



## ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Helping to Preserve the Flora and Fauna of Illinois since 1897

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Illinois Audubon Society Protects Property along the Cache River

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Audubon Society announced today that it has purchased an ecologically valuable land parcel in Johnson County, Illinois. Northwest of Cache River State Natural Area, this 303-acre parcel is a large tract of upland, bottomland and swamp forest along the Upper Cache River.

Following its acquisition earlier this year within the Shawnee National Forest's Lusk Creek Wilderness Area, Illinois Audubon's Executive Director Tom Clay touted his organization's recent efforts to save some of Illinois' most valuable aquatic and terrestrial natural communities. "The ecological importance of preserving these high quality upland and forested wetlands is immeasurable." Clay said adding "The Cache River wetlands provide critical habitat to migratory waterfowl and shorebirds – critical enough to be one of only 22 sites in the United States designated as a RAMSAR Convention Wetland of International Importance."

Previously owned by the late Marion and Henrietta Faulkner, the family was insistent their land be protected from future development and managed in accordance with the property's ancient natural characteristics. According to their son and Estate executor Bill Faulkner, "Our parents would be pleased at Illinois Audubon Society's ownership of this land. They cared deeply for their property and now it will be saved from development, continue providing habitat for rare and endangered species and be a place for everyone to enjoy now and for generations to come."

In managing the site, the Illinois Audubon Society intends to work closely with the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture, a cooperative partnership that includes the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), US Fish and Wildlife Service-Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This unique public-private partnership shares a common vision to protect and restore a riparian corridor within the Cypress Creek/Cache River watersheds. "We were pleased to hear that Illinois Audubon acquired the Faulkner tract" stated Liz Jones, Assistant Refuge Manager at Cypress Creek NWR; "this 300 acres of land will contribute to the establishment of a continuous riparian corridor along the Cache River beginning at IDNR's Cypress Pond and progressing south through the Refuge to the Cache River outlet at the Mississippi River."

In addition to Illinois Audubon Society's land acquisition funds, proceeds used to purchase this parcel came from a previous grant to Illinois Audubon from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. Established in December 1999, the Foundation invests in clean energy development and land preservation efforts, working with communities and residents to improve environmental quality in Illinois.

The mission of the Illinois Audubon Society is to promote the perpetuation and appreciation of native plants and animals and the habitats that support them. Independent from National Audubon, the Illinois Audubon Society is a privately supported, not-for-profit, statewide organization. It was founded in 1897 and is Illinois' oldest private conservation organization with over 2300 members, 19 chapters and 13 affiliate groups. IAS currently owns and manages 12 wildlife sanctuaries and has saved over 2600 acres which are now being protected and managed for habitat and biodiversity throughout Illinois.

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