



NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

Protecting and restoring Ann Arbor's natural areas and fostering an environmental ethic among its citizens

Volume 20, Number 1
Spring 2015

Park Focus: Oakridge Nature Area

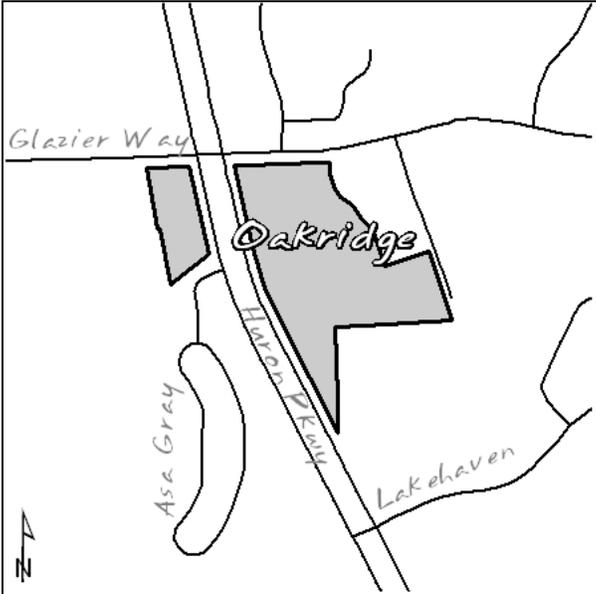
Mary Adams

Since working with NAP, I have been fortunate to discover several new parks and natural areas around Ann Arbor that I previously did not know existed. My new discoveries included tiny play areas tucked inside friendly neighborhood communities, large woodlands that were only a few blocks away from my home, and even quaint natural areas nestled next to busy roads that I often drove past, but seemingly ignored. Oakridge Nature Area is one such place that I often saw out of my car window, but had never really seen.

After just one visit to Oakridge I was completely sold on its beauty and importance in our community.

Upon entering Oakridge, one might expect to find litter and thick brush lining the busy sidewalks. However as I made my way into

this lonesome forest, I knew right away that there was much more than meets the eye. Divided by Huron Parkway, Oakridge Nature Area sits south of Glazier Way encompassing 8 acres of oak-hickory woods and wetland. Within these woods a portion of Miller Creek silently runs along a rare type of Michigan wetland called a fen. A fen is characterized by its



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COORDINATOR'S CORNER

A unit of the City of Ann Arbor
Community Services Area,
Parks and Recreation Services.

*The mission of Natural Area
Preservation is to protect and
restore Ann Arbor's natural areas
and to foster an environmental
ethic among its citizens.*

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*Natural Area Preservation is
funded by the voter-approved
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Capital Improvements Millage.*

Restoring Relationship To Land

Long-time readers will know that NAP's current mission statement was not our original one. We changed it after our first few years of existence and added the part about "fostering an environmental ethic." Basically we were acknowledging that it wasn't enough to just restore our natural areas. We also wanted to restore our relationship with those natural areas.

So, I was thrilled this past January to hear this same message shared by one of our keynote speakers at the Stewardship Network's annual conference on The Science, Practice, and Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems. The speaker was Robin Wall Kimmerer, a professor at State University of New York. She is also the Founding Director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, and a member of the Citizen Band Potawatomi. Wearing all of those hats, she gave a great talk on finding common ground between traditional and scientific knowledge. For me, these were the most powerful words she shared, quoted directly from her PowerPoint presentation: *It's not the land which is broken, but our relationship to land. To restore land we must also restore relationship to land.*

I like the way she says that. It's not enough to focus on what is wrong with the land. We also need to consider what is wrong with how we treat land, and how we interact with it. Nature is full of complex inter-connecting relationships. It's a web of life. And we are part of that web. We are not only stewards of nature - we are also active members of it. So, the more that we wall ourselves off from Nature – the more that we isolate ourselves in air-conditioned buildings, seek nutrition from a can, and turn to video screens for entertainment and relaxation – the more our relationship with land suffers.

Fortunately, there are many easy ways to restore relationship to land, especially for Ann Arborites who have surrounded themselves with a fine network of parks and nature areas. None of us has to travel very far to be out in nature. Still not sure how to get started? Check out the calendar on pages 4-5 for a list of the many opportunities that NAP has to offer. Come learn how to identify frogs, toads, salamanders, birds, and turtles – and use that new knowledge to get you out into our parks as a NAP volunteer. Or join our controlled burn crew and help NAP return life-giving fire to our native ecosystems. Or be a photo-monitoring volunteer and see nature through a different lens than you ever have in the past. Or roll up your sleeves and grab a hold of some garlic mustard and help us remove this invader from our forests. There are many, many opportunities that NAP has to offer that will help restore your relationship to land. And not only will the land benefit – you will benefit also!

