

**8. Invasive Species Management.** Management of invasive species is one of the main stewardship activities on the property. Invasive species are species that were introduced to the area, whether by accident or on purpose, and have not evolved within this particular ecosystem. Native species are often out-competed as invasives absorb all the nutrients and sunlight in the ecosystem. Stewards manage invasive species through herbicide use, cutting, clearing, girdling and burning. Throughout the sanctuary you will see many brush piles, the result of hundreds of volunteer hours spent clearing invasive species. These piles will eventually decay and disappear but in the meantime provide food and shelter for many insects, birds and mammals.

**9. Native trees, shrubs and wildflowers.**

There are still invasives to eliminate in many parts of the sanctuary. However, in areas where the invasives have been removed, we've seen a resurgence of native understory plants. Species like eastern wahoo, spice bush, arrowwood, elderberry, coralberry and other viburnums have been sprouting up. As well as wild flowers such as bluebells, dutchman's breeches, trillium, green dragons, jack-in-the-pulpits, mayapples and Solomon's seal.

Visit us each season and you'll notice different species each time. In spring you'll see wild flowers, in summer the prairie starts to bloom, and in the fall as the leaves turn, the understory plants are beautiful in their varied pinks, reds and oranges.

**10. Thank you! Please visit us again!**

We hope you enjoyed your hike. To learn more about Adams or Illinois Audubon's work around the state, please visit our website: [illinoisaudubon.org](http://illinoisaudubon.org).



The Adams Family, 2315 Clear Lake Avenue, 1894

**Additional Margery Adams History**

According to friends Margery was quiet, kind and gentle. She liked to sew, make homemade jams, and write poetry and song lyrics. Neighbors remember her selling berries door-to-door. In a 1982 article in the State Journal Register Max Baker referred to her as a "product of pure prairie stock." She cared for her animal friends on the property, and later wanted a place for her "friends"—the birds, raccoons, and squirrels—to live in safety.

Margery lived here for 86 years and donated the property after her death in 1983. In 2006, the Board of Directors of the Illinois Audubon Society made the decision to permanently locate the Society's headquarters in Springfield at Adams Wildlife Sanctuary. The new facility was designed to blend the original 1857 home-stead with an administration wing, providing room for staff and a new indoor education center.



Miss Margery Adams  
Photo by Barry Locher  
1982



**GUIDELINES & INFORMATION**

Visitors are asked to stay on the trails for their own safety and to prevent damage to the plants. Poison ivy is abundant in the woods and prairie.

It was Margery's wish that her "friends" in the woods have a safe place to live. Please respect this as a home for native plants and animals. Removal or destruction of any material, plant or animal, is prohibited.

Please keep pets leashed.

Adams Wildlife Sanctuary is owned and operated by Illinois Audubon Society.

A schedule of events held at Adams Wildlife Sanctuary is available on the Illinois Birding Calendar at: [www.illinoisaudubon.org](http://www.illinoisaudubon.org).

You can support Adams by becoming a member of Illinois Audubon or by making a charitable contribution. Visit our website for membership and donation information: [illinoisaudubon.org](http://illinoisaudubon.org).

Friends of Adams Wildlife Sanctuary Newsletter  
If you would like to receive a copy or be a part of our Volunteer Stewardship Corps, please contact us at 217.544.2473 or [aws@illinoisaudubon.org](mailto:aws@illinoisaudubon.org).

***Thank you for visiting,  
enjoy our trails throughout the year.***

Adams Wildlife Sanctuary  
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Springfield, Illinois 62703

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**Illinois Audubon Society**



**Margery Adams Wildlife Sanctuary**

**Information & Trail Guide**



# Interpretive Trail Guide

## 1. Welcome to Adams Wildlife Sanctuary.

Adams is a 40-acre wildlife sanctuary. The habitats here include woodlands, wetlands and a prairie. All our trails are easy walking.

