



Legislation Text

File #: 15-0318, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED MISCELLANEOUS ITEM OF BUSINESS

HARMS FLATWOODS FOR ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVE (“INP”) DEDICATION

Department: Resource Management

Summary: Requesting authority, pursuant to Section 9 of the Cook County Forest Preserve District Act (70 ILCS810/9), to submit Harms Flatwoods for Illinois Nature Preserve (“INP”) dedication.

This dedication contributes to one of the key goals set forward in the Next Century Conservation Plan to dedicate 20,000 acres by 2025 as INPs. Dedication of a site as an INP provides the highest level of protection for land in Illinois, and is granted only to natural areas of exceptional ecological quality.

Harms Flatwoods is an approximately 107 acre preserve located in the Village of Skokie in northeast Cook County. The site consists of high quality remnant flatwoods and mowed Eurasian meadow. Because of its relatively flat topography and poorly draining clay soil, the site frequently retains water on the surface and is considered a northern flatwoods. Formal ecological management of the site began in the late 1970’s, and was conducted primarily by volunteer stewards under the guidance of scientists and Forest Preserves of Cook County (“FPCC”) staff. Currently the site exhibits an excellent climax canopy community made up mostly of white oak, swamp white oak, bur oak, and red oak. The understory and ground layer vegetation contain many conservative species including some listed species.

The FPCC currently has 22 dedicated nature preserves. The addition of Harms Flatwoods would bring the FPCC’s total INP protected lands to approximately 6,514 acres.

It is respectfully requested that authority be granted to the FPCC to submit Harms Flatwoods to the INP Commission for review and formal dedication as an Illinois Nature Preserve.