- Dave Borneman, Deputy Manager for Volunteerism and NAP

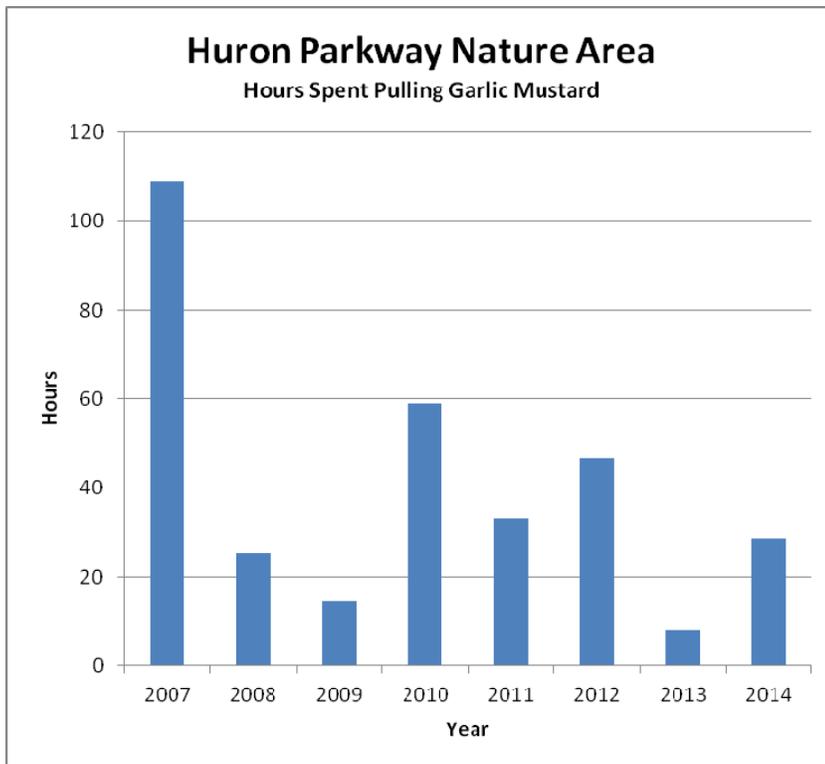
WINNING THE GARLIC MUSTARD BATTLE

Becky Gajewski

Garlic mustard is a particularly aggressive and tricky invader. It grows in a wide variety of conditions – from wet to dry soils, and from sun to partial shade. It’s especially fond of disturbed habitats, and it produces a chemical in its roots to keep other plants from growing. Knowing the nature of this invader can make eradicating it seem like a daunting task, and keeping a positive attitude is sometimes tough in the face of such an aggressive species. It can feel like an unwinnable fight, returning to the same place year after year to pull what seems like the same patch of plants over and over again.



But all that pulling really does make a difference! At NAP, we have been keeping track of our fieldwork in the parks since 1994. Looking at past records of the amount of time it took our field crew and volunteers to clear all the garlic mustard out of a given area each year, we find documentation that garlic mustard can be greatly controlled. As the garlic mustard population decreases from year to year, the time it takes to clear the area also decreases. Several of Ann Arbor’s parks and natural areas have shrinking garlic mustard populations in their higher-quality sections. The graph below illustrates a good example at Huron Parkway Nature Area. There is a clear downward trend in the amount of time our field crew spent pulling garlic mustard in the park over the years. In less than a decade, our volunteer and crew’s work effort has decreased from 109 hours in 2007 to 29 hours in 2014!



As one can see, the downward trend isn’t a smooth one – some years required a little more effort than the year before. There are many factors that may cause this sort of fluctuation from year to year. If we have an early spring, for example, the garlic mustard may get an early start and cover more area than it would have otherwise. Or there may be a significant number of seeds lying dormant in the soil, just waiting for the right conditions to sprout (sometimes as much as 10 years after they were produced). And because garlic mustard is biennial, it is not uncommon to see its population rise and fall as plants that were tiny sprouts during the first year of their life bolt and flower the next year.

It’s important not to give up if you see these temporary increases after years of effort. Our data shows that if you stay determined and keep chipping away little by little, you will be able to see a difference over time. If you’re feeling discouraged, it can be helpful to talk to other folks who have had success in

controlling garlic mustard. They may have suggestions for different methods you can try. More importantly, they can be a good source of moral support in what could seem like an uphill fight. And we at NAP are also here to say that you can do it! Keep pulling away, and eventually that patch of invasives will be a distant memory.

