

# Natural Area Preservation News

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

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Autumn 2002

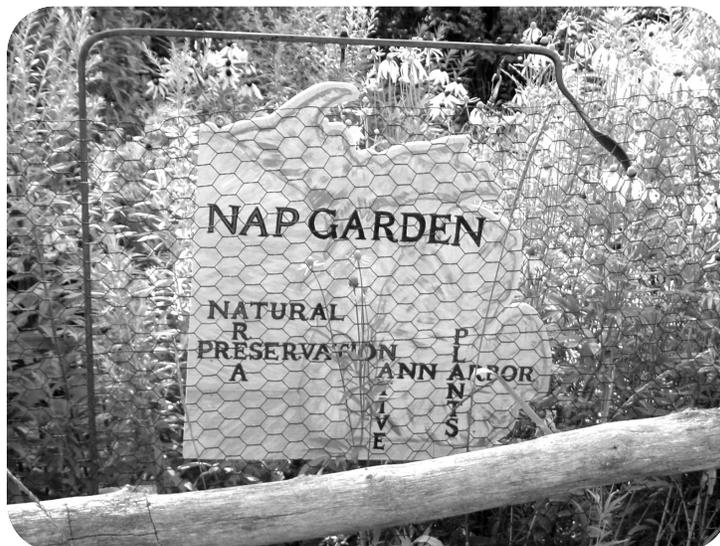
## Park Focus: Native Plant Gardens

Utilizing native plants for landscaping, as well as culinary and medicinal purposes, has been coming (back) into fashion. NAP promotes the use of native landscaping for numerous reasons: the plants have evolved to live in southeast Michigan, thus upkeep is less costly; a planted prairie has much more ecological diversity than, say, a lawn, thus promoting a greater variety of wildlife; and every yard that has natives is one less place from which invasive, non-natives can escape and overrun Ann Arbor's natural areas. Here are a couple places you can see planted natives...

### NAP Garden by Dana Wright

When I moved to Ann Arbor a year and a half ago a friend took me for walks in Bird Hills Nature Area with Caesar, his Doberman. Being a good friend he tried to show me the ins and outs of "tree town." On one of our walks he pointed out a tree and told me that it, indeed, was the oldest tree in Ann Arbor. Wow, I thought, and it doesn't even look that big. A little further down the trail he pointed to a big rock and told me that it, indeed, was the biggest rock in all of Ann Arbor. At this point I had to question the validity of his proclamations, but he said, "You should see the part that's underground! These are some of the best kept secrets in Ann Arbor." Later, after I started working at

NAP, he was interested in native plants and asked me questions about what he could put in his gardens and what the difference is between phlox and dame's rocket. I would like to tell him and the other Ann Arbor gardeners about one of the truly best kept secrets of Ann Arbor, the NAP demonstration garden.



This little known, but wonderful native plant garden was started by NAP in 1996. It lives tucked away at the Leslie Science Center in the south end of Project Grow's gardens. In 1996 the hip folk of Ann Arbor had only just begun to go native. This garden was created for those pioneers and those who have wished to follow in their footsteps. It is a snapshot of southern Michigan biological diversity with prairie, wet meadow, and marsh plants. More

recently, volunteer stewards Raquel Weber and Helen Bunch have expanded the garden to also include woodland species. A walk through the mini habitats displays the turkey foot seed heads of the big bluestem grass, the towering prairie dock, colorful zig-zag goldenrod, and the unusual bottle-brush grass. In the woodland area, plants such as trillium, tall meadow rue, and wild ginger grow shaded by sumac bushes.

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## Coordinator's Corner

# The State of Our Natural Areas

As many of you are aware, NAP receives virtually all of its funding from the Park Maintenance and Repair Millage, last approved by City voters in 1997. On November 5th of this year, voters will return to the polls to decide if they will renew that millage, which is set to expire on June 30, 2003. Because we are now in the final year of the current millage, I thought this would be a good opportunity to present a brief "state of our natural areas," and a summary of what NAP has been doing for 9 years.

NAP was created in 1993 as a new addition to the Department of Parks and Recreation to care for the park system's natural areas, which were expanding as a result of the Park Acquisition Millage approved by voters in 1988. Currently, Ann Arbor has approximately 1,255 acres of undeveloped, unmowed parkland scattered throughout 74 different sites (out of 2,022 total park acres in 147 sites). Over the past 9 years, NAP has systematically inventoried and assessed these properties as the first step toward deciding how to best manage and care for them. These inventories have documented a surprising abundance of biological diversity in the city, including:

- 1091 species of plants, including 19 species that are "state-listed" as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern in Michigan;
- 105 species of summer resident birds (86 which breed here), including 7 that are state-listed. Of the many additional species that use our parks as stopover sites during migration, 6 are also state-listed;
- 75 species of butterflies, including 1 that is state-listed;
- 10 species of frogs and toad (all that occur in this region), including 1 that is state-listed;
- 8 species of turtles, including 1 that is state-listed;
- 8 species of snakes, including 1 that is state-listed.

