



**ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY
LOCAL SANCTUARY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORTS**

April 1, 2023 thru March 31, 2024

Annual Local Sanctuary Report : Entry # 4875

Sanctuary & Report Information

Sanctuary Name

Adams Wildlife Sanctuary

Report Time Period

2023-2024

Report Submitted by

Mike Holinga

Management Activities

Management Activities

Maintenance of 2.1 miles of trails. This includes clearing blockages, mulching and widening. Keeping benches free from vegetation and mowing grassy areas.

Removal of invasive species

Burning the prairie as needed

Maintaining the landscaping around the IAS Building

Removal of garbage from site as needed

Planning for new stewardship shed

Conducting educational programming for adults and school children

Planting appropriate native species as required

Maintaining and repairing the equipment as needed

Inventorying flora and fauna at Adams

Training volunteers

Participating Volunteers

Volunteer List

Mike Holinga Donna Holinga Mary Grundel

Jim Grundel Marylyn Robins Gail Runyon

Grace Norris Nick Klobuchar Greg Feeny

Stan Korza Allen Andrews Dan Moore

Mona Maas Ann Klose Martha Armour

Jeanne Handy Tom Handy Susan Allen

Joan McGrath Chris Liebman Kyra Copp

Veronica Fesser Rhetta Jack

Total Volunteer Hours

Total Volunteer Hours

1900

Donations

Donations

Several donations between \$100 and \$1000

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Contract Work and/or Grant Items

Contract/Grants

Spraying winter creeper in the sanctuary. Amount spent around \$1000.

Approximate Number of Visitors (Annually)

Number of Visitors

1500

Promotions

Contract and Grant Work

Website
Facebook page
Illinois Times (listing activities and events)
Local tv stations (covering activities)

Annual Local Sanctuary Report : Entry # 4800

Sanctuary & Report Information

Sanctuary Name

Green River Lowlands Preserve

Report Time Period

April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

Report Submitted by

Deb Carey

Management Activities

Management Activities

Successful research projects and restoration of savanna, wetland, and prairie at Amboy Marsh beginning December 4, 2012 (date of acquisition) through March 2024 has been swift and satisfying because of dedicated volunteers, and available funding. The volunteer Local Sanctuary Committee (LSC) of Birdsong Chapter assumes the daily role in restoration activities and management of what is now called Green River Lowlands Preserve. The entire acres of Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve (Guanci, Spears, Hatch, Grigalauski, Ryback and Queen of the Prairie parcels) includes INAI Site #1621 and INAI Site #1111.

The same restoration and research efforts began on the date of acquisition of Gremel Nature Preserve, included within the Green River Lowlands Preserve, and including INAI Site #1828.

Current total of all parcels owned by Illinois Audubon Society in Lee County is 967 acres MOL.

There are not enough words to thank and glorify the volunteers who cheerfully spend hours in all kinds of weather caring for all sites. Not every volunteer is mentioned by name in this report but EVERY volunteer is appreciated! This sites would not exist but for volunteers.

The Volunteer Center at Amboy Marsh is well used by volunteers almost every day of the reporting period. Jim Hampson, donor of the Center and faithful volunteer, keeps the bird feeders and bird baths cleaned and filled 365 days of the year. Deb Doyle dedicated many hours as she scheduled and led our stewardship workday events in FY24.

Spring Bird Count, Christmas Bird Count and a Sandhill Crane Count were completed thanks to Diana Rod for organizing teams of counters, assigning count areas and compiling and reporting statistics

Bluebird boxes at AMNP and Gremel, and purple martin houses at AMNP, were maintained and checked throughout the nesting season. Jim Hampson, Jean Larson and Jack Hartford maintained the bird house trails and recorded nesting efforts.

Bill Rogers handled general maintenance of infrastructure, but more importantly, devoted every day to restoration plans and projects. Equipment maintenance and repairs were as expected and none out of the ordinary; good, well-running equipment is critical to managing the sites.

Dave and Amy Brewer are the media crew - they created newsletters, Facebook and the chapter webpage, plus maintained the two information kiosks at AMNP that welcome visitors and explain the fragile nature of the site.

Specific rules (no dogs or vehicles, etc.) are posted, as are current trail closures due to wildlife nesting or wet conditions.

Deb Carey handled administrative duties, and kept the port-a-pots in pristine condition.

Improving habitat for endangered Blanding's turtle is a prime goal; a female Blanding's turtle was live-trapped in June 2023 in Willow Wetland. This female was outfitted with a transmitter and she was tracked for many weeks. Unfortunately, the transmitter

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failed (as did the entire box of transmitters utilized by Dr. King in 2023).

