



# PRAIRIE LAND CONSERVANCY

**A division of Prairie Hills Resource  
Conservation and Development, Inc.**

# **STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN**

July, 2009





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## INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Conservation Plan will serve to guide the land protection efforts of Prairie Land Conservancy (PLC) by identifying priority wildlife habitat, open space, natural areas and sustainable agricultural land; assessing threats; identifying potential partners; and developing implementation, leverage and funding sources. The plan is intended to provide a framework which is organic and flexible with multiple characteristics to help PLC make better decisions. A key component of this plan is to determine where the priorities of other potential partners overlap with the mission and goals of PLC, how PLC could use the available resources to determine priority areas and natural resources in the 10-county service area, and identify possible ways PLC could partner with other groups to achieve land protection goals.

## BACKGROUND

Prairie Land Conservancy is a conservation land trust which operates as a division of Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc (PHRCD), an IRS 510(c) (3) organization based in Macomb, Illinois. The service area of the land trust is a 10-county area comprising the following counties in west-central Illinois: Adams, Brown, Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler and Warren.

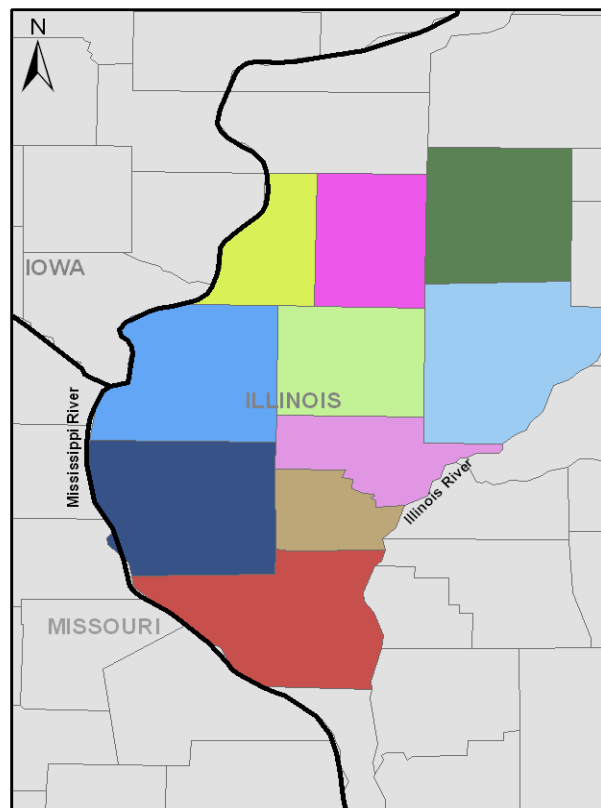


Figure 1. PLC Coverage Area

## ROLE OF PRAIRIE HILLS RC&D, INC.

Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. created the Prairie Land Conservancy in order to protect critical habitats in natural areas, farm lands, forests and open spaces. The PLC is a division of Prairie Hills RC&D, Inc. Prairie Hills amended its by-laws to include Article IV Section 15 stating:

1. “The Prairie Land Conservancy shall act on behalf of the Council and Board of Directors in matters pertaining to its operations and management and report on its activities on a regular basis to the Council and its Board of Directors.
2. The Land Conservancy shall have a Board of Directors of which two are members of the Council and its Board of Directors.
3. The Land Conservancy shall recommend to the Council and its Board of Directors conservation easements/land donations to acquire and hold on behalf of the Land Conservancy.”

Within this framework, the PLC shall recommend to the Council or its Board of Directors lands for which conservation options exist. Upon approval of the Council or its Board of Directors, the PLC shall proceed to acquire the conservation option with the landowner, and their legal advisor, and Prairie Hills, and its legal advisor, to secure the necessary legal documentation in order for Prairie Hills to hold such lands on behalf of the PLC.

PLC operates as a division under PHRCDD which consists of 30 council members (see organizational structure Figure 2). The organizational structure of PLC requires the maintenance of a 10 member executive board with a least 2 from the PHRCDD board of council members. PLC intends to maintain a membership as a means to collect operational funds and to share information with stakeholders. PLC will also retain a list of technical advisors (some of which will require payments for their services) to provide expertise for the land trust in areas such as legal, realty, tax issues, landowner negotiations, land assessments, etc. Future plans for PLC include acquiring sufficient funds to support staff which will oversee various committees organized to address: 1) public relations, i.e., fund raising and marketing, 2) finance, 3) field teams (site evaluations and stewardship), 4) legal / landowner negotiations.

In the summer of 2008, the PLC Steering Committee, in consultation with Mayes/Wilson and Associates, LLC, developed a 3-year Strategic Plan for the organization with the use of funds provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and PHRCDD. The steering committee consisted of the following members:

Bob Champlin (PHRCDD board)  
Chuck Gilbert (PHRCDD board)  
Charles Bair (PHRCDD board)  
Chris Delany-Barmann  
Lisa Gruver  
Alice Henry (PHRCDD board, PLC Chair)

David King (PHRCDD coordinator)  
Tracy Meredith (PHRCDD Program Assistant)  
Angella Moorehouse  
Dan Moorehouse  
Margaret Ovitt

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The following organizational chart illustrates the roles of the various PLC committees and membership affiliations.

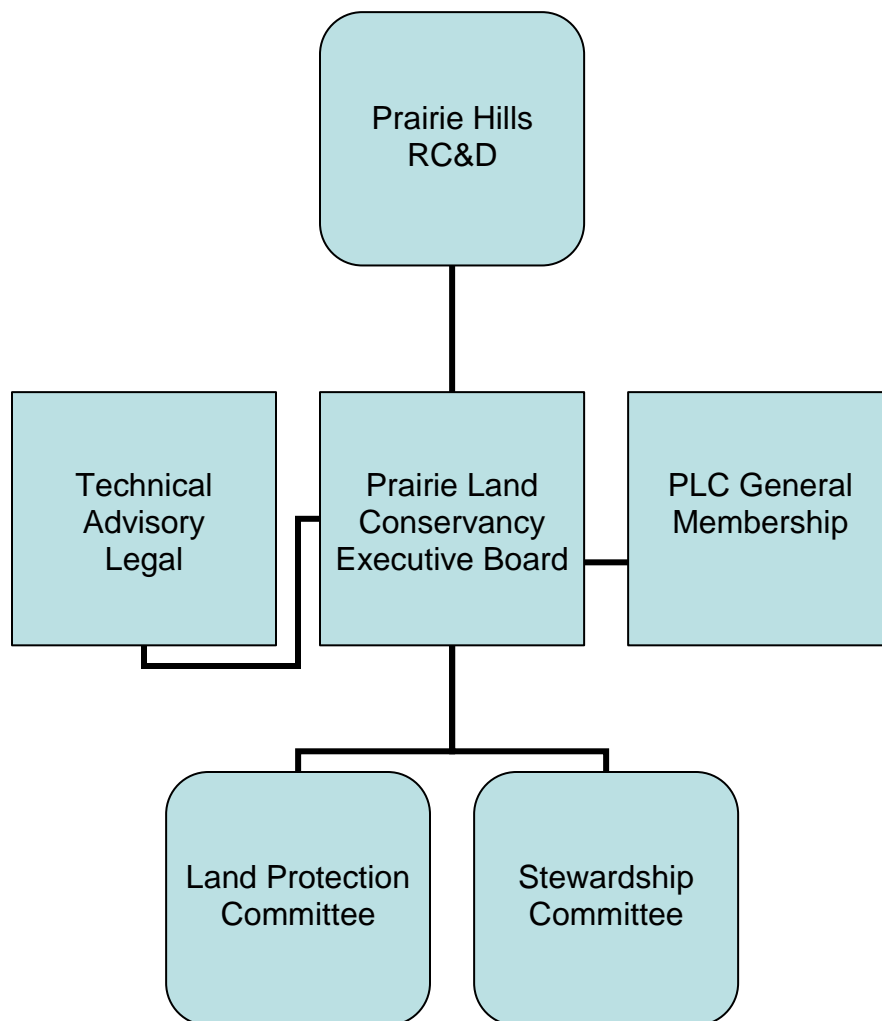


Figure 2. Organizational Chart

## MISSION

The mission of PLC is “to preserve wildlife habitat, open space, natural areas and sustainable agricultural land within west-central Illinois”. Goals of the organization include:

- 1) Protect wildlife habitat and serve as a buffer between development and natural areas.
- 2) Provide protection and enhancement of natural areas and landscape diversity.
- 3) Reduce flooding, improve water quality, and protect groundwater recharge areas.
- 4) Provide safe and affordable food for domestic and foreign consumption.

## PLANNING PROCESS

As part of the strategic planning process, survey data was collected from the steering committee as well as a sample of interested citizens (stakeholder interviews) from the coverage area. The survey identified several broad issues including: trends in the community, trends and opportunities in conservation, organizations working in the service area, conservation priorities, conservation opportunities and ways to engage the community and measure the success of the organization and its conservation programs (PLC Strategic Plan 2008, pp. 13-18).