The existence of such a wealth of biodiversity within the city is an indication of the relatively good ecological health of our parklands. Even more important than individual species is the presence of intact natural communities (plants and animals in the woodlands, prairies, and wetlands) of Ann Arbor. Using data from NAP's inventory and assessment efforts, we have divided these various natural communities into two categories: **Conservation Areas** and **Green Space**. This was done using the following criteria: integrity of natural ecosystems, biological diversity, presence/absence of invasive plant species, acreage, and restorability.

**Conservation Areas** cover 937 acres and are found in 43 of the city's highest quality natural parks (846 acres of woodland, 58 acres of wetland, 33 acres of prairie). They are the most complete and intact remnants of Ann Arbor's historic natural landscape. Conservation Areas contain the greatest native biodiversity of plants and animals and the healthiest ecosystems of any of our parklands. We have the most to lose if we don't care for these sites properly,

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**Parks & Recreation**  
CITY OF ANN ARBOR

### Natural Area Preservation

is a Division of the City of Ann Arbor  
Department of Parks and Recreation.

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

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Bev Walters, *Botanist*

For up-to-date information on stewardship activities, call the "hotline" at (734) 996-3266.

# Benefit Concert for the Buhr Park Children's Wet Meadow Project

As you may remember from previous articles, the Buhr Park Children's Wet Meadow Project was inspired six years ago by a group of preschoolers. Upon seeing runoff water in Buhr Park rushing into storm drains, headed for Malletts Creek, and learning that in nature wetlands manage such water, they exclaimed, "Let's make one here." A year later, the Wet Meadow was created by the collaboration and volunteer efforts of numerous groups and individuals. The Wet Meadow now functions well, it collects some of the potential runoff, provides habitat, serves as an educational site for water quality issues, and is an attractive addition to the park - with an array of native plants.

The next step is to look at the entire park as a system, to utilize all the stormwater onsite, taking into account the numerous recreational uses. The development of a three-phased implementation plan, funded by the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, was prepared by a team of consultants from Tilton & Associates in collaboration with the Wet Meadow Team, the Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Department, and other stakeholders.

Funding is currently being sought for the first phase of this plan which includes expansion of the Wet Meadow, construction of a swale and berm along part of the eastern edge of the park to direct water away from neighboring back yards, the addition of soil amendments to an

informal playing field to increase infiltration, the initiation of regular turf aeration, the creation of a small wet meadow on the west side of the park to handle water from roof runoff, and the renovation of two parking lots to incorporate innovative stormwater treatment features.

As part of the fundraising efforts, you are invited to enjoy a multi-media celebration of wilderness, featuring folksinger **Walkin' Jim Stoltz**. In his FOREVER WILD shows, he will be performing his original backcountry ballads and showing multi-image slides from more than 25,000 miles of walking through America's last wild places.

The two benefit concerts will be:

**Saturday, October 12, 8:00 pm**  
\$12 adult, \$8 youth, \$15-50 benefactor

**Sunday, October 13, 2:00 pm - Children's Concert**  
\$10 adults, \$7 children (12 and under), \$25 family

Location: Ypsilanti Farmers' Market Freighthouse in Depot Town, Ypsilanti.

For more information or advance tickets call Jeannine Palms at (734) 971-5870.



## NEW Invasive Alert: Emerald Ash Borer

The Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) is touted to have the ability to kill an adult ash in two years. If you notice significant dieback on local ash with small D-shaped emergence holes on the trunk, you may well be seeing this bugger's damage. It is believed that this beetle, native to Asia, has only been in southeast Michigan for the past five years but it is spreading extremely rapidly throughout the state. Experts from Michigan State University Extension stress, "The emerald ash borer insect appears to be very aggressive on ash trees of all ages and situations and we believe it is the major contributor to ash decline and death in the southeast region of Michigan." For more information, see [http://www.msue.msu.edu/reg\\_se/roberts/ash/index.html](http://www.msue.msu.edu/reg_se/roberts/ash/index.html), or call the Parks and Recreation Forestry Division at (734) 994-2768.



