

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES

NATALIE PHELPS FINNIE
JOHN ROGNER
TODD STROLE
ANN MARIE HOLTROP



**NATALIE
PHELPS
FINNIE**

Illinois Department of
Natural Resources





AGENCY PRIORITIES

- Conservation Mission
- State Parks and Historic Sites
- Communication and Partnerships
- 60th Anniversary of Nature Preserves System
- Open Space for Everyone



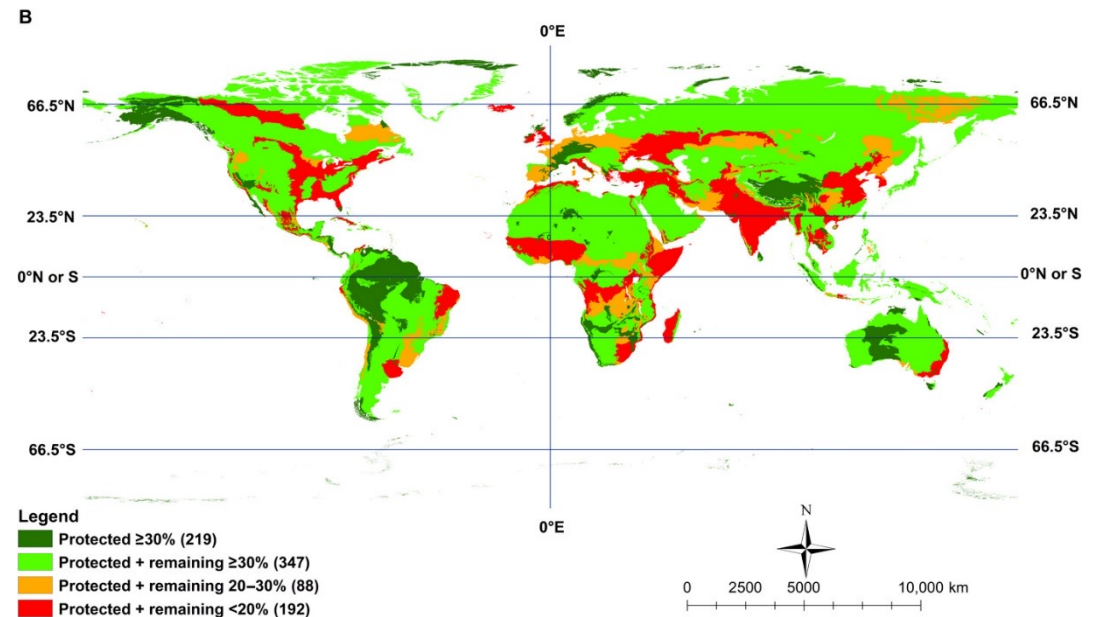
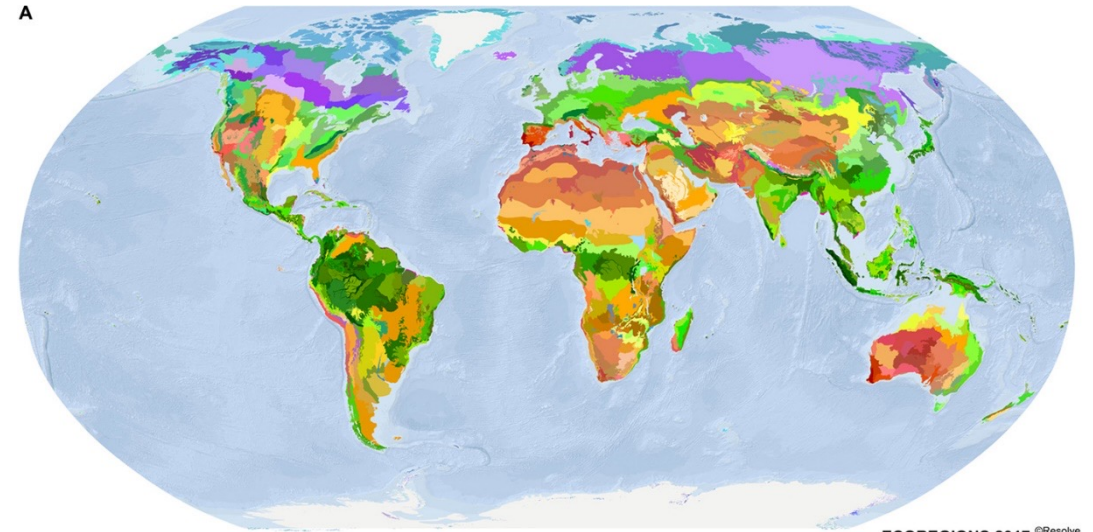
“Everyone Belongs
in
Nature”



**JOHN ROGNER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
IL DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

GLOBAL DEAL

- Scientists and Environmental Leaders call for “Global Deal for Nature”
- Protect half of the world’s lands and Seas (Science Advances, 2019)



30 BY 30

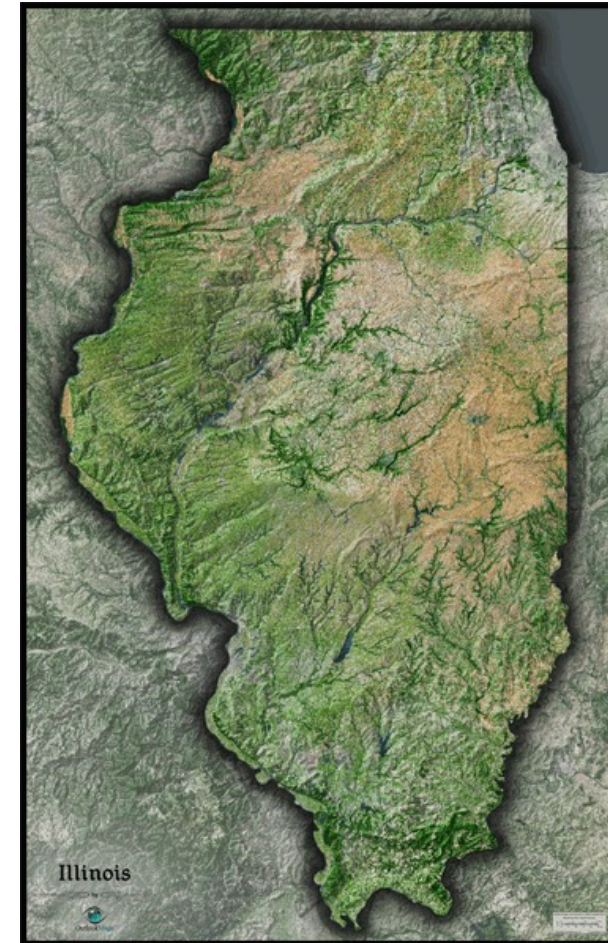
- Conserving 30% of land and water by 2030
- Umbrella strategy to address habitat/biodiversity loss and climate change



Humanity is waging a war on nature. This is suicidal. Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century. It must be the top, top priority of everyone, everywhere.

~ UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, December 2020

APPLYING CONCEPT SUB-GLOBALLY



ILLINOIS BY THE NUMBERS

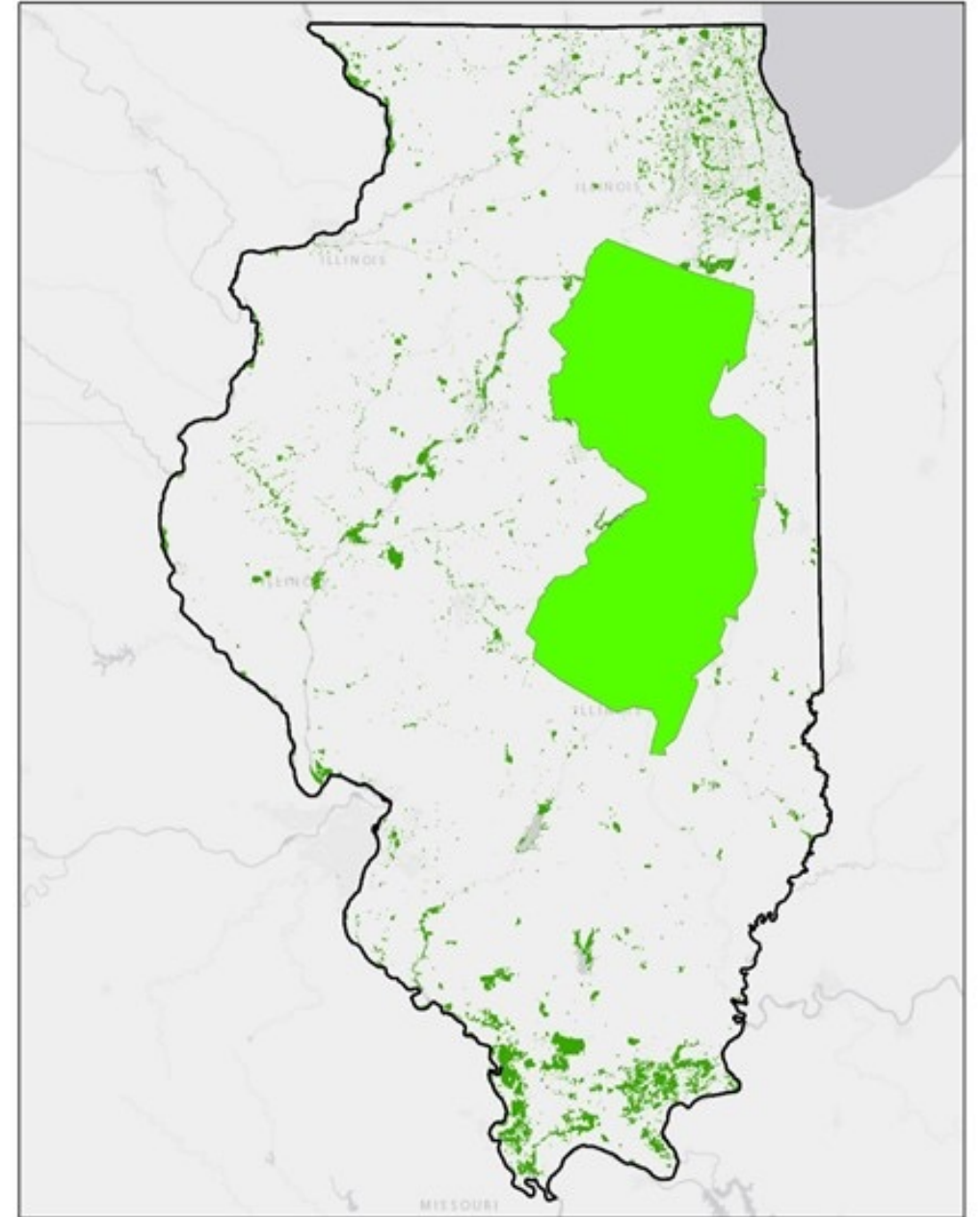
- 36.3 M acres of land and water in IL
- 27 M acres in agriculture (75%)
- 1.5 M acres of public/private protected natural land (4.2%)



Last five years: Protected 27,091 acres (0.07%) of natural land or agricultural land that may one day be restored

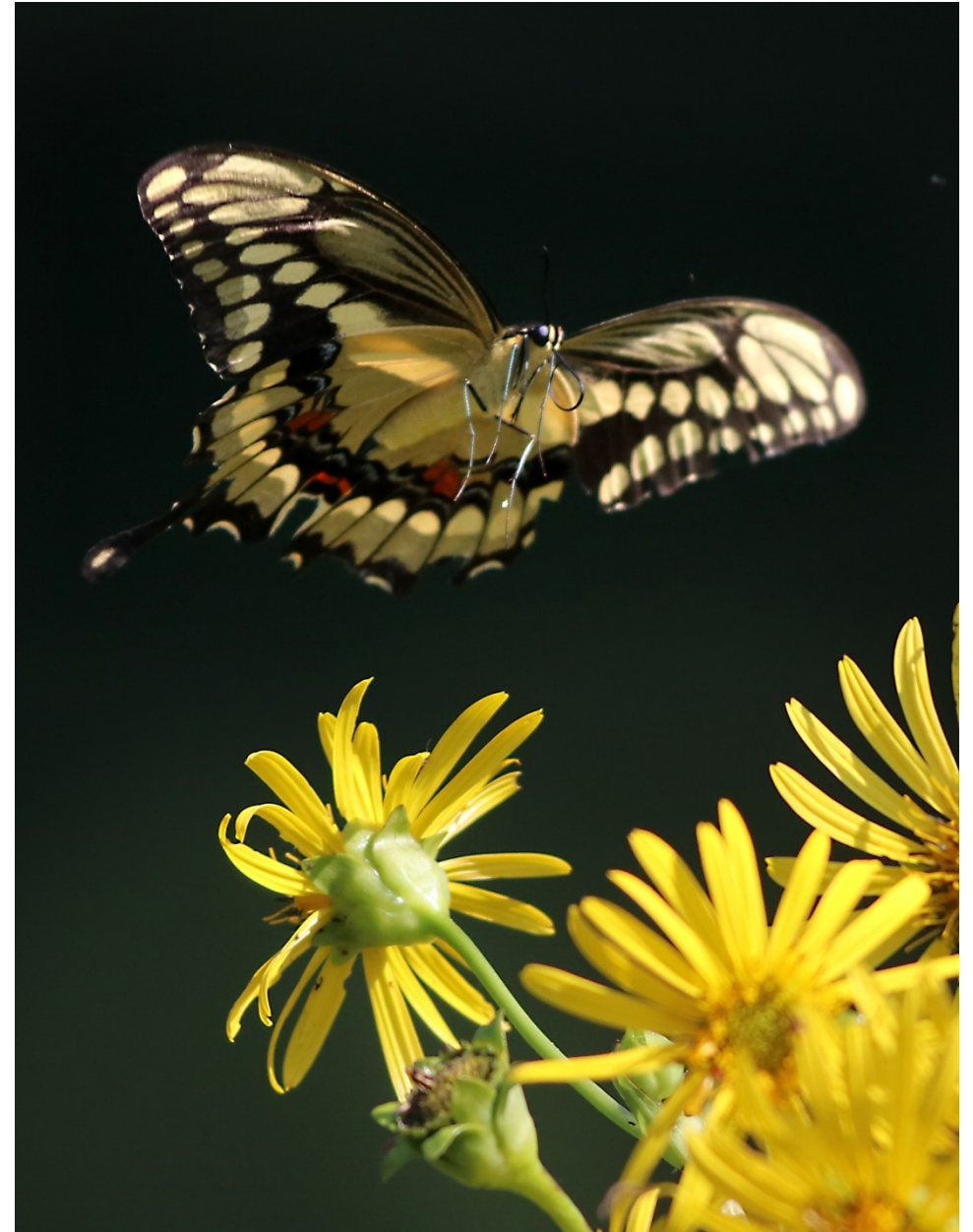
GETTING TO 30%

- 10.9 M acres is target for protected land (30%)
- 9.4 M acres short
- Need to add an area the size of New Jersey (9 M acres)



