



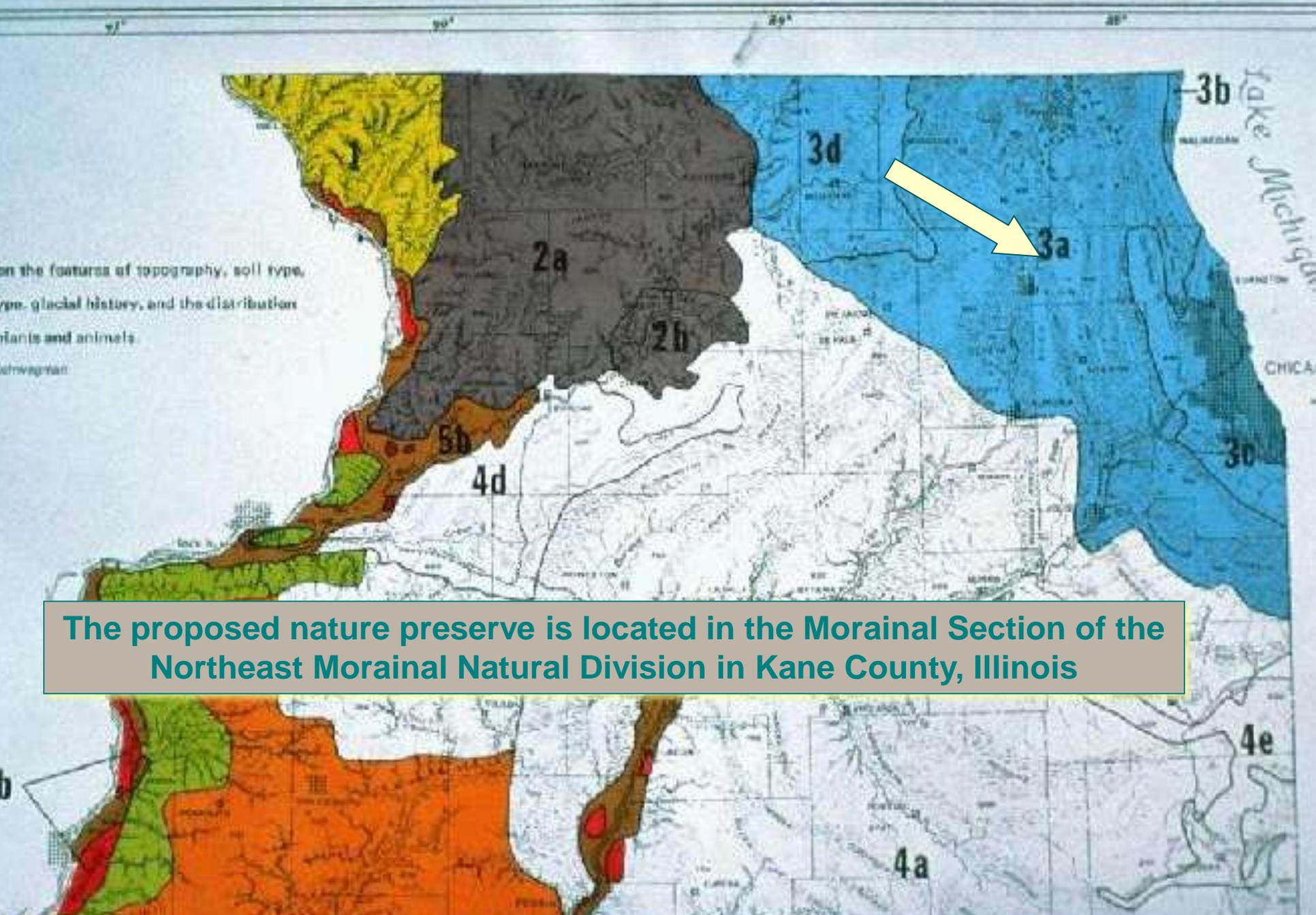
PROPOSAL FOR DEDICATION OF THE  
**FORESTED FEN**  
AS AN ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVE

205<sup>TH</sup> MEETING, MAY 2010

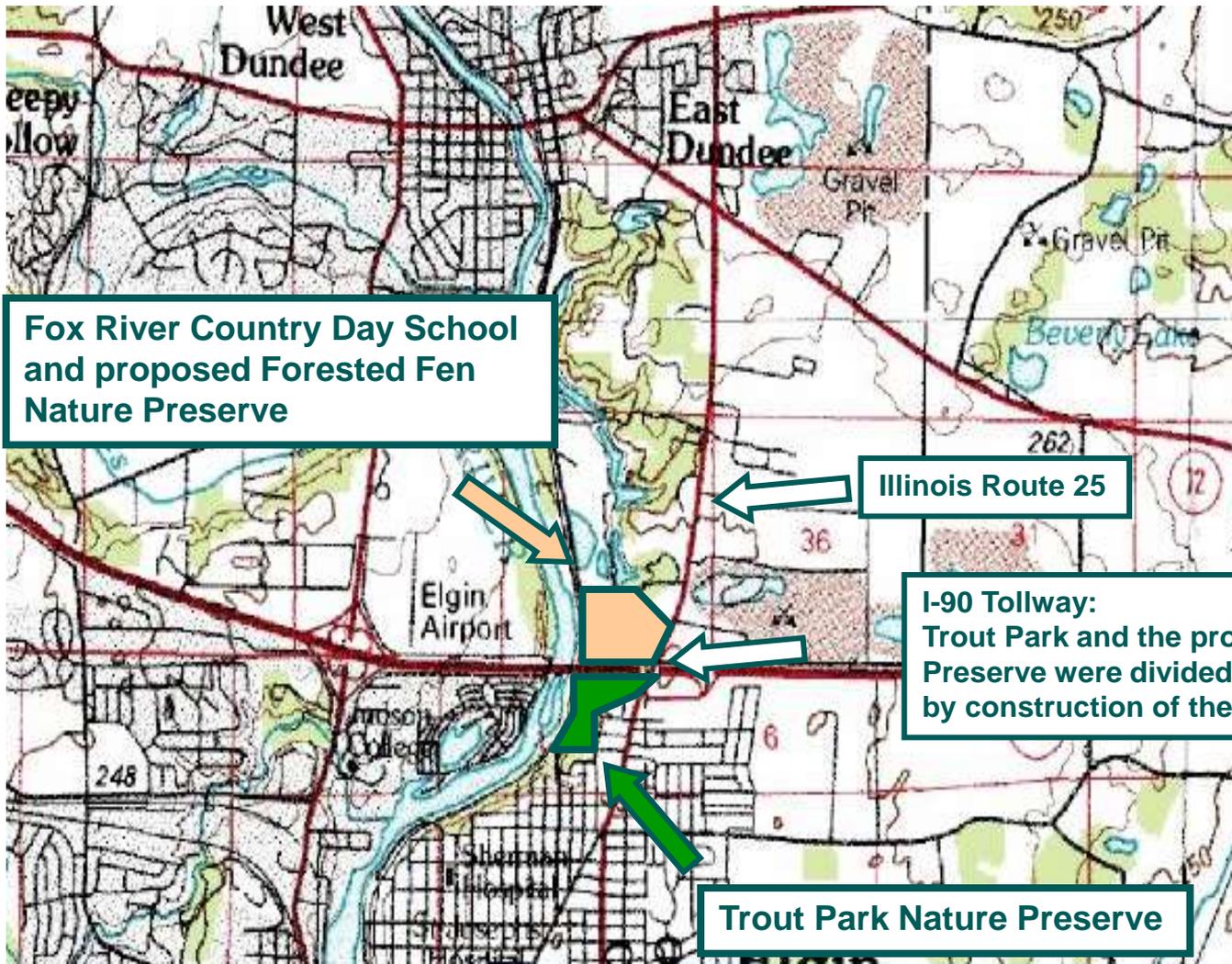
PREPARED ON BEHALF OF THE  
**FOX RIVER COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL**  
AND  
**ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION**

Re-presented by Steve Byers for a  
**FREP Noon Network**  
**10-16-13**

# The Natural Divisions of Illinois



The proposed nature preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeast Morainal Natural Division in Kane County, Illinois



**Fox River Country Day School and proposed Forested Fen Nature Preserve**

**Illinois Route 25**

**I-90 Tollway:**  
Trout Park and the proposed nature Preserve were divided by and impacted by construction of the Tollway in 1958.

**Trout Park Nature Preserve**



Administration Bldg.

Forested fen and uplands at FRCDS

I-90 Tollway

Trout Park River's Edge

Trout Park Nature Preserve

## Forested fen wetland



marsh marigold



swamp thistle



skunk cabbage

Dr. Henry Cowles (1923) eloquently described Trout Park (then combined with the Fox River Country Day School) this way:

“I have long known of the place and love it for its beautiful springs and evergreens. There is no place like it in the whole state.”

# HIGH-QUALITY FENS IN ILLINOIS

	# Fens	Acres
Calcareous seep	6	16.1
Floating mat	10	167.0
Graminoid fen	18	133.0
Shrub fen	3	5.4
Forested fen	2	14.5
Totals		336.0

## **Fox River Country Day School**

- 1. Formerly referred to as the Chicago Junior School; its mission is “...to educate the whole child through a value-based curriculum conducted in a home-like environment combining academic excellence with individual character development”,**
- 2. FRCDS acquired the site in 1923, once part of a 100-acre working farm,**
- 3. FRCDS has long recognized significance of the fen and has featured stewardship as an important element of their environmental education program,**
- 4. In August, 1989, the Board of Trustees formally recognized ecological significance of the site by enrolling the fen with INPC as an Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark,**
- 5. In 2006, FRCDS approved IDNR C2000 grant application to provide impetus for stewardship at the proposed Forested Fen Nature Preserve.**

# The Forested Fen Sanctuary



Open Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Welcome Respectful Visitors**

Thank you for visiting the Forested Fen Sanctuary. Please continue our responsible efforts to preserve the quality of this rare natural ecosystem by obtaining a Visitor Card from the Administration Building. Weekend admission and guided tours can be scheduled by contacting the Campus Northside at 817-464-7916.

Please obey the following rules of the Forested Fen Sanctuary:

1. Leave Only Footprints, Take Only Memories
2. No Picking Plants or Disturbing Wildlife
3. Walk on Designated Trails
4. No Food or Beverages
5. Quiet Foot Traffic Only
6. Pets are Not Permitted

Thank you for responsibly enjoying the Forested Fen Sanctuary.



## The Preservation of the Forested Fen Sanctuary

### Invasive Species Eradication

A primary goal in the sanctuary is to remove invasive species that threaten the survival of rare species and entire natural communities. The primary culprits are buckhorn, garlic mustard, and bittersweet. These are plants that were brought to the United States from Europe or Asia. With no natural competition in the United States, they are already out-competing native species for space and nutrients, thus you disrupting the balance and beauty of ecosystems across our entire region.



### Collecting Seed for a Good Deed

After the invasive species are removed, students and Fun De volunteers collect millions of seeds from native plants and rare seasonal communities in order to reestablish those communities in areas of our campus.



### Preparing the Seed

All collected seeds are then scrubbed through screens to separate and prepare each individual seed for sowing. After the screening process, our bags of seed are then treated with Perlite, acting as a spacer, to ensure that the sowed seeds are evenly spread.