The survey data gathered pertaining to land conservation included trends in changing land use (conversion of land to additional agricultural production, urban sprawl around larger communities, increased need for hunting and recreational opportunities, large-scale livestock confinement operations, and road expansion projects) and local, regional, statewide and federal efforts to conserve lands and waterways for wildlife habitat, passive recreation, environmental protection and eco-tourism opportunities.

The need to identify potential partners from government agencies and non-government organizations working on land protection within the service area was discussed. To address this need contacts have been made with other land protection organizations working within the service area. Information has been collected from these organizations on land protection goals, high priority areas (including maps and community descriptions), watershed plans, and conservation opportunity strategies offered (Appendix 1).

Within the conservation priority section, the survey identified natural areas as the top priority for land protection. Other priority areas were loosely identified including forests, open areas, farmlands, wetlands and grasslands. Based on this survey and additional information supporting the need for the protection of natural areas will remain the highest priority for PLC land protection efforts. For the purposes of the PLC strategic conservation plan a “natural area” will be defined as follows: “an area of land in public or private ownership which, either retains or has recovered to a substantial degree its original natural or primeval character, though it need not be completely undisturbed, or has floral, faunal, or ecological features of scientific, educational, scenic or aesthetic

interest” (adapted from “natural area” as defined by Illinois Conservation Law). The preservation of other lands (forests, open areas, farmlands, streams) that buffer a natural area or have the potential for restoration to natural area conditions will be of secondary importance to the mission of PLC.

The survey provided information on measuring success for PLC. Possible criteria for success included: staff hiring, funding source for legal defense and stewardship endowment, additional participation from service area, acres of land protected, community leadership, public awareness and favorability, and maintenance of solid rules, guidelines, accomplishments, and committed people. Potential measures of success include: protection of critical habitats, partnerships with other agencies and NGOs, number of conservation easements, reduction in sedimentation, soil loss and water pollution, committed stewardship team, and ability to offer land conservation options to landowners in service area.

## IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY LANDS

The majority of the service area, including all 10 counties, is included within priority land protection programs and conservation plans developed by the dozens of government agencies and non-government organizations working on land protection in west-central Illinois. Knowledge of these plans and priorities will be extremely valuable to PLC land protection efforts. The use of these priorities and plans will greatly aid PLC in setting priorities for land protection as well as providing opportunities to share resources with these agencies and NGOs. These plans and priorities can also serve to provide additional justification of a land's conservation values for meeting the IRS standards and Standards and Practices for land trusts. A reference list of all the known plans and priorities from other area agencies/organizations is provided in Appendix 1 along with how and where to access the information. For specific contact information for government agencies and NGOs refer to the Potential Partners Section below as well as the contact list provided as Appendix 2.

## SUMMARY OF PLANS/PRIORITIES AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE AREA

Local land protection efforts include municipal park districts in the towns of Canton, Quincy, Macomb and Galesburg. The goals of these park districts focus primarily on serving the outdoor recreational needs of the town and local community. Land protection plans and priorities are maintained by agricultural offices located in each of the 10-counties within the service area. These offices include state staff (Soil and Water Conservation District, SWCD) and federal staff (Natural Resource Conservation Service, NRCS).

These offices focus on single counties while implementing regional, state and federal agricultural land protection incentive programs and providing technical assistance for land management. State and federal government agencies have also focused on land protection efforts at the local level primarily through land acquisitions to expand existing





ownership around state parks, state forests, national wildlife refuges and refuge units. See Appendix 3.

Several non-government organizations are involved in land protection efforts at a local level. These include outdoor recreational groups such as the Western Illinois Natural Trails and Greenways (WINTAG), based in Macomb. This group has developed county plans to promote the development and maintenance of recreational trails and greenways including: hiking trails, road and mountain biking trails, canoe trails with public access points to larger streams, and larger green space for outdoor recreation. The Western Illinois Nature Group (WING), based in the Galesburg area, owns and manages a former Girl Scout Camp known as Black Thorn Hill in Warren County. This group is focused on using this site to offer outdoor education and recreational opportunities for the local community.

Within the Macomb area several other local groups are involved in habitat protection and other environmental issues including: Western Prairie Audubon Society (chapter of Illinois Audubon Society), LaMoine River Ecosystem Partnership, Environmentally Concerned Citizens, and the Food Initiatives Group.

## REGIONAL

Much of the regional land protection prioritization for west-central Illinois is focused on improving habitat quality, reducing soil loss, sedimentation, and pollution within major watersheds. Watershed plans have been developed for the following streams and basins: LaMoine River, Greater Bear Creek, Spring Lake, and Court Creek. These plans are primarily created and utilized by citizen-based ecosystem partnerships organized through the IDNR's C2000 program and/or the county NRCS and SWCD offices. State DNR and EPA staff is also involved in the implementation of these plans. Current focus of implementation involves the use of incentive programs for agricultural lands within these priority watersheds.

Other regional land protection efforts by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and IDNR utilize the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan which identifies several Conservation Opportunity Areas located within the service area including: Siloam Springs, Lower La Moine River, Upper Mississippi River, Middle Illinois River, and Hill Prairie Corridor. These regional areas include multiple counties and cover a large part of the 10-county service area, with the exception of Warren and Knox counties. The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan also identifies habitat campaigns for Forests, Farmland and Prairie, and Wetlands. Currently these campaigns are being developed to focus on large habitat blocks outside of the service area.

Several NGOs are also working at a regional level to protect wildlife habitat in west-central Illinois. Most notably The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited have partnered with the FWS and IDNR to acquire and manage floodplain habitat along the western side of the Illinois River at Emiquon and Spunky Bottoms.

## STATE

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources maintains information on priority lands for the State of Illinois including the following: Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, and Species of Greatest Conservation Concern (list, Illinois Wildlife Action Plan), list of high priority streams and waterways; and additional data maintained by the Division of Natural Heritage: Illinois Natural Areas Inventory, Illinois Natural Areas Division (GAP list), Illinois Nature Preserves System, State Endangered and Threatened Species. See Appendix 4.

## FEDERAL

Principal federal agencies involved in land protection and management for the service area include: FWS, NRCS, U.S. EPA, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). While limited technical assistance is provided by FWS and NRCS, most of the assistance from these agencies is through grants (for acquisition, management and stewardship) provided to state and local government entities and to non-profits or, in the case of NRCS, through incentive payment made directly to private landowners. Grant funds are also available from other federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency See Appendix 4.

In order to maintain non-profit 501(c)(3) status as a land trust which can hold conservation easements providing tax benefits to private landowners, PLC can only accept 4 types of easements based on the IRS standards. These include easements for: 1) outdoor recreation, 2) protection of natural habitat for fish, wildlife and plants, 3) preservation of open space, and 4) preservation of historically important areas. At this time PLC does not plan to focus on the preservation of historical site but rather on the first 3 easement types (outdoor recreation, natural habitat and open space – to include agricultural lands).

PLC has also set the goal of receiving Land Trust Alliance (LTA) accreditation as a certified land trust. To meet this goal PLC will also need to ensure that all conservation easements meet the Standards and Practices (S&Ps) developed and maintained by the LTA.

## DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR PLC LAND PROTECTION EFFORTS

PLC has the ability to offer a variety of land protection options to both private and public landowners throughout the state; however, efforts will focus on lands within the 10-county Illinois service area. Sites outside the 10-county service area will be considered only when no longer land trust is available to offer assistance, protection of the specific land meets the mission and goals of PLC, and PLC has the financial and technical resources to permit protection of land outside the primary service area.

Many factors will be considered when determining which land protection option is best for each site as its owner. PLC must make the determination that it is the best



organization to serve the needs of the land and its owner rather than another government agency or NGOs. It will be critical that PLC land negotiation personnel remain familiar with the other agencies and organizations working in the area and with the programs that may be available for that particular land/landowner. If its determined that PLC is the best option, then steps will need to be followed to decide whether PLC should pursue a potential project. The best type of land protection option (conservation easement, land acquisition, land donation, etc.) may not be initially apparent and may require lengthy negotiations with the landowner. Therefore sites can be evaluated based on the ecological attributes, with consideration given concerning the owners attitudes/needs for land protection, using the same criteria regardless of which option is ultimately chosen.

In order to maintain consistent standards for PLC land protection efforts a feasibility checklist (Appendix 5) has been developed to determine whether a site should be considered for a PLC land protection program. Consideration is given to potential threats and hazards and other encumbrances or land uses that would make the site either ineligible for a conservation easement based on the IRS codes, S&Ps for land trusts, incompatibility with the PLC mission and goals, inaccessibility, or unpractical when accounting for considerations of financial and technical resources necessary to maintain the site's conservation values. The feasibility checklist is to be used as the first step (minimum requirements) in the decision process of determining whether to continue to pursue negotiations regarding a tract of land. See also, Threats Assessment section below.

Once a site has met the minimal requirements of the feasibility checklist, ranking criteria (Appendix 6) are used to determine whether PLC time is available and justified for the potential project and how the project ranks in priority when compared with other potential projects on which PLC personnel are currently working. Multiple factors were considered in determining ranking criteria including: 1) land protection prioritization process, 2) the need for buffer zones for natural areas, waterways and other high priority areas, 3) use of lands to promote educational outreach, 4) partnerships with local, state and federal entities, 5) reduction of negative land use trends to improve the quality of life for the citizens of west-central Illinois, 6) to serve the needs of the local community.