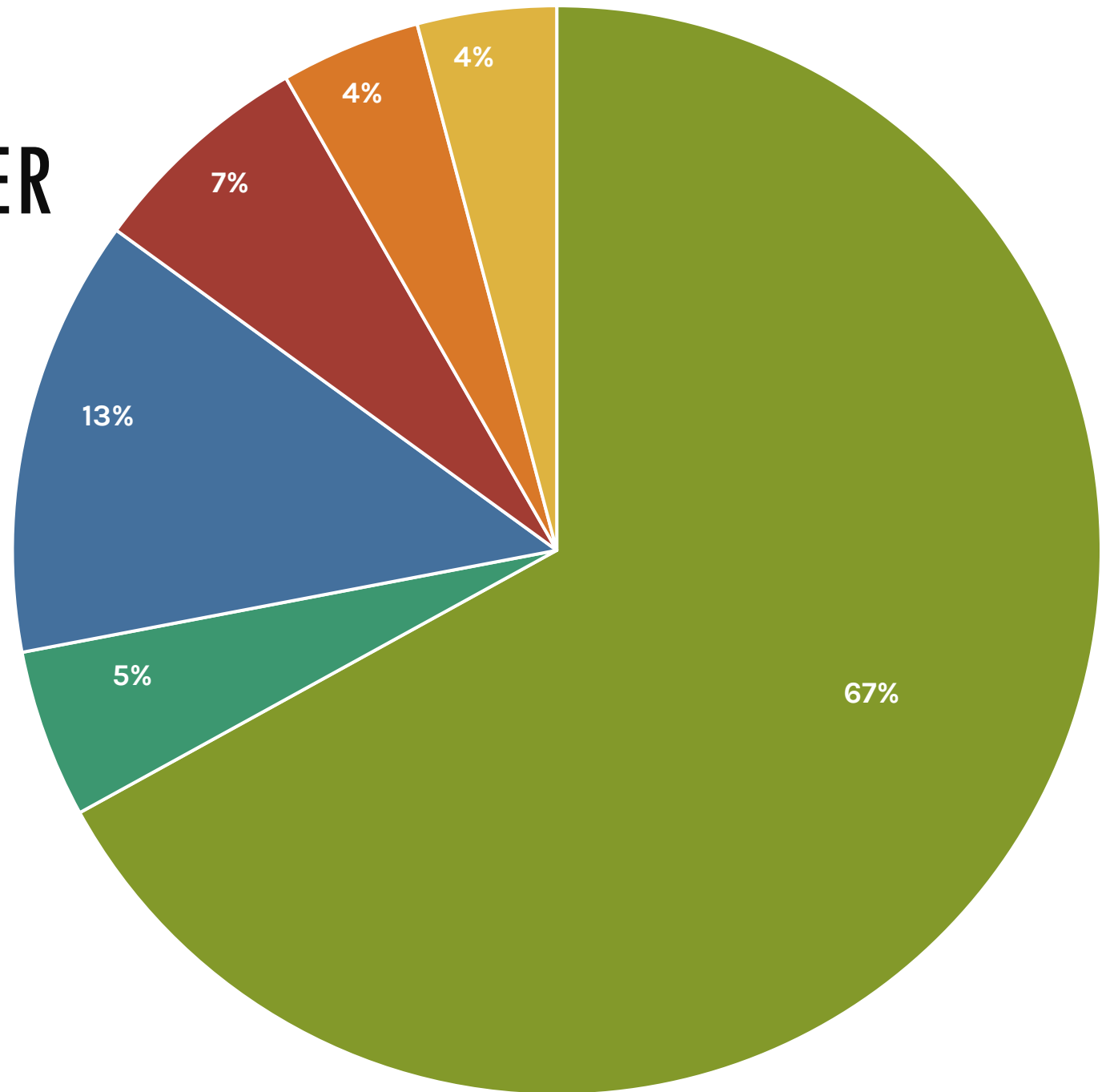
30 X 30 TASK FORCE

- Report to the Illinois General Assembly, September 2022
- Explored opportunities for building on to what we have in Illinois
- https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/programs/30by30/Documents/30x30_task_force_final_2022.pdf



LAND USE/LAND COVER

- Cropland
- Pasture
- Forest
- Urban
- Protected Areas
- Misc

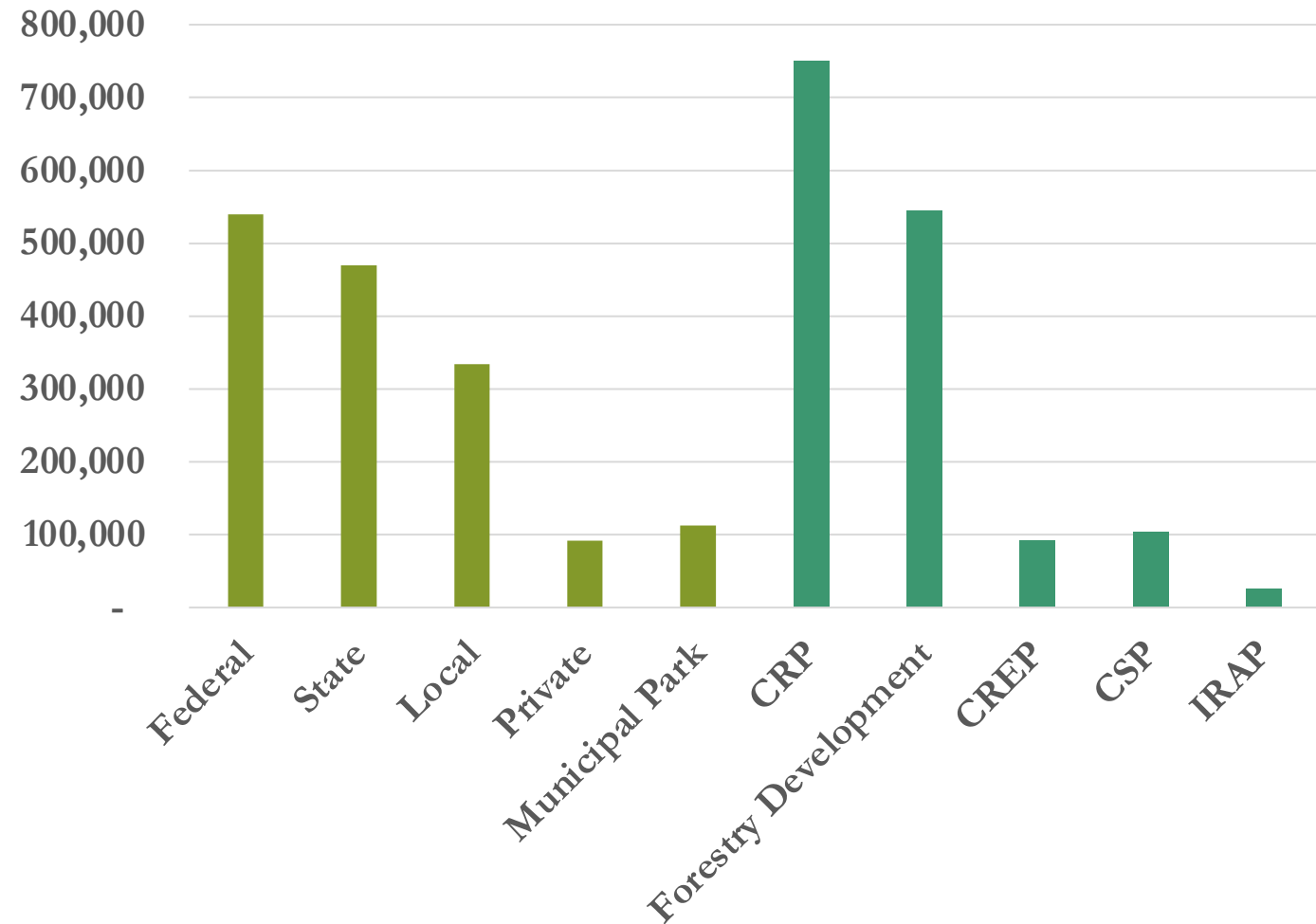




**MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES BY BEING
CREATIVE WITH HOW AND WHAT WE
COUNT**

EXPANDING THE CONSERVATION TENT

- Over 120,000 acres are protected by INPC (highest legal protection)
- Areas not legally protected provide conservation benefit
- CRP and FD programs support conservation on private lands



*CRP - Conservation Reserve Program, CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, CSP - Conservation Stewardship Program, IRAP - Illinois Recreational Access Program



**Transportation R.O.W.
(Aurora, IL)**



**Single Family Backyard
(Lake County, IL)**



**Commercial – Tuthill Corp
(Burr Ridge, IL)**



**Multi-Family Residential R.O.W.
(Chicago, IL)**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS



- Improve coordination between public and private conservation efforts
- Manage existing conservation areas strategically
- Acquire new conservation areas strategically



- Increase voluntary conservation program funding
- Increase awareness of conservation program benefits
- Disseminate and encourage best practices for private landowner conservation



- Increase natural resource agency staffing
- Improve conservation funding accessibility
- Increase opportunities for conservation land trusts to contribute

DEVELOP STATEWIDE FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

- Develop leadership structure and approach
- Determine what counts
- Consider equity across sectors and landscapes
- Align with existing plans: State Wildlife Action Plan, Illinois Forest Action Plan, State Water Plan, Cook County FPD Next Century Conservation Plan, CW Biodiversity Recovery Plan, Etc.





