



Helen and Betty Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary Local Sanctuary Committee Annual Report Fiscal Year 2020

Reporting Time Period: April 1, 2020 2019 – March 31, 2020

Report Submitted by: Don Krefft

Management Activities

Hickory Hills Chapter, AKA Bremer Sanctuary, has a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers. On a normal Tuesday or Thursday morning anywhere from 6 to 12 volunteers are busy making the sanctuary an appealing place to visit. With over 5 miles of hiking trails, mowing and trail maintenance takes a lot of time. Monitoring of 50 blue bird nest boxes is performed regularly. Regular repair and maintenance of all machinery, unless under warranty, is performed by the volunteers. We try to be good stewards of the land and also Illinois Audubon finances. Restoration is an important aspect of efforts at Bremer, trying to return the 206 acres to how it might have appeared prior to European settlement. Much time is spent removing invasive species, and also collecting and disbursing seeds from native grasses and forbs in order to preserve and expand natural communities of plants and animals. Volunteers maintain list of birds, trees and shrubs. Detailed records are maintained of inspections of blue bird nest boxes. The Illinois Spring Bird Count is performed each year in early May. In September we hosted the 3rd annual bird banding by Lincoln Land Association of Bird Banders, which also included activities for kids. The following day we hosted an "all about trees" program. In November the Chapter annual meeting, open to the public, was held featuring IAS Executive Director Jim Herkert who gave an interesting program on bird migration. And on New Year's Day, we hosted the annual walk and pot luck lunch, which if the weather cooperates, has attracted nearly 100 people eager to start the year off right.

Participating Volunteers

Henry Eilers - his knowledge of nature seems limitless as does his energy for a 80+ year old man. Highly respected throughout the state by naturalists.

Ron Gazda - the ultimate handyman - can build anything and fix nearly everything.
Jim Hefley - retired aquatic biologist. A valuable resource.
Don Krefft - involved in restoration efforts. Serves as Chapter Rep., Treasurer and latrine orderly.
Sonya Luckett - performs monthly updates on bulletin boards.
Ed Martin - trail maintenance and keeps fuel cans filled.
Dane Murphy - retired from power company. Knowledgeable in building arts and electrical matters.
Jerry Prater - former Chapter Rep. and now serves as Bremer Secretary. Primarily involved in trail maintenance and community outreach.
Nancy Redman - devotes many hours to preparing the quarterly newsletter. Very active as Head of education program and social outreach. Also monitors blue bird nest boxes.
Bruce Redman - Active in trail maintenance. Assists Chapter Rep in many aspects of sanctuary operations.
Dick Rompasky - Long time steward with knowledge of Bremer history. Primarily involved in woodworking and trail maintenance.
Carl Savage - Long serving steward with extensive knowledge of Bremer history. Primarily involved in trail maintenance. Carl is happiest on a tractor.
Ken Schaal - retired biology teacher with extensive knowledge of nature. Heads restoration activities.
Jim Yount - Can build or fix most anything. A tireless worker.

Total Volunteer Hours

7,449

Donations

The estate of Carol Buffetti, cousin of Chapter Steward Dick Rompasky, donated \$21,901 to the IAS with the funds to be earmarked for Bremer Sanctuary. The donor specifically requested that some of the funds be used to acquire a golf cart. A good used golf cart with rough terrain tires and good ground clearance was obtained for \$5,000. The remainder of funds were budgeted for a low-profile creek crossing structure over Cress Creek. This will allow easier access to the 47 acres across the creek.

Contract Work and/or Grant Items

During the reporting period we acquired a New S4 JD Gator with two bench seats and dump bed, also a new back pack blower with electric start. We set up trail cams and a new security system around the barn/education center. In September we built and installed several owl boxes. In October construction was completed on a viewing platform near the south silo. Materials were primarily cedar from old telephone poles and, of course, all labor was done by stewards. In June we purchased used books from a local library, we will use the books to stock the "little library" outside the education center. We were involved in the National 4H Council Pollinator Program and 5 classes of 5th graders from the local school attended an education program in the barn and then helped sow seeds on a prepared 1/8-acre plot near the south silo. We used grant funds from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and spent nearly \$11,000 on contractors to remove invasive honeysuckle south and west of the barn. We also installed a 12-foot chimney swift tower atop the south silo. In July we met with a NRCS engineer to plan the Cress Creek

Crossing Project. In February delivery of materials began for the project scheduled to be completed in Summer of 2020.