The ranking criteria offer guidelines for decision making, presented in priority order with criteria #1 being the most important priority, followed by #2 and so forth. It is not essential that a site meet all criteria, however, it is possible that a particular tract of land will meet more than one criteria and the balance of how many criteria are met as compared to the ranking number of each criteria met will need to be evaluated for each project. These criteria should be considered as additive qualities; not for elimination. While the need to offer public access and engagement (outdoor educational and recreational opportunities to serve the needs of the community) will remain an important attribute, such access should be based on site-specific factors such as public or private ownership, resource protection, etc.

## TARGETED LANDS

As PLC matures as a land trust the need to focus on a particular area (geographic or community type) will become important to establish a unique role for PLC in land protection efforts within the region. While it's unknown what future resources will be available and what efforts will be most successful, a focus for PLC efforts will likely be based on the ability to serve a need not currently being filled in order to protect areas not being protected through other means.

Currently federal and state agricultural agencies serve the needs of the agricultural community relating to farm programs, crop payments and compliance. However, one area of opportunity for targeted lands includes this sector. Illinois farm families have a long tradition of valuing good land stewardship. Conservation options such as conservation easements and land donations create tangible and highly visible family legacies which keep family farms attainable for future farm generations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's focus is primarily on habitat for migratory birds and fish within the Mississippi and Illinois River floodplain. The state IDNR has recently begun to use the State Wildlife Grant to implement the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan with a focus of protecting and restoring large habitat blocks within the Siloam Springs area of Adams and Brown County, grasslands in Fulton County and loess hill prairies within the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

Gaps remain in protecting characteristic oak woodlands, savanna and barren communities in the northern portion of the 10-county service area. The need to provide additional outdoor recreational opportunities for the public, such as bike trails, also remains underserved. These two areas may represent opportunities for PLC to establish itself and a superior organization serving the needs of the regional community.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

As a start-up land trust PLC does not presently have large funding sources and is reliant primarily on volunteer staff. Thus the ability to partner with paid professionals from government agencies and non-government organizations working on land protection within the service area will be critical to achieving the goals of PLC. One of the original purposes for forming a land trust to serve west-central Illinois was to fill a gap in land protection for lands which do not qualify for existing protection options currently available to private landowners within the service area. Thus a measure of PLC success will be the organizations ability to partner with other groups to achieve that goal of providing land protection options to landowners with high priority lands which would not be eligible for land protection through other means.

A list of contact for each government agency and non-government organization involved in land protection within the service area is provided in Appendix 2. This list will need to be maintained and updated on a regular basis.



The success of PLC land protection efforts will be dependent upon knowledge of land protection options that are available to private and public landowners in west-central Illinois through government agencies and other non-profits. A summary of these options is provided in Appendix 3 and will need to be maintained as changes are made.

## **LAND PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

The Strategic Plan (PLC Strategic Plan 2008, pg. 31-32) identifies the need to create a Land Protection Committee (LPC) to address specific issues involving all aspects of land protection programs for PLC.

The LPC is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Strategic Conservation Plan. Their primary role is to provide guidance for prioritization, procedure, and stewardship issues relating to the various conservation options offered by PLC. The plan will provide guidelines for landowner contact negotiations and step by step procedures for the various land protection options.

Specific issues dealing with stewardship and management on lands and easements owned by PLC will be determined by the Stewardship Committee through the adaptation of a specific plan(s) developed for that individual property.

## **LAND PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

To facilitate efficiency in land protection efforts PLC requires written policies, standards and practices for the various conservation options including land acquisition and easements. These policies and guidelines are based on the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Standards and Practices, and the PLC mission and goals. PLC has developed a process for landowner contact, project evaluation and assessment of conservation values (see Appendix 7: Ranking Criteria); adopted a conflict of interest policy; and formulated a committee-based decision-making process for managing land acquisition and easements. The PLC formed the Land Protection Committee and the Stewardship Committee to address these topics.

A series of procedures and guidelines have been prepared by the LPC to provide landowner contact (LOC) personnel with direction on the following: General Procedures for Landowner Contact (see Appendix 8), Guidelines for Landowner Contact (see Appendix 9) and Step by Step Procedure for Conservation Easements (see Appendix 10). Additionally an Initial Site Evaluation Form (see Appendix 11) has been prepared to aid the LOC person in the collection of information on the landowner and the tract of land from the initial phone conversation(s) and an initial site visit to determine whether the site meets the feasibility checklist and ranking criteria to justify pursuit of the project. The Site Evaluation Form should also include a threats report and maps. Additional information will be required to document conservation values as part of the conservation easement process (see Appendix 10).

## OTHER PROCEDURES

- Threat Assessment Reports
- Continuing education and training for staff and volunteers for landowner contacts, monitoring, stewardship, and base line documentation shall be a high priority for PLC.

## OTHER PROTECTION PROGRAMS

Conservation options offered by PLC will include, but are not limited to: conservation easements, land donations, donating remainder interest, donating land by will, and bargain sales.

## THREATS ASSESSMENT

Threats may include pressures on the existing conservation easements that have possible negative consequences. Examples of threats may include logging operations, surface mining, dredging, roads, subdivisions, ATV/motorcycle use, poaching, illegal chemical disposal and meth labs, trash dumping (esp. in gullies in attempt to control erosion), agricultural and other hydrologic alterations (drain tiles, dams, etc.), excessive mowing (esp. of roadsides and agricultural greenways), loss of fence rows, large livestock confinement areas, fall plowing, recreational bulldozing (seemingly for no reason other than to "improve" the appearance), excessive or improper use of herbicides and insecticides for home and agricultural use, switch to "conservation tillage" over no-till, cultivation of railroad and road Right of Ways, excessive deer browse, and exotic/invasive plants. Another issue that's hard to put to a few words is the loss of the family farms.

## LANDOWNER CONTACT TRAINING

Staff and volunteers will receive training in the proper methods and procedures for contacting, talking, and personal relations with landowners. Training may include formal classroom instruction from workshops conducted by the Land Trust Alliance or its affiliates, and on-the-job-training. Appendix 9 contains a general guide for landowner contacts.

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Land Stewardship Committee is responsible for all activities related to the conservation efforts that are begun when a property is acquired or an easement negotiated. See Appendix 12 for Contents of a Conservation Easement.

## SIGNAGE

Appropriate signs will be developed for each property that has a CE, or is owned and/or administered by PLC, as determined.



## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS POLICIES**

The PLC and all of its Board and committee members will strictly adhere to the Prairie Hills RC&D Inc. "Conflict of Interest" and "Ethics Policies". See appendix 13 and 14 respectively.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: List of Land Protection Plans

#### Illinois Natural Areas Inventory

Website for county listings of INAI sites:

[http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/naturalheritage/pdfs/inai\\_list\\_website.pdf](http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/naturalheritage/pdfs/inai_list_website.pdf)

#### Illinois Nature Preserves System

Website for county listings of INPC sites:

[http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/naturalheritage/pdfs/nature\\_preserves\\_list\\_website.pdf](http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/naturalheritage/pdfs/nature_preserves_list_website.pdf)

#### Illinois Natural Areas Divisions (GAP List)

Website for IDNR Natural Heritage with background on Natural Divisions:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/naturalheritage/florafauna/document.htm>

Website for INAI Communities:

<http://www.plantbiology.siu.edu/Invasives/Community%20types.pdf>

#### Federal and State Endangered/Threatened Species (definition of site suitable habitat)

Website for county listings of E/T species:

[http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/naturalheritage/pdfs/et\\_species\\_list\\_website.pdf](http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/naturalheritage/pdfs/et_species_list_website.pdf)

#### Illinois Wildlife Action Plan

Website for IWAP: <http://dnr.state.il.us/ORC/WildlifeResources/theplan/>

Habitat Campaigns (information in IWAP)

Conservation Opportunity Areas (information in IWAP, draft maps available from IDNR)

Species of Greatest Conservation Concern Website for SGCC:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/ORC/WildlifeResources/theplan/species.htm>

#### Illinois Resource Rich Areas

Created by: Illinois Natural History Survey (Critical Trends Project)

Website: <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cwe/rra/rra.html>

#### USFWS Private Lands Program

Website for Quad Cities Office (Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program):

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/partners/illinois.html>

#### La Moine River Watershed Plan

Website:

[http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/ecosystem/partnerships/LMR/LaMoine\\_River\\_Plan/](http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/ecosystem/partnerships/LMR/LaMoine_River_Plan/)





Greater Bear Creek Watershed Plan

*Not available on website – contact Pam Peter (Adams County SWCD)*

Spring Lake Watershed Plan

Website:

<http://aiswcd.org/EventsAndNews/Spring%20Lake%20WS%20Plan%20Final%20July%2010%202008.pdf>

Court Creek Watershed Plan

*Not available on website – contact Ron Hall (Knox County SWCD)*

Agricultural Programs (CRP, CREP, EQIP, LIP, etc.)