TODD STROLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVE COMMISSION



...to secure for the people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of natural areas...

August 28th, 1963

What happened then?



60TH ANNIVERSARY

- The signing of the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act
- The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission established
- The Illinois Nature Preserves System created



60TH ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES

Outdoor **Illinois**
Journal

<https://outdoor.wildlifeillinois.org/>



Illinois Nature Preserves Commission 60th Anniversary

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission is featuring protected sites throughout 2023 to celebrate its 60th anniversary.

Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and Illinois Department of Natural Resources

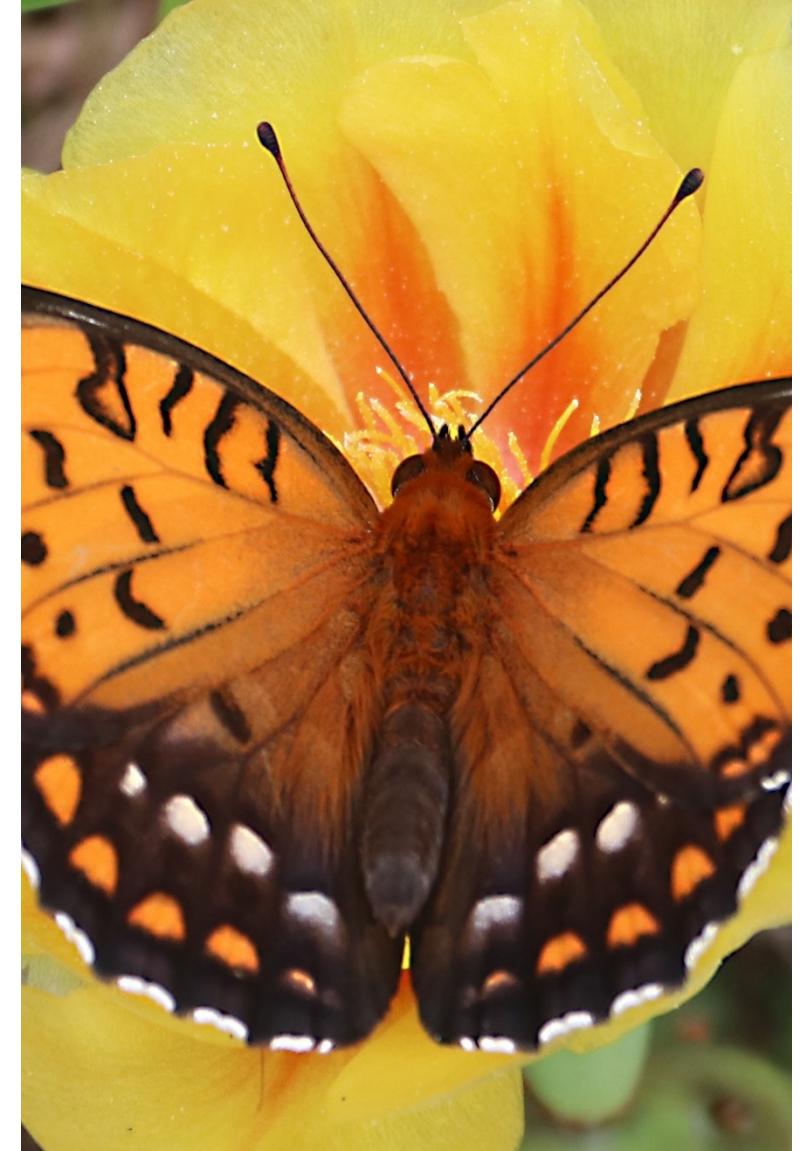
StoryMap – INPC website landing page

FINAL QUESTION... A PRACTICAL TEST.

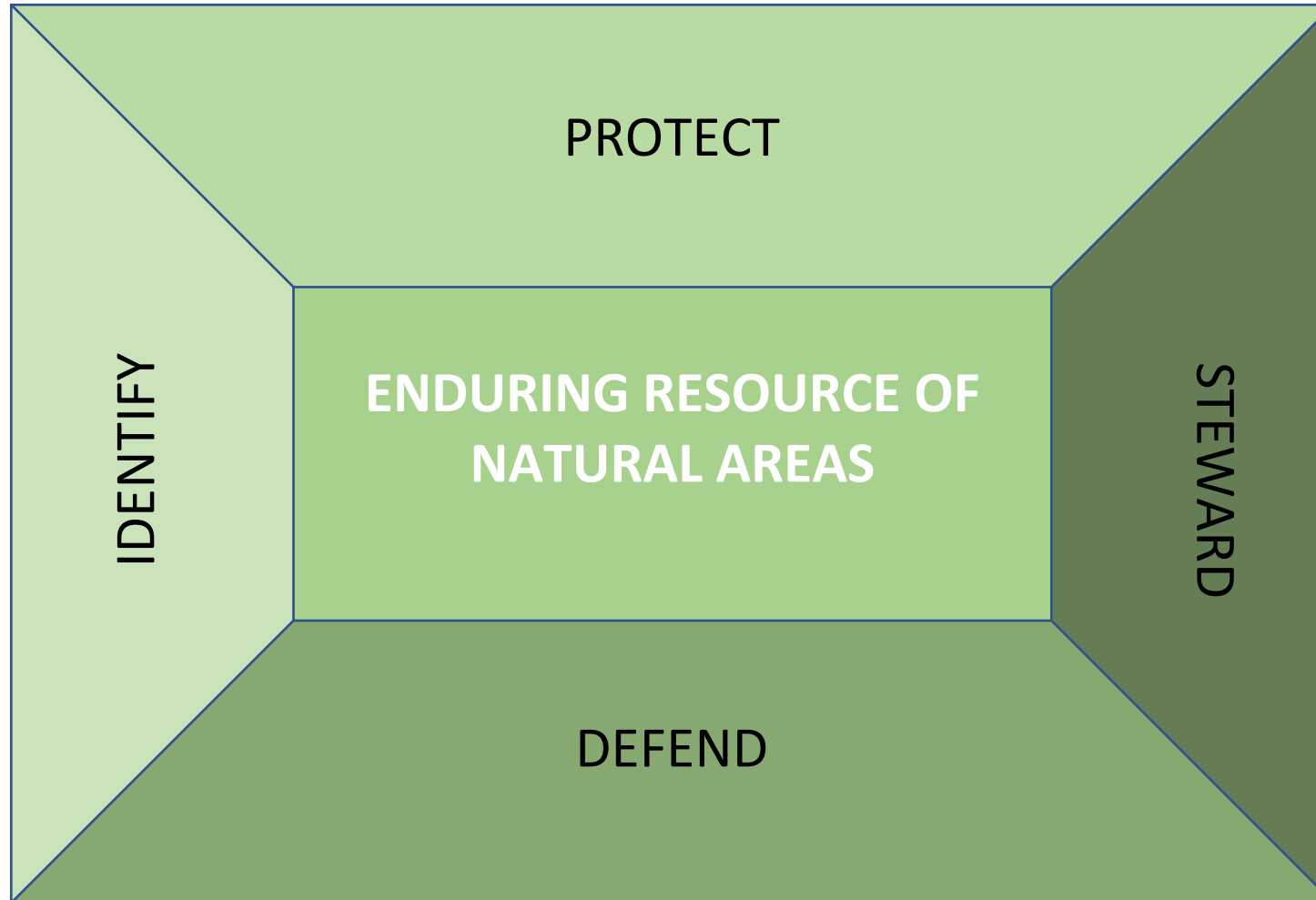


UPDATES FROM THIS YEAR

- 4 new Commissioners (2 more in 2023)
- Increased operating budget by 40%
- Return to in-person meetings
- 3 positions posted
- Natural Heritage Resident Program
- Online application for INPC special use permits
- Herbicide drift report calling for strong interagency action
- Nature Preserve System: 625 sites, 121,492 acres