The Green River Lowlands Preserve offers unparalleled opportunities for natural area restoration due to their hydric and sandy soils. First priority has always been given to the identification and restoration of those areas which have best resisted succession and retained their natural, pre-settlement integrity, and to the implementation of management strategies designed to preserve indigenous characteristics with the least possible negative impact. It is rewarding to volunteers that high quality native vegetation often emerges after invasive species are removed. This has been the normal reaction – no seeding has been used in any restoration effort. Herbaceous species, with number nine and ten S&W ratings, that have returned to areas cleared of invasives are listed in a Conservative Species Inventory.

All inventories are available for review: Flora; Avian; Mammal; Herpetological; Moth; Lepidoptera; Sound Recording; Fungus; Odonata; and Insect.

Researchers are required to apply for an IAS permit and an Illinois Nature Preserves permit if needed. Researchers must provide a written report on their activities including data collected.

FY24 Research included:

Bill Handel – Flora

Dr. Richard King/David Mauger/Tom Anton – Herpetological

Dr. Bo Dziadyk – Ondatra zibethicus

Tara Beveroth – Avian

Isaac Stewart – Entomology

Professional research projects are critical to successful restoration and management of the site. Individual researchers greatly add to our data collection, and have provided information on methods and areas that enhance restoration. All research reports are available for review. Volunteer research is invaluable since it covers almost every day of the year.

Both sites were completely closed to visitors and volunteers during shotgun deer seasons since adjacent neighbors all hunt. Although no hunting is allowed on the Green River Lowlands Preserve, we close the sites as much as possible without interfering with normal site activities, as a precaution.

LSC/Birdsong Chapter is indebted to IAS staff for providing administrative and technical assistance, and for answering hundreds of emails, texts and phone calls.

LSC/Birdsong Chapter is grateful to the IAS Board for their continued support.

Participating Volunteers

Volunteer List

Jim Hampson
Dave Brewer
Amy Brewer
John McCrosky
Deb Doyle
Cassandra Rodgers
Bill Rogers
Damian Considine
Mike Carr
Clyde Seeley
Connie Dickinson
Steve Gillam
Cheryl Newlan
Randy Singleton
Dave Hinkston
Jack Hartford
Bob Chinn

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Tim Smith
Teresa Smith
Diana Rod
Gene Rod
Alyssa Rod
Lonnie Sheaffer
Dan Shaefer
Dick Todd
Greg Hunter
Steve Hager
Bo Dziadyk
Alice Topping
Ernie Topping
Jan Williams
Deb Carey

We sincerely mourn the loss of dedicated and much-loved volunteer Tom Williams.

Total Volunteer Hours

Total Volunteer Hours

4538

Donations

Donations

Jerry and Christine Guanci, continue to support the original Amboy Marsh site with an annual donation of \$5,000.00.

Contract Work and/or Grant Items

Contract/Grants

The NAWCA grant to restore wetland areas including Big Marsh, Wet Pond, Willow Wetland and 50 Turtle Head Pond at the original Amboy Marsh location was stalled due to inclement weather and an issue with a new contractor. The grant will continue through FY25.

The ICECF Stewardship grant at Gremel Nature Preserve restored INAI Site #1828, a high quality sedge meadow - this project included removing invasive woody brush, and controlling herbaceous invasives. The larger property surrounding the INAI site has significant ecological value, and offers opportunities for restoration of natural communities that were once widespread in the Green River Lowlands, but are rare today. Biological inventories of Gremel Nature Preserve include over 212 avian species and 440 floral species. Total expenditure for FY24 was \$34,000.00. 575 volunteer hours were a match for funding for part of this grant. The grant will continue in FY25.

An IDNR Natural Areas Stewardship grant was completed successfully and within the allotted time frame at Gremel Nature Preserve. This grant enhanced INAI Site #1828 and surrounding wetland areas. The grant totaled \$54,000.00 in FY24. Numerous large and small restoration projects included removal of woody and herbaceous invasives at all sites during FY24, and utilized volunteers and contractors.