Photo credit: USDA Forest Service

# Inventory Updates

## **NAPFLASH!!!!!!**

*In a fine example of just how important our inventory staff is, NAP Entomologist Barb Barton and NAP Botanist Bev Walters put their heads together and came up with a list of potential sites for *Carex lacustris*, a broad-leaved sedge used by the state threatened butterfly Duke's skipper (*Euphyes dukesi*). Barb and NAP volunteer Roger Kuhlman have been visiting these sites and found the rare skipper in a sedge meadow near Foxfire East Park. Two heads are better than one, so they say.*

## **Botany by Bev Walters**

Newcomers to the Ann Arbor area may take for granted the inviting, open woodlands and prairies packed with wildflowers. But before NAP started the program of prescribed burns and invasive species removal, much of our quality natural areas were choked with buckthorn and honeysuckle. Woodland wildflowers were reluctant to bloom under the dense shade and thick leaf litter. Herbaceous aliens, such as garlic mustard and dame's rocket, were busy elbowing out native species. Tall spires of purple loosestrife loomed forebodingly over the rich floral diversity of our wetlands. This was the landscape that greeted me in 1994 when I was hired by NAP to conduct botanical inventories in the City parks. I fought my way through the thick undergrowth, often finding native plant species tucked in among the invaders. The following year Dave Borneman initiated a plan to try to restore some of the parkland to its pre-European settlement condition. The prairie remnants responded well to prescribed burns. Isolated pockets were readily joined together to become unbroken tracts of prairie grasses and goldenrods, thereby giving us a glimpse of the landscape encountered by the first settlers and well known to Native Americans. But I didn't initially share Dave's vision, especially for wooded areas, and over the years, along with other NAP staff, questioned the wisdom of some of the restoration activity. Remove all the honeysuckle from Foster savanna? We shook our heads. Wasting your time in Brown - too thick with buckthorn. Burn Argo and Dhu Varren? Those steep slopes will surely erode. Dave listened, considered... and persisted. Soon plant species not found during the initial inventories started appearing in the drier woodlands and prairies that had been burned - purple milkweed, annual false foxglove, early buttercup, wood betony, and prairie phlox. But the initial results in some of the woodlands were disappointing, with areas remaining barren for several years after a fire. Unseen by us, the bulbs and roots of plants long dormant were

there, waiting, holding the soil, while the conservation crew and volunteers used fire and brut force to clear the shrubs above them. Eventually, warmed by sunlight and fed by the nutrients released from the ash, they too burst forth, first with golden carpets of trout lilies, then white snowdrifts of trilliums and later with soft pink gems crowning wild geraniums. The rewards of restoration work have come, bringing us more species and a greater abundance of native plants in our natural areas.

As autumn leaves settle around you and the plant world prepares for the oncoming cold, remember that the job is not done. Keep in mind that wildflowers remain resting among the invaders, waiting for the opportunity to add to the floral display. May they get their chance!

*Bev will be giving a presentation about these findings to the Michigan Botanical Club on October 21, 2002, at 8:00 PM (Club business meeting at 7:45)  
Location: Auditorium at Matthaei Botanical Garden  
The public is welcome.*

## **Birds by Dea Armstrong**

Every year our survey has added at least one new species to our list of birds found in Ann Arbor parks. The 2002 breeding season was no different. This year, a young male Summer Tanager was in Marshall Nature Area from late May to mid-July. Usually this migrant from South America nests south of Michigan, but it has been known to occasionally "overshoot" during the May migration season. Records indicate rare, brief appearances in southern Michigan in May with even fewer records for June and July. While the bird's presence in Marshall suggests a potential effort at breeding, no female or fledglings were seen. Adult Summer Tanagers have an all-over red plumage (like our resident cardinal without the crest), but a first year male (born the previous spring) is a patchwork of red and yellow, with more red near the front and head of the bird. Marshall had even more "in-this-city-park-only" birds: Hooded Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Ruffed Grouse, Ovenbird, and Black-throated Green Warbler. Thanks to observant volunteers Susan Falcone and Roger Wykes for keeping tabs on these and other Marshall Nature Area birds.



Summer Tanager, (M) ©Dan Sudia

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# Ask the Technician: Getting a Handle on Buckthorn by Kee Condict

**Q: What are the Origins of Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*)?**

A: Common buckthorn and glossy buckthorn are closely related species native to Europe and northwestern Asia. They were introduced into North America as ornamentals, and used as hedgerows and shelterbelts during the 1800s. Unfortunately, they are well established and rapidly spreading in Michigan. Despite their invasive growth patterns - devastating many natural areas - exotic buckthorns are still legally sold and planted as ornamentals.

**Q: How Can I Identify Common and Glossy Buckthorn?**

A: Both common and glossy buckthorn are woody shrubs or small trees that can reach up to 20 feet in height. Their bark is gray to brown with prominent, often elongate, lighter-colored lenticels (pores in the outer layer of a woody plant stem). Cutting the stems of either species reveals a distinctive yellow sapwood and pink to orange heartwood.

Despite these commonalities, some unique characteristics make them fairly easy to distinguish from one another. Common buckthorn leaves are alternate or sub-opposite on the stems, are simple, and are rounded to egg-shaped with finely toothed margins. Leaves are very dark green and smooth on both surfaces. The terminal bud is often modified into a spine that is longer than the buds.

