

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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

Volume 19, Number 3
Autumn 2014

Park Focus: Oakwoods Nature Area

Michael Hahn

THE first time I ventured to Oakwoods Nature Area, my immediate thought was, "How impressive could this place be? It's surrounded by houses!" Nestled in the Arbor Hills neighborhood on the northeast side of town, Oakwoods has three entrances, two of which are unassuming, tucked between houses on Dunwoodie Road and Earlmore Lane. The third access point is located off of Green Road - a slightly more conspicuous entrance than those found in the neighborhood.

Upon entering the woodland my attention was caught by the subtlety of rolling hills covered by mature oak and hickory trees. I followed a trail to the east, making my way to the top of a hill. At its crest, I was welcomed with a beautiful view overlooking a small pond tucked in between the understory trees and shrubs. As I hiked down and around a few curves in the trail, crossing a corduroy-style bridge, two mallard

ducks dropped down to the water from the sky. They were so focused on making it to their landing spot that they never even noticed me standing there watching them. The ducks began dabbling in the water, foraging for food, and it was at this point that I understood the importance of Oakwoods.

Oakwoods is a 22-acre oak-hickory woodland, with several small ponds bordered by a large wetland to the west. Because of its diverse habitat of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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PARTY TIME!

How many hours have NAP volunteers spent working this year? Which exciting birds and herps did we spot, and where were they?

It's time for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Potluck, where we will share stats and thank our dedicated volunteers! Check the back page for details!

Photo: Michael Seabrook





COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Yellowstone

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
2013-2018 Park Maintenance &
Capital Improvements Millage.*

Years ago, shortly after I began working for NAP, a friend from out west stopped by for a visit and to see our work here in the City parks. Himself a wildland firefighter with the National Park Service, he had personally participated in prescribed burns thousands of times bigger than anything NAP would ever do. So I remember feeling a little silly showing him the results of a tiny 2-acre burn, knowing that he was used to working in national parks, restoring enormous landscapes that protect grizzlies and wolves, not in tiny city parks.

But my friend pointed out something that I hadn't fully considered before, though it was obviously true: The only way that there will be any support for protecting and restoring large, intact ecosystems far away is if people can see and experience such stewardship efforts at a local level, in their backyards. Perhaps getting the public comfortable with prescribed fire in city parks helps them also feel comfortable seeing it introduced into national parks. And perhaps it is easier to understand controversies surrounding the reintroduction of predators like wolves into national parks, if one has already personally dealt with neighbors upset about having coyotes move into their local city park.

I reflected on these things this summer when I had the opportunity to take my kids on their first trip to Yellowstone National Park. We saw wolves, bears, elk, and many other animals that are only a far distant memory to the Ann Arbor area. The wildlife roamed freely across an enormous uninterrupted ecosystem, the likes of which is hard to imagine ever existed here in southeastern Michigan. It is incredibly important that we save places like Yellowstone where there is still wilderness. We need to keep those areas wild, which means we need to keep them "out there," far away from where most of us live. I will never visit most of these remote wilderness areas, but I don't need to, and I wouldn't want the infrastructure built that would facilitate too much visitation from the public. That's one of the important functions of our local natural areas, to give us nearby places where we can jump in and get our hands dirty and grapple with issues like invasive species and fire suppression and predator-reintroduction - where we can learn to be good stewards. We can work out our environmental ethic right here in the city parks. And that ethic will then guide our policies regarding remote wilderness areas that few of us will ever visit.

I invite you to take advantage of this opportunity. What you do here in your local city parks may very well influence what happens in our largest national parks and wilderness areas. You really do have the opportunity to "think globally, act locally." Don't miss it!

- David Borneman, Deputy Manager for Volunteerism and NAP

MICHIGAN'S RED-EARED SLIDER

If you have been boating at Gallup Park recently, you may have noticed large wooden poles jutting out of the water with traps suspended between them. This is an effort lead by NAP's Herpetologist, Patrick Terry, to understand the health of Gallup Park's turtle community. Patrick is also gathering data for his master's research on a turtle with a controversial history in Michigan, the Red-eared Slider.

