This user’s guide provides a brief overview of the features of the I-View web app. For a more detailed explanation, see the instructional video on the PSCC I-View webpage.

(http://www.prairiestateconservation.org/pscc/iview/)
Thanks. So, What is This Thing?

I-View is, at its heart, a tool to view and analyze the protected natural areas and municipal parks found within Illinois. Natural areas are defined as lands and waters that 1) contain primarily native or restored ecosystems or are potentially restorable to primarily native ecosystems, 2) have as their primary purpose the preservation or restoration of native ecosystems, and 3) are protected in perpetuity. I-View includes all protected natural areas (fee-owned, managed, or under easement) that are held by public or private organizations. This includes, for example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, County Forest Preserve & Conservation Districts, and nonprofit conservation land trusts and nature centers. It also includes all Illinois Nature Preserves and Land & Water Reserves registered with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. Finally, I-View includes the majority of municipal park properties (whether or not they are natural areas), including all members of the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

There are two caveated omissions:

1) I-View, at the request of the division responsible, does not include easements created and held under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

2) I-View records of Natural Resource Conservation Service-held easements, which were provided by the Service, are incomplete.

All other protected natural areas in the state are or should be incorporated into the database, which is updated regularly (if you choose to work with the data offline, remember to re-download it before beginning a new project to ensure that you aren’t missing any relevant, newly protected properties!).

The PSCC Board requested that for conservation easements we keep the name of the landowner as a protected field that can only be accessed upon permission by the organization holding the conservation easement. To preserve landowner privacy, easements named after the landowner have often had their Site Name changed to “<organization holding the easement> Easement” or to an alpha-numeric code, as chosen by the private sector organization owning the property or holding the easement.

If you spot something missing, in error, or in need of updating, let us know. If you have a suggestion for additional data layers to add, again, let us know. Contact us at iview@prairiestateconservation.org.
OK. Now How Do I Use This Thing?

Upon opening I-View, you’ll see a page similar to the screenshot on the first page of this guide. It’s from here that you can navigate to any particular area of the state or conduct basic analyses. Clicking on any polygon will generate a popup window with details including the site’s name, its owner/manager, what type of protection it enjoys, its acreage, and a variety of other data points. If two or more sites overlap, all will be selected and you can view the information about each by using the forward and backward arrows found at the top of the popup.

The rest of this guide will be devoted to briefly exploring each of the features found in the I-View app:

1 – Search Bar

The search bar can be used to zoom to either an address or a specific protected property. You can limit your search to one or the other by using the dropdown menu along the left-hand side of the bar.

2 – Zoom

The zoom buttons enable the user to, as the name suggests, change the scale of the map. This one is pretty cut and dry!

3 – Default Extent

The default extent button returns the map to its original position and scale encompassing the entirety of the state.

4 – Geolocation

The geolocation button is usable exclusively on mobile or other devices equipped with GPS services. Clicking on this will zoom the map to your present location (or at least to within a few dozen feet), making it easier to identify properties in the field and to place yourself within the larger context of a site.

5 – Current Location

This provides the latitude and longitude (in decimal degrees) of wherever the cursor is placed. Clicking on the compass symbol to the left of the numbers activates a feature that enables the user to select any point on the map to obtain the geographic coordinates, with the site then marked and the coordinates held static until the compass signal is depressed a second time.

6 – Basemap Gallery

The base layers button opens a gallery of twelve different base maps that can be applied as desired, ranging from aerial photography, to street maps, to topographic overlays.

The aerial photography base map is created from a mosaic of different images. ESRI, the company which provides the service, maintains a [web map] that you can use to determine the source and date of any
particular aerial photo used in the mosaic. By zooming in and then clicking on a point, you’ll be provided with a popup containing both pieces of information. It’s important to note that the popup provides information on only the ‘best’ imagery available at the site. This usually means the image that you get when you zoom in pretty closely.

7 – Regional Map

The eye button located in the upper right-hand corner of the screen opens a smaller map that shows the current map extent in a wider context. This can be particularly useful if the goal is to explain a site to an audience with little familiarity of its specific details.

8 – Measurement & Location Tools

Clicking on this button opens a popup with three broad functions, enabling the user to measure a site’s area, the distance between two points, or determine a point’s latitude and longitude in greater detail than is provided for in the “Current Location” feature on the main page of the app.

9 – Layers

This provides the list of layers that can be applied to the map. A user can deactivate any or all of the existing protected lands layers, and can activate subsets of the data and/or additional layers covering both environmental and political data, such as Illinois Department of Natural Resources’ Conservation Opportunity Areas, regional trails and bikeways, Illinois Natural Areas Inventory sites, and federal & state electoral districts.

10 – Legend

The legend button displays information on all layers that are currently turned on, detailing the layer name, what it’s displaying, and how it appears on the map.

11 – Save & Print Maps

This feature enables the current extent to be saved as a map in any of over half a dozen different formats, and incorporates a map title, legend, scale bar, and other associated information.

12 – Draw

The draw tool lets the user draw lines or polygons and insert text onto the map. The tool provides the user with full control over color, shape, fill, and transparency.

13 – Filter

The filter is a powerful feature that permits a user to find specific properties or the properties owned or managed by specific organizations. It also allows the user to create temporary layers that include only those records that overlay other geographic features (for example, all Illinois DNR properties lying within the 8th U.S. Congressional District) and to export the tabular information of selected protected lands properties to a spreadsheet for further analysis.
14 – Attribute Table

The attribute table button, as the name suggests, opens a table containing the tabular attributes of all of the protected lands properties. This feature provides a more granular filtering option, enabling users to create filtered layers that meet certain criteria (for example, all properties greater than 100 acres in size owned by the McHenry County Conservation District) and, again, to export that information to a spreadsheet.

15 – Download Data

The protected lands database of 10,000+ properties is always available as a web layer through ArcGIS Online, and is also available for download in either Geodatabase or Google Earth KML format by clicking on this link.

The data is updated regularly and the date of the most recent update can be found in the Geodatabase metadata. If using the offline data, then, as I wrote above, it’s recommended that you re-download the database prior to beginning a new project to ensure that you’re not missing newly protected properties relevant to your endeavor; you don’t want to get halfway through a project only to learn that the landscape changed when you weren’t looking!

Contact us with any questions or suggestions (OK, even complaints)

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