Glossy buckthorn leaves, on the other hand, alternate on stems, are simple, and oval-shaped with toothless margins. Leaves are dark green and glossy, often with moderately hairy undersides. Twigs lack the terminal spine that is typical on common buckthorn twigs. Glossy buckthorn leaves also tend to have 8-9 pairs of leaf veins that radiate out from a central midvein, whereas common buckthorn leaves only have 3-5 pairs of leaf veins.



*Common Buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica)*  
Photo credit: Moscow State University

Both species produce fruit annually, which tend to serve as a food source for birds, although not a preferred food. The fruit of both species is poisonous to humans.

**Q: Why is the Spread of Buckthorn Considered a Problem?**

A: Human plantings, large numbers of seeds, and rapid growth rates contribute to the spread of buckthorn throughout the United States. Once established, these species aggressively invade natural areas and

form dense thickets, displacing native species. Common buckthorn tends to invade woodlands, savannas, prairies, and abandoned fields. Glossy buckthorn prefers moister locations like fens, marshes, wetlands and riverbanks.

Both common and glossy buckthorn leaf-out very early in the spring and keep their leaves late into the fall, helping to shade out native trees, shrubs and wildflowers.

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## 2002 Volunteer Appreciation Potluck Thursday, November 14, 6:30 PM

This yearly get-together is a celebration of the volunteers who are working for Ann Arbor's natural areas. NAP hopes all the volunteers who have helped us this year can make it. If you have thought about working with us, but have not made it out yet, you are also welcome to attend! Please bring a dish to pass, someone to sit next to (if you like), and a place setting. NAP will provide some vegetarian lasagna. This year's potluck will be held at the Leslie Science Center's Nature House. Please let us know if you will be attending!

# NAPpenings

## Thank You...

- **Nichole Mitchell** for gaining your Girl Scout Silver Award while working with NAP! You and the volunteers you coordinated pulled 52 bags of garlic mustard, weighing a total of 2,400 pounds. That's 1.2 tons!!!
- Students from **Abbot, Emerson, and the Ann Arbor Girl's Middle schools** for your efforts in Hollywood Park, Bird Hills Nature Area, and Cedar Bend Nature Area.
- **Girl Scout troops 1211 and 782** for your hard work in Hollywood Park and Bird Hills Nature Area.
- **YMCA Youth Volunteer Corps** for cutting loads of honeysuckle in Black Pond Woods.
- Staff from **Carlisle-Wortmon, Merchant of Vino (Whole Foods), and Ayres, Lewis Norris, and May** for all your time at NAP's National Trails and Rivers Workdays.

## Garlic Mustard Weed-Out Day

This year's Weed-Out Day was a great success. 26 volunteers pulled 2460 pounds of garlic mustard from Argo, Bird Hills and Cedar Bend Nature Areas! You can see the impressive impacts that Garlic Mustard Weed-Out Day and other workdays have had by walking through a City natural area. You will likely notice areas that are heavily infested with invasives, while other sections are dominated by natives. Wonderful folks donating thousands of hours are keeping these more pristine regions invasives-free.

## Purple Loosestrife Success

Two years ago NAP collaborated with Linda Coughenour, a trained volunteer with the Michigan Sea Grant program and a member of the Washtenaw Audubon Society, to release approximately 2,000 *Galerucella* beetles in a dense stand of loosestrife in Plymouth Park. The release site served as a pilot study within the City parks, to locally examine the effects of these beetles on loosestrife. This summer, we have already seen promising results. The leaves of the loosestrife are riddled with holes, evidence of the damage caused by the beetles. Even more encouraging is the fact that the beetles have begun migrating to the other side of Plymouth Road, making a meal of the loosestrife there. Also this summer, Linda has set up a study site in Gallup Park. With one release plot and two monitoring locations, she hopes to gain a greater understanding of their movement patterns. After witnessing the positive results at Plymouth Park, we are planning

to expand the beetle release project to other parks that have sizeable areas of loosestrife - stands too large for NAP to control manually or chemically. Linda hopes to recruit a number of volunteer site managers for this expansion. Look for further information in the Spring 2003 newsletter. If you already know you will be interested in fostering some *Galerucella* beetles and monitoring a plot of purple loosestrife, call the Outreach Coordinator and have your name added to the 'contact me in the spring' list.

## Goose Update

If you noticed fewer geese hanging out at Gallup Park and our City golf courses this summer, you can thank Gooseworks, a company comprised of Kirk Mehlhaff, his wife Wendy, and the couple's border collies: Ellie, Logan, Dexter, and Breezy. This is the second summer the City has contracted Gooseworks to reduce human-geese conflicts in our parks and reduce excess nutrients running into the river. The canine foursome is trained to discourage Canada geese from congregating in select public areas by chasing and hazing their feathered friends. In addition, Gooseworks removed over 200 geese from Gallup Park and Leslie and Huron Hills golf courses. The geese were then sent to Iowa to be released on preserve land.