CREP: [http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/conservation\\_programs/crep/](http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/conservation_programs/crep/)

<http://www.ltgovernor.il.gov/conservation2005/pdf/CREP.pdf>

CRP: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CRP/>

EQIP: <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/index.html>

LIP: [http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/conservation\\_programs/LIP/](http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/conservation_programs/LIP/)

WHIP: <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/index.html>

WRP: [http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp\\_ewp/wrp\\_index.html](http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp_ewp/wrp_index.html)

Audubon Illinois' Important Bird Areas

<http://iba.audubon.org/iba/viewState.do?state=US-IL>

Western Illinois Nature Trails and Greenways (WINTAG)

<http://www.wintag.org>

McDonough Greenway and Trails Comprehensive Plan

Western Illinois Nature Group (WING)

<http://www.blackthornhill.org>

The Nature Conservancy in Illinois

<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/illinois/>

Ducks Unlimited in Illinois

<http://www.ducks.org/Page1831.aspx>

Natural Land Institute

<http://www.naturalland.org/>

Illinois Audubon Society

<http://www.illinoisaudubon.org/>

Grand Victoria Foundation – Vital Lands Initiative

[www.grandvictoriafdn.org](http://www.grandvictoriafdn.org)

## Appendix 2: Contact List for Government Agencies and NGOs

### Illinois Department of Natural Resources

#### Division of Natural Heritage (District Heritage Biologists)

##### District 5: Fulton, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Warren counties

Michelle Simone  
Jubilee College State Park  
13921 W. Route 150  
Brimfield, IL 61517  
309-446-9181  
[michelle.simone@illinois.gov](mailto:michelle.simone@illinois.gov)

##### District 15: Adams, Brown, Hancock, Pike, Schuyler counties

Dean Corgiat  
Route 106 West  
Pittsfield, IL 62363  
217-285-2221  
[dean.corgiat@illinois.gov](mailto:dean.corgiat@illinois.gov)

#### Division of Forestry (District Foresters)

##### Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, McDonough and Warren counties

Barrie McVey  
640 Argyle Park Road  
Colchester, IL 62326  
309-776-5271  
[barrie.mcvey@illinois.gov](mailto:barrie.mcvey@illinois.gov)

##### Adams, Brown and Pike Counties

Bob Church  
Route 106 West  
Pittsfield, IL 62363  
217-285-2221  
[robert.church@illinois.gov](mailto:robert.church@illinois.gov)

##### Knox County

Steve Felt  
1510 46<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Rock Island, IL 61201  
309-778-0419  
[steve.felt@illinois.gov](mailto:steve.felt@illinois.gov)

##### Schuyler County

Matt Peterson  
700 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Havana, IL 62644  
309-543-3401  
matt.peterson@illinois.gov

Division of Wildlife (District Wildlife Biologists)

District 5/6: Fulton, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Warren counties

Kevin Oller  
2100 S. Lake Storey Road  
Galesburg, IL 61401  
309-344-2617

District 20: Adams, Hancock and Schuyler counties

Brad Poulter  
Route 106 West  
Pittsfield, IL 62363  
217-285-2221  
brad.poulter@illinois.gov

District 21: Brown and Pike counties

Tim Krumweide  
Route 106 West  
Pittsfield, IL 62363  
217-285-2221  
tim.krumweide@illinois.gov

Division of Fisheries (District Fisheries Biologists)

Knox County

Ken Russell  
Anderson Lake SFWA  
674 N. IL 100 Highway  
Astoria, IL 61501  
309-344-2617

Pike County

Rob Hilsbeck  
Ray Norbut State Park  
46816 290<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Griggsville, IL 62340

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (Natural Areas Preservation Specialist)

Angella Moorehouse  
2005 E Highway 136, Suite B  
Carthage, IL 62321  
217-357-9522  
angella.moorehouse@illinois.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Gwen Kolb (Private Lands Program)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Illinois Ecological Services Office  
1511 47<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Moline, IL 61265  
(309) 535-2290

The Nature Conservancy

Tharran Hobson, Restoration Specialist  
Illinois River Project Office at Emiquon  
11304 N. Prairie Road  
Lewistown, IL 61542  
309-547-2730  
thobson@tnc.org

Natural Land Institute

Jerry Paulson, Jill Kennay  
320 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Rockford, IL 61104  
815-964-6666  
jkennay@aol.com

Illinois Audubon Society

Tom Clay, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 2547  
Springfield, IL 62708  
217-544-2473

Ducks Unlimited

Eric Schenck  
229 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Canton, IL 61520  
309-647-5651  
eschenck@ducks.org



**NRCS (District Conservationists, County Offices)**

Adams County NRCS  
Matt LeMaire  
338 S. 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Quincy, IL 62301  
217-224-9304 x3  
[matthew.lemaire@il.usda.gov](mailto:matthew.lemaire@il.usda.gov)

Brown County NRCS  
John Gunther  
P.O. Box 111 (Route 24 W)  
Mt. Sterling, IL 62353  
[john.gunther@il.usda.gov](mailto:john.gunther@il.usda.gov)

Fulton County NRCS  
Kim Smail  
P.O. Box 146 (Route 100N)  
Lewistown, IL 61542  
309-547-2215 x3  
[kim.smail@il.usda.gov](mailto:kim.smail@il.usda.gov)

Hancock County NRCS  
Lori Bollin  
110 Buchanan Street  
Carthage, IL 62321  
217-357-2180 x3  
[lori.bollin@il.usda.gov](mailto:lori.bollin@il.usda.gov)

Henderson County NRCS  
Cathy Olsen (Monmouth Office)  
P.O. Box 510 (323 E. Main)  
Stronghurst, IL 61480  
309-924-1173  
[cathy.olsen@il.usda.gov](mailto:cathy.olsen@il.usda.gov)

Knox County NRCS  
Ron Hall  
P.O. Box 630 (465 Farnham Street)  
Galesburg, IL 61401  
309-342-5714 x3  
[ron.hall@il.usda.gov](mailto:ron.hall@il.usda.gov)

McDonough County NRCS  
Greg Jackson  
1619 West Jackson  
Macomb, IL 309-833-1711 x3  
greg.jackson@il.usda.gov

Pike County NRCS  
Johanna Fuller  
1319 W. Washington  
Pittsfield, IL 62363  
217-285-5448 x3  
johanna.fuller@il.usda.gov

Schuyler County NRCS  
Joe Sullivan  
R.R. 4, P.O. Box 290  
Rushville, IL 62681  
217-322-3358 x3  
joe.sullivan@il.usda.gov

Warren County NRCS  
Cathy Olsen  
701 N. Main Street  
Monmouth, IL 61462  
309-734-9308 x3  
cathy.olsen@il.usda.gov

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)  
Resource Conservationists, County Offices same as NRCS

Adams County – Pam Peter      acsw@adams.net

Brown County – Charla Meyers      charla.meyers@il.nacdnet.net

Fulton County – Andy Karrick      andy.karrick@il.nacdnet.net

Hancock County – Bobby Knight

Henderson County – Shannon Pence      shannon.pence@il.nacdnet.net

Knox County – Kara Downin      kara.downin@il.nacdnet.net

McDonough County – Daune Mansir      duane.mansir@il.nacdnet.net



## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN

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Pike County – Brad Smith      brad.smith@il.nacdnet.net

Schuyler County – Larry Shelts      Larry.Shelts@il.nacdnet.net

Warren County – Rick Winbigler      rickwinbigler@frontiernet.net

### La Moine River Ecosystem Partnership

Dan Moorehouse, President  
1851 Main Street  
Warsaw, IL 62379  
217-256-4732  
dmoorehouse@frontiernet.net

### Macomb Park District

Ray Peterson, Director  
1406 N. Randolph  
Macomb, IL 61455  
309-833-4562  
parks@macomb.com

### Quincy Park District

[www.quincyparkdistrict.com](http://www.quincyparkdistrict.com)  
Mike Parks, Executive Director  
217-223-7703

Ed Seger, Director of Parks

### Western Illinois Nature Group

Laura Wright, President  
Cell 309-343-4321  
[llwright9020@comcast.net](mailto:llwright9020@comcast.net)

## Appendix 3: Land Protection Options From Government Agencies and NGOs

### Cost-Share / Financial Incentive Programs:

#### Acres for Wildlife (non-binding)

Eligible lands: Statewide, wildlife habitat, minimum 1 acre with minimum 1 year commitment

Program Description: non-legally binding minimum 1 year commitment to managing wildlife habitat, primarily for game species/hunting opportunities

Benefits: technical assistance in protecting, improving or developing lasting wildlife habitat; some funding assistance for habitat restorations and management may be available from local Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, Quail Forever, or Wild Turkey Federation chapters

Administered by: IDNR, Division of Wildlife

Contact: District Wildlife Biologist

#### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Eligible lands: defined area within the Illinois River Watershed

Program Description: permanent and temporary conservation easement for conversion of cropland to permanent vegetative cover to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation and provide wildlife habitat within target area of the Illinois River Watershed

Benefits: state/federal components with annual rental payments for first 15 years, lump sum payment on 16<sup>th</sup> year; cost-share assistance to establish vegetative cover (% of cost-share based on length of contract – 100% for permanent easements)

Administered by: SWCD / NRCS

Contact: County SWCD

#### Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Eligible lands: Statewide, highly erodible cropland

Program Description: temporary/permanent conservation easement for conversion of highly erodible cropland to permanent vegetative cover to reduce soil loss and create wildlife habitat

Benefit: annual rental payments for multiyear contracts; cost-share assistance to establish vegetative cover (% of cost-share based on length of contract)

Administered by: FSA / NRCS

Contact: County NRCS Office

#### Conservation Stewardship Program

Eligible lands: Statewide, natural areas, 5 acre minimum





## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN

Program Description: designed to encourage landowners to maintain unimproved land in order to protect limited environmental resources; non-legally binding agreement; landowner required to submit plan to IDNR

Benefit: possible reduction in state property tax

Administered by: IDNR, Office of Resource Conservation

Contact: <http://dnr.state.il.us/Stewardship/instructions.html>

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Eligible lands: Statewide, eligible agricultural lands

Program Description: promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers to meet Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental requirements.

