the INAI, and it also includes habitat for the endangered orange fringed orchid (*Platanthera ciliaris*), primrose violet (*Viola primulifolia*), and the state-threatened regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*) and ornate box turtle (*Terrepenne ornata*). The proposed nature preserve addition provides habitat for numerous other wildlife SGCN, buffers high-quality INAI savanna communities, and contributes to good, defensible preserve design for Carl N. Becker Savanna NP. All uses and management activities are consistent with the rules for management and public use of Illinois Nature Preserves. The proposed 60-acre addition will increase the total acreage of this nature preserve to 215 acres; protect a portion of the Leesville Savanna INAI site and habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species; contribute to good preserve design of this site; and promote contiguity of natural habitat on this important landscape.

**REPORT**

Kim Roman  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

**Item 17:\* Lake County – Mello’s Preserve at Westfork Savanna Buffer Addition to Florsheim Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication**

Lake Forest Open Lands Association (LFOA) proposes dedication of 99.3 acres known as Mello’s Preserve at Westfork Savanna buffer addition (Westfork Savanna) to Florsheim Park Nature Preserve. The existing nature preserve is 105.12 acres and is owned and managed by the Village of Lincolnshire. If approved, this buffer addition to Florsheim Park NP will bring the total area of the preserve to approximately 204.76 acres. The nature preserve, additions and proposed buffer addition are within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division and part of the Florsheim Park INAI (#1500) as a Cat. III for the nature preserve status and Cat. II for three state-listed and one federally listed plant species. Approximately 68.7 acres of the site are made up of a patchwork of northern flatwoods and wet-mesic upland forest

communities. Vernal pools are characteristic of flatwoods communities, and wet-mesic upland forest communities occur in areas of poor drainage on level topography. The remainder of the site is cultural old-field (30.6-acres).

There is an existing mowed trail system at Westfork Savanna that is open to the public. LFOLA plans to work with the Village of Lincolnshire to eventually connect Westfork Savanna's trails to Florsheim Park Nature Preserve's trail system. In addition to public use, LFOLA plans to collaborate with tribal partners to allow and encourage certain cultural uses of the site. Management activities at Westfork Savanna Buffer Addition will focus on improving the quality of the site's natural communities. Removal of European buckthorn in the forested areas is a top priority. This will encourage oak regeneration and a healthier understory. The old field areas will be gradually reforested as resources allow. Young oaks are already moving into these open areas from the forest edges, and they will likely transition gradually from open savanna communities into woodland and forest communities that resemble the rest of the site. Restoration work done by LFOLA staff and volunteers is ongoing.

The Westfork Savanna Buffer Addition boundary excludes a bike path that runs east-west along the southern edge of the property. There are two pre-existing easements associated with the adjacent interstate 94 that are within the proposed buffer addition. These originated in the 1950s and relate to slope and drainage during the construction of the interstate. A carbon credit easement, held by City Forest Credits was also placed within the forested portions of the site in 2023. LFOLA reserves the right to maintain and improve the site's trail system and potentially connect a pedestrian bridge over the interstate to the northernmost tip of the property in the future.

LFOLA also reserves the right to allow certain special uses at the site for its tribal partners. These uses may include but are not limited to overnight events, cultural ceremonies, temporary ceremonial structures, and traditional harvesting of native plants that are not state-listed species. A special use INPC permit will be obtained by the landowner prior to such events. Additionally, LFOLA reserves the right to reintroduce bison grazing to the site in the future for management purposes pending additional approval from INPC. There are not currently any plans to do so, but if the opportunity arises in the future, the bison will graze the old field area in the southern portion of the site.

**REPORT**

Ryan London  
Lake Forest Openlands Association

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

**Item 18:\* Lake County – Addition and Buffer Addition to North Dunes Nature Preserve, Preliminary Dedication**

IDNR seeks preliminary approval for dedication of a 91.4-acre Addition and 138.6-acre Buffer Addition to North Dunes Nature Preserve, 230 acres in total. The existing 816-acre nature preserve is owned and managed by IDNR. The proposed addition is located within the Lake Michigan Dunes Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division and is part of Illinois Dunes North INAI Site (#1066). This addition will