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR SPRING 2015

Volunteers assist NAP in all aspects of our work. Community involvement is vital to the success of NAP's conservation and education efforts. Please join us for one of these events!

For all of our **Stewardship Workdays**, please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Workdays are **free** and suitable for all ages. Minors must be accompanied by a guardian or have a signed release form. Contact NAP for release forms. Tools, snacks, and know-how provided.

MARCH AND APRIL KICK-OFFS AND TRAININGS

Please register for all **Kick-offs and Trainings** by contacting NAP at 734.794.6627 or NAP@a2gov.org. Most trainings may have indoor and outdoor portions, so please dress for the weather.

Sunday, March 8
Salamander Survey Kick-off & Training
Gallup Canoe Livery
Eli Gallup Meeting Room
3000 Fuller Rd
Noon to 2 p.m.

If you have a willingness to get muddy, please help us monitor salamander populations. Surveys are done three to six times in early spring. Please register by March 5.

Sunday, March 8
Frog & Toad Survey Kick-off & Training
Gallup Canoe Livery
Eli Gallup Meeting Room
3000 Fuller Rd
2:30 to 5 p.m.

Join us to monitor frog populations. No previous experience required; family-friendly! Surveys are done three to six times March through June. Please register by March 5.

Saturday, March 21
Photo Monitoring Kick-off & Training
NAP Office
3875 E. Huron River Dr
10 to 11:30 a.m.

Volunteer to take photos at specific locations to track the progress of restoration work. You must have your own digital camera. Join us for more details about this volunteer opportunity! Register by March 19.

Saturday, March 21
Workday Leader Training
NAP Office
3875 E. Huron River Dr
Noon to 5:30 p.m.

Interested in leading and/or co-leading NAP workdays? This training will focus on ecological considerations, procedures, and tips to lead a successful event. Minimum age of 18. Register by March 19.

Tuesday, April 7
Breeding Bird Survey Kick-off
Gallup Canoe Livery
Eli Gallup Meeting Room
3000 Fuller Rd
7 to 8:30 p.m.

Some experience in bird identification is necessary. Sign up for your favorite park, pick up survey materials, and learn about the 2014 survey results. Please register by April 3.

Saturday, April 18
Turtle Steward Kick-off & Training
Gallup Canoe Livery
Eli Gallup Meeting Room
3000 Fuller Rd
2:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Learn turtle species ID, nest monitoring, and how to report observations. Please register by April 16.

STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

STEWARDS' CIRCLE

7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Second Tuesday of every month

Bruegger's Bagels
709 N University Ave

Are you interested in learning more about how to care for natural areas? Then join the Stewardship Network's Huron Arbor cluster for an informal discussion on a monthly topic. Free and open to anyone interested.

www.stewardshipnetwork.org

Tuesday, March 10

This month's topic: Volunteer Engagement: The Psychology of Environmental Stewardship. Come prepared to ask questions and share your tips for establishing a volunteer base.

Tuesday, April 14

Discuss restoration challenges related to climate change, invasive species, and landscape fragmentation. Learn about establishing new species and which plants are most appropriate to face these challenges.

Tuesday, May 12

Amphibians and reptiles are currently facing a global extinction crisis. Come discuss ways you can help to make your own backyard or other lands conducive to these animals' well-being.

Saturday, April 18
Earth Day Stewardship Workday
Wurster Park
9 a.m. to noon

Bring friends and family out to pull garlic mustard, spruce up the park, and help to spread woodchips. Bring your plastic sleds to move woodchips. We'll also work on Wurster Park's Edible Garden. Please meet at the cul-de-sac on Edgewood Place off of West Davis Avenue.

Sunday, April 19
Earth Day Festival
Leslie Science & Nature Center
1831 Traver Rd.
Noon to 4 p.m.

This free, family-friendly event features activities and displays from local organizations. All ages welcome. For more information visit www.lesliesnc.org/a2earthday.

Saturday, April 25
Arbor Day Stewardship Workdays

Lakewood Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Celebrate Arbor Day in this 13-acre woodland by removing spring invasives and spreading woodchips to help keep the trails accessible. Bring your plastic sleds to help move woodchips. Meet at the Lakewood School parking lot, 344 Gralake Ave.

Hollywood Park
1 to 4 p.m.

This diverse mesic forest is the perfect place to celebrate Arbor Day! Bring friends and family out to combat garlic mustard and other spring invasive plants that threaten the growth of native foliage. Meet on Sequoia Parkway near Archwood Drive.

Mary Beth Doyle Park
1 to 4 p.m.