### Fires: Learn Why We Burn

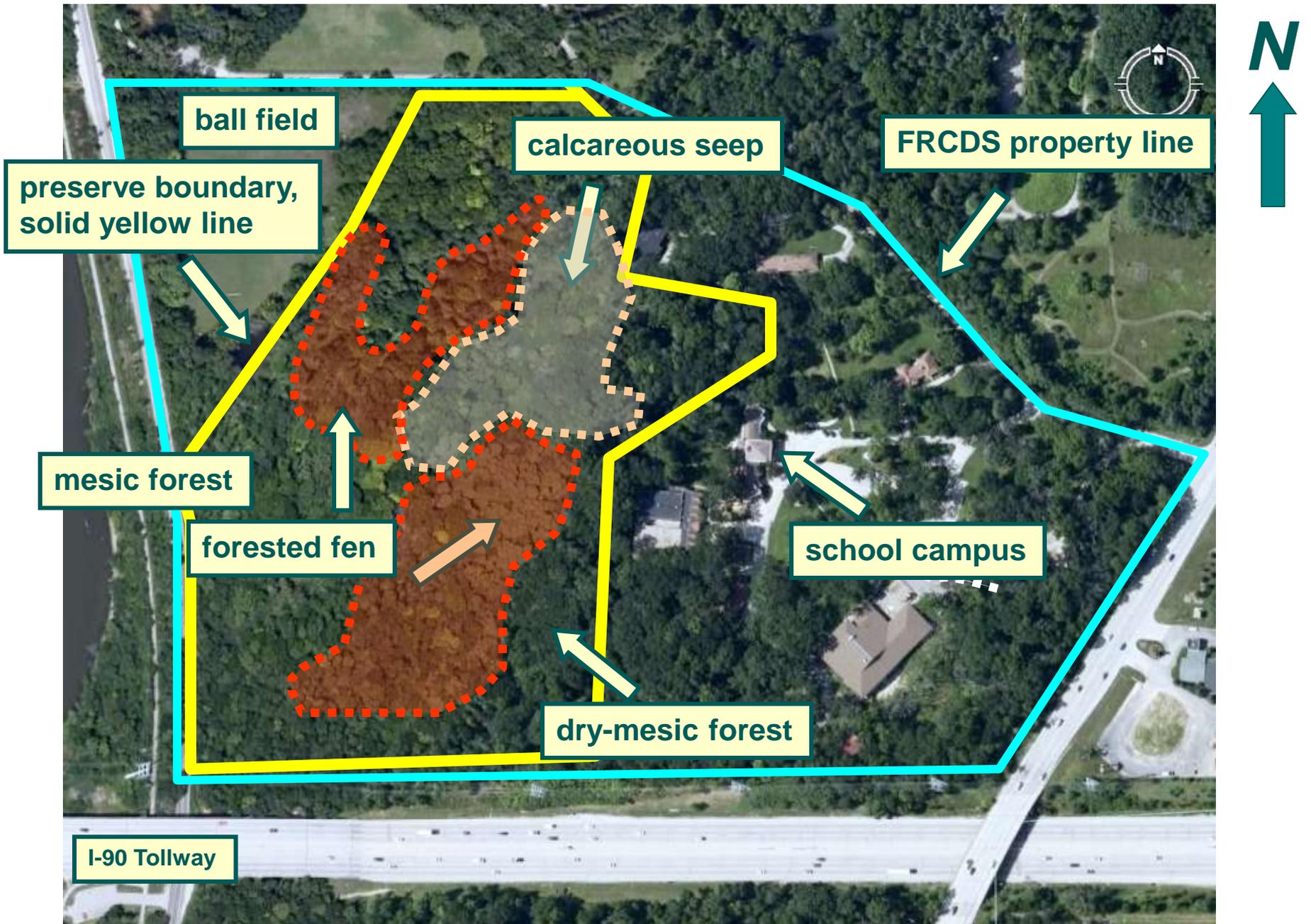
Burns are becoming a more familiar modern day restoration method. This practice mimics the conditions of a fire that would have naturally occurred due to lightning or Native Americans who used fire to clear their hunting grounds. Weedy plants and mosses, non-native plants, are not likely to withstand the scorching flames which leaves open the ground and sky for more plants to thrive. The native plants, adapted to this natural disturbance, will also benefit from the nutrient rich ashes left behind by the clearing fire.