provide protection to 14 INAI Category I high-quality Grades A and B natural communities, including beach, foredune, panne, mesic prairie, wet prairie, dry-mesic sand savanna, sedge meadow, freshwater marsh, graminoid fen, Great Lake, and dry-mesic, mesic, wet-mesic, and wet sand prairie. The Lake Michigan Panne natural community is globally rare and has rare plant assemblages. The INAI is also designated as Category II due to the presence of numerous federal and state-listed species. Twelve state-listed species, one of which is also federally listed, have been recorded from within the boundaries of the proposed Addition. Protection of this area will strengthen the resiliency of the existing nature preserve and the multitudes of additional rare species found there. The area is recognized as part of a Conservation Opportunity Area by the State Wildlife Action Plan, is a critical region of the Lake Plain Coastal Restoration Partnership, contains wetlands recognized to be of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and is recognized in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Kellogg/Dead Dog Creek Watershed Plan, the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Water Bird Conservation Plan, and the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan. The proposed Addition will contribute significantly to national and regional biodiversity, preserve coastal wetland ecosystems, and provide critical habitat for declining plant and animal species. It also serves as a critical avian, mammalian (e.g., bats), and invertebrate (butterflies, dragonflies) migration corridor. Reserved rights include the right to maintain existing trails, allow pets in accordance with the park's pet policy, manage deer, wildlife diseases, and nuisance wildlife, and perform hydrological maintenance, restoration, or alteration. If approved, this Addition to North Dunes Nature Preserve will bring the total acreage of protected land at this site to 1046 acres.

**REPORT**

Melissa Grycan  
 Illinois Department of Natural Resources

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

**Item 19:\* Adams County – Buffer Addition to Allendale Springs Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

Allendale Spring is located in southern Adams County in the Galesburg Section of the Middle Mississippi Border Natural Division. The proposed nature preserve received preliminary approval at the 248th INPC meeting (resolution #2642). The addition consists of approximately 5.155 acres and lies directly north of the existing preserve. The addition and the preserve are owned by Edward Behrensmeyer. The site is listed on the INAI (#1967) as a Category III site for the dedicated nature preserve. and providing suitable habitat for the two federally listed species. While not currently on the INAI as a Cat. II site, it could potentially qualify for having habitat supporting the two listed bats species: Indiana bat which breeds within the vicinity of the proposed preserve, and northern long-eared bat, which is thought to overwinter on site. The site is also listed within the Illinois Inventory of Archaeological and Paleontological Sites and was used as a settlement by various prehistoric peoples of the Dalton, Hardin, Archaic, Sedalia, and late woodland cultures. Allendale Spring contains habitat supporting at least five SGCN as defined by the IWAP. Protection and management of the addition will expand the size of the preserve to 7.42 acres and will serve to help fulfill goals within both the Forest and Woodland and Streams IWAP campaigns.

The landowner has reserved the right to:

1. Collect water from the spring that runs along the Eastern edge of the preserve. This includes maintaining the water collection infrastructure. There are three places the spring exits the hillside; the existing water collection structure is setup on one of those openings and consists of a concrete and PVC pipe structure to deliver the water to the springhouse/weir. The springhouse and weir are located just outside the preserve. The landowner has not sold the water for many years but wants to reserve the right to do so in the future.
2. The landowner wishes to reserve the right to graze a small number of goats on the nature preserve to keep the invasive exotic woody species from encroaching. He has done this for many years and has created no erosion issues.
3. He also reserved the right to cut hay off the small portion of the hayfield that is in the preserve and contains some of the archaeological resources. This would help prevent woody encroachment/invasion of this area.

The control of invasive shrubs also reduces erosion by promoting more desirable soil-holding vegetation. Management of archaeological features typically involves some form of surface mowing to reduce vegetative height and reduce deep-rooted woody vegetation. Thus, both the haying and the grazing would benefit the maintenance of the archaeological feature.

**REPORT**

Angella Moorehouse  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 20:\* Jackson County – Fountain Bluff Nature Preserve, Final Dedication**

The Thurmond family, owners of WPFT, LLC, seek final dedication of 11.7 acres of as the Fountain Bluff NP in southwestern Jackson County. The proposed preserve is in the Greater Shawnee Hills Section of the Shawnee Hills Natural Division. It protects 11.7 acres of the currently unprotected 3995-acre Fountain Bluff INAI site (#0589, Categories II, IV, and VI) in perpetuity. Significant features of the NP include suitable habitat for numerous state-threatened and state-endangered species, unusual concentrations of vascular flora, presence of relict northern plant species, and unusual concentrations of reptiles and amphibians. Natural communities range from high-gradient small stream at the lowest topographical relief (420 feet), to dry sandstone cliff, sandstone glade, dry-woodland, dry-mesic woodland, and loess hill prairie at the highest topographic relief (620-640 feet). Across the site, botanical diversity is extremely high and average coefficient of conservatism is exceptional. The proposed preserve resides within the Western Shawnee Conservation Opportunity Area.

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

1. Permanent protection of 11.7 acres of INAI#0589,

2. Verified extant populations of five state-listed species: yellow honeysuckle (*Lonicera flava*, SE), crested coralroot orchid (*Hexalectris spicata*, SE), butternut (*Juglans cinerea*, SE), Skinner's false foxglove (*Agalinis skinneriana*), and timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*, ST),
3. Historic populations of two state-listed species: Allegheny barberry (*Berberis canadensis*, SE) and heartleaf nettle (*Urtica chamaedryoides*; ST),
4. Provides habitat for 31 SGCN including 19 avian species that are confirmed as breeding, and
5. Supports various Illinois Wildlife Action Plan campaigns.

