

## CLASS III SPECIAL GROUNDWATER CLASSIFICATION:

Special Resource Groundwater is a unique classification for areas that either have been determined by the Illinois Pollution Control Board to be “*demonstrably unique... or...vital for a particularly sensitive ecological system...or...groundwater that contributes to a dedicated nature preserve...*” (Ill. Admin. Code 620.230). The Commission has found that this designation is a useful planning tool for developers and consultants in guiding them from causing harm to our state’s dedicated lands protected under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act (525 ILCS 30). This designation requires that Class III areas be held to Class I (or drinking water) standards. However, an important distinction is that the Class III designation allows an area to be subjected to adjusted water quality standards if it is found that certain chemical constituents degrade the specific ecological community. For example, in a rare and sensitive high-quality fen wetland nature preserve in northeastern Illinois, the Commission could petition the Illinois Pollution Control Board to decrease the allowable concentration of chlorides to sustain this highly adapted ecosystem

The Illinois Water and Geological Surveys prepare, on behalf of the Commission, Class III Special Resource Groundwater petitions. As detailed in Illinois Administrative Code 620.230.b, the written petitions are submitted to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) where it will be reviewed for technical accuracy. The proposal, upon confirmation by IEPA, will be published in the Environmental Register for a 45-day public comment period. Within 60 days after the public comment period IEPA will publish the final listing in the Environmental Register or notify the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission of the reasons for not listing the Nature Preserve. At least once each year IEPA will publish a list in the Environmental Register of all dedicated Nature Preserves which are designated Class III Special Resource Groundwater.

**Nature Preserves (NP) with Class III designations:** (15) Boone Creek Fen NP, McHenry Co.; Amberin Ash Ridge NP, McHenry Co. (lies within Boone Creek Fen NP Class III); Pautler NP, Monroe Co.; Stemler Cave NP, St. Clair Co.; Fogelpole Cave NP, Monroe Co.; Julia M. and Royce L. Parker Fen NP, McHenry Co.; Illinois Beach NP, Lake Co.; Bluff Spring Fen NP, Cook Co.; Braidwood Dunes and Savanna NP, Will Co.; Lake in the Hills Fen NP, McHenry Co.; Volo Bog NP, Lake Co.; Elizabeth Lake NP, McHenry Co.; Lockport Prairie NP, Will Co.; Romeoville Prairie NP, Will Co.; Armin Krueger Speleological Area NP, Monroe Co.

**Studies completed by the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) and petitioned to IEPA for review:** George B. Fell NP, Ogle Co.; Spring Grove Fen NP, McHenry Co.; Goose Lake Prairie NP, Grundy Co.; Trout Park NP, Kane Co.; Cotton Creek Marsh NP, McHenry Co.; Gladstone Fen NP, McHenry Co.

**Next studies to be petitioned upon receipt from ISGS:** Searls Park Prairie NP, Winnebago Co.; Sand Ridge NP, Cook Co.; Yonder Prairie NP, McHenry Co.

**Next INPC sites to be studied by ISGS:** Thomas W. and Elizabeth Moews Dore Seep NP, Whiteside Co.; Long Run Seep NP, Will Co.; Apple River Canyon NP, JoDaviess Co.

There are currently 351 Illinois Nature Preserves which encompass 46,172 acres in 83 counties. Once a natural area is dedicated as a nature preserve, it is provided protection and defense in perpetuity by statute. The Class III Special Resource Groundwater designation assists the Commission in protection of these sites.