Approximate Number of Visitors (Annually)

Number of Visitors

875

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Promotions

Contract and Grant Work

Website:

amboymarsh@illinoisaudubon.org

<https://amboymarsh.wixsite.com/amboymarsh>

FaceBook: Birdsong Chapter-Stewards of Amboy Marsh/Gremel

Contact us: amboymarsh@illinoisaudubon.org

Additional Information

Select Files to Upload

- [Female-Blandings-turtle-June-2023-Amboy-Marsh.jpg](#)
- [Amboy-Marsh-Orchids-in-bloom-May-2023.jpg](#)
- [Volunteers-at-Work.jpg](#)
- [Volunteer-Work.jpg](#)
- [Prickly-Pear-Blooming.jpg](#)
- [Prescribed-Fire-Crew.jpg](#)
- [ICECF-grant-outlet-drain.jpg](#)
- [E.-Hognose-Snake-Amboy-Marsh-Nature-Preserve.jpg](#)
- [NAS-grant-Chelone-glabra-turtlehead.jpg](#)

Annual Local Sanctuary Report : Entry # 4807

Sanctuary & Report Information

Sanctuary Name

Hickory Hills Chapter Hillsboro, Illinois

Report Time Period

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Report Submitted by

Chapter Rep Don Krefft

Management Activities

Management Activities

Hickory Hills Chapter (also known as H&B Bremer Sanctuary) has a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers. On a typical Tuesday or Thursday morning there will be 6 to 12 volunteers busy making Bremer Sanctuary a nice place to visit. With over 5 miles of hiking trails, mowing and trail maintenance takes a lot of time. Monitoring 50 bird nest boxes is done weekly during the nesting season. Volunteers perform repair and maintenance on all machinery, unless under warranty. We try to be good stewards of the land and also Illinois Audubon finances. Restoration is an important aspect of efforts at Bremer, with much time devoted to collecting grass and forb seeds of local ecotype and removing invasive species. Volunteers maintain detailed lists of nest box inspections, and bird, tree and forb inventories. We are very proud of our active education programs. The public is invited to attend educational seminars and nature walks year-round.

Participating Volunteers

Volunteer List

Jerome Epplin – Retired MD, helps with restoration. Very handy to have around considering the average age of volunteers is +70.
Henry Eilers – a walking encyclopedia on many aspects of nature. Been involved at Bremer since its inception.
Ron Gazda – the ultimate handyman, can fix or build nearly anything.
Jim Hefley – retired IDNR biologist. Valuable resource with education programs.
Don Krefft – Chapter Rep and Treasurer. Assists with restoration. Also serves as Latrine Orderly.
Sonja Luckett – maintains and updates outdoor bulletin board monthly.
Dane Murphy – Retired from power company. Besides wiring knowledge, also has building skills. Helps with trail maintenance.
Jerry Prater -former Chapter Rep and IAS Board Secretary. Helps with trail maintenance and community outreach.
Nancy Redman – devotes endless hours heading the education program and community outreach. Editor of the quarterly chapter newsletter. Coordinates programs with 4H, various area school groups, and Facebook posts, Monitors nest box trail weekly.
Bruce Redman – Chapter President. Spend endless hours at Bremer, maintaining trails, meeting contractors etc. Assists Chapter Rep in researching many matters.
Dick Rompasky – long time chapter volunteer. Assists with trail maintenance and knowledgeable of chapter history.
Bob Schwandner – retired carpenter. Lots of energy, skilled worker. Lowers average age of volunteers a year or two.
Ken Schaal – retired biology teacher. Another walking encyclopedia of nature facts. Heads restoration program. Lead author of Sanctuary Management Plan.
Jim Yount – Tireless worker who can fix or build nearly anything.

Total Volunteer Hours

Total Volunteer Hours

1488

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Donations

Donations

Sharon Page Memorial \$500.00
Montgomery County Tourism \$250.00
Decatur Audubon \$300.00

Contract Work and/or Grant Items

Contract/Grants

Contractor Bill Hunyadi has done extensive restoration work removing honeysuckle and timber stand improvement. He is paid from IAS funds.

Approximate Number of Visitors (Annually)

Number of Visitors

6000

Promotions

Contract and Grant Work

refer to www.bremersanctuary.com

Sanctuary & Report Information
Sanctuary Name
Plum Island Eagle Sanctuary
Report Time Period
July thru October 2023
Report Submitted by
Don Goerne
Management Activities
Management Activities
Removed approximately 425 protective tree cages from trees planted during the C2000 grant from 2006-2009 and subsequent plantings. Removed 1,723 lbs. of flood debris during a one day July cleanup day spearheaded by IAS staff and board members, Starved Rock Audubon members, and Chad Pregracke and his Living Lands and Waters staff. Numerous other volunteers helped as well. Thirty Streator High FFA members, two faculty advisors and twenty-one SRAS members participated in a September workday where over one hundred tree cages were disassembled and twenty-seven hardwood trees were planted. In all, a total of ninety-four volunteers assisted at one time or another during the twelve workdays in 2023.
Participating Volunteers
Volunteer List
Please see above.
Total Volunteer Hours
Total Volunteer Hours
773
Donations
Donations
Nothing substantial
Contract Work and/or Grant Items
Contract/Grants
None
Promotions
Contract and Grant Work
Matthew Klein, a local videographer, filmed the FFA workday that took place at the end of September. Editing and final production of this workday video has not been completed as of yet.