HOW WE WORK



NATURAL AREAS STEWARDSHIP - WHO

- Landowners (275 unique landowners of 625 sites)
- Staff – 9 (5-22 counties)
- Contractor
- Volunteers



NATURAL AREAS STEWARDSHIP - WHAT

- Natural Processes (flood and fire)
- Restoration or recreation of native land cover
- Monitoring
- Control of invasive species (exotics and invasive natives)



CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

- Occurs on 100% of the sites in our system
- The single biggest expense in natural areas stewardship
- The single biggest time sink in natural areas stewardship

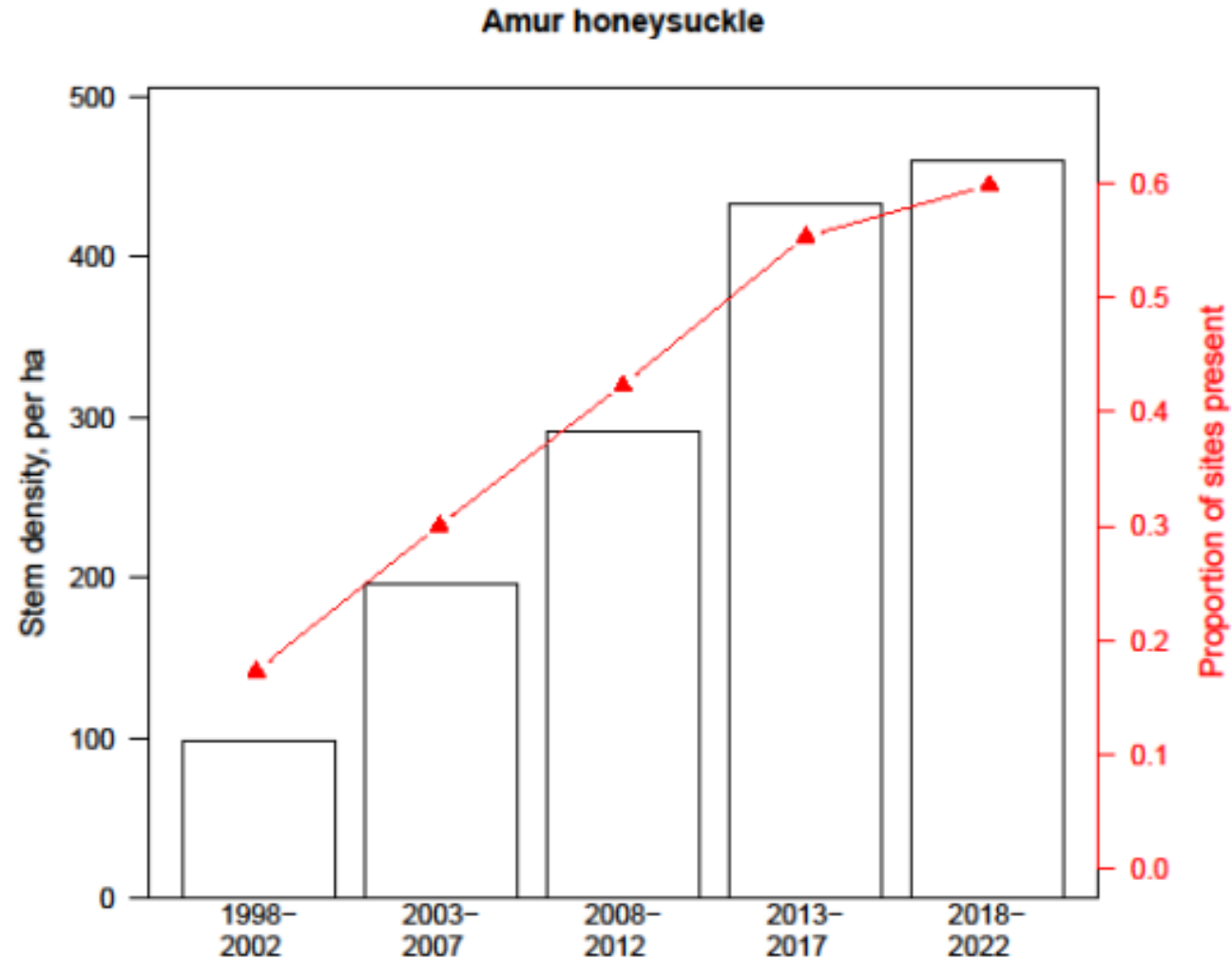


The single biggest threat to an enduring system of natural areas

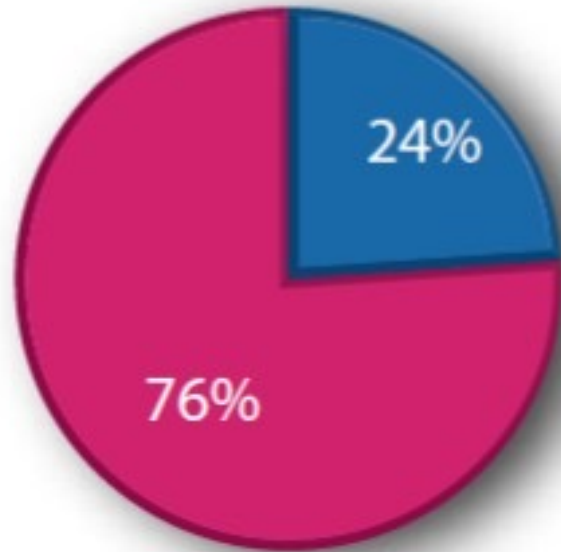
A recent survey of IDNR parks produced 1 427 reports of problems with 74 invasive species covering 31 2,206 treatment acres.

(1 acres covered with 2 invasive species = 2 treatment acres)