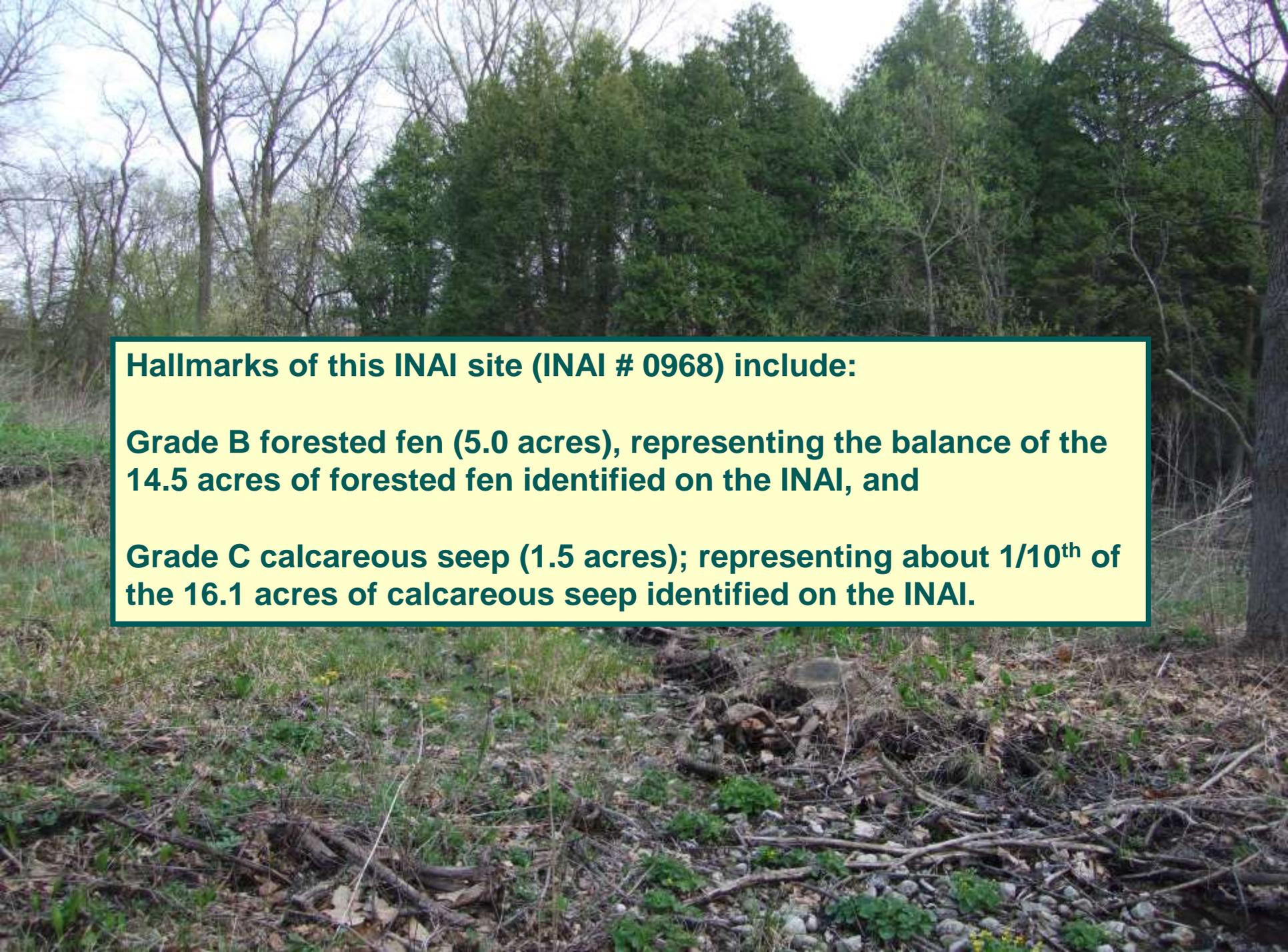


### Sowing for Future Growth

To celebrate the long hours of hard work, millions of seeds are carefully sprinkled to the bare soil where gentle wind and weather wash them into the ground throughout the winter. Come springtime, some seeds will have reclaimed their natural community. It is our hope to restore the natural fen, and forest of our campus for all to experience and enjoy.

**Educational kiosk at trailhead reflects FRCDS commitment**





**Hallmarks of this INAI site (INAI # 0968) include:**

**Grade B forested fen (5.0 acres), representing the balance of the 14.5 acres of forested fen identified on the INAI, and**

**Grade C calcareous seep (1.5 acres); representing about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the 16.1 acres of calcareous seep identified on the INAI.**

## **Forested fen community:**

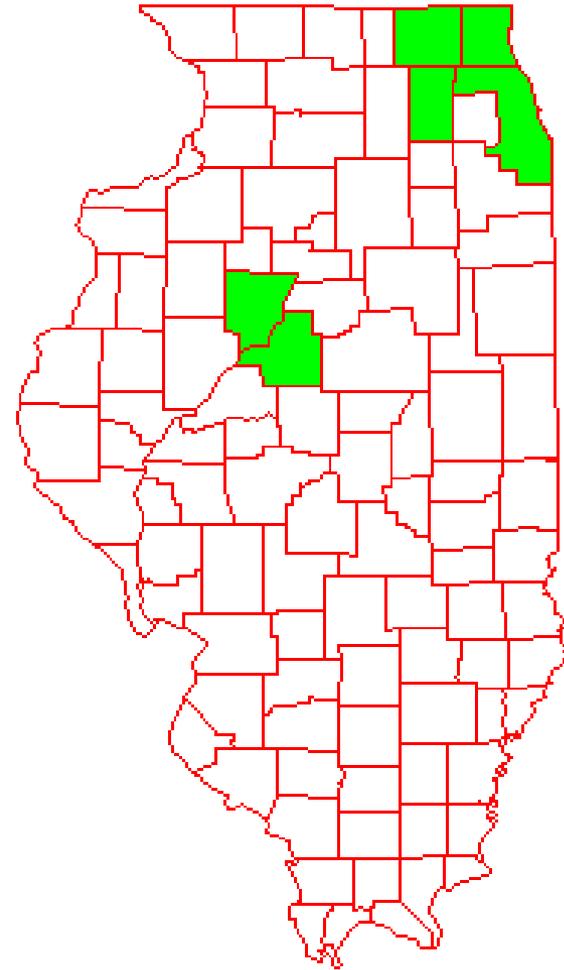
- 1. Considered Grade B by INAI, characteristic species include white cedars with understory of skunk cabbage (pictured here),**
- 2. This community restricted in Illinois to nearby Trout Park Nature Preserve and the proposed Forested Fen Nature Preserve,**
- 3. These community is restricted in Illinois to sites with strong alkaline ground water discharge and where the landscape (in this case the Fox River and steep slopes overlooking the river) prevented reoccurring fires.**

## **Calcareous seep community:**

- 1. Considered Grade C by INAI, characteristic species include swamp goldenrod, Ohio goldenrod, swamp thistle, grass of Parnassus and marsh marigolds (pictured here).**
- 2. This community is restricted to seven sites in Illinois totaling 16.1 acres.**
- 3. This community is restricted in Illinois to sites with strong alkaline ground water discharge where groundwater flows to the surface in a diffuse rather than concentrated flow. These sites are further distinguished by the absence of tree cover, and adjoining peat deposits.**
- 4. Supports population of State-threatened common bog arrow grass.**



**Common bog arrow grass**



***Triglochin maritima***

Observed during INAI in 1977 and again in 1986 by Dick Young. It's continued presence currently unknown. Herkert and Ebinger (2002) reported this species is represented by 10 populations in 3 Illinois counties.



