

# Rockford Register Star

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## NEWS

# Land Institute: Nov. 14 letter from feds gives go ahead for Bell Bowl Prairie destruction

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The Natural Land Institute announced Monday that its lawyers have sent a 60-day intent-to-sue letter to the Greater Rockford Airport Authority and others now that a second federal agency has sided with the airport's plans to build on over half of the Bell Bowl Prairie.

The prairie, located on airport property, is thousands of years old and home to indigenous plants and endangered wildlife like the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee. The Chicago Rockford International Airport plans to build a \$50 million cargo expansion project and a service road to the site would pass through the prairie.

"The complaint will be filed in order to allege violations of the Environmental Species Act (ESA) because federal defendants, IDOT and the GRAA have failed (and are continuing to fail) to ensure that their funding, authorization, construction, expansion and operation of RFD does not jeopardize the health and existence of the federally-listed endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee – whose existence on Bell Bowl Prairie was confirmed on August 8, 2021," the land institute stated in its news release.

**More:** Bell Bowl Prairie supporters protest outside Gov. JB Pritzker's home

According to the land institute, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on Nov. 14, 2022, "concurred with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that authorizes destruction of approximately 15 acres of Bell Bowl Prairie."

Airport officials want to build a 100,000-square-foot air freight facility, storm water detention basins, ramp expansion as well as the service road.