Additional information at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/>.

Benefits: financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

Administered by: NRCS

Contact: County NRCS office

### Forestry Assistance Programs

Eligible lands: Statewide, forested tracts

Program Description: to assist and encourage landowners to become good land stewards, achieve land management objectives, and maintain ecological processes; maintain and improve the State's rural and urban forests, and enable forests to remain as an important component in the ecological processes that sustain the State's valuable natural resources and economy using non-regulatory approaches and voluntary participation.

Benefits: Reduction in state property tax for lands with a forestry plan that is prepared by professional forester. The program is designed to provide technical assistance to landowners to manage their forests for multiple resources. Cost-share assistance is available for landowners to implement forest stewardship practices.

Administered by: IDNR, Division of Forestry

Contact: District Forester

### Land and Water Reserve Registration

Eligible lands: Statewide, Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Endangered/Threatened Species (site suitable habitat), large blocks of wildlife habitat supporting sensitive wildlife, other sites determined by INPC

Program Description: conservation easement held by IDNR and INPC, provides high level of protection for natural areas, archaeological sites, and large blocks of wildlife habitat while permitting some passive recreational uses

Benefits: possible reduction in state property taxes; funds for management/stewardship; 5-year management schedule prepared by IDNR/INPC staff; assistance with defense issues

Administered by: Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

Contact: Angella Moorehouse  
2005 E Highway 136, Suite B

Carthage, IL 62321  
(217) 357-9522  
[angella.moorehouse@illinois.gov](mailto:angella.moorehouse@illinois.gov)

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)

Eligible lands: targets natural areas in Adams and Pike counties, funded through 2010 only

Program Description: to promote creation, restoration and preservation of habitat for “Species of Greatest Need of Conservation” (identified in Illinois Wildlife Action Plan)

Benefits: provides 75% cost-share to landowners to enhance, protect or restore declining habitat to benefit wildlife Species in Greatest Need of Conservation

Administered by: SWCD

Contact: LIP Coordinator

Stan McTaggart  
Sangamon County SWCD  
40 Adloff Lane, Suite 7

Pam Peter  
Adams County SWCD  
338 S. 36<sup>th</sup> Street

Brad Smith  
Pike County SWCD  
1319 W.

Washington

Springfield, IL 62703  
(217) 741-6901  
[stan.mctaggart@illinois.gov](mailto:stan.mctaggart@illinois.gov)  
[brad.smith@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:brad.smith@il.nacdnet.net)

Quincy, IL 62301  
(217) 224-9304 x3  
[acsw@adams.net](mailto:acsw@adams.net)

Pittsfield, IL 62363  
(217) 285-5448 x3

Natural Heritage Landmark Program (non-binding)

Eligible lands: Statewide, privately-owned Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites

Program Description: non-legally binding management agreement between landowner and IDNR/INPC

Benefits: funds for management/stewardship may be available with 10-year commitment from landowner, technical assistance with management/stewardship

Administered by: Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

Contact: Angella Moorehouse  
2005 E Highway 136, Suite B  
Carthage, IL 62321  
(217) 357-9522  
[angella.moorehouse@illinois.gov](mailto:angella.moorehouse@illinois.gov)

Nature Preserve Dedication

Eligible lands: Statewide, Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites, Endangered/Threatened Species (site suitable habitat), other sites determined by INPC

Program Description: conservation easement held by IDNR and INPC, provides state's highest level of protection for high quality natural areas and archaeological sites

Benefits: State property tax reduced to \$1/acre; funds for management/stewardship; 5-year management schedule prepared by IDNR/INPC staff; assistance with defense issues

Administered by: Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

Contact: Angella Moorehouse



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2005 E Highway 136, Suite B  
Carthage, IL 62321  
(217) 357-9522  
[angella.moorehouse@illinois.gov](mailto:angella.moorehouse@illinois.gov)

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Eligible lands: Statewide, targets privately-owned natural areas, migratory bird and E/T species habitat, watersheds

Program Description: non-legally binding management agreement (10 yr) between landowner and FWS restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat on private lands and to restore habitat for migratory birds, T/E species and watershed habitats.

Benefits: offers technical assistance and 75% cost-share for a variety of practices including wetland, prairie and stream restoration, migratory bird habitat, endangered species habitat and invasive species control

Administered by: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Contact: Gwen Kolb  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service / Illinois Ecological Services Office  
1511 47<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Moline, IL 61265  
(309) 793-5800

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE / CRP - CP38)

Eligible lands: Spoon River Watershed (1,500 acres grassland habitat)

Program description: 10-15 year CRP contracts to create preserve, manage grassland bird habitat in targeted area

Benefits: annual rental payments for 10-15 year CRP contract

Administered by: Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Contact: IDNR District Wildlife Biologist

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

Eligible lands: Statewide, agricultural wetlands with specific crop history requirements

Program Description: temporary (30 yr) and permanent easements or non-legally binding restoration agreements to restore and protect privately-owned wetlands

Benefits: possible state property tax reduction for easements, cost-share for restoration and vegetative cover

Administered by: NRCS

Contact: County NRCS office

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Eligible lands: Statewide, [previously non-agricultural private lands were eligible; new changes to Farm Bill require lands to have specific % of agricultural use]

Program Description: Participants work with NRCS to prepare a wildlife habitat development plan in consultation with the local conservation district. Plan may be part of a larger conservation plan that addresses other resource needs such as water quality and soil erosion. The plan describes the participant's goals for improving wildlife habitat,

includes a list of practices and a schedule for installing them, and details the steps necessary to maintain the habitat for the life of the agreement.

Benefits: non-legally binding agreement (5/10yr) to provide cost-share payments and technical assistance for new practices to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Administered by: NRCS

Contact: County NRCS office

Additional References:

Illinois Natural Resources Coordinating Council, 1997. Landowner's guide to natural resources management incentives. 54 p.

McKenzie, D.F. 1997. A wildlife manager's field guide to the Farm Bill. Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C. 44 p.

## Appendix 4: Illinois Threatened and Endangered Species

FEDERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES - species in danger of extinction nationally.

FEDERAL THREATENED SPECIES - species in danger of becoming endangered nationally.

STATE ENDANGERED SPECIES - any species which is in danger or extinction in Illinois.

STATE THREATENED SPECIES - any species which is likely to become a state endangered species within the foreseeable future in Illinois.

WATCH LIST: status unknown, of special concern (indicator species, typically found only in high/moderate quality natural communities)

“Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act prohibits the possession, taking, transportation, sale, offer for sale, or disposal of any listed animals without permit issued by the Dept. of Conservation. Also prohibited are the taking of listed plants without expressed written permission of the landowner and the sale or offer to sell plants or plant products of endangered species.”

Counties designed by italics represent historical sightings (species have not been seen w/n these counties in recent decades)

### ENDANGERED PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

<u>Scientific name</u>	<u>common name</u>	<u>status</u>	<u>counties</u>
<i>Asclepias meadii</i>	Mead's Milkweed	FT/SE	<i>Fu, Ha, He</i>
<i>Asclepias stenophylla</i>	NL Green Milkweed	SE	<i>Ad, Pi</i>
<i>Astragalus distortus</i>	Bent Milk Vetch	SE	<i>Ad, Pi</i>
<i>Bechmannia syzigachne</i>	American Slough Grass	SE	<i>Mc</i>
<i>Calopogon oklahomensis</i>	Oklahoma Grass Pink Orchid	SE	<i>He</i>
<i>Calopogon tuberosus</i>	Grass Pink Orchid	SE	<i>Ha, He</i>
<i>Carex tuckermanii</i>	Tuckerman's Sedge	SE	<i>Ha</i>
<i>Cypripedium reginae</i>	Showy Lady's Slipper	SE	<i>Ha, He, Kn, Mc</i>
<i>Filipendula rubra</i>	Queen-of-the-Prairie	SE	<i>Fu, Mc</i>
<i>Lycopodium dendroideum</i>	Ground Pine	SE	<i>Br, Sc</i>
<i>Microseris cupidata</i>	Prairie Dandelion	SE	<i>Ha, He</i>
<i>Penstemon grandiflorus</i>	LF Beardstongue	SE	<i>He</i>
<i>Plantago cordata</i>	Heart-ldv Plantain	SE	<i>Ha</i>
<i>Poa wolfii</i>	Wolf's Bluegrass	SE	<i>Ad, Br, Fu, He, Pi</i>
<i>Polygala incarnata</i>	Pink Milkwort	SE	<i>Fu, Ha, He, Sc</i>
<i>Scirpus purshianus</i>	Weak Bulrush	SE	<i>Ha</i>
<i>Sparganium americanum</i>	American Bulreed	SE	<i>Kn</i>
<i>Spiranthes lucida</i>	Yellow-lip Lady's Tresses'	SE	<i>Ha</i>
<i>Stenanthium gramineum</i>	Grass-leaved Lily	SE	<i>Pi</i>
<i>Stylisma pickeringii</i>	Patterson's Bindweed	SE	<i>He</i>