Sanctuary & Report Information

Sanctuary Name

War Bluff Valley Wildlife Sanctuary

Report Time Period

April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

Report Submitted by

John B. Wallace

Management Activities

Management Activities

Spring activities revolved around clearing and mowing trails on the sanctuary as well as some past due yard work around the Caretaker's house. Some effort also went into removing an excess of old furniture and debris stored in the small guest "house" by the previous caretaker.

The age of the lawn mower became obvious as the caretaker and volunteers struggled with keeping the riding mower operational. A good deal of volunteer stewardship time was also devoted to performing periodic maintenance to the mowers, the tractor and the UTV including changing motor oil and hydraulic fluid.

A small plumbing repair was needed below the fixture on the Kestrel Hall sink and the foot valve on the intake pipe in Dragonfly Pond needed replacing. This pipe supplies water to the pump inside the equipment barn which feeds two hydrants, one near the parking area next to Kestrel Hall and the other near the goldfish pond next to the caretakers house.

Spring Bird Count participants documented 68 species during a portion of their day while participating in the Pope County Bird Count.

July and August Stewardship Days were primarily devoted to preparing the Sanctuary for the upcoming Hummingbird Day on July 22 and Insect Awareness and Appreciation Day (IAAD) on August 26.

Hummingbird Day was met with stellar weather, which assisted with attracting 85 visitors which watched the busy hummingbird feeding station and participated in several hummingbird workshop presentations and a migration game as well as hummingbird crafts. The program was followed by the Shawnee Chapter's Annual Meeting.

IAAD was plagued with weather woes, unfortunately. Scattered thunderstorms were forecasted along with an extreme heat advisory so the number of participants ranged between 50 and 60. Participants seemed fascinated by a butterfly program, two different aquatic insect field expeditions, an insect zoo and insect crafts. The end of the day was capped off with a lasagna dinner featuring varied pot luck side dishes and desserts, the really cool raffle and music from Rog 'n' Bob 'n' Ruth Ann.

October and November were primarily devoted to clearing trails, winterizing equipment and draining the two outdoor pump water systems.

On December 10 the Shawnee Chapter hosted the War Bluff Valley Sanctuary Open House with a presentation on Southern Illinois Stone Forts by retired history teacher and lay archaeologist Mark Motsinger. The planned Hike up to the War Bluff stone fort on the Shawnee was cancelled due to cold, rainy weather, but the relatively small group of visitors still enjoyed the product of the chili cook-off and the warmth of the wood burner in Kestrel Hall. A couple of musicians even entertained the group into the evening hours.

More trail work continued through the winter and as warm weather began to return to War Bluff Valley along with the emergence of calling frogs and toads, the wildflowers and the return of forest birds, work began in

earnest to dig footings, construct a form and pour concrete for a concrete pad to mount the Illinois Audubon Cardinal sign.

Participating Volunteers

Volunteer List

Kelsey Bowe, Kerry Camp, Kathryn Carter, Emily Carter, Cindy Champeau, Tom Esposito, Karen Frailey, Debbie Hogg, Bob Hughes, Richard Jones, Corina Lang, Henry Mulder, Kevin Nagele, Sam Stearns, Deb Van Vlyman, Jonathan Voelz, Sharon Voelz, and John Wallace.

Total Volunteer Hours

Total Volunteer Hours

823

Donations

Donations

No donations

Contract Work and/or Grant Items

Contract/Grants

No contract work or grant items other than repair work done to the John Deere Lawn mower by Sydenstricker Nobbe Partners in Norris City for \$935.

Jeremy Hogg in Simpson, also performed repair work on the Polaris Ranger for \$210.

Approximate Number of Visitors (Annually)

Number of Visitors

400

Promotions

Contract and Grant Work

See attached files of event flyers and newspaper column below.

Additional Information

Select Files to Upload

- [Southern-Illinois-experiences-2nd-recent-solar-eclipse-WBVS-Sun-Times.pdf](#)
- [27th-Annual-IAAD-2023-flyer.pdf](#)
- [War-Bluff-Open-House-Flyer-12.9.23.pdf](#)
- [2023-Hummingbird-Day-flyer.pdf](#)