

## LaSalle County Natural Area Guardians

Committee of LaSalle County SWCD

Web site: [www.lasalleswcd.org](http://www.lasalleswcd.org)

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**Last Meeting:** Our last meeting was on Sunday, September 18, 2011 at 2:00 pm at the Echo Bluff Park and Recreation Area. Seven members enjoyed the tour and learning what the park has to offer. There are trails to walk, Frisbee golf, zip line, High Rope course, and paint ball. I got the impression they are open on weekends. Many of the activities have individual or group rates. For rates, information, or make a reservation contact them at 815-447-2115 or [www.echobluff.org](http://www.echobluff.org).

**Next Meeting:** Sunday, October 9th our meeting will be at the Rasmusen Natural Area. We will meet at 2:00 pm for those who would like to explore the property or just enjoy some time in nature. We will have a cook out at 4:00 pm. The address is 2960 N 4351st rd, Sheridan, IL. (Map attached) Bring your lawn chair, choice of drink and a dish to pass. Hot dogs and brats will be furnished to be cooked over a fire. Condiments, plates, and napkins will also be furnished. Please park in our parking area along the road, we will have golf carts for transportation to the savannah area for the picnic.

I know the Burgoo Festival is in Utica also, but there are many activities going on at the same time as many of our meeting times. So I do understand if you have other commitments.

If you are able, let me know how many of your family will be attending. It will give me a better idea on how much meat and buns to have.

If you enjoy being outdoors and would like to help with helping the trees that were planted on Plum Island, read the attached article and plea for help.

Hope to see you at the meeting and bring a friend. If you have any questions, please contact Diana Rod at 815-539-7237 or [prairie\\_nag@yahoo.com](mailto:prairie_nag@yahoo.com). If you are running late or are lost you may call my cell at 815-343-3544

Diana Rod  
Chairperson

Nov 13 – Winged Migration Video??  
Jan. 8, 2012  
Mar 11, 2012

Sent: Fri, Sep 16, 2011 1:10 pm  
Subject: Plum Island

#### THE TREES ON PLUM ISLAND NEED HELP

The oaks and sycamores we planted on Plum Island are being severely impacted by rodents (probably voles) that are killing them by, at ground level, gnawing off about a 5" wide band of bark around their trunks. We have purchased bark guards to install on these trees in the hope that this will mitigate the problem and we'll need help getting as many of them installed as we can before winter when the greatest damage occurs.

On Friday, October 14th, Living Lands and Waters is coming to Starved Rock for a river cleanup and they have agreed to provide transportation for any volunteers we can muster for an afternoon work session on the Island. If you are interested in helping out, you can contact Don Goerne at [dgoerne@yahoo.com](mailto:dgoerne@yahoo.com) or his work phone, 815-673-5544/815-673-5544.

But be forewarned that, while this work is absolutely essential to save as many trees as we can, it will not be easy. Besides crawling around in overgrown grass and weeds the following steps will be involved.

- Cut the appropriate cable ties and open up the fencing around the tree
- Rip out as much weedy vegetation as necessary to access the trunk at ground level
- Cut out any woody vegetation (like maples) that is growing in the cage
- Prune off any suckers that are sprouting from the tree's roots
- Snap the bark guard around the tree's trunk
- Drive in a ground staple to hold the guard as tightly to the ground as possible
- Reclose the fencing and secure it with two cable ties
- Flag the cage with marking tape to indicate it is done

It's a dirty job but somebody has to do it. We have too much effort and money invested in these trees to just let them be killed and hope a number of you will be willing and able to help us on 10/14. Complete details, regarding the time and the tools we hope you can bring, will be provided later.

In the meantime, whenever he can Don will also be canoeing over to the Island to whittle away at the project. If anyone is interested in accompanying him on these forays, he'd greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Thanks  
John McKee