By the time you read this, the **Huron Parkway Prairie** should be in its full autumnal glory. This marks the end of the 3rd growing season for this 4-acre pilot project, which stretches south from Hubbard Road, almost to Huron High School. So how's it looking? Well, the northern half has taken hold very well, but the southern half has not. There have been many challenges for the prairie plants: one part of the site was used as a staging area for nearby developments, with equipment and soil stored there; and at the Glazier Way intersection, road work brought a lot of weed seeds to the surface that continue to plague the prairie in that section of the median. Although NAP planned to do its first burn of this site last fall, uncooperative weather and difficult logistics kept us from getting it burned either then or this spring. We have, however, been able to get the site mowed again this year, which is one of the temporary measures used to help keep the weeds down until the native prairie species get well established. So, contrary to what some concerned citizens thought this spring, mowing there does NOT indicate that we have given up on the prairie; just the opposite - we're actively caring for it so it will look even nicer next year. Drive by and enjoy the beautiful fall colors of the foliage.



# Autumn 2002 Natural Area Preservation Volunteer Stewardship Calendar



NAP is located at the Leslie Science Center (1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor, 48105). Our phone number is (734) 996-3266. Many groups participate in NAP workdays, or arrange special workdays for their organization. Contact the NAP office if a group you are involved with is interested in planning a volunteer stewardship event. Minors must either be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form.

## September

**September 8, Sunday**  
**Bird Hills Nature Area**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Get to know this fantastic woodland park while removing invasive shrubs and trash. Join us at the Bird Road entrance.

**September 10, Tuesday**  
**Steward's Circle Meeting**  
**7:30 to 8:30 am**



**Bruegger's Bagels, North Univ. Ave.**  
 Topic: Purple Loosestrife eating beetles

**September 10, Tuesday**  
**Native Landscaping**  
**Workshop III**



**Leslie Science Center Nature House**  
**7:00 - 9:00 PM**

Interested in native plants? Would you like to learn how to establish them in your yard? Program fee: \$15. (To register or for program information please call the NAP office)

**September 15, Sunday**  
**Furstenberg**  
**Native Plant Garden**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Help in the garden and learn about native plants. Meet at the circle drive in Furstenberg Nature Area off Fuller Road.

**September 21, Saturday**  
**Bluffs Nature Area**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Visit one of the newest additions to the Ann Arbor park system while sprucing up trails and removing trash. Meet in the parking lot of the Elks Pratt Lodge on Sunset Road just north of Wildt Street.

## October

**October 8, Tuesday**  
**Steward's Circle Meeting**  
**7:30 to 8:30 am**



**Bruegger's Bagels, North Univ. Ave.**  
 Topic: Ecological restoration potential

**October 12 & 13**  
**Benefit Concert**  
**Ypsilanti Farmers' Market**



**Depot Town, Ypsilanti**  
 See article on page 3.  
 For more information or advance tickets call: Jeannine Palms at (734) 971-5870.

**October 13, Sunday**  
**Barton Nature Area**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Collect seed from native plants and view this park in its fall glory. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

**October 26, Saturday**  
**Bandemer Park**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Collect seed from native plants, to be sown at a later date in Ann Arbor parks. Meet at the parking area off Barton Drive.



Long pants and closed-toe shoes are required for your safety. When joining our stewardship events, please keep an eye on the weather and dress appropriately. Workday orientation starts promptly at 10:00 AM.

## November

**November 2, Saturday**  
**Scarlett Mitchell**  
**Nature Area**



**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**  
 Help remove trash from the new part of this woodland park. Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot off Lorraine Street.

**November 2, Saturday**  
**Brown Park**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Help by removing as many invasive shrubs as you can. Meet in the parking lot at the Packard Road entrance.

**November 12, Tuesday**  
**Steward's Circle Meeting**  
**7:30 to 8:30 am**



**Bruegger's Bagels, North Univ. Ave.**  
 Topic: Volunteer feedback

**November 14, Thursday**  
**Volunteer Appreciation Potluck!!!**  
**Leslie Science Center Nature House,**  
**6:30 PM**  
 See article on page 5. Please call NAP to register.

**November 16, Saturday**  
**Redbud Nature Area**  
**10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**



Join us at our last workday of the year, removing invasive, non-native shrubs and grooming the trails. Meet at the park entrance on Parkwood Avenue at Jeanne Street.

**November 21, Thursday**  
**How to Become a Park Steward**  
**Leslie Science Center Nature House**  
**7:30 PM**

See article on page 11.  
 Please register by calling NAP.

