



 **FOREST PRESERVES**
of Cook County

Proposed Illinois Nature Preserve
Somme Prairie Grove
~85 acres | Northbrook, IL



Illinois Nature Preserves Commission



“Currently, nature preserves protect over 900 occurrences of endangered and threatened plants and animals. More than 20% of all Illinois endangered species are in state dedicated nature preserves.”

Mission

The mission of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) is to assist private and public landowners in protecting high quality natural areas and habitats of endangered and threatened species, in perpetuity, through voluntary dedication or registration of such lands into the Illinois Nature Preserves System. The Commission promotes the preservation of these significant lands and provides leadership in their stewardship, management and protection.

Rapid changes in land use and expanding urban development prompted the Illinois General Assembly to establish the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission in 1963 to create a system of natural areas representative of Illinois' landscape. The Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (525 ILCS 30) governs the Commission and charges it to preserve, protect and defend natural areas and endangered species habitat for public benefit.

Currently there are only 654 high-quality, undisturbed natural communities in the state. Approximately half of these areas are unprotected, and sites are either in danger of being, or have already been, totally or partially destroyed. Each year, 12-15 new nature preserves are dedicated after a thorough and detailed study of an area protecting them into the future.

Types of Dedication

Registration as an Illinois Nature Preserve.

Only high-quality natural areas qualify for this land protection tool. Dedication is the strongest protection that can be given to land and provides permanent protection. The owner retains custody but voluntarily restricts future uses of the land in perpetuity to preserve its natural state and to perpetuate natural conditions. Qualifying lands in private, corporate, or government ownership can be dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. This agreement may result in financial benefits to the landowner, primarily in the form of a charitable contribution deduction on federal income taxes and a local property tax reduction. The biggest benefit to the landowner is the assurance that their cherished land will be permanently and legally preserved while still allowing them to enjoy it now and pass it on to their heirs.

Registration as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve.

Lands and waters of Illinois that support significant natural heritage or archaeological resources qualify for this land protection tool. The agreement to register an area as a Land and Water Reserve determines allowable uses and stipulates management objectives. Registered Reserves may be in public or private ownership. The agreement may be for a term of years or permanent. The property can be sold or passed on to heirs subject to the agreement. Land and waters permanently registered may qualify for reduced tax benefits in the form of a local property tax reduction and possibly a charitable contribution deduction on federal income taxes.

Registration as an Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark.

This is a recognition program that introduces a landowner to the concept of natural area protection and allows the state to assist with management of the natural area. It is a voluntary program that increases understanding of the value of natural areas and encourages their preservation by private landowners. An agreement document determines provisions and can be terminated by either party on sixty days' notice. These programs are designed to preserve the natural features of the land and do not require public access to private property.