## **Reserved rights:**

- 1. Maintain road for access to ball field,**
- 2. Maintain the existing trail system, which incorporates this road,**
- 3. Evaluate effect of well head, and when funds become available and should study show ground water benefit, remove well head,**
- 4. Renovate existing platform for educational venue, and**
- 5. Continue to use the Forested Fen for environmental education.**



existing foot trail with signage



**existing platforms, restore for  
environmental educational venue**



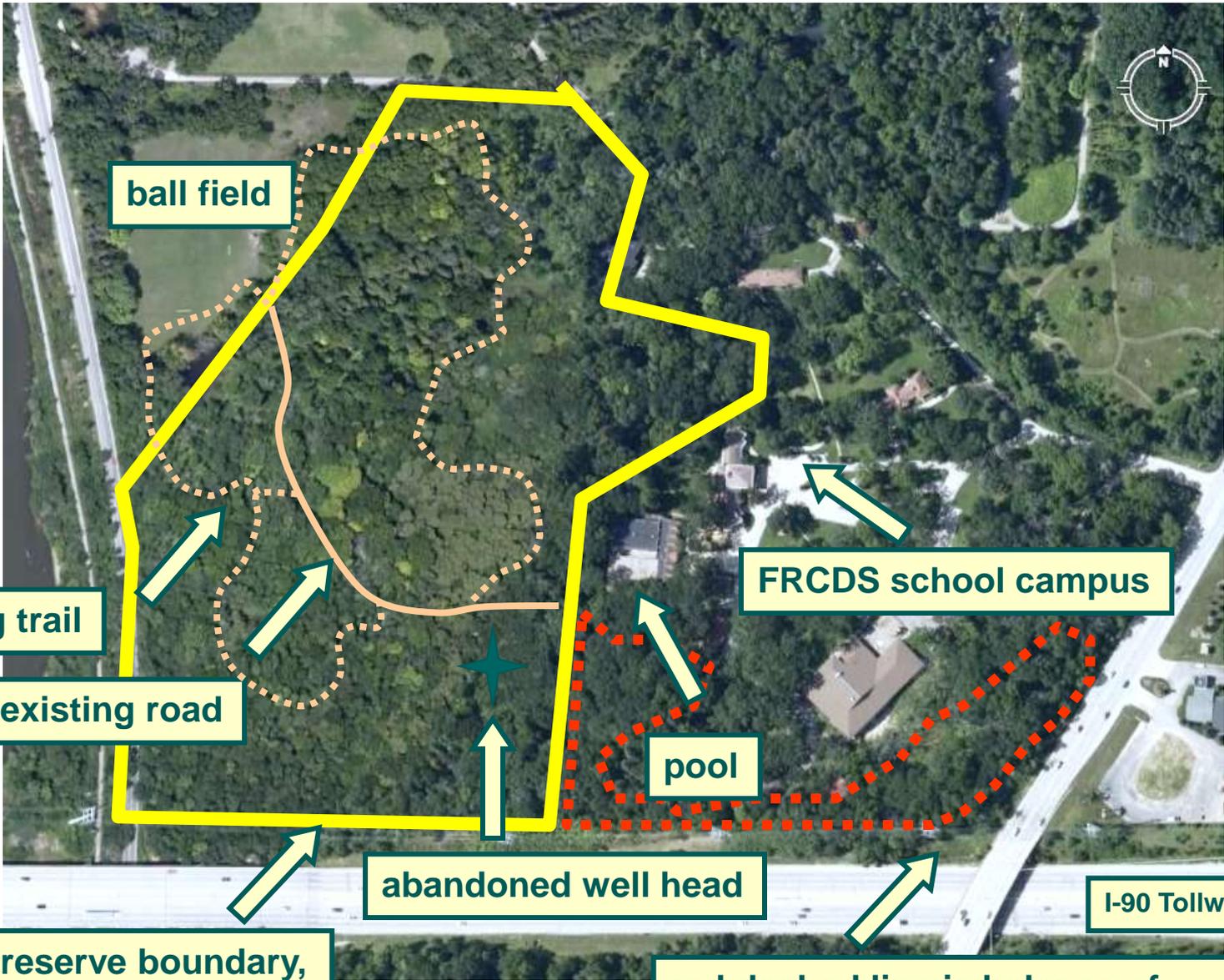
**water emerging from well head**

**Existing well may be impacting groundwater; currently groundwater surfaces at this point and flows into natural stream course.**

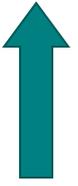
**If studies show removal of well head would improve groundwater, (and as funds become available), FRCDS would remove wellhead.**



**Students at Fox River Country Day School – removing buckthorns. FRCDS reserves right to continue to use site for environmental education programs in the manner to which they have become accustomed.**



N



ball field

existing trail

existing road

abandoned well head

FRCDS school campus

pool

I-90 Tollway

preserve boundary, solid yellow line

red dashed line is balance of INAI site (not included in proposed nature preserve)

Fox Valley Land Foundation applied for IDNR C2000 grant; pivotal in restoration of this site and created new mind set that has led to commitment by Board of Trustees to move forward with dedication of site as Nature Preserve