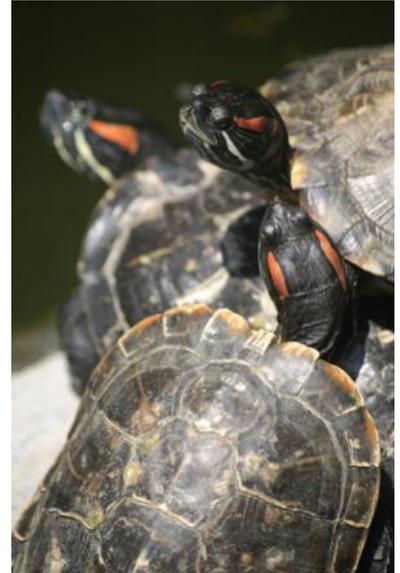


Photo: Lazslo Ilyes

The Red-eared Slider is an aquatic turtle often found in Ann Arbor's natural areas and throughout Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Most biologists consider this turtle to occur naturally from the southeastern United States to the fringes of southwest Michigan, making its status as native or non-native to Michigan a topic of debate. This is largely due to the turtle's popularity in the pet trade, which has allowed it to become introduced worldwide. Many supporters of the species' non-native origin believe it has become established in Michigan through the repeated release of unwanted pets. On the other hand, proponents of the native origin think that the turtle has been a part of Michigan for a long time and has expanded its range naturally during a brief warming stage in the last glacial period approximately 2,500-9,000 years ago. Both sides are backed by a good deal of circumstantial evidence; however, until the availability of recent genetic testing, performing an experiment has not been possible.



**NAP Herpetologist
Patrick Terry with
a Red-Eared Slider**

By taking DNA samples from captured turtles, Patrick will be able to compare each genetic sample to those that have been collected elsewhere in the United States. If Michigan's Red-eared Sliders are native, they should be more genetically similar to populations that are geographically closer, such as those in Indiana. If the opposite is observed, it would indicate that the turtles have been introduced to the state by humans. It is entirely likely, however, that the history of Michigan's Red-eared Slider is more

complex than a simple native or non-native origin and that each population has a unique past. Whatever the result, the Red-eared Slider will still be a beneficial species to our aquatic ecosystems and will continue to be protected.

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR AUTUMN 2014

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.*

SEPTEMBER

Thursday, September 4
AADL Nature Hike at Mary Beth Doyle Park
7 to 8:30 p.m.

Celebrate National Wilderness Month at a guided hike along Malletts Creek. Meet at the park entrance off Packard Road.

National Day of Service Workdays

A nation-wide day of service and remembrance for 9/11.

Saturday, September 13
Hannah Nature Area, 9 a.m. to noon
Meet at the west end of Bath Street, west of Seventh Street.

Sunday, September 14
Mary Beth Doyle Park, 9 a.m. to noon
Meet at the end of Verle Avenue, two blocks west of Platt Road.

Sunset Brooks Nature Area, 1 to 4 p.m.
Meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive.

Sunday, September 21
Miller Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Help maintain the unique landscape at Miller by removing invasive shrubs. Meet at the Arborview Boulevard entrance.

Sunday, September 21
Bird Hills Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

We will be removing invasive shrubs at the same park as NAP's first workday! Meet at the Bird Road entrance, west of Huron River Drive.

Sunday, September 21
Cedar Bend Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

Remove invasive shrubs at Ann Arbor's oldest Nature Area. Meet at the Island Park parking lot, at the end of Island Drive.

Saturday, September 27
National Public Lands Day Workday
Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Celebrate National Public Lands Day by helping keep trails accessible. We will be trimming overgrowth and spreading woodchips. Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot.

Saturday, September 27
Marshall Nature Area
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Help remove invasive shrubs. Meet in the parking lot on Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.

Sunday, September 28
National Public Lands Day Workday
Ruthven Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

Celebrate National Public Lands Day and help support Ruthven's biodiversity by removing invasive shrubs. Meet at the Gallup dock parking lot, at the southeast corner of Huron Parkway and Geddes Road.

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 4
Greenview Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Spread woodchips on trails and remove invasive shrubs. Meet at the park sign, on Greenview Drive across from Barnard Road.

Saturday, October 4
Leslie Woods Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

Join us to help remove invasive shrubs. Meet at the north end of Upland Drive, just north of Plymouth Road.

PUBLIC MEETING Controlled Ecological Burn Program

Wednesday, October 8
Downtown Ann Arbor District Library
7 to 8:30 pm

Ask questions, learn more about benefits of burning, and hear about the specifics of effectively and safely using fire as a restoration tool.

Sunday, October 12
Stapp Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Remove invasive shrubs and collect native seeds. Meet at the park sign at the corner of Huron Parkway and Tuebingen Parkway.

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 with volunteer and professional land stewards, plus others interested in nature. Free and open to anyone interested.
www.stewardshipnetwork.org.

September 9: Integrated Pest Management/Biocontrols

Biological pest control (biocontrol), utilizes natural enemies of pests, e.g. predatory insects, fungi, and bacteria. We will discuss biocontrols in the research phase, concerns about biocontrols, and how to implement biocontrol as part of your Integrated Pest Management approach.