# Ask the Technician *Continued from page 5*

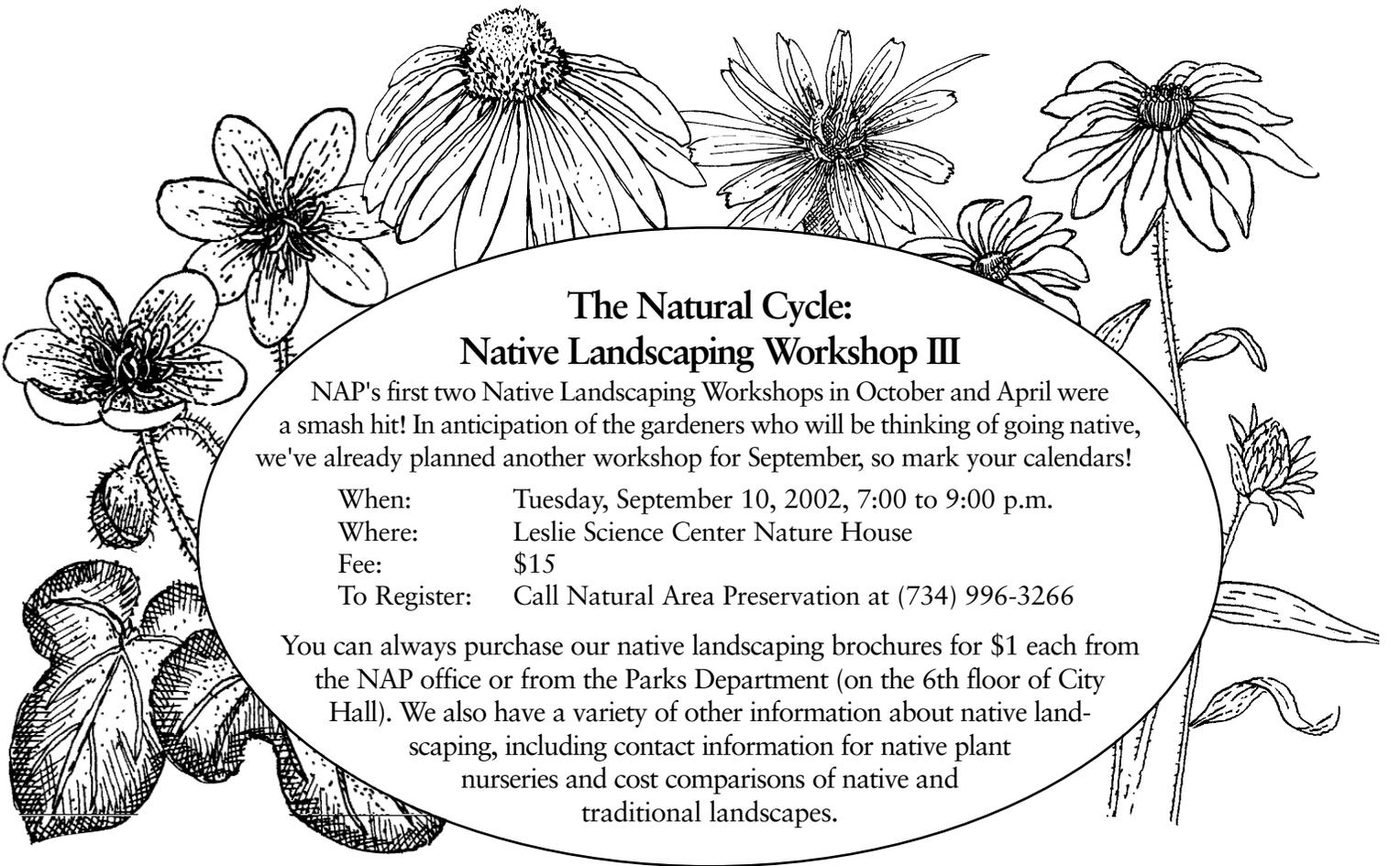
## Q: What Can I Do To Control Buckthorn?

A: Control of buckthorn is best achieved with early identification and removal of isolated plants, before they begin to produce seeds. With large infestations of buckthorn, the larger, seed-producing plants should be removed first. Depending on the degree of infestation and the time and resources available to you, a variety of control methods exist for managing buckthorn:

- **Hand Removal:** Buckthorn seedlings can be removed by hand if the infestation is small and the stems are less than 0.5 inches in diameter. Be sure to tamp disturbed soil resulting from hand pulling to minimize disturbance and reinfestation. Larger plants (0.5 -1.5 in. diameter) can be dug or pulled using a shovel or some type of mechanical device such as a Weed Wrench™.
- **Cutting:** Repeated cutting can also prevent the spread of buckthorn. Be prepared for a long battle as resprouts will continually need to be trimmed back.

Cutting in conjunction with herbicide treatments are generally more effective and less time consuming. Consult a restoration professional or your County Extension Agent for more information.