Remove invasive species from groundwater discharge zone identified above

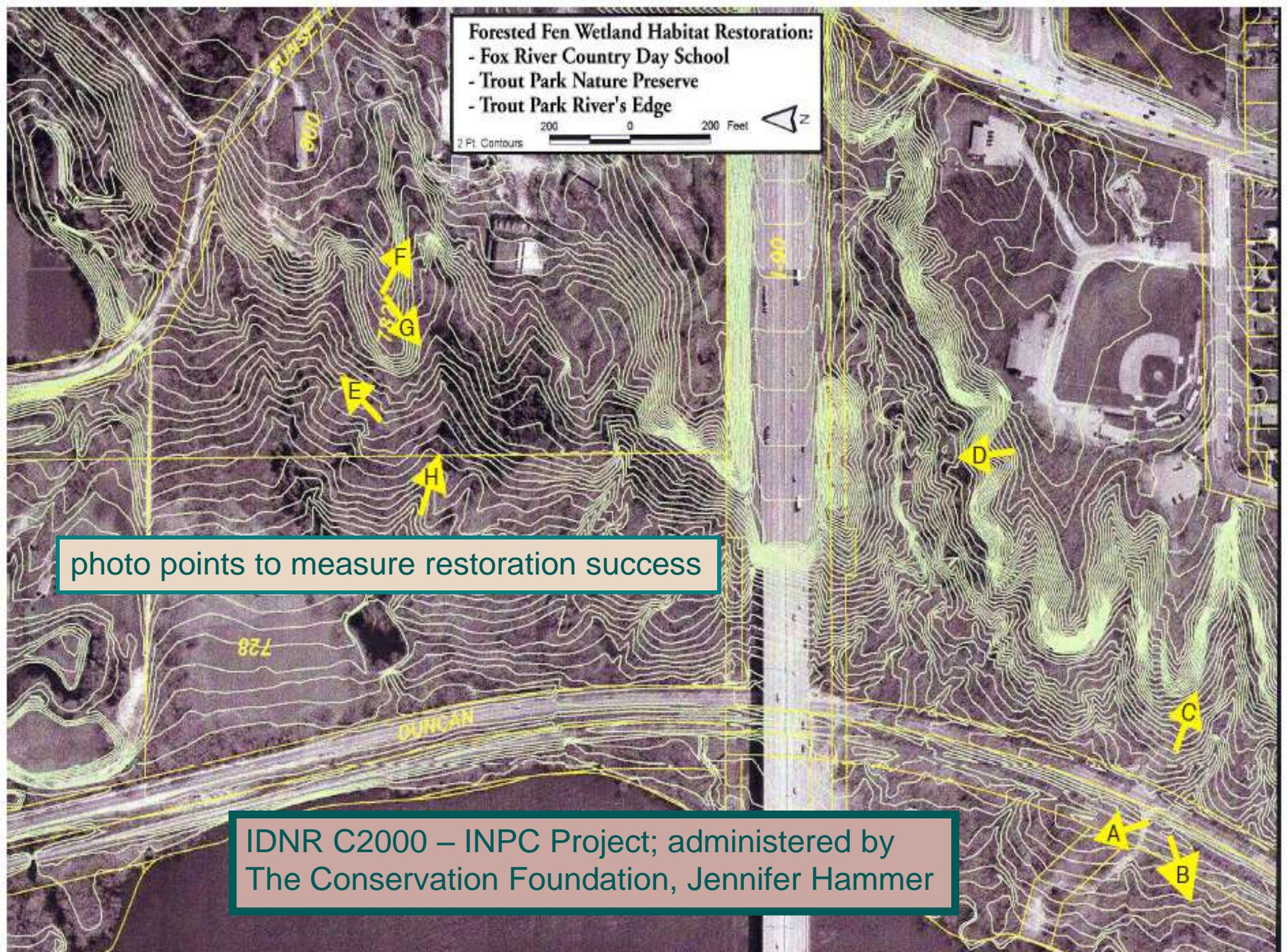
Fox River Country Day School; aka Chicago Junior School Fen

**Forested Fen Wetland Habitat Restoration:**  
- Fox River Country Day School  
- Trout Park Nature Preserve  
- Trout Park River's Edge

2 Ft. Contours      200      0      200 Feet      

photo points to measure restoration success

IDNR C2000 – INPC Project; administered by  
The Conservation Foundation, Jennifer Hammer