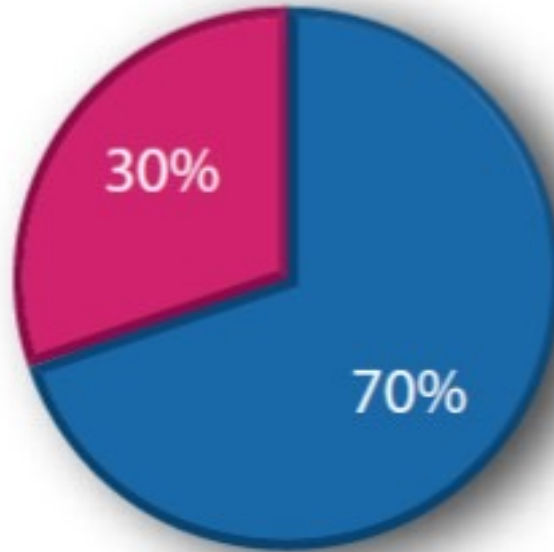
CRITICAL TRENDS ANALYSIS PROGRAM



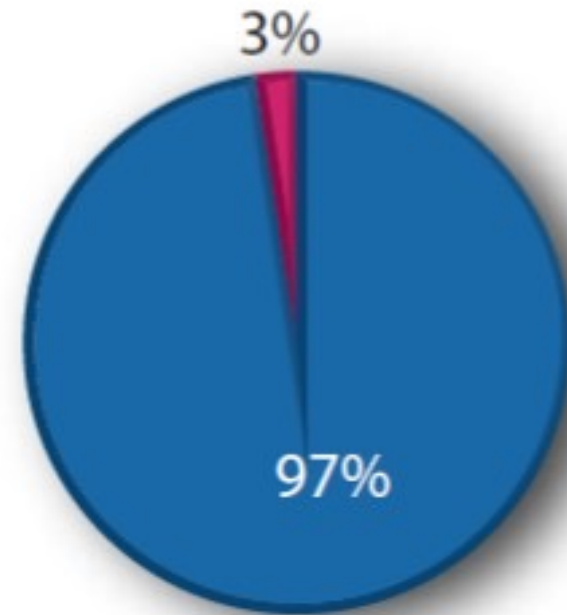
CRITICAL TRENDS ANALYSIS PROGRAM



Random Grassland



Random Prairie



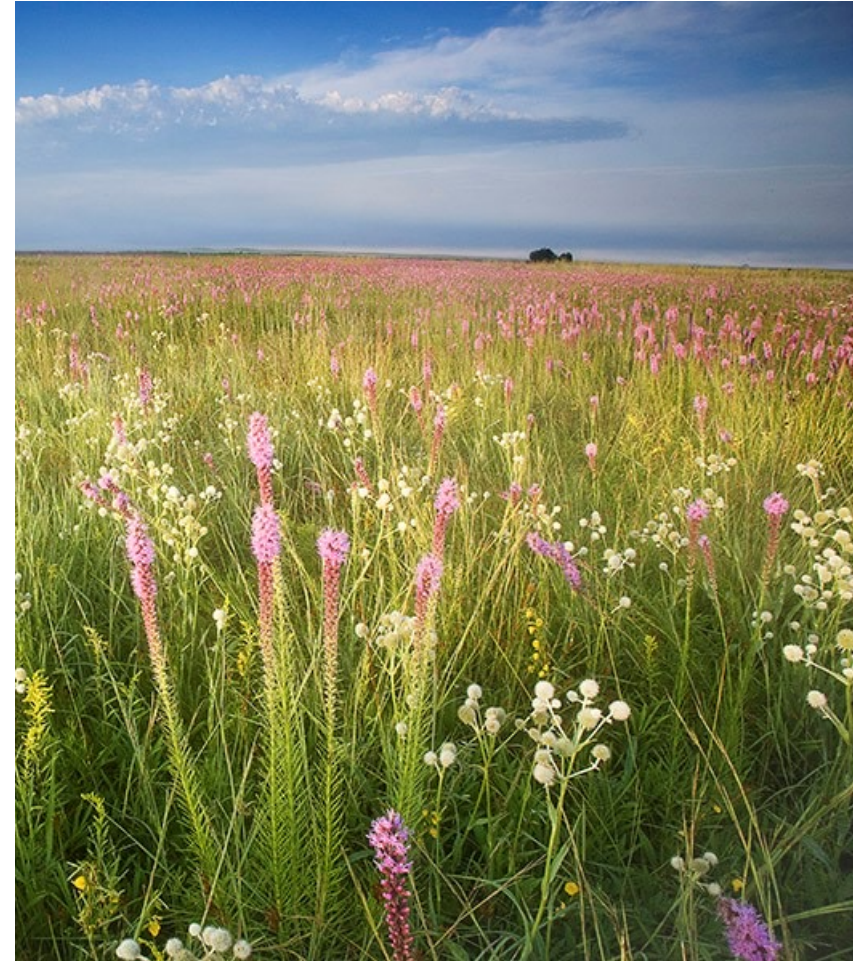
Reference Prairie

 Native

 Non-native

COLLECTIVE EFFORT NEEDED

- Law/policy – Illinois Invasive Species Council, agencies
- Industry – landscaping, retail, growers
- Education – everywhere
- Early detection – site stewards, crowd-sourced science
- Monitoring – site stewards
- Control activities – rapid response, research, high efficacy



SOME VERY CURRENT ACTIVITIES...

The National Invasive Species Council (NISC) and Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) assessing impacts of invasive species on Wildland Fire

Questionnaire: : <https://forms.office.com/r/FBZwhBG9tD>



SOME VERY CURRENT ACTIVITIES...

The Terrestrial Plants Subcommittee of the Illinois Invasive Species Council (IISC) is announcing intent to conduct an assessment with comment open until March 15th of the following species:

Comments to: Illinoisinvasivespeciescouncil@gmail.com

- Japanese Stiltgrass
- Wild Parsnip
- Callery Pear
- Black and Pale Swallow-wort
- Amur Cork Tree
- Garlic Mustard
- Bush-clover
- Leafy Spurge





**ANN MARIE HOLTROP
CHIEF
IDNR, DIVISION OF NATURAL HERITAGE**



Heritage and INPC staff October 2019



Heritage and INPC staff December 2022

NATURAL AREAS TIMELINE

- 1963 – Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act
- 1973 – Illinois Natural Divisions and Section
**INPC dedicated first 64 Nature Preserves
before 1978**
- 1978 – Illinois Natural Areas Inventory
- 1988 – Natural Areas Evaluation Committee
- 2002 – INAI Standards and Guidelines
- 2023



NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

- Development of methods to *find and describe* undisturbed forests, prairies, and wetlands
- Special search criteria identified for railroad ROW and cemetery prairie remnants
- Today, the INAI classifies 96 unique Natural Community Types within 9 Classes



NATURAL AREAS IN ILLINOIS

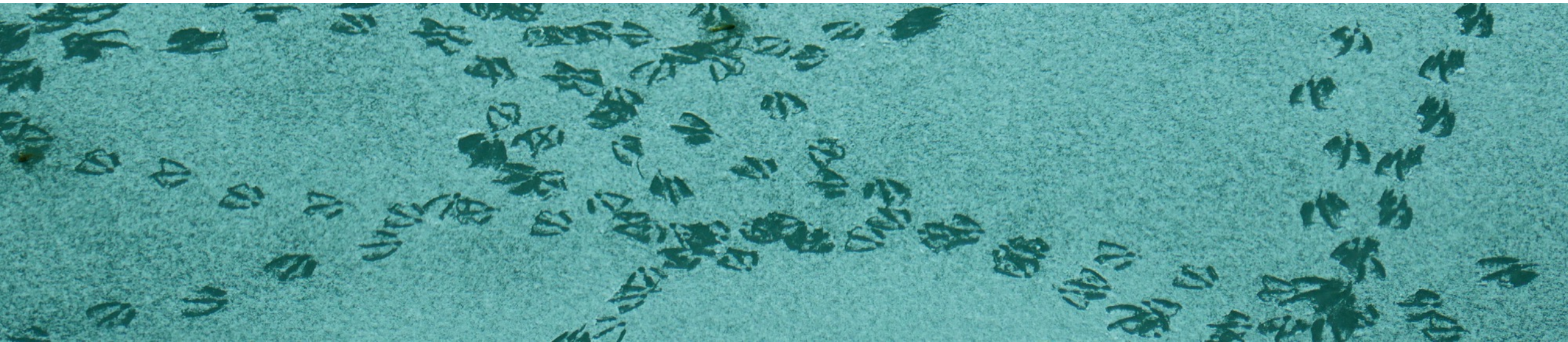
*Currently, the Inventory identifies **1,515** privately and publicly-owned natural areas (486,381 acres) containing one or more rare species, significant features, and exemplary natural communities*



PRESENT CHALLENGE FOR NATURAL AREAS

Maintaining the integrity of the Inventory - ensuring the rarest, most sensitive, and most threatened natural communities and species habitats are protected, managed, and defended...

and those communities without qualifying features are removed.