Tremendous progress has been made to increase the native habitat in this large preserve; help continue this effort! Plant native shrubs and pull garlic mustard. Please meet at the end of Verle Avenue, west off of Platt Road between Packard and Ellsworth.

MAY

Saturday, May 2
Stewardship Workday
Bird Hills Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Bird Hills is a great place to participate in stewardship activities! Come out to remove garlic mustard and other spring invasive plants. Meet us at the Bird Road park entrance, west of Huron River Drive (add'l parking at Barton Park).

Saturday, May 2
Stewardship Workday
Keubler Langford Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

This park offers many of the same features as its neighbor Bird Hills: lush woodlands, dramatic ravines, and a diverse array of rare plants and wildflowers. Join us to remove invasive garlic mustard. Please meet at the entrance on Beechwood Drive north of Sunset Road.

Thursday, May 7
AADL Nature Hike
Barton Nature Area
7 to 8:30 p.m.

Staff Ornithologist Dea Armstrong will lead you on a fascinating walk through Barton's old field habitat. This event is intended for all ages. Meet in the parking lot off Huron Drive just north of Bird Road.

Saturday, May 9
Garlic Mustard Weed-Out Day!
9 a.m. to noon

We need lots of hands to help pull Garlic Mustard at Argo, Cedar Bend, Dolph, Miller, and Ruthven Nature Areas. See page 8 for more information!

Saturday, May 16
Downtown Blooms Day and
Adopt-A-Park Kickoff
9 a.m. to noon

Plant flowers in neighborhood parks and the downtown area. This is a fun opportunity for the whole family! To pre-register or for more information call Adopt-A-Park at 734.794.6627.

Sunday, May 17
Stewardship Workday
Leslie Woods Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Tremendous progress has been made to increase the native habitat in these woods- help continue this effort! Join us in removing invasive garlic mustard and other spring invasive plants to give native plants a chance to thrive. Meet at the end of Upland Drive, north of Plymouth Rd.

Sunday, May 17
Stewardship Workday
Bluffs Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Perched high atop a ridge, Bluffs Nature Area offers stunning views of the Huron River and downtown Ann Arbor. Help remove garlic mustard, dame's rocket, and other spring invasive plants that threaten the native habitats of this natural area. Meet at the entrance on Sunset Rd.

Sunday, May 17
Stewardship Workday
Oakridge Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

There are over 100 native species found in this valuable, eight acre oak-hickory woodland. Help remove garlic mustard, dame's rocket, and other spring invasive plants. Please meet at the SW corner where Huron Parkway and Glazier Way intersect.

Saturday, May 30
Stewardship Workday
Huron Parkway Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Bring friends and family out to support the beautiful native plants of this park by hand pulling garlic mustard and other invasive plants. Please meet at 3470 Woodland Drive.

Saturday, May 30
Stewardship Workday
Furstenberg Native Garden
9 a.m. to noon

Help us weed and preserve this native garden amidst the 38 acres of Furstenberg Nature Area. You'll learn a lot about native plants from Park Steward and Master Gardener Aunita Erskine. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School.

Oakridge Nature Area

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

water chemistry, namely it is pH neutral and contains a high amount of dissolved minerals relative to other wetland types. Typically dominated by grasses and sedges, the Oakridge fen is no exception to Ann Arbor's beautiful and diverse wetlands.

If you have ever explored Oakridge (and I encourage you to do so if you haven't), you may have noticed the large, invasive honeysuckle that has colonized the stream banks and consequently gave little thought to the wetland just a short distance away. Even if your

eye tends to naturally find common invasive shrubs, I ask you to look at the big picture and observe all of the wonderful features Oakridge has to offer. Not only are the stream and the fen great places to observe wildlife, but Oakridge offers a wide array of 119

native plant species. Given its great diversity and somewhat secluded location, this natural area in the heart of Ann Arbor is an excellent excuse for getting outside, exploring the woods, and connecting with nature.

In order to combat the invasive species that threaten the diverse native plant life at Oakridge, Park Steward Leonore Gerstein has dedicated many hours to clearing the area of thick invasive shrubbery, and even hosting her own workdays with individuals from a nearby neighborhood. Gerstein has begun to transform this natural area not only by removing

invasive plants, but by bringing neighborhood attention to the park and sharing with others the importance of protecting and restoring our limited natural areas. Focusing primarily on invasive species removal, Gerstein also would like Oakridge "to look cared for," and her hard work is truly telling of how much a difference one person can make in his/her community.

After just one visit to Oakridge, I was completely sold on its beauty and importance in our community.