View F



View F



View E



View E



View H



View H



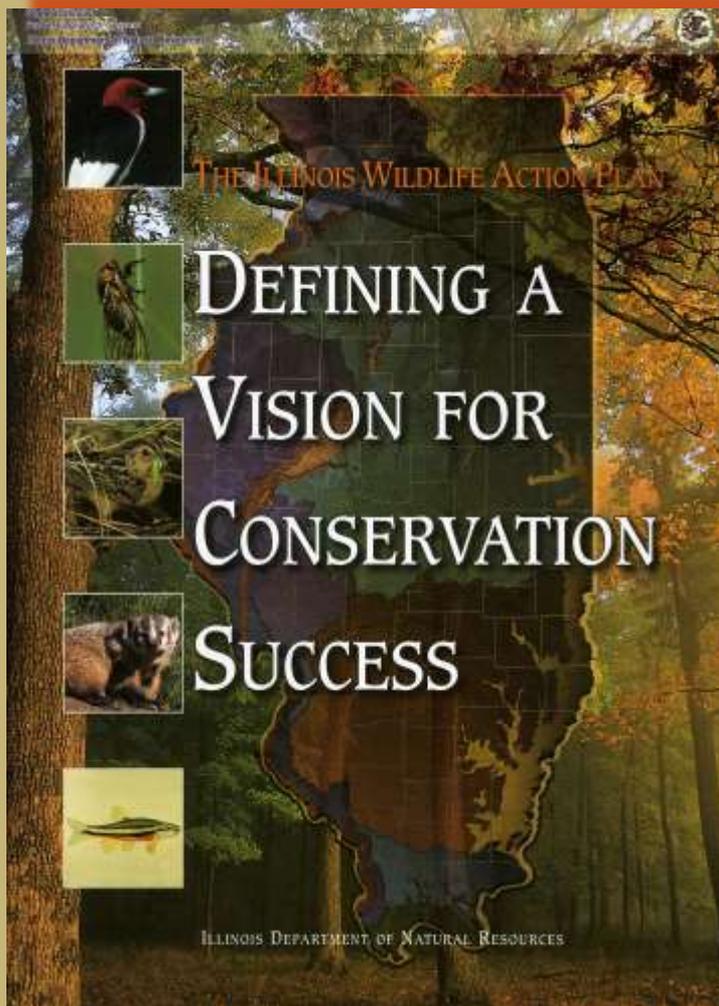
**View H**



Vicinity G looking up slope

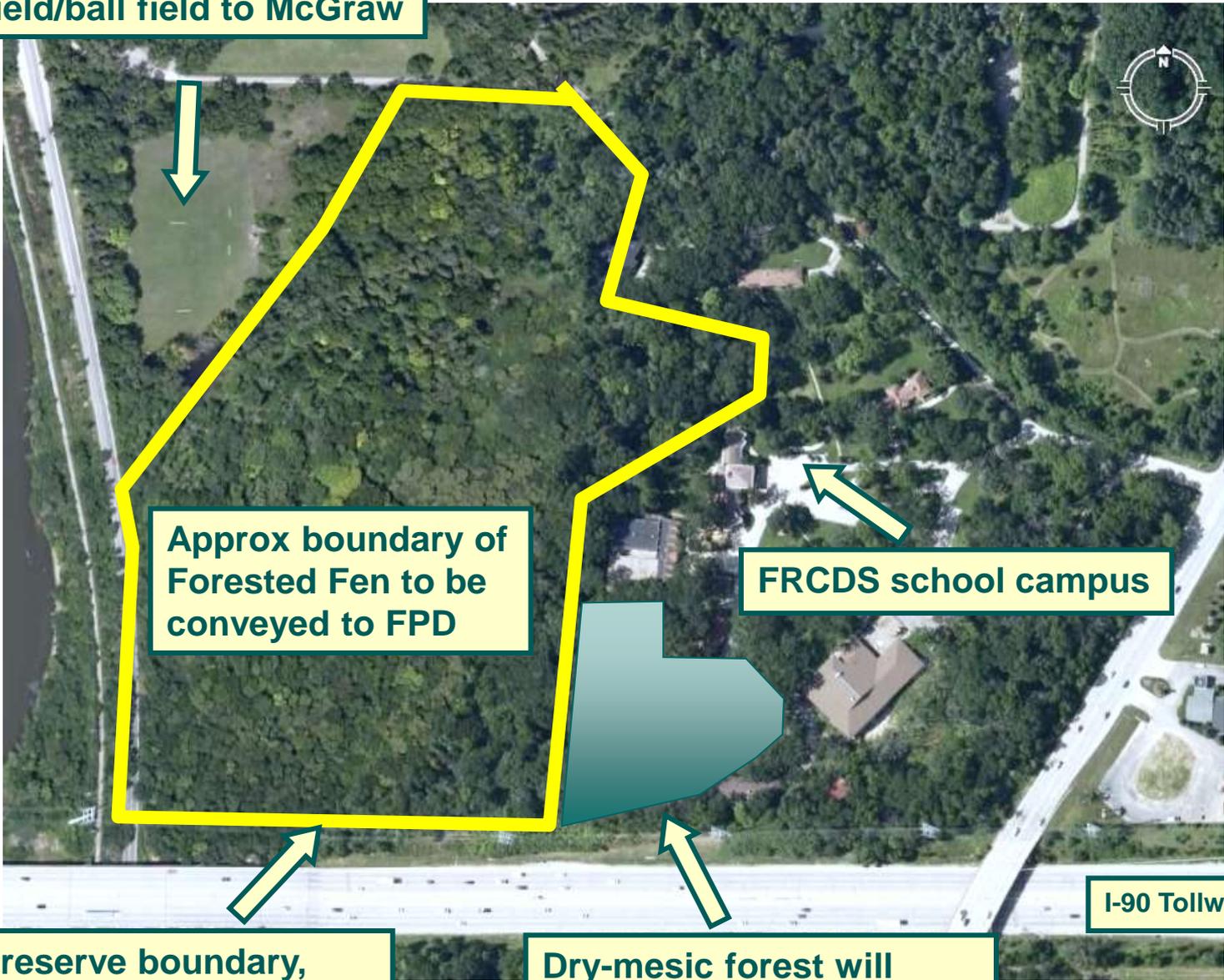


Vicinity G (maybe little north) looking up slope



The proposed addition supports elements of IDNR Wildlife Action Plan – wetlands campaign; restore and manage high-quality wetlands

Old field/ball field to McGraw



Approx boundary of Forested Fen to be conveyed to FPD

FRCDS school campus

I-90 Tollway



preserve boundary, solid yellow line – from proposal

Dry-mesic forest will also be conveyed to FPD.

## Proposed Forested Fen Nature Preserve

1. This 23-acre preserve will protect the balance of the surviving forested fen community in Illinois and a restored calcareous seep wetland (both considered imperiled globally),
2. The calcareous seep supports a population of the State-threatened common bog arrow grass, and
3. Reaffirms the commitment of the Fox River Country Day School to preservation of this site while retaining the site for environmental education.