Within the proposed preserve, the landowner reserves the right to maintain pre-existing foot trails and to manage white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*; INPC 2005) per the most recent IDNR wildlife regulations.

**REPORT**

Kevin Sierzega  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 21:\* Jo Daviess County – Casper Bluff Nature Preserve and Buffer, Final Dedication**

Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JD CF) seeks approval for the dedication of 62.62 acres as nature preserve and 26.88 acres as nature preserve buffer, 89.5 acres total, on the property known as Casper Bluff located in Jo Daviess County and the Wisconsin Driftless natural division. The same 89.50 acres are currently a registered Illinois Land and Water Reserve. Casper Bluff LWR was created in 2008 (69.82 acres) (INAI #1782, Cat. III) to protect a significant portion of the Aiken Mound Group, a series of Native American earthen mounds, including the only intact thunderbird effigy mound within the State of Illinois, which are significant cultural (archaeological) resources. The Addition to Casper Bluff LWR was registered in 2021 (19.68 acres) as an expansion. The federally endangered rusty patch bumblebee (*Bombus affinis*) is present at the site. Since 2008, much of the site has been restored or recreated to woodland, savanna, and prairie communities, including a small dolomite hill prairie remnant.

Upon dedication, the Nature Preserve Buffer area will serve a dual purpose of (1) Protecting existing natural and cultural features, and (2) Facilitating the reinterment of prehistoric Native American human remains, grave artifacts, and funerary objects that were unearthed and removed from their original burial locations after Euro-American colonization of the region. Casper Bluff provides long-term protection for an important part of the Wisconsin Driftless Forest Conservation Opportunity Area as well as a significant Native American cultural/archaeological site. Dedication further increases protections for these unique cultural/archaeological features and the natural communities, which benefits current and future visitors, researchers, and residents of the Galena area by preserving unique natural and cultural heritage in northwestern Illinois.

Reserved rights will follow best management practices for conservation of both archaeological resources and for the conservation of a prairie, savanna, and woodland landscape/ecosystem. Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JD CF) wishes to carry

forward the following allowable uses from the registration as reserved rights on the proposed Nature Preserve and Nature Preserve Buffer: hiking, bird watching, nature observation and study, scientific research, hunting, photography, picnicking, cross-country skiing, and off-road vehicles which will be allowed only for the purposes of site management or maintenance.

Furthermore, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation reserves the right to allow the following activities that are compatible with the objectives of the dedicated preserve and are consistent with the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act:

- Restoration, re-creation, and management of the biological communities on the property.
- Recreational Developments: JDCF reserves the right to develop and maintain a hiking trail system with kiosks, benches, interpretive signs, and footbridges spanning some of the ravines. JDCF reserves the right to maintain the existing parking lot and picnic shelter in their current locations.
- JDCF retains the right to harvest and sell a small number of trees, primarily black walnut and cherry, to provide additional funds for ecological restoration and management of the site.
- JDCF reserves the right to repair or reconstruct the Native American mounds for educational interpretation and historical preservation in accordance with the Illinois Human Remains Protection Act (HRPA) and with permission from affiliated tribes.
- Archaeological research (see preceding section for a detailed description of this reserved right).
- Archaeological researchers with an approved permit will be allowed to park vehicles, trailers and/or temporary structures on the preserve during periods of archaeological investigations.
- JDCF reserves the right to permit Indian tribes to rebury human remains, grave artifacts, and funerary objects within the Nature Preserve Buffer provided that such activities are conducted in compliance with the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and HRPA.
- JDCF reserves the right to permit Indigenous peoples to harvest traditional foods, medicines, and other natural resources used for Native American cultural purposes, provided that no harvesting activity harms any feature protected by the Nature Preserve and Nature Preserve Buffer.
- JDCF reserves the right to permit Indigenous peoples to access and utilize the preserve for ceremonial, religious, cultural, and educational purposes, provided that no such activity harms any feature protected by the Nature Preserve and Nature Preserve Buffer.

Staff of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Illinois State Museum, Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin, and Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation recommend permanent dedication of 62.62 acres as nature preserve and 26.88 acres nature preserve buffer.

**REPORT**  
Kaleb Baker

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**  
Final Approval for Dedication  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 22:\* Lee County – Proposal to Allow Control of Mesopredators at Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve**

The 291-acre Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Preserve owned by the Illinois Audubon Society is located in the approximately 1100-acre Green River Lowland 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* – proposed to be listed as threatened by the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board in 2025). 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.

**REPORT**

Jamie Arntzen  
Illinois Audubon Society

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Approval of Mesopredator Control

Kelly Neal  
Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

**Item 23: Election of INPC Consultants**

**REPORT**

Commissioner Clay

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED**

Final Approval for Dedication

**Item 24: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)**

**Item 25: Other Business**

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

**Item 26: Adjournment**