COMBATING THE CHALLENGE — STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

2002 S&G created —

- INAI Technical Report aligned with decisions of NAEC

2022 - S&G review and comments

- New Aquatic INAI Guidelines

2023 — Version 2 released for all

- Small groups convening to discuss complex comments



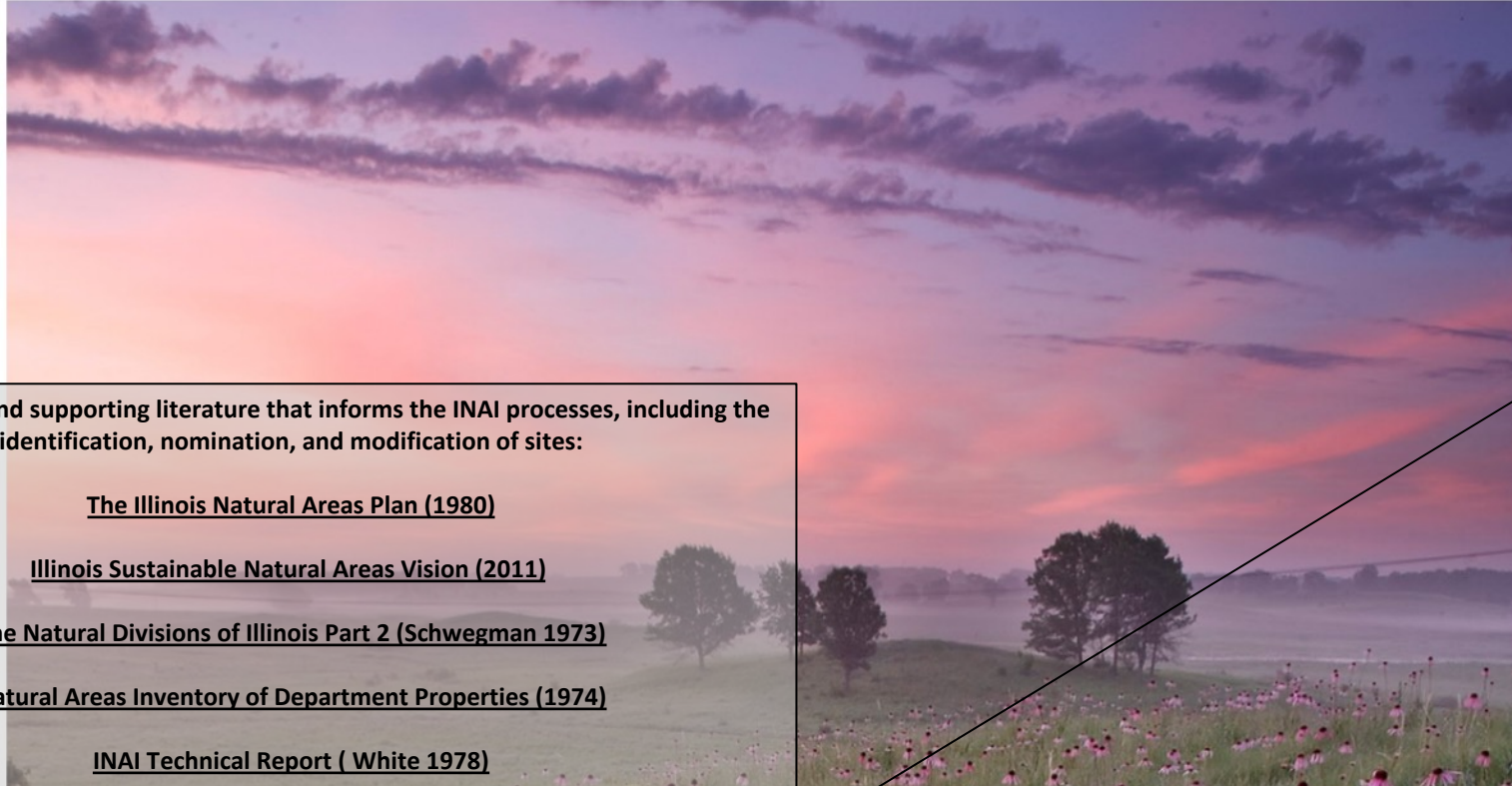
COMBATING THE CHALLENGE CONT.

- ✓ Use of Cat 1 Update and Recheck Project data
- ✓ Creating plant lists by Natural Community
- ✓ Category II and Species Recovery
- ✓ Research – Plant Rarity and Trend Project
(associate with Natural Communities)
- ✓ Terrestrial Invasives Council
- ✓ IL Wildlife Action Plan
- ✓ And more....



NATURAL AREAS

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/naturalheritage/Pages/default.aspx>



Below you will find supporting literature that informs the INAI processes, including the identification, nomination, and modification of sites:

[The Illinois Natural Areas Plan \(1980\)](#)

[Illinois Sustainable Natural Areas Vision \(2011\)](#)

[The Natural Divisions of Illinois Part 2 \(Schwegman 1973\)](#)

[Natural Areas Inventory of Department Properties \(1974\)](#)

[INAI Technical Report \(White 1978\)](#)

[Technical Report Summary \(White 1978\)](#)

[Ten Years Later \(Schwegman 1989\)](#)

[Illinois Natural Divisions \(Schwegman 1997\)](#)

[Conceptual foundation and philosophical framework for INAI 4th edition \(White 2008\)](#)

[Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Update Survey Manual \(White 2009\)](#)

[Grading Handbook - 4th edition \(White 2009\)](#)

NATURAL AREAS

Natural Areas Program

Natural Divisions

Natural Areas Evaluation
Committee

INAI Supporting Documents

Illinois Nature Preserves
Commission

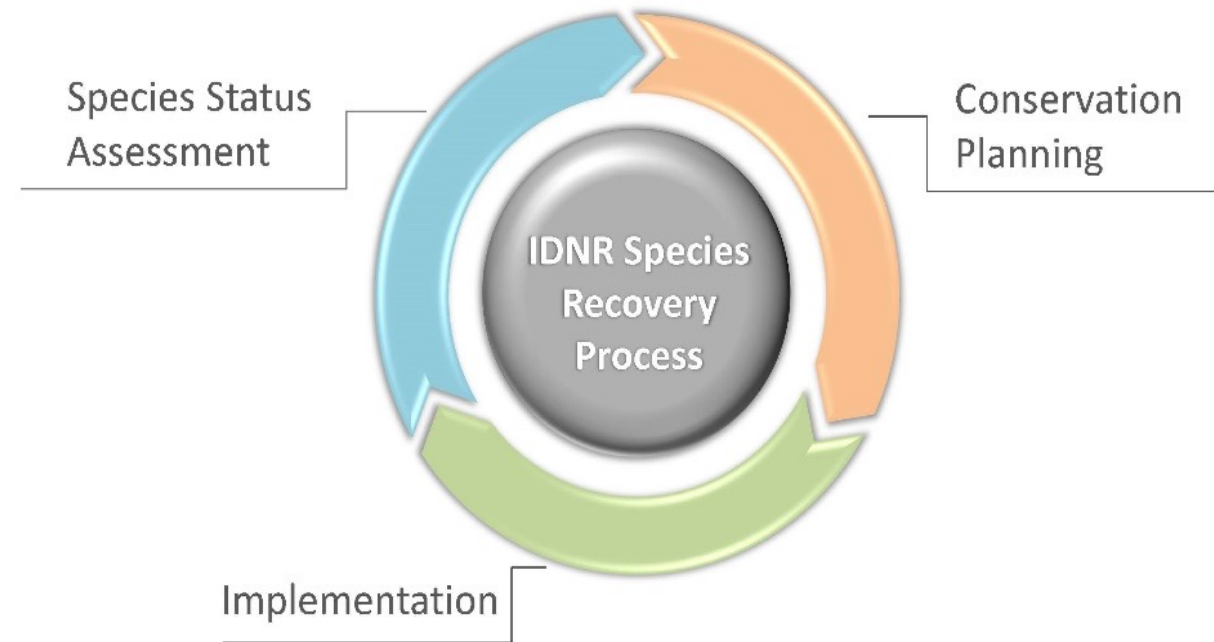
Endangered Species Protection
Board

Biologically Significant Streams

Why Natural Areas?