## Acknowledgements:

The Fox River Country Day School, its staff and Board of Trustees merit acknowledgement. Karen Morse, Head of School, and Tim Holzworth (naturalist/teacher) are deserving of special recognition for their respective commitments to preservation and stewardship.

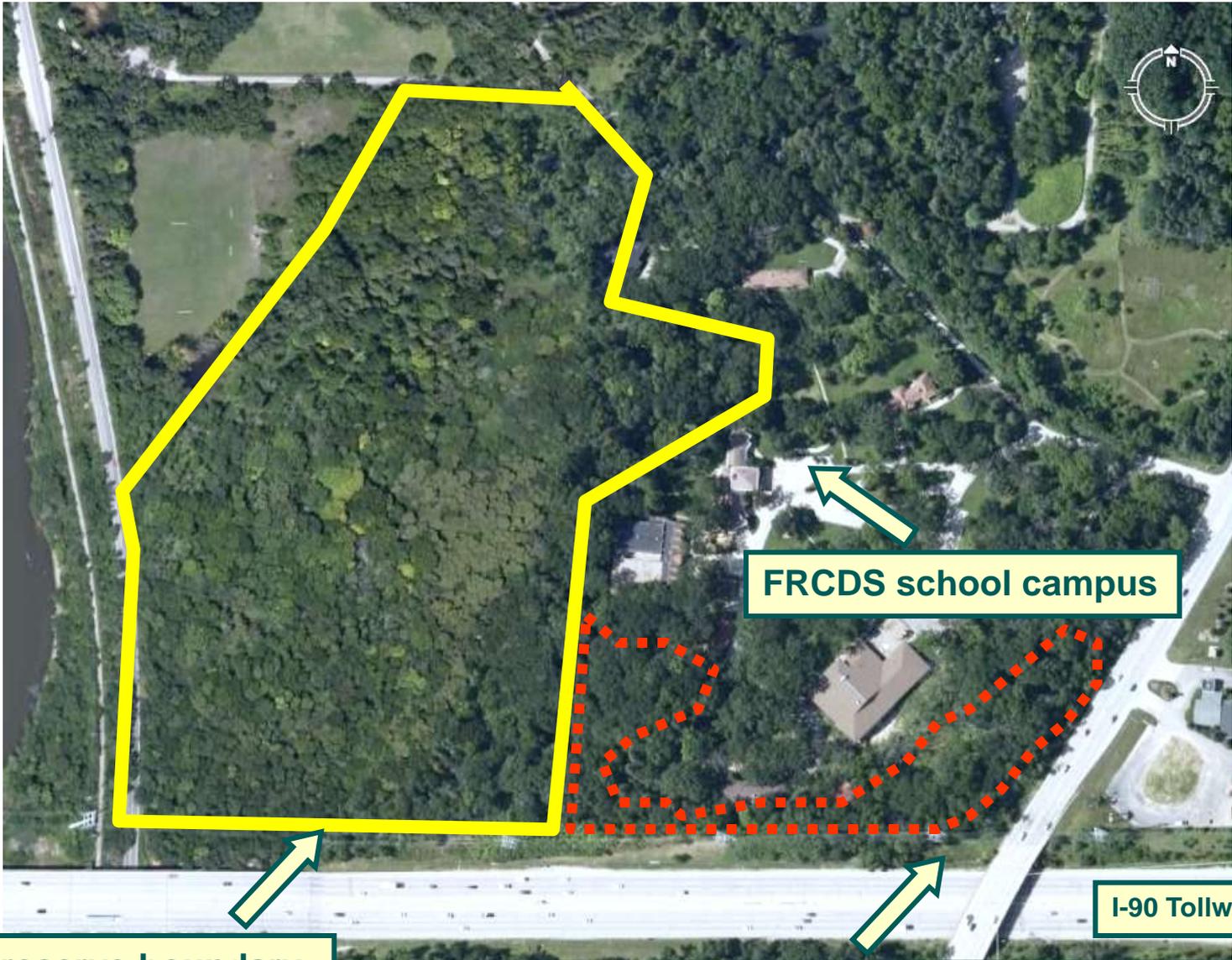
The IDNR C2000 program was especially helpful in funding restoration and helped foster a renewed appreciation for these unique wetland resources.





## **Updates since the site was presented for preliminary approval for dedication:**

- 1. Fox River Country Day School threatened with foreclosure.**
- 2. The Conservation Foundation, INPC began exploring financial options/  
- purchase of conservation easement.**
- 3. Fox River Country Day School went into foreclosure/site listed for sale.**
- 4. INPC, TCF began exploring options to protect site with The Tollway Authority  
(Bryan Wagner and leadership).**
- 5. INPC, TCF reached out to the FPD of Kane County, City of Elgin, and McGraw  
Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (mitigation for I-90  
road-widening project).**
- 6. The Tollway Authority (\$2.6 m) and McGraw Wildlife (\$600 k) agreed to  
purchase the site and convey property to the City of Elgin (Mayor Kaptain).**
- 7. City in turn agreed to convey forested fen to FPD Kane County, small  
acreage to McGraw Wildlife Foundation.**
- 8. FPD has a specified period of time to dedicate site as nature preserve and  
has responsibility for performance standards specified by Corps.**
- 9. City of Elgin plans will honor easement to “freeze” existing footprint of  
buildings to protect groundwater recharge zone and remove some buildings.  
Goal (Mayor Kaptain) is to provide conservation day camp at site.**
- 10. INPC continues to support management with IDNR NAAF funding/INPC  
funding (\$7500) in 2014.**



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FRCDS school campus

I-90 Tollway

preserve boundary, solid yellow line

red dashed line is balance of INAI site (not included in proposed nature preserve)