October 14: Kids and Restoration

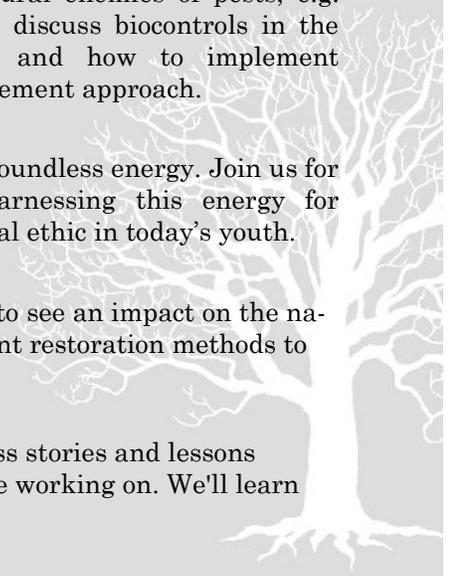
Children are naturally eager to learn and have boundless energy. Join us for a discussion about the best practices for harnessing this energy for restoration work while fostering an environmental ethic in today's youth.

November 11: Global Warming and Restoration

As our climate changes, our community is likely to see an impact on the native flora and fauna. Should we modify our current restoration methods to address these impacts?

December 9: Restoration Success Stories!

You are the expert! Please come and share success stories and lessons learned from the restoration projects that you are working on. We'll learn from each other and celebrate together today!



Saturday, October 18
Mary Beth Doyle Park
9 a.m. to noon

Bring your family to learn about native plants while collecting native plant seeds. Meet at the end of Verle Avenue, west off Platt Road between Packard and Ellsworth.

Saturday, October 18
Bluffs Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

Tucked away within Bluffs' 39 acres is an open field filled with native prairie species. Come out and help us preserve this and other hidden gems at Bluffs, by removing invasive shrubs. Meet at the entrance off of Sunset Road.

Make a Difference Day Workdays

Celebrate the 23rd anniversary of this event by volunteering at one of these parks:

Saturday, October 25
Dicken Woods Nature Area, 9 a.m. to noon
Meet at the end of Dicken Drive, off South Maple Road.

Oakwoods Nature Area, 9 a.m. to noon
Meet at the park entrance off Dunwoodie Drive.

Molin Nature Area, 1 to 4 p.m.
Meet at the entrance near the corner of Powell Avenue and Columbia Avenue.

Sunday, October 26
Kuebler Langford Nature Area, 1 to 4 p.m.
Meet at the Beechwood Drive entrance, north of Sunset Road.

Seed-Collecting Series

Bring your family to learn about native plants while collecting native plant seeds.

Sunday, November 9
Bird Hills Nature Area, 1 to 4 p.m.
Meet at the Bird Road entrance.

Saturday, November 15
Barton Nature Area, 9 a.m. to noon
Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

Saturday, November 15
Black Pond Woods, 1 to 4 p.m.
Meet at the Leslie Science & Nature Center parking lot, 1831 Traver Road.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 8
Argo Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

Fall is a great time to visit Argo Nature Area; help us maintain the unique landscape by removing invasive shrubs. Meet in the Argo Canoe Livery parking lot near the entrance to the woods, 1055 Longshore Drive.

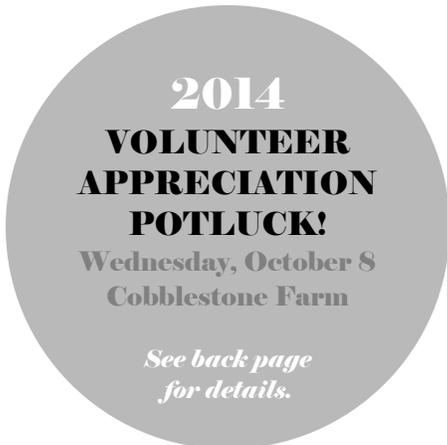
DECEMBER

Saturday, December 6
Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

Help cut and remove invasive shrubs. Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot.

Sunday, December 7
Oakridge Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

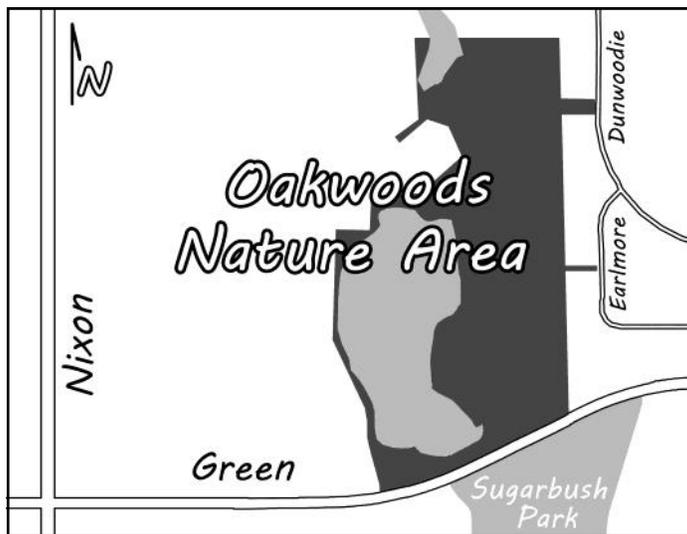
Help cut and remove invasive shrubs. Meet in the University lot, at the NW corner where Huron Parkway and Glazier Way intersect.