<i>Thelypteris phegopteris</i>	Long Beech Fern	SE	He, Mc
<i>Trifolium reflexum</i>	Buffalo Clover	SE	Ad, Fu, Ha, Sc
<i>Trillium viride</i>	Green Trillium	SE	Ad, Pi
<i>Ulmus thomasii</i>	Rock Elm	SE	Ad, Ha

THREATENED PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

<u>scientific name</u>	<u>common name</u>	<u>status</u>	<u>county</u>
<i>Agalinis skinneriana</i>	Pale False Foxglove	ST	Ha, He, Pi
<i>Aster furcatus</i>	Forked Aster	ST	Fu, Ha, He
<i>Besseya bullii</i>	Kittentails	ST	He, Pi
<i>Boltonia decurrens</i>	Decurrent False Aster	FT/ST	Br, Fu, Sc
<i>Carex communis</i>	Fibrous-rooted Sedge	ST	Ad, Sc
<i>Carex intumescens</i>	Swollen Sedge	ST	Ad
<i>Carex prasina</i>	Drooping Sedge	ST	Ad, Br, Ha, Sc
<i>Cypripedium candidum</i>	White Lady's Slipper	ST	Ha, He
<i>Liatris scariosa</i> var. <i>nieuwlandii</i>	Savanna Blazingstar	ST	Ad, Br, Ha,
Sc, Pi			
<i>Melanthium virginicum</i>	Bunchflower	ST	Ha, Mc, Wa
<i>Plananthera leucophaea</i>	E Pr White Fringed Orchid	FT/ST	Ad, Ha, He, Mc, Fu, Kn
<i>Scirpus polyphyllus</i>	Leafy Bulrush	ST	Ha, Ad, Br
<i>Tomanthera auriculata</i>	Ear-leaved Foxglove	ST	Ad, Ha
<i>Tradescantia bracteata</i>	Prairie Spiderwort	ST	Ad, Ha, Mc, Pi
<i>Veronica scutellata</i>	Marsh Speedwell	ST	Fu
<i>Viburnum molle</i>	Downy Arrowwood	ST	Ad, Br, Pi

WATCH LIST AND RARE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

<u>scientific name</u>	<u>common name</u>
<i>Angelica atropurpurea</i>	Great Angelica
<i>Aplectrum hyemale</i>	Puttyroot Orchid
<i>Aster schreberi</i>	Smooth Forked Aster
<i>Aster umbellatus</i>	Flat-top Aster
<i>Buchnera americana</i>	Blue Hearts
<i>Cacalia tuberosa</i>	Tuberose Indian Plantain
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh Marigold
<i>Castilleja coccinea</i>	Indian Paintbrush
<i>Chelone glabra</i>	White Turtlehead
<i>Cirsium hillii</i>	Hill's Thistle
<i>Corydalis curvisiliqua</i> var. <i>grandibracteata</i>	Large-bracted Corydalis
<i>Delphinium carolinianum</i>	Prairie Larkspur
<i>Dicentra canadensis</i>	Squirrel Corn
<i>Dodecatheon amethystinum</i>	Jeweled Shooting Star
<i>Epilobium angustifolium</i>	Fireweed
<i>Erythronium americanum</i>	Yellow Trout Lily
<i>Erythronium mesochoreum</i>	Prairie Trout Lily
<i>Hydrastis canadensis</i>	Goldenseal
<i>Mentzelia oligosperma</i>	Stickleaf
<i>Mitella diphylla</i>	Miterwort



**STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN**

<i>Orchis spectabilis</i>	<i>Showy Orchis</i>
<i>Panax quinquefolia</i>	<i>Ginseng</i>
<i>Pedicularis canadensis</i>	<i>Wood Betony</i>
<i>Pontederia cordata</i>	<i>Pickerelweed</i>
<i>Rhexia virginica</i>	<i>Meadow Beauty</i>
<i>Sabatia angulatus</i>	<i>Rose Pink</i>
<i>Saxifraga pensylvanica</i>	<i>Swamp Saxifrage</i>
<i>Smilacina stellata</i>	<i>Starry False Solomon's Seal</i>
<i>Sparganium eurycarpum</i>	<i>Giant Bur-reed</i>
<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i>	<i>Skunk Cabbage</i>
<i>Trillium nivale</i>	<i>Snow Trillium</i>
<i>Veratrum woodii</i>	<i>False Hellebore</i>

**ENDANGERED ANIMAL SPECIES FOUND IN WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS**

<u>scientific name</u>	<u>common name</u>	<u>status</u>	<u>counties</u>
<i>Cumberlandia monodonta</i>	Spectaclecase Mussel	SE	Ad, Ha, He, Pi
<i>Epioblasma triquetra</i>	Snuffbox Mussel	SE	Fu
<i>Lampsilis higginsii</i>	Higgin's Eye Mussel	FE/SE	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Pi
<i>Plethobasus cyphus</i>	Sheepnose Mussel	SE	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Pi
<i>Potamilus capax</i>	Fat Pocketbook	FE/SE	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Pi
<i>Caecidotea lesliei</i>	Isopod	SE	Mc
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern Harrier	SE	Kn, Pi
<i>Crangonyx packardi</i>	Packard's Cave Amphipod	SE	Pi
<i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>	Lake Sturgeon	SE	Ad, Ha, He
<i>Ammocrypta clarum</i>	Western Sand Darter	SE	Pi
<i>Hybopsis amnis</i>	Pallid Shiner	SE	He
<i>Notropis heterolepis</i>	Blacknose Shiner	SE	Fu, Wa
<i>Notropis texanus</i>	Weed Shiner	SE	He
<i>Kinosternon flavescens</i>	Illinois Mud Turtle	SE	Ha, He
<i>Macrochelys temminckii</i>	Alligator Snapping Turtle	SE	Ad
<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>	Eastern Massasauga	SE	Ad, Kn, Wa
<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	Upland Sandpiper	SE	Ad, Ha, Fu, Kn, Mc
<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern	SE	Br, Fu
<i>Egretta thula</i>	Snowy Egret	SE	Pi
<i>Ictinia mississippiensis</i>	Mississippi Kite	SE	Ad, Pi
<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>	Black Rail	SE	Ad, Br
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Black-crowned Night-Heron	SE	Fu, Pi
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	SE	Ad
<i>Rallus elegans</i>	King Rail	SE	Fu
<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	Bewick's Wren	SE	Ad, Br
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	SE	Pi
<i>Myotis grisescens</i>	Gray Bat	FE/SE	Ad, Pi
<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Indiana Bat	FE/SE	Ad, Fu, He, Mc, Pi, Sc

**THREATENED ANIMAL SPECIES FOUND IN WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS**

<u>scientific name</u>	<u>common name</u>	<u>status</u>	<u>counties</u>
<i>Alasmidonta viridis</i>	Slippershell Mussel	ST	Fu
<i>Cyclonaias tuberculata</i>	Purple Wartyback Mussel	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, Pi
<i>Ellipsarian lineolata</i>	Butterfly Mussel	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Pi
<i>Elliptio crassidens</i>	Elephant-Ear Mussel	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Pi
<i>Elliptio dilatata</i>	Spike Mussel	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Kn, Pi
<i>Fusconaia ebena</i>	Ebonysell	ST	Ad, Br, Fu, Ha, He, Pi
<i>Ligumia recta</i>	Black Sandshell	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Kn, Pi
<i>Hesperia metea</i>	Cobweb Skipper	ST	Pi
<i>Speyeria idalia</i>	Regal Fritillary	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Mc, Pi
<i>Erimystax x-punctatus</i>	Gravel Chub	ST	Fu
<i>Fundulus dispar</i>	Starhead Minnow	ST	Fu
<i>Lepomis miniatus</i>	Redspotted Sunfish	ST	Ha
<i>Clonophis kirtlandi</i>	Kirtland's Snake	ST	Ad, Fu, Mc, Sc
<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	Timber Rattlesnake	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, Mc, Pi
<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Blanding's Turtle	ST	He
<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>	Four-toed Salamander	ST	Kn, Mc
<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>	Western Hognose Snake	ST	He
<i>Tropidoclonion lineatum</i>	Lined Snake	ST	Mc
<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	Henslow's Sparrow	ST	Ad, Br, Fu, Kn, Mc, Pi
<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>	Cerulean Warbler	ST	Ad, Mc, Pi
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	FT/ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, He, Pi, Sc
<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Loggerhead Shrike	ST	Ad, Ha, Fu, Kn, Mc, Pi, Sc
<i>Spermophilus franklinii</i>	Franklin's Ground Squirrel	ST	Ad, Fu, Ha, Kn, Mc, Pi