- **Fire:** Prescribed burning in spring or fall has been used to control buckthorn in many natural areas. Fire can kill seedlings and top kill larger plants; re-sprouting is likely to occur however. Annual or biannual burning may be needed for several years to control buckthorn. Fire should not be used if it could adversely affect the local plant community. Be aware of local and state fire codes, as well as local permits that may be required for a burn.
- **Seeding:** Re-seeding with native grasses and forbs provides increased competition and can help limit the sprouting of buckthorn seedlings.
- **Volunteer:** We have various workdays throughout the year to remove buckthorn. Check the Stewardship Calendar for more information.



## The Natural Cycle: Native Landscaping Workshop III

NAP's first two Native Landscaping Workshops in October and April were a smash hit! In anticipation of the gardeners who will be thinking of going native, we've already planned another workshop for September, so mark your calendars!

When: Tuesday, September 10, 2002, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.  
Where: Leslie Science Center Nature House  
Fee: \$15  
To Register: Call Natural Area Preservation at (734) 996-3266

You can always purchase our native landscaping brochures for \$1 each from the NAP office or from the Parks Department (on the 6th floor of City Hall). We also have a variety of other information about native landscaping, including contact information for native plant nurseries and cost comparisons of native and traditional landscapes.

# Staff Updates

## hello...

If you've been around the office the past few months, you may have seen a familiar face that hasn't been here for a while. **David Mindell**, NAP's Stewardship Coordinator from 1995-1998, has been helping out in the interim between Kee's departure and her replacement being hired. Since leaving NAP 4 years ago, David has been running his own ecological consulting business - PlantWise. We're grateful for his assisting NAP through this transition.



During this spring's burn season, NAP staff should have become suspicious when a mysterious volunteer arrived for the first burn day then the second then the 3rd through 8th. In

fact, this was all part of **Ross Orr's** diabolical plan to force NAP into giving him a job. After stints as a woodworker and a Macintosh tech guru, Ross decided it was time to go professional with his interests in native plants and restoration. Ross is native to Ann Arbor parks himself, having begun playing in Argo Nature Area back in 1963 or so.



**Shira Diem.** I am a new NAPPER. What a splendid switch, being around all these wetlands and fens, compared to my last job-office manager/ spiritual advisor of New York City casting

agents and entertainment lawyers. Along with my blooming, greening interest of understanding nature in her native dress, I love to go dancing. I have two sisters, one of them a twin. The three of us can be seen around town impersonating each other.

## farewell...



**Nancy Novitski.** This is the first newsletter in two years that I have not edited (well, not edited much J). Since I came to NAP, I have had to read many a good-bye from friends.

Alas, I knew that eventually my time would come. What started as a temporary clerk position has become one of the most formative, educational, and fun experiences of my life. And it has inspired me to explore environmental policy writing as a career. I can't thank the NAP staff enough. This has been a moment in heaven. -NanZ

P.S.> If you ever need anything edited, I know someone in San Francisco who will always have a red pen handy.



**Kee Conduct.** After 3 ½ years with NAP, I am headed to the Mecca of big hair and banjos - Nashville, TN. Contrary to popular thought, I am not moving to work at Opryland or

Dollywood, but am moving to be with my partner who will be starting a Ph.D. program at Vanderbilt. So, as I sit here reflecting back on my past years with NAP, I find my eyes drifting to a quote I have above my desk - "Let the beauty we love be what we do." Working at NAP has allowed me to experience that in a very real and special way. Who would have thought that burns, buckthorn, and chigger bites would provide fond memories for me, but they do and will. They will be reminders of the good fortune I have had, to work for an organization that deeply cares about preserving and stewarding the environment. And then there is the personal side of NAP - that incredible and inspiring group of volunteers and staff that I have had the pleasure to work alongside. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I say thanks, to all of you, for making NAP such a special and memorable place to have worked.

# The State of Our Natural Areas

*Continued from page 2*

and the most to gain if we do. Our stewardship goals for Conservation Areas are to maintain and improve their quality over time by controlling the small infestations of invasive species currently present, preventing future infestations, preserving wildlife habitat, and maintaining trails.

**Green Space** is all the remaining undeveloped land in the park system (318 acres in 31 sites). It has lower biodiversity and has suffered more disturbance than Conservation Areas. Green Space may, however, be great for wildlife habitat, a great place to walk your dog, watch birds or butterflies, go for a hike, pursue other recreational pursuits, or just get away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. But other than doing some inventory work at these sites, NAP is not able to spend much time doing ecological restoration in Green Space. We do, however, recruit and assist volunteers who have interest in working there.

Most of the NAP staff's ecological restoration energies currently go into the top 120 acres of our highest priority Conservation Areas, those sites where we fully expect that we can win the war on invasive species and thus preserve the historic native landscape in a weed-free condition. We also carry out various stewardship activities over a much larger area. For example, every year we conduct prescribed burns on about 175 acres of urban natural areas. And last year volunteers contributed 4634 hours toward NAP activities, such as the 50 volunteer stewardship workdays that NAP coordinated throughout the park system. Then there are 110 volunteers who work independently throughout the park system on NAP-sponsored activities, including 18 Park Stewards who have each adopted specific sites to help care for.

