

## Illinois Audubon Society



**Program Area:**

Natural Areas Program

**County:**

Lee

**Grantee:**

Illinois Audubon Society

**Grant Date:**

October 2012

**Grant Amount:**

588,000

**Location:**

Amboy, IL 61310

About two miles southeast of Amboy is a 273-acre parcel comprised of prairie, meadow and savanna within the Green River Conservation Opportunity Area on the north edge of the Bloomington Moraine. Part of over 1,000 acres identified by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory as a high-quality site and the first parcel within this area to be purchased for protection, Amboy Marsh contains unparalleled examples of remnant native vegetation including black oak sand savannas, sedge meadows and dry sand prairie. This unique ecosystem provides refuge for state-listed plants and animals and with restoration efforts in progress, the populations of such species are hoped to increase.

What's next for this Project? This spring (April 2013) management began with the burning of three sections of Amboy Marsh. Burns are an important tool used in restoration to clear fire intolerant invasive species, while promoting the growth of the native species that have evolved to withstand fire. Plant, insect and bird inventories are also underway and are another valuable method utilized in land management. This information not only helps land managers protect and understand the species on their property, but can also be used state-wide in wildlife conservation plans. Many conservation groups, including Lee County Natural Area Guardians, Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District, The Natural Land Institute, The Nature Conservancy- Nachusa Grasslands staff, Augustana College Research Station and Richardson Wildlife Foundation, rallied to help protect this site. The Illinois Audubon Society has put together a committee made up of representatives from these partner groups who are now working together to manage, restore and open the site for public use consistent with Illinois Nature Preserves Commission guidelines, as part of the plan to petition for dedication as an Illinois Nature Preserve. This past winter (December 2013) Illinois Audubon Society, along with the joint effort of the Dixon Park District and the Lee County Soil and Conservation District, announced the creation of its 21st chapter, the Birdsong Chapter, located in Lee County. The Birdsong Chapter will be an integral part of the management efforts at Amboy Marsh.