WATCH LIST ANIMAL SPECIES FOUND IN WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS  
(see Illinois Wildlife Action Plan "Species of Greatest Conservation Concern")



## Appendix 5: Funding Sources for Land Protection

### [Acquisition and Stewardship]

State and Federal Government Landowner Incentive Programs (annual rental payments, cost-share for restoration/management) – Appendix 3

State Wildlife Grant            [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us)

Conservation 2000            [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us)

Natural Areas Acquisition (Stewardship Fund)   [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us)

Acquisition by a Government Agency or Non-profit 501(c) (3) Organization

Grand Victoria Foundation            [www.grandvictoriafdn.org](http://www.grandvictoriafdn.org)

Doris Duke Foundation            [www.ddcf.org](http://www.ddcf.org)

Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation   [www.illinoiscleanenergy.org](http://www.illinoiscleanenergy.org)

EPA 319 Non-Point Source Pollution Grant            [www.epa.stat.il.us](http://www.epa.stat.il.us)

## Appendix 6: Feasibility Checklist

### Feasibility Checklist

- Easement meets the IRS standards (natural habitat for fish, wildlife and plants, open space, outdoor recreation, historical sites) as well as the S&Ps for land trusts.
- Land fits the PLC mission, goals and priorities.
- Property does not contain any encumbrances, hazardous wastes, pre-existing easements or restrictions, potential environmental/ecological threats, or other circumstances that would seriously impinge upon PLC's abilities to own the land or hold a conservation easement and/or manage the natural resources on that land.
- Resources (financial, technical, man-power) are available to maintain the natural communities or features of the land based on its assessed needs (also considering the needs/wishes of the landowner donating the easement/land).
- PLC personnel must have access to the site to conduct required monitoring and to implement stewardship as needed.
- If the land is not located within the 10-county PLC service area, there must be sufficient justification for PLC to pursue a land protection option.

## Appendix 7: Ranking Criteria

Ranking Criteria (used to determine eligibility and priorities)

- 1) Promotes the PLC mission and one or more of the goals.
- 2) Meets criteria for a natural area.
- 3) Offers protection for an irreplaceable land such as a unique high quality community (seep, glade, hill prairie). See appendix 3.
- 4) Habitat for endangered/threatened or rare species.
- 5) Habitat for multiple “Species of Greatest Conservation Concern” as defined by the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan.
- 6) Protects working lands from fragmentation, creating affordable agriculture for future generations.
- 7) Offers PLC the opportunity to partner with another organization or government agencies to help meet their goals of protecting land in ecologically high priority areas; lands included in local, regional or state conservation plans: IDNR/INPC - Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) Site, Conservation Opportunity Area (Siloam Springs, Lower La Moine River, Middle Illinois River, Upper Mississippi River, Hill Prairie Corridor), Ecosystem Partnerships (watershed plans for La Moine River, Spoon River, Mississippi Western Five area), NRCS/SWCD (pilot watershed program, additional priority areas such as Greater Bear Creek and Spring Lake), TNC/DU – Illinois and Mississippi River floodplain areas, and lands owned by DNR, FWS, TNC, IAS, Park Districts, and other conservation NGOs, lands protected with permanent conservation easements (INPC sites, etc.). See appendix 1.
- 8) Allows PLC to protect a representative of each unique type of natural community found in the 10-county area (similar to IDNR Gap list: prairie, glade, savanna, barrens, open woodland, upland forest, bottomland forest, stream, sedge meadow, seep, marsh, shrub swamp, lake/pond, cliff, cave, etc.).
- 9) Protects a large tract of land supporting signature species, biological diversity, or with good sustainable restoration potential.
- 10) Provides a buffer for a natural area, wetland or stream, or from urban sprawl; or a wildlife corridor joining at least 2 habitat blocks.
- 11) Enhances outdoor educational and recreational opportunities for the community.
- 12) Promotes sustainable land use; i.e. reduces sedimentation and pollution entering streams, other wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas.
- 13) Offers opportunities to leverage other resources (including human, financial, agency, NGOs).

## Appendix 8: General Procedures for Landowner Contact

- 1) Provide information packets on PLC conservation easements and land protection options to interested/qualifying landowners from specific requests. (See Step by Step Procedure for Conservation Easements)
- 2) Collect information on landowner and site (see Preliminary Site Evaluation form)
- 3) Review Feasibility Checklist to make sure land meets minimal requirements for conservation easement or other protection options.
- 4) Review Ranking Criteria to determine amount of attention this potential project should receive as compared with other on-going and potential projects.
- 5) Schedule site visit with landowner; explain ecological significance of their land and protection options offered by PLC.
- 6) Complete Preliminary Site Evaluation form with map and hazard/threats report.
- 7) Provide information to landowner (list of species seen, notable ecological resources, and additional information on PLC programs) as warranted.
- 8) Follow Step by Step Procedures for conservation easement.
- 9) Pursue mutually agreeable stewardship and protection activities. Assess owner's attitudes towards protection and stewardship; determine which protection and stewardship options are suitable; pursue suitable stewardship and protection that meets owner's needs and desires for land.

## Appendix 9: Guidelines for Landowner Contact

### Basic Principles

- make a good first impression
- have a professional and respectful appearance
- do not make any early promises that may need to be retracted later
- don't make assumptions about the landowners (collect information)
- be careful not to judge the landowner's intentions/attitudes for the land especially when they may not match with the goals of PLC (they may change in time).
- be an advocate for the land while greatly respecting the landowner's rights
- be flexible
- be an active listener
- share information about the land with the landowner
- provide species lists of plants, birds, other species whenever possible
- respect the landowner's right to make decisions about their land.
- be accessible, keep in touch, and be truthful
- don't apply undue pressure

## Appendix 10: Step by Step Procedures for Conservation Easements

### **Stage 1: Obtaining Information**

Step 1: The landowner contacts PLC and requests information packet on conservation easements and land protection options offered by PLC.

Step 2: The landowner requests a preliminary site evaluation by PLC to determine whether the land will likely meet the eligibility requirements and priorities for a PLC conservation easement.

Step 3: The landowner and PLC representative schedule a meeting to conduct the preliminary site evaluation and to clarify issues and questions regarding a conservation easement.

Step 4: The PLC representative visits with the landowner's family, including all heirs, if possible, attorney, tax advisor, estate planner, financial advisor, etc. on discuss conservation easement obligations and benefits.

Step 5: The landowner notifies PLC, in writing, of desire to donate a conservation easement. NOTE – landowners with priority lands who are not able to commit to a conservation easement may be asked to consider entering into the PLC's Registry Program at this time.

Step 6: The landowner obtains concurrence of PLC regarding their willingness to pursue conservation easement negotiations.

### **Stage 2: Information Collection and Site Evaluation**

Step 7: PLC representative completes baseline inventory of resources on the easement property and prepares a report on the conservation values of the land.

Step 8: It is recommended that the landowner obtain a qualified appraiser and appraisal report, at their own expense, to determine the value of the land prior for tax purposes.

Step 9: The landowner provides a written statement to PLC indicating intent to voluntarily contribute to the Stewardship Endowment and the method and timing of the donation.

Step 10: The landowner will need to provide PLC with a valid legal description, or the means to write a valid legal description from the property deed, of the land to be protected in the conservation easement. If this cannot be readily provided the



landowner will need to hire a survey to identify the land unit boundaries and prepare a legal description for the easement.

Step 11: The landowner needs to provide PLC with a title report and obtain title insurance if needed and/or desired.

Step 12: The landowner obtains statements relating to probability of surface mining if mineral rights have been previously separated from the ownership of the land and provide to PLC.

Step 13: The landowner provides PLC with all pre-existing easements or encumbrances to the land as well as any mortgage or other subordination agreements as needed and provide to PLC.

Step 14: PLC makes a determination as to their willingness to accept the easement based on whether the resources on the property, pre-existing easements as well as restrictions offered by the landowner, value of Stewardship Endowment versus estimate long-term costs for maintaining easement fit the goals and mission statement of PLC.

### **Stage 3: Preparing Conservation Easement and Related Items**

Step15: PLC representative prepares the conservation easement document in consultation with the landowner and including all application restrictions and special conditions to be reviewed by the PLC attorney. A copy will be provided to the landowner for review by their attorney.

Step16: PLC prepares the conservation easement document in consultation with the landowner. This document must be reviewed by the landowner. The easement document language and restrictions must be reviewed and determined to be legally accurate by the PLC lawyer.

### **Stage 4: Finalizing Easement, Baseline Inventory, and Monitoring**

Step 17: The easement document is signed and notarized by the landowner as well as PLC officially recorded. Copies of the document are distributed to parties involved.

Step 18: The landowner contributes to the Stewardship Endowment Fund as planned.

Step 19: PLC provide to landowner sign(s) to place on property for easement notification.

Step 20: Landowner obtains signatures from PLC on IRS forms as needed for income taxes.

Step 21: PLC monitors easement annually and prepare report for records.