## 2. State HQ & Historic House.

You are now standing in front of the historic Adams family home and the state headquarters of Illinois Audubon Society. The Adams house was built in 1857 by James Logan. Margery Adams' grandfather, Lucian Adams, began purchasing the property in 1859. Margery's parents moved onto the property in 1894 and Margery was born in this house in 1897. In 1931, Margery's father, James Lucian died. Farming operations ceased and nature began to take over. For a decade Margery and her mother and her aunt lived in the house. In 1941, Margery's mother, Laura Lovenia Synder died. Margery lived alone on the property for the next 42 years.

## 3. History of the Land.

When Margery was young her father ran a fruit orchard and truck farm on the property. From records, it was discovered that in the early 1900s 1,800 fruit trees were present on the property, mostly apple and pear. In certain areas undulations are still visible in the land from the orchard that existed 100 years ago. The undulations are the result of ridges which were made to provide better drainage for the fruit trees and grape vines when the orchard was established in the late 1800s. Prior to being plowed in the 1840s, this area was a poorly drained tall grass prairie. The topsoil here is typical central Illinois prairie soil 30 inches deep.

## 4. Wildlife at Adams.

Spring and fall bird banding and bird surveys have documented nearly 80 species of migratory and non-migratory

birds that have passed through or resided at the sanctuary.

The woods have been home to coyotes, red foxes, white-tailed deer, raccoons, opossums, tree squirrels, ground squirrels and groundhogs. Volunteer have also identified American toads, cricket frogs, gray treefrogs, plains leopard frogs, rat snakes, prairie king snakes, common garter snakes and brown snakes in the sanctuary.

## 5. What is a Prairie?

You are now standing at the edge of the woods and at the beginning of our restored prairie. Feel the air, sun and wind change from one habitat to another! Edges are a great place to look for birds! Take a few moments and see who appears in the tree line. Prairies are composed of primarily grasses and then forbs or flowers. The tall grasses can be 8 to 12 feet high. Prairie plants, unlike typical lawn grasses, have long roots, making them drought tolerant and easy to care for. In fact up to 80% of the biomass of prairies is found underground where the plants' roots are protected from drought, grazing, fire and frost, all the extremes that typified historical prairie climates.

Once there were over 22 million acres of tall grass prairie in Illinois. Now only a little over 2,000 acres remain. Prairies dazzled early settlers, and once they discovered the productivity of the rich prairie soils, the land was plowed. Over the course of 200 years, Illinois lost all but 0.01% of its prairie. Original plots are rare, but many organizations and private homeowners are working to restore these native ecosystems.

## 6. Wetlands.

As you walk through the prairie, you will encounter a series of wetlands. A wetland is an area that is part land and part water and in which water is the controlling environmental factor. During the great seasonal migrations prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Illinois

## Enjoy the trails at Margery Adams Wildlife Sanctuary

### Trails are open dawn to dusk year-round

wetlands served as "stopovers" where millions of wetland birds rested and refueled. Demands of agriculture and development have shrunk Illinois' once vast wetland acreage to less than 10% of its former size.

If you approach slowly you might see mallards, wood ducks or killdeer. Notice all the crawfish chimneys in the mud or animal tracks if the wetland has temporarily dried up. Wetlands provide habitat for birds, insects, reptiles and amphibians. They help filter nutrients and help with flood control and sediment storage. Our largest wetland is hard to miss, but if you follow the prairie trail to the back of the property, you can stop and see the other wetlands and ephemeral pools.

**7. Prairie Restoration Project.** The Adams' prairie is a restored prairie. The area north of the large wetland was farmed until the 1980s. Three acres on the eastern edge of prairie were restored after the sanctuary was donated in 1982, and the rest of the land was unmanaged. Faster growing trees such as cottonwood, elm and box elder sprouted up over time. In 2009 with the help of the Landowner Incentive Grant and Friends of Sangamon Valley, invasive trees and plants were removed with heavy machinery. The large wetland was enlarged and four additional small ephemeral pools were created.

The prairie area was seeded with native grasses and forbs using a no-till drill. Since the restoration volunteer stewards have used burning, seeding, mowing and herbicides to maintain and manage the prairie. In the summer you can find bluebirds, indigo buntings, tree swallows, red-winged blackbirds, song sparrows and cedar waxwings among the grasses and willow trees. Visitors have also observed many butterflies, skippers and dragonflies.