Oakwoods Nature Area

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

upland forest, ponds, and wetlands, this nature area can support a wide variety of different plant and animal species, making it a great place to view wildlife. During the early spring you might be lucky enough to see salamanders emerging from their winter hibernation, waddling across the landscape towards the water to reproduce. At ground level one can find a brilliant display of wildflowers, with the sounds of Spring Peepers and other tree frogs calling in the background. As the seasons progress, sedges create an almost carpet-like appearance on the forest floor. However, what I found most interesting while hiking around this



impressive woodland was the diversity of trees. There are oaks, hickories, ironwood, beech and basswood present. Even more, there is an outstanding difference in the age of trees. You'll find a display of old trees, saplings, seedlings and everything in between - all of which will make a wonderful exhibit of fall colors.

If I've learned one thing while working in the ecological restoration field, it is that restoration is a process, not a result. For the past 18 years, volunteers and staff have been working diligently at Oakwoods to achieve our restoration goals. The first documented work was back in January, 1996 cutting buckthorn, and over the subsequent months further progress was made by removing more invasive brush. The first controlled burn was conducted a couple of years later, in the spring of 1998. Today, those restoration efforts are evident throughout the park. I am excited to see how Oakwoods changes as we continue our restoration efforts in the years to come.

**RESTORATION
IS A PROCESS,
NOT A RESULT.**

NAPpenings

Welcome, new Park Stewards!

David Repp and Richard Geglio
White Oak Nature Area

Leonore Gerstein
Oakridge Nature Area

Margot Mehringer
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!

Ann Arbor Academy
Arbor Prep
Community High School
Emerson School
Greenhills School
King School
KT's Running Group
Office of Health Equity and Inclusion
The North Face
Toyota Boshoku
Triangle Fraternity
UM Law School
WATT Youth Day of Caring
Yoga Serves
Youth Volunteer Corps- Ann Arbor YMCA



Recycling at Ann Arbor Parks!

Recycle Ann Arbor has partnered with the City of Ann Arbor's Solid Waste Division and the City of Ann Arbor's Parks & Recreation Department to introduce recycling options for the Ann Arbor community and park users at 14 pilot parks!



STAFF UPDATES

WELCOME...



MIKE HAHN
Stewardship Specialist

For the past eight years I managed natural areas and coordinated volunteers for a land trust in the Chicagoland area. My passion for ecological restoration is continually growing and I am eager for the opportunity to share that passion with the residents of Ann Arbor. I hope to see you in the field!



MARY ADAMS
Workday Coordinator

I am interested in connecting people to nature, and I want to help volunteers become engaged and excited about preserving the local parks. I am very excited to get started at NAP and to learn more about Ann Arbor's natural areas!

FAREWELL...



KRISTEN SCHOTTS
Field Crew

I have always been passionate about the environment and working to restore it. After interning with the field crew, I am excited to join the team as an official member. I look forward to helping others have fun taking care of the environment.



ASHLEY SCHILLING
Field Crew

Over the past year with NAP I have enjoyed getting to know Ann Arbor's beautiful natural areas and dedicated volunteers. While time at NAP is coming to a close, I am happy to say that I will be still be close by working for a local controlled burn company while finishing my degree.



RACHEL WESTON
Field Crew

After working for a plant ecology lab as well as UM's Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, I wanted to continue working to restore natural areas within the city. I am excited to work with NAP and to interact with Ann Arbor's wonderful residents!



JESSICA CRAWFORD
Workday Coordinator

Although I was Workday Coordinator for a short time, I was fortunate to have worked along side some dedicated and amazing people at NAP and with the awesome volunteers who came out rain or shine! Although I am no longer in Ann Arbor, I hope to come back and visit these great natural areas!



DANA BURNETTE
Park Steward Coordinator

I fell in love with ecological restoration after participating in a prescribed burn, and I have experiences teaching environmental education to youth, square-foot gardening in Fiji, and sampling fish on Lake Huron with NOAA. I'm excited to work with NAP's dedicated volunteers!



CONGRATULATIONS...

Outreach Communications and Events Coordinator, Renée Hytinen, and her husband Dave, welcomed their second son, Isaac Nilson, on June 28th, 2014. Everyone is healthy and happy and adjusting well.

Natural Area Preservation

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**2014
VOLUNTEER
APPRECIATION
POTLUCK!**

**Wednesday, October 22
6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Cobblestone Farm**



All volunteers are invited to our annual celebration of your volunteerism and stewardship!

**RSVP by October 17
NAP@a2gov.org
734.794.6627**