



THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTER

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS COMPLETED

Project reviews completed from September 15 to October 15 are listed below. These projects have been screened through the internal environmental review process for potential impacts on wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and cultural and archaeological resources, etc. Through the review process it was determined that environmental impacts have been kept to a minimum and mitigated as necessary, that they do not meet the criteria for significant actions as defined in the environmental review process, and may proceed. All of these projects are in compliance with the Endangered Species Protection Act, Natural Areas Preservation Act, Interagency Wetlands Policy Act and cultural resource statutes.

Notice of Significant Action Cecil White Prairie Land & Water Reserve

Project Description

The Cecil White Prairie Land & Water Reserve is a 33 acre tract of land located in Hancock County that was donated to the Department of Natural Resources in 1998. As part of a larger 62 acre Natural Area Inventory site, its qualifying features include a hill prairie community and a Late Woodland Mortuary Mound complex.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is proposing to expand Illinois Rt. 136, which lies adjacent to and south of the Land & Water Reserve, to a four lane facility at this location. In order to raise the existing roadbed as well as provide proper drainage the IDOT will require a permanent R.O.W. easement of 0.53 acres, 0.31 acres of which will be used as a construction zone. An additional 0.46 acres will be required as temporary easement for access purposes. The work will involve the removal of approximately 125 trees some of which include non-native invasive black locusts.

In mitigating impacts to the area the IDOT, in cooperation with IDNR and Nature Preserve staff, have offered the following to be incorporated into the project design and implementation.

1. A 0.35 acre tract of land abutting the Land & Water Reserve will be donated to the IDNR to provide additional buffer and management capabilities to secure the long-term protection of the hill prairie.
2. IDOT will provide \$15,000 to be utilized for tree clearing and woody encroachment control on the main hill prairie ridge within the Land & Water Reserve.
3. IDOT will seed the R.O.W. adjacent to the reserve to native Prairie grass.

4. A wildlife passage/culvert will be located to the West of the reserve in the new road construction area to provide safe access for wildlife from the reserve to the La Moine River valley.
5. A small hill prairie located outside the construction zone will be protected with snow fence throughout the construction phase of the project
6. The INPC and IDNR staff will assist in the marking of additional non-native and undesirable trees (black locust and sugar maple) adjacent to the road for removal during construction.

Wetland Resources

All work taking place in the Land & Water Reserve is located in an upland area and will not impact wetland resources.

Archaeological Resources

IDNR staff and archaeological contractors working for the IDOT have visited the site and have determined that the mound complex was a significant enough distance away from the proposed construction zone and would not be impacted by the proposed work.

Threatened & Endangered Species Natural Area and Land & Water Reserve

There are no known occurrences of listed species at the Cecil White Prairie. As the Land & Water Reserve lies within the boundaries of the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site, both will be affected by 0.99 acres of construction and easements.

Alternative Analysis

The IDOT studied the alternative of shifting all construction and additional R.O.W. requirements to the south side of existing Rt. 136 and thus avoiding any impacts to the INAI and Land & Water Reserve site. This alternative would require the IDOT to bridge a large bend in the La Moine River which lies adjacent to the south side of the existing highway. The bridge would have to span the entire 500' length of the bend and require one or more piers constructed perpendicular to the stream. This design was unacceptable to the IDNR, Division of Water Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the IDOT.

It is the opinion of IDNR and INPC staffs that the proposed IDOT construction proposal will not adversely impact the

resources for which the site was protected and that the clearing of trees from along the roadside and the hill prairie and the addition of 0.3 acres of buffer land will improve the overall ecological condition of the reserve.

Prior to this project proceeding, both the IDNR and the INPC must find that the action is in the public interest. As such, the Department is inviting comments and any questions from the public on this proposal. Comments or questions may be sent to:

Mr. Kenneth L. Litchfield
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, Ill. 62702-1271

All comments must be received by the close of business on Friday, December 16, 2005.

Questions and Comments

All questions and comments about the environmental review process or this newsletter should be directed to:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Div. of Natural Resource Review & Coordination
One Natural Resources Way,
Springfield, IL 62702-1271
Phone: 217/785-5500

- **Fox Ridge State Park**

0504521 - This project involves the construction of a replacement spillway with a 40' weir. The principal spillway will be modified by adding sidewall openings and replacing the deteriorated concrete. Project was submitted for review on 6-15-05.

- **Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park**

0601258 - This project involves the conversion of an old rearing pond for Northern Pike into a children's fishing pond by deepening the existing site in a few areas. Project was submitted for review on 9-28-05.

- **Green River State Wildlife Area**

0601655 - This project involves the clearing of invasive and exotic woody vegetation across approximately 100 acres of prairie and wetland habitat. The vegetation will be removed utilizing rubber tracked brush cutting machinery. Project was submitted for review on 10-13-05.

- **William W. Powers**

0404848 - This project involves the construction of a new visitor center/outdoor education facility beside Wolf Lake at the existing concession building's location. Additional items will include a pavilion, sidewalks, security lighting, and landscaping. Project was submitted for review on 5-15-04.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources receives federal financial assistance and therefore must comply with federal anti-discrimination laws. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility please contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural Resources, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62701-1787, (217) 782-7616, or the Office of Human Resources, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

All public meetings conducted by the Department of Natural Resources will be accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with Executive Order No. 5 and pertinent state and federal laws, upon notification of the anticipated attendance. Persons with disabilities planning to attend and needing special accommodations should inform the Department of Natural Resources at least five days prior to the meeting by telephoning or writing the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural Resources, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62701-1787, phone (217) 782-7616.

Department of Natural Resources information is available to the hearing impaired by calling DNR's TTY: 217/782-9175. The Ameritech Relay Number is 800/526-0844. Printed by the Authority of the State of Illinois. 362-6/97