## Inventory Updates *Continued from page 4*

Also, returning to our parks after missing several years is the Acadian Flycatcher, spotted at Bird Hills Nature Area. Continuing at the Ann Arbor Landfill: increasing numbers of Bobolinks and no fewer than four Sedge Wrens - a banner year for these little guys who are rare in Washtenaw County. As always, it is our volunteers who do such great work finding these birds. Thanks to all of you!



If you are a regular reader of this newsletter, you'll realize that there are many other things NAP does or with which we assist, too many to list here. Some examples; trail development and maintenance, site plan review for new developments, new park acquisition, urban goose control, native landscaping and re-naturalization of turf areas, and public education (including distributing this quarterly newsletter to about 1300 parties, and conducting dozens of public walks and talks every year).

It has been very gratifying to watch these accomplishments grow over the past 9 years as more and more volunteers have gotten involved. It's like a snowball picking up speed and mass as it rolls downhill. And enough time has passed that we can clearly see the positive, lasting impacts our efforts have made to the landscape. Our city natural areas are healthier and more diverse than they were 9 years ago (see Bev's article on page 4 for more details on this). Although alien invaders will continue to roll across the continent, Ann Arbor has become one stronghold where the loss of native ecosystems is not a foregone conclusion. We are preserving a bit of our natural heritage for future generations. For this our grandchildren will thank us.

*More detailed information on "The State of Our Natural Areas" is available from NAP. The department has also prepared fact sheets that provide more information about the Maintenance and Repair Millage and how the funds are spent. Call the NAP office for copies of either.*

- David Borneman, *Natural Area Preservation Manager*

### **Butterflies by Barb Barton**

With the cool weather in the early part of the season, followed by the spell of hot and dry conditions, the butterflies were a little slow to come out. Things have picked up, with many sightings of skippers such as Black Dash, Northern Broken Dash, and Mulberry Wing in our wet meadows. The locally rare Broadwinged skipper was found in the sedge meadow areas of South Pond and Black Pond Woods - a first time sighting at both of these locations! Our volunteers have been hard at work looking for these beautiful winged wonders.



# The State of Our Natural Areas

*Continued from page 2*

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# Park Focus: Native Plant Gardens *Continued from page 1*

A resource like this is too good to pass up. If you are thinking about native plantings, or would like to add something to what you already have and don't know what would go well in your space...come visit and get ideas from our demonstration garden. There are volunteer opportunities with the native gardens - you can work alongside a Master Gardener in tending the gardens.

## Furstenberg Native Plant Demonstration Garden *by Eric Ellis*

Along Fuller Road, across from Huron High School, grows a small piece of Ann Arbor's natural history. The Furstenberg Demonstration Garden, established in 1994 as a memorial to Casey Gilbert Hakken, is planted with 73 species of prairie plants native to southeast Michigan. Many of the plants can be found in the surrounding park as well.

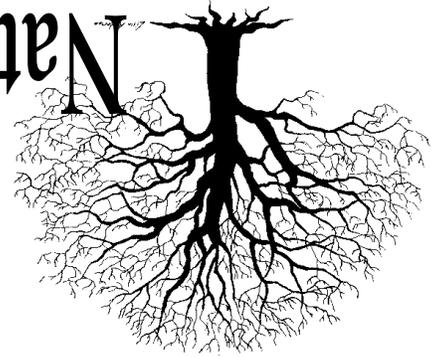
There is something in bloom from early spring until the end of the growing season. Late summer is the best time for peak wildflower viewing. The plants are labeled in all stages of their growth, which can be particularly useful to people interested in planting natives.

Park Steward Aunita Erskine diligently maintains the garden with the help of many Washtenaw County Master Gardeners and the general public at volunteer workdays.

Every year she encounters new challenges. Early on, she worked to keep out invasive cool season (turf) grasses and isolate the individual native species. More recently she has dealt with hungry critters such as deer and rabbits. This past spring a split-rail fence was erected to keep the deer (not people) out. The rabbits continue to nibble. Another challenge is finding space for new species in the small garden. This year there are three new additions; pasture thistle (*Cirsium discolor*), false sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*), and one of the numerous native asters. In early spring NAP conducts prescribed burns in the garden to simulate the natural process these native species are adapted to. The last burn was this April.

If you would like to learn more about the garden, Aunita will be leading a volunteer workday on Sunday, September 15th from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. Aunita's workdays are more than a chance to help with the garden's upkeep; she also gives out a native plant resource sheet, a plant list, and leads a short nature walk in other parts of Furstenberg. If you don't have time to attend the workday, feel free to visit the garden and enjoy the wildflowers.

# Natural Area Preservation News



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