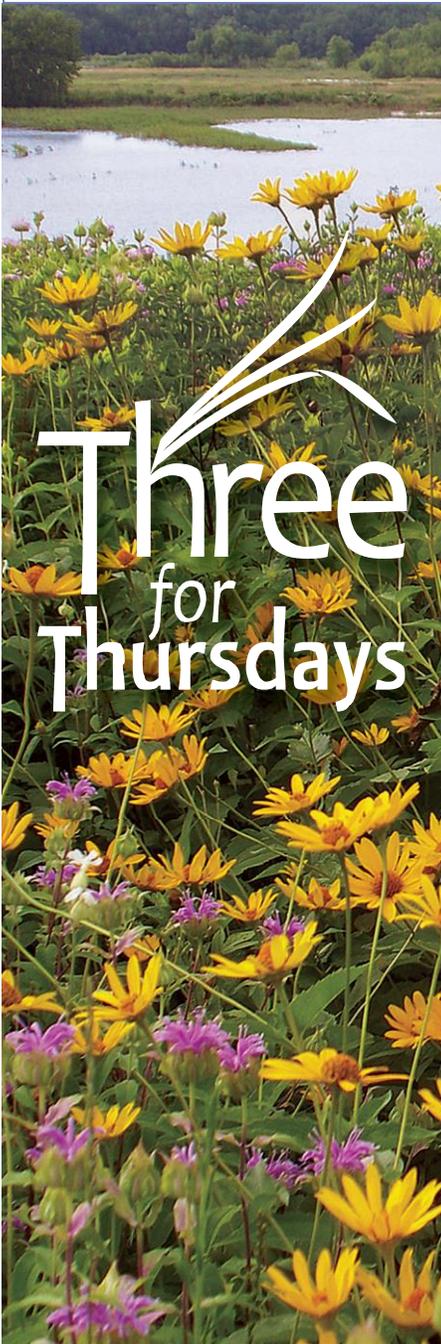


NATURAL LAND INSTITUTE

Conserving Land
in Northern Illinois



Three
for
Thursdays

The Value of Impactful, Collaborative Partnerships

Partnering for Land Protection 1- At last week's **Illinois Nature Preserve Commission meeting** their board gave preliminary approval for Nature Preserve dedication to a number of sites, one of which struck one of the Board members as the epitome of what Vital Lands Illinois seeks to do. *"This was a three-landowner dedication as buffers of the Severson-Colman Dells NP complex in Ogle and Winnebago Counties, increasing the protected acreage from just over 94 to 361 acres. The Winnebago County and Byron FPDs and **Natural Land Institute** worked together to accomplish this and it is a great example of cooperative conservation leading to the creation of landscape level work, stewardship potentials and enhanced protection. This is good stuff and the VLI Network's stress on showcasing the power of collaboration shines in this example!"* I want to thank our Board for supporting this preliminary dedication.

Partnering for Land Protection 2- NLI, and Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JDCF) have begun the process of choosing a facilitator for the **Regional NW Illinois Strategic Land & Water Conservation Planning** project. The project will create a regional strategic land and water conservation plan that targets the use of permanent land protection, policy initiatives, and best management practices to protect land and water in four major watersheds of NW Illinois. JDCF and NLI will be engaging land conservation partners as well as nontraditional partners such as the Illinois Farm Bureau, American Farmland Trust, Illinois Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Illinois Corn Growers Association and local governments in the first Phase of this project. This project is funded by the McKnight Foundation and the Il. Clean Energy Foundation.

Partnering for Land Protection 3: Stewardship Resources

Overcoming our biggest challenge for the next 50 years is the ability to steward the land we protect. The historic relationship we have had with the state to take lands that Illinois environmental land trusts protect is over, as they no longer have the resources to manage their preserves in the face of the increasing pressure of invasive species and budget cuts.

NLI is partnering with many regional land protection agencies across northern Illinois as part of a **seed sharing network**, saving us thousands of dollars and allowing us to restore and enhance our native plant diversity. NLI is also partnering with many land management agencies across NW Illinois in a **Stewardship Cooperative** that through grants and agency support, will add 2-3 shared staff to manage our regional diversity. NLI is also partnering with the Delta Institute, JDCF, Openlands and the IEC to develop tools for IL land trusts to be able to finance their stewardship. This **Conservation Finance** project (*Dual Approach*) is funded by the Grand Victoria Foundation.

Kerry September 21, 2017