

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Impacts of Governor's FY05 Budget Proposal

Mission Statement of IDNR. Our mission is to manage, protect and sustain Illinois' natural and cultural resources; provide resource-compatible recreational opportunities; and promote natural resource-related public safety, education, and science.

Statutory Definition of the General Powers and Duties of IDNR (20 ILCS 801/1-5, Sec. 1-5). It shall be the duty of the Department to investigate practical problems, implement studies, conduct research and provide assistance, information and data relating to the technology and administration of the natural history, entomology, zoology, and botany of this State; the geology and natural resources of this State; the water and atmospheric resources of this State; and the archeological and cultural history of this State.

(Source: P.A. 89-50)

Statutory language introducing the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (525 ILCS 30/2). It is therefore the public policy of the State of Illinois to secure for the people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of natural areas, including the elements of natural diversity present in the State, by establishing a system of nature preserves, protecting nature preserves and gathering and disseminating information regarding them, providing for appropriate use of nature preserves that will not damage them, establishing and maintaining a register of natural areas and buffer areas, providing certain forms of protection and control of registered natural areas and registered buffer areas and otherwise encouraging and assisting in the preservation of natural areas and features.

(Source: P.A. 85-150.)

Specifics on the Impacts of Governor's FY 05 Budget Request

<u>Program</u>	<u>FY 04 Budget</u>	<u>FY05 Budget Request</u>
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<u>Endangered Species Protection Board</u>	\$0	\$0
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The ESPB is responsible for the listing of species of plants and animals as endangered or threatened and advising the DNR on the conservation of listed species. Zeroing out their budget will cause the ESPB to default on their statutory responsibility to list species resulting in further degradation of species in peril.

<u>Nature Preserves Commission (NPC)</u>	\$1,216.4	\$0
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The NPC is responsible for the dedication of high quality natural areas and endangered species habitats as nature preserves and land and water reserves. These two dedications place the protection of these lands as their highest and best use. It is the strongest protection provided land in Illinois.

OSLAD Grants

Each year the number of grant applications far exceeds the funds available to the program. Over the life of the OSLAD program, \$197 million OSLAD dollars have leveraged more than \$508 million in local projects.

Additional Talking Points to Consider

- Open space and natural area acquisition and protection are not “misplaced priorities” for the State of Illinois. Voters throughout the state consistently vote to increase taxes to support land acquisition work at the local level. Much of the local land acquisition is accomplished by matching local money with state OSLAD grants.
- “Decisions made today will impact budgets and plans for tomorrow. It is about setting priorities.”
- Attracting new businesses to Illinois, creating new jobs for Illinois, does “need to be targeted, responsible, and intelligent.” That means making the State marketable. An important factor to attracting new jobs to Illinois is the quality of life.
- Now is not the time to “take a holiday from open space programs.” Now is exactly the right time to buy land due to double-digit inflation of land prices in some parts of the state.
- “These programs (OSLAD and NAAF) were supported by diversions of the real estate transfer tax, which will now be deposited in the General Revenue Fund.” Unfortunately the diversion of funds rests in the Governor’s hands. The real estate transfer tax distribution is set by law to be disbursed to Affordable Housing, Open Space Land Acquisition Development Fund (Source: P.A. 86-925.) and Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (Source: P.A. 86-925.). It has been that way since 1989.
- Governor Ryan proposed lowering the funding formula for the real estate transfer tax in 2002, and there was overwhelming support from the General Assembly to make that change temporary. The funding formula is written in law and its purpose is not general revenue.
- Most of the positions that would be eliminated at IDNR are union positions. They are ALL front line positions. Many of the middle-managers are now front line workers due to past budget cuts and headcount reductions.
- Illinois was the pioneer in legislating a Nature Preserve's Commission - the Illinois model has been copied (sometimes practically word for word - see Kentucky) by many other states.
- Illinois was recognized for its far-sightedness and creativity in creating the Nature Preserves Commission and the state system of nature preserves at the World Environmental Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil a few years ago.
- In Cook County alone, the population declined during the 1970s and 80s, while land consumed by development increased and farmland was reduced by 44 percent.
- OSLAD and NAAF work hand-in-hand to provide a safety net for rapidly disappearing open space in Illinois.
- Protection of open space requires farsightedness and a consistent and reliable source of funding. What would New York City be without Central Park or Chicago without 16 miles of lake front open to the public or your community without neighborhood parks.