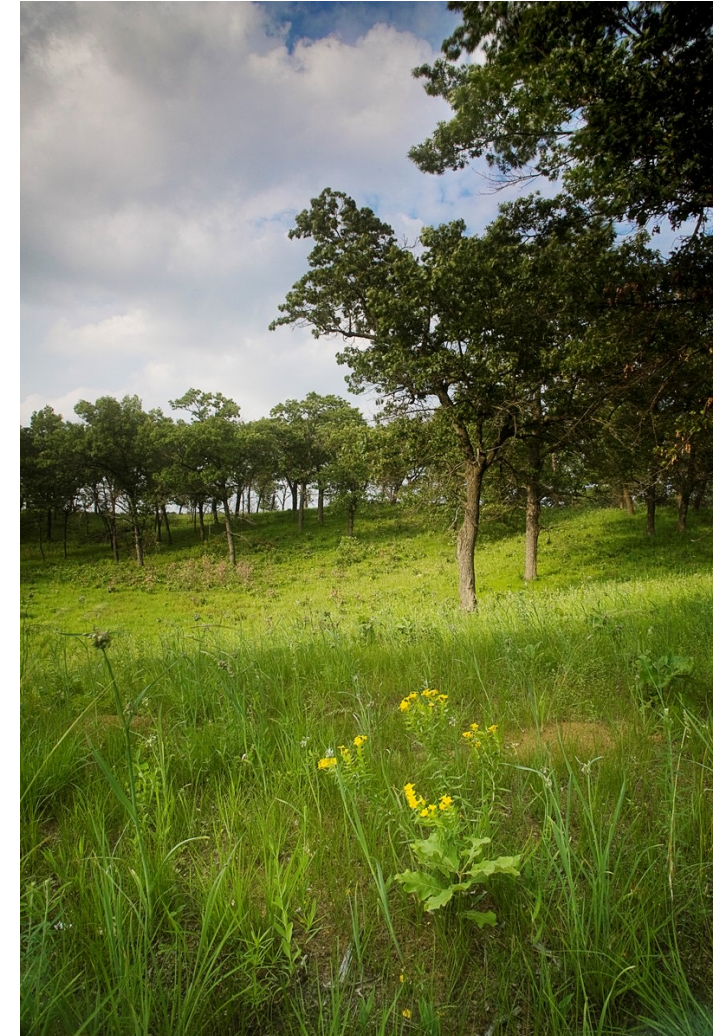
SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY

- **Species Management**
 - Any activity that benefits the species
- **Recovery**
 - Targeted and directed management for listed species to maintain or improve condition
 - 38 Species Leads
 - 36 Species Status Assessments
 - 4+ Planning Documents



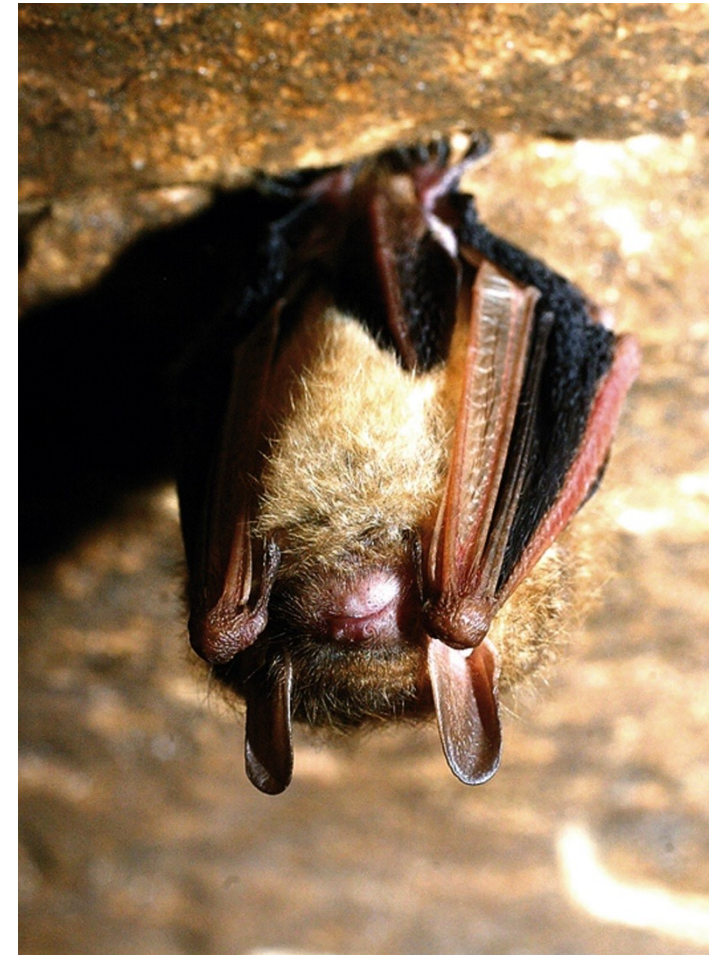
NATURAL AREAS STEWARDSHIP GRANTS

- 2021 - \$500,000 available; 7 grants funded
- 2022 - \$500,000 available; 10 grants funded
 - Changes to application process
 - Delays in payments
- 2023 - \$750,000
 - Application period anticipated April 3 – May 26
 - <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/grants/Pages/StewardshipGrants.aspx>



POTENTIAL CONSERVATION FUNDING - RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT

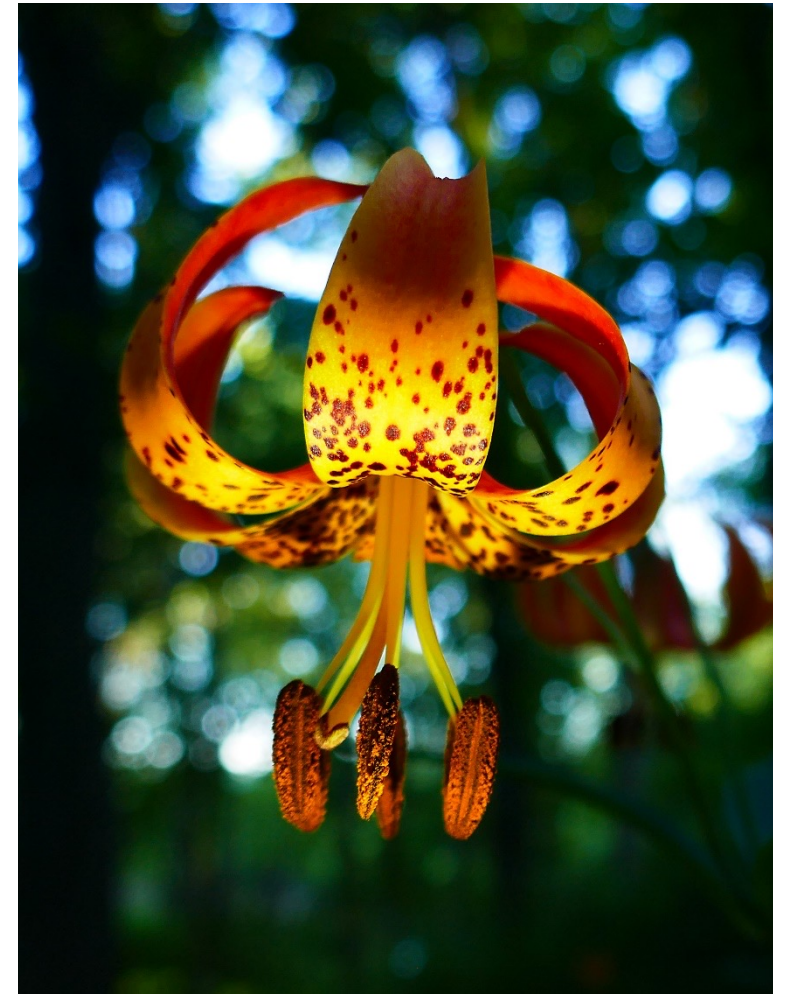
- Purpose to implement State Wildlife Action Plans
- The 2023 Omnibus package did not include RAWA
- The bill secured the support of an unprecedented 240 Member of Congress
- Some movement in the Senate to reintroduce the Bill; looking for pay-for



POTENTIAL CONSERVATION FUNDING — AMERICA

THE BEAUTIFUL CHALLENGE

- Support voluntary conservation and restoration projects
- Landscape-level projects toward priority conservation and restoration needs
- Priorities for Midwest: grasslands for birds and pollinators, aquatic connectivity, and wetlands, habitat connectivity



NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Today's complex conservation challenges are unique to our changing times. They require a new way of thinking—an adaptive framework

- Serves diverse natural resource related organizations (Federal Agencies, State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Tribal and Natural Resource-related Industry Organizations)
- Application period closes April 15



QUESTIONS