Approximate Number of Visitors (Annually)

4,700

Promotions

Refer to www.bremersanctuary.org for quarterly newsletters and other information highlighting all activities at Hickory Hills Chapter.

Like us on Facebook at "Bremer Sanctuary, Hickory Hills Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society".

Additional Information

Attachments

Photographs

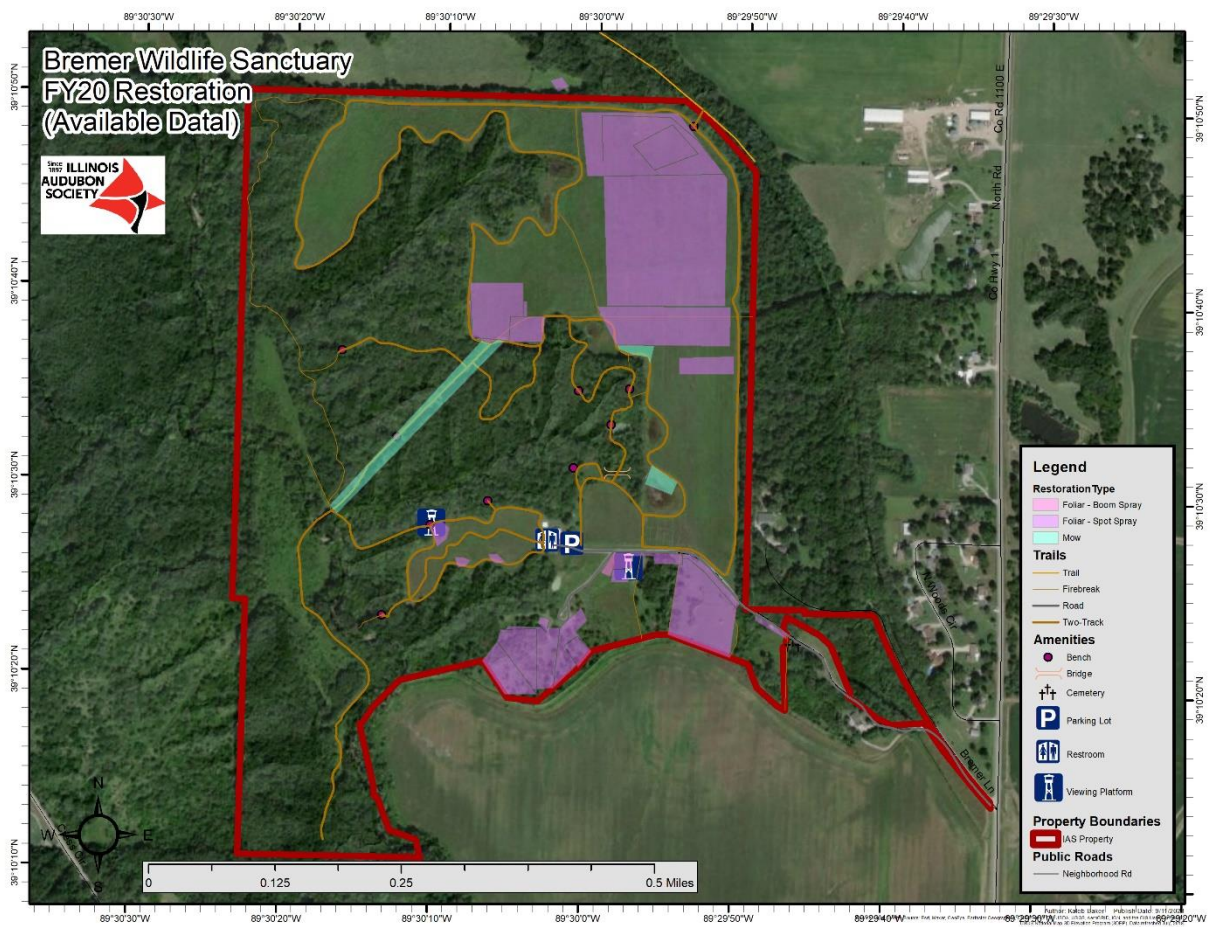
New lookout tower, November 19, 2019.



Kids pollinator program November 19, 2019.



Kids sowing pollinator prairie, November 19, 2019

Map

End.