

Dixon Waterfowl Refuge

The Dixon Waterfowl Refuge is located at Hennepin and Hopper Lakes, backwater lakes located in the floodplain of the Illinois River that were drained for cropland during most of the 20th century. Located in Putnam County, Illinois, these lakes came back to life in 2001 when the Wetlands Initiative terminated drainage activities and began restoration. Our Master Naturalists assist with restoration activities and data collection by taking part in removal of invasive species, planting native plant plugs, and taking part in “Bioblitz” events. During this event, teams of volunteers led by experts assist in conducting surveys of the many species of flora and fauna located within the refuge. These surveys assist managers of the refuge in gauging the health and biodiversity of this amazing natural area.



Above: Master Naturalist volunteers are busy planting native plant plugs at Dixon Waterfowl Refuge during spring of 2019.



Right: A very uncommon Vesper Bluet damselfly identified during the 2018 Dixon Waterfowl Refuge 2018 BioBlitz event. Photo by John McKee, Master Naturalist Volunteer.



ABOVE: Master Naturalist volunteers listen to a leader on how to plant native plant plugs during the workday held at Dixon Waterfowl Refuge in May 2019.