Oakridge Nature Area in winter

With an almost "untouched" appeal (there are no marked trails within Oakridge), it is as if I had been far removed from the bustling intersection with only a faint, muffled sound of nearby passing traffic. In my relatively short venture

through this

area, I found several animal tracks pressed into the dark soils, large vines winding all around making it difficult to find where they begin and end, and a subtle yet calming sound of water making its way along the creek. From this experience alone, I have decided not to be blinded by my everyday commute and errands to the diverse and special places that reside on the sides of roads, even within my own neighborhood. I encourage you to do the same: take time to seek out natural areas such as Oakridge that are surely waiting to be noticed for their diversity, ecological importance and unmistakable beauty.

NAPpenings



**Society for Ecological Restoration
Midwest-Great Lakes Chapter
Annual Meeting 2015**

The 2015 Annual Meeting of the Midwest-Great Lakes SER Chapter, Cultivating Ecological Restoration within Human Dominated Landscapes, will be held at the Chicago Botanical Garden in Glencoe, Illinois from March 27 to March 29, 2015. Visit their website at: www.chapter.ser.org/midwestgreatlakes/current-meeting



STAFF UPDATES

FAREWELL...



Quentin Turner
Adopt-A-Park Coordinator

My year working for NAP has been such a formative experience for my life. I have learned much about volunteerism, being a professional and the natural world. I will carry these lessons with me throughout all my future endeavors. I will miss so many things about being the Adopt-A-Park Coordinator but what I will miss the most are the passionate and knowledgeable volunteers of the Adopt-A-Park program. It has been great getting to know you all and I wish you the best headed into the spring. Thank you and farewell!



Kristen Schotts
Field Crew

I had a good time interning and working at NAP. It was nice to be surrounded by like-minded, nature-loving people. I'll miss the field crew, but I'm sure I'll be back from time to time to do my share of volunteering.

Welcome, new Park Stewards!

Jason Tallant
Ruthven Nature Area

Jonathan Parker
Molin Nature Area

Brooks Curtis
Bird Hills Nature Area

Thank you!

Many thanks to the groups who volunteered with NAP recently. We could not make such a difference without you!

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Americorp | St. Mary's Student Parish |
| Dicken Elementary School | Team Red, White, and Blue |
| Emerson Middle School | UM Alpha Phi Omega |
| EMU Delta Zeta | UM Circle K |
| EMU Vision | UM Econ 108 |
| Envirodems | UM Environment 201 |
| Foundation for the International Relief of Children | UM Lambda Theta Phi |
| Greenhills 8th Grade | UM Law School |
| Huron High School Key Club | UM School of Information |
| Pioneer High School Interact Club | UM Sigma Gamma Rho |
| | UM Triangle Fraternity |
| | Youth Volunteer Corp |

Giant Hogweed or Cow Parsnip?

Each year we receive reports of suspected infestations of giant hogweed in our parks. To date, we have investigated each and every report and they have all been cases of misidentified native cow parsnip. Here are a few tips to tell them apart:

Giant Hogweed	Cow Parsnip
Umbrella-shaped flower	Flat-topped flower
50+ rays per flower cluster	<30 rays per flower cluster
Green stem with purple splotches and coarse white hairs	Green stem and ridged with fine white hairs

For more identification tips, watch this video from the Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver <http://tinyurl.com/HogweedVsParsnip>. Please note, both Cow Parsnip and Giant Hogweed can cause burns, so it's best to avoid touching either of these giant *Apiaceae*.



Photo of Cow Parsnip courtesy of Prairie Moon Nursery.

Natural Area Preservation

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via email, please let us know! NAP@a2gov.org



Garlic Mustard Weed-Out Day is an annual celebration in which volunteers hand-pull invasive garlic mustard in natural areas all around Ann Arbor! Garlic mustard is an aggressive invasive plant which can quickly crowd out native foliage and decrease species diversity in the woods. Identifying and pulling garlic mustard is fun and easy for all ages, so this is a great volunteer opportunity for families!

**Please join us for the
17th ANNUAL GARLIC MUSTARD
WEED-OUT DAY: Saturday May 9, 2015
9:00 AM to noon**

Argo Nature Area - Meet in the Argo Canoe Livery parking lot near the entrance to the woods, 1055 Longshore Drive.

Cedar Bend Nature Area - Meet us at the Island Park parking lot, at the end of Island Drive, just northeast (and across the river from) Fuller Road and Maiden Lane.

Dolph Nature Area - Meet in the parking lot off of Wagner Road, directly east of Jackson Plaza.

Miller Nature Area - Meet at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue.

Ruthven Nature Area - Meet at the Gallup boat launch parking lot on Geddes Road, east of Huron Parkway.