## Appendix 11: Preliminary Site Evaluation Form

Preliminary Site Evaluation Form (information can be gather on phone or in person)

Landowner Contact Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Site Visit \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Acreage: \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to be reached \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage considered for protection: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of property (County, Township, Range, Section):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Directions/Access to property (provide map for file): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How long has landowner owned this property: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the landowner's intentions for the property: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does the landowner want for the long-term future of the land: \_\_\_\_\_





Known past land uses: \_\_\_\_\_

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Was site grazed, how long ago, for how long: \_\_\_\_\_

Was timber harvested, how long ago: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated acreage for each community type (forest, grassland, cropland, wetlands/ponds, prairie restoration, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

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Cooperation / Concerns with neighboring landowners: \_\_\_\_\_

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How did landowner hear about PLC: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation completed by: (phone interview) \_\_\_\_\_

(Site visit): \_\_\_\_\_

*Recommend site visit to check answers given to questions above. Site visit should be conducted with landowner if possible. Use map to mark specific features (buildings, water features, roads, access, trails, etc.). Walk through various community types and record plants and animals observed. Look for potential hazards, ecological threats, and land uses which may not be compatible with PLC goals. Provide completed form, map, and potential hazard/threats report and species list for PLC evaluation.*

## Appendix 12: Content of a Conservation Easement

- Parties - Grantor (landowner) and Grantee (easement holder)
- Date of Conveyance
- Recitals ("Whereas" clauses)
  - Tide representation
  - Conservation values of property
  - Legal descriptions
  - Documentation of "pre-easement" conditions of property
  - Continuation of existing uses
  - Conveyance of rights to protect conservation values to grantee
  - Qualifications of grantee to hold easement
- Grant (transfer of property interest)
  - Consideration: nominal amount or gift language
  - Citation of statutory authority
  - Duration: perpetual
- Provisions
  - Purpose
  - Rights of Grantee
  - Prohibited uses
  - Reserved rights
  - Conservation practices
  - Notice and approval
  - Grantee's remedies
  - Access
  - Costs, liabilities, taxes, and environmental compliance
  - Extinguishments and condemnation
  - Assignment
  - Subsequent transfers
  - Estoppel certificates
  - Notices
  - Recordation

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Appendix 13: Conflict of Interest Policy

**Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.**

**Council Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form**

In their capacity as members of the Council of Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. Council (PHRCD) must act at all times in the best interests of PHRCD. The purpose of this policy is to help inform the Council about what constitutes a conflict of interest, assist the Council in identifying and disclosing actual and potential conflicts, and help ensure the avoidance of conflicts of interest where necessary. This policy may be enforced against individual Council members as described below.

1. Council members have a fiduciary duty to conduct themselves without conflict to the interests of PHRCD. In their capacity as Council members, they must subordinate personal, individual business, third party, and other interests to the welfare and best interests of PHRCD.
2. A conflict of interest is a transaction or relationship which presents or may present a conflict between a Council member's obligations to PHRCD and the Council member's personal, business or other interests.
3. All conflicts of interest are not necessarily prohibited or harmful to PHRCD. However, full disclosure of all actual and potential conflicts and a determination by the disinterested Council (or PHRCD Executive Board) members – with the interested Council member recused from participating in debates and voting on the matter – are required.
4. All actual and potential conflicts of interest shall be disclosed by Council members to the PHRCD Executive Board through the annual disclosure form and/or whenever a conflict arises. The disinterested members of the PHRCD executive committee shall make determination as to whether a conflict exists and what subsequent action is appropriate (if any). The PHRCD Executive Board shall inform the Council of such a determination and action. The Executive Board shall remain the ultimate enforcement authority with respect to the interpretation and application of this policy.
5. On an annual basis, all Council members shall be provided with a copy of this policy and required to complete and sign the acknowledgement and disclosure form below. All completed forms shall be provided to and reviewed by the PHRCD Executive Board, as well as all other conflict information provided by Council members.

**Adopted December 12, 2008 by the Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development Inc., Executive Board of Directors**

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**Richard Winbigler, President**

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**Jere Greuel, Secretary**



**PRAIRIE HILLS RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INC.  
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

I have read the PHRCD Council Conflict of Interest Policy set forth above and agree to comply fully with its terms and conditions at all times during my service as a PHRCD Council member. If at any time following the submission of this form I become aware of any actual or potential conflicts of interest, or if the information provided below becomes inaccurate or incomplete, I will promptly notify the PHRCD President and/or Executive Director in writing.

**Disclosure of Actual or Potential Conflicts of Interest:**

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**Council Member**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Council Member Printed**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 14: Ethics Policy

### **PRAIRIE HILLS RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INC**

### **PRAIRIE LAND CONSERVANCY**

### **ETHICS POLICY**

#### **FULFILLING BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

Because directors do not actually manage the nonprofit organization, nonprofit statutes grant the boards of directors the authority to create committees and appoint officers, and to assign a broad range of duties and functions to both. The *Revised Model Nonprofit Corporation Act (RMNCA)* sets national standards for state law to copy, and explicitly states that corporate affairs are managed under board authority. In addition to the authority to delegate, boards also rely on outside experts to develop and evaluate information as the basis for board (or committee) decision-making. The board may also delegate and rely on the expertise of organization staff. A primary goal of the board is creating and maintaining a system that assures the regular flow of accurate, timely and complete information necessary for the board to fulfil its responsibilities on an informed basis.

#### **HOW THE LAW EXPECTS BOARD MEMBERS TO ACT**

The law recognizes three duties of board members to the organizations they serve: the duties of care, loyalty, and obedience.

***DUTY OF CARE:*** The duty of care concerns the competence of the member to act in a way that an ordinarily prudent person would act in a like position and under similar circumstances. The duty of care does not require any special abilities of the board member.

***DUTY OF LOYALTY:*** The duty of loyalty requires the board member to faithfully pursue the interests of the organization instead of self-interest or the interests of another person or organization.

***DUTY OF OBEDIENCE:*** The duty of obedience requires the board member to act lawfully to further the purpose of the organization as expressed in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

#### **WHAT DUTY OF CARE MEANS**

The RMNCA duty of care provision states:

#### **Section 8.30 GENERAL STANDARDS FOR DIRECTORS**

(a) A director shall discharge his or her duties as a director, including his or her duties as a member of a committee:

- (1) In good faith:
- (2) With the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances; and
- (3) In a manner the director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the corporation

*GOOD FAITH* Directors must act in good faith. Good faith means the same in common language: honesty of intention, openness and fair dealing. Board member behavior, which is taken to indicate good faith, includes:

- ◆ attending meetings regularly
- ◆ keeping well informed about the issues
- ◆ keeping informed about the operations of the organization
- ◆ recording the actions of the board or committee ensuring that the legal requirements are met adopting sound policies and procedures

*BEST INTERESTS*: Directors must act, not in their personal interests or even in the interests of others, but in the interest of the organization they are serving.

*ORDINARILY PRUDENT PERSON*: Directors are expected to possess and exercise sound, practical judgement, to employ common sense, and to reach sound, informed conclusions.

*CARE*: The concept of care requires directors to be diligent and attentive. Diligent means interested in the organization's activities as evidenced by attending meetings, reading pertinent materials, and being involved with its activities. Attentive means evaluating such areas as potential problems, their magnitude, the general situation of the organization at the time, and the extent to which the member relied upon staff, committees and experts.

A board member is entitled to rely on information, opinions, reports, or statements provided by staff who the director believes to be reliable and competent in the matter, technical expertise such as legal counsel or accountants, and committees set up by the board.

The nonprofit organization is covered by the *BUSINESS JUDGEMENT RULE*. The business Judgement rule is a legal doctrine, which means that decisions by boards about business affairs are presumed correct and business functions best when those decisions remain inviolable except in cases of intentional misconduct. The business judgement rule is intended to protect honest, informed business judgements in order to allow risk-taking, innovation, and other creative entrepreneurial activities that are at the hear of business. The



business judgement rule protects the board members from liability so long as they observe the duties of care, loyalty and obedience.

**WHAT THE DUTY OF LOYALTY MEANS**

The basic duty of loyalty requires a board member to have an undivided allegiance to the organization's mission when using either the power of his position or information he possesses concerning the organization or its property. The duty of loyalty prevents a board member from acting in a way that benefits himself, another person or another organization. A board member must always avoid an appearance or actual conflict of interest in making decisions. A board member must always avoid self-dealing. Loans to directors are specifically banned.

**WHAT THE DUTY OF OBEDIENCE MEANS**

Nonprofits are organized to achieve some purpose, serve a specific constituency, to advocate for a cause, and other charitable purposes. For nonprofit organizations, the means and the mission are inseparable. A director is charged with carrying out the purposes of the organization, as expressed in the legal documents creating and defining its mission. Board members may not deviate in any substantial way from the duty to fulfill the specific purposes for which an organization was created. The duty of obedience also imposes on all board members an obligation to act in conformity with all laws generally affecting the organization. This obligation means that the organization must conduct its activities lawfully.

This Ethics Policy also recognizes and incorporates Prairie Hills "Conflict of Interest Policy" for Council Members and committees.

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Richard Winbigler, President

Attested by: \_\_\_\_\_

Jere Greuel, Secretary