

Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 10, Number 2

Summer 2005

Eagle Scouts-Improving the Parks *by Maggie Hostetler*

Last summer a pair of six-foot tall tripods were installed in Marshall Nature Area—one at the top of a hill and one at the bottom. Hand-made from branches lashed together, the structures look like sculptures but have a very useful purpose. Steven Zekany and a friend built the tripods off-site and transported them to Marshall—all part of Steven's Eagle Scout project.

Steven contacted NAP earlier that summer looking for a project in the parks that would fulfill the community service requirements for his Eagle Scout rank. Knowing of erosion problems at Marshall, Outreach Coordinator Laurel Malvitz suggested he close a steep, erosion-prone trail and reroute hikers via a more established trail. The tripods embedded in the ground were the barriers Steven devised to shut off the steep trail.

To work on his project, Steven recruited about a dozen friends and fellow scouts from Troop 8, raised \$100 for materials, and led his team in 200 hours of work. In addition to the tripods, they installed interpretive signs to help re-route hikers to the better trail, created a new trail connector at the bottom of the hill, and cleared out an infestation of invasive oriental bittersweet.

Thanks to Steven's work, a hill at Marshall was saved from erosion and native wildflowers will have a better chance to flourish in the area.

A few months after Steven completed his project another Eagle Scout candidate from Troop 8, Tim Kieras, made

further improvements at Marshall. He and his volunteers created a new trail in the western portion of the park that will also be used as a firebreak for future prescribed burns. Now, a whole new section of the park can benefit from fire, which encourages native species.

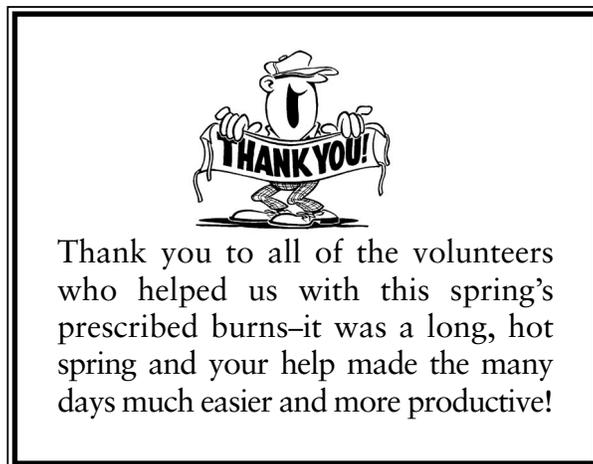
Tim and Steven were not the first Scouts to volunteer for NAP. Between 1995 and the present, a total of 14 Eagle Scouts have brought their talents and hard work to the natural areas of Ann Arbor, completing a variety of projects that NAP staff would not have found time for. Next time you are out for a hike, look for one of the many improvements that Scouts have contributed to our parks...

Stewart Hedberg completed a very interesting project in 1999. He and fellow scouts from Troop 7, with some adults,

began the project in the parking lot of K-Mart on July 16, washing cars to raise the \$176 to buy fencing material, posts, and other hardware.

Early the next day, they constructed 10' x 10' deer enclosures (fenced off areas used to study the effects of deer browsing on native vegetation) at two sites. They started at the north edge of Black Pond Woods, not far from the pond. Later they moved to Bird Hills near the Newport entrance. Stewart posted signs at each enclosure and handed out fliers to park neighbors explaining his project. Today, park visitors can see for themselves how the protected areas behind the fences are doing, compared to the surrounding woods.

Continued on page 6



Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped us with this spring's prescribed burns—it was a long, hot spring and your help made the many days much easier and more productive!

In This Issue

Eagle Scouts Improve the Parks.....	1	Volunteer Calendar.....	4-5
Coordinator's Corner.....	2	NAPpenings.....	5
Herpetological Rescue.....	2	Staff Updates & Alumni News.....	7
Prairie Rose.....	3	Huron River Day.....	8
Screech Owl Houses in Dicken Woods.....	3	Stewards' Circle.....	8

Coordinator's Corner

New Roommates

There are some exciting changes around the NAP office these days. Ten years ago we moved into one of the four upstairs rooms at the Leslie Science Center. Since then, as NAP has grown, we've expanded into a second, and then a third room. For the past few years the fourth room has been the home of Project Grow, Ann Arbor's Community Garden. Now, in a collaborative move involving four organizations, NAP has again expanded its offices at LSC and gotten a new roommate in the process. The Leslie Science Center has vacated a staff room in one of the other buildings in the LSC Campus. This will be the new ground-level headquarters for Project Grow. Their old office will now provide space for NAP's expanding staff. So what's the fourth organization? The Stewardship Network, the growth of which we've covered for years in this newsletter. The Stewardship Network is now an official 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has outgrown its old "office" in the home of TSN's Executive Director Lisa Brush. NAP and the Network will share the fourth room in the LSC upstairs and we're thrilled about the new opportunities this will provide both organizations. NAP's involvement in the Network goes back to the very beginning, and NAP staffers remain active on the Network's board, steering committee, and in the formation of the new Huron Arbor Cluster. Many of NAP's volunteers are also active in the Stewardship Network and now they can visit both organizations in the same location! So stop by and see our new space, meet our new roommate, and look forward to more collaboration between NAP and The Stewardship Network.

- David Borneman, *NAP Manager*

Herpetological Rescue

NAP has been working with the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the Detroit Zoo to save amphibians and reptiles from the site of the new Ann Arbor High School (North Maple at M-14). To date, here's what we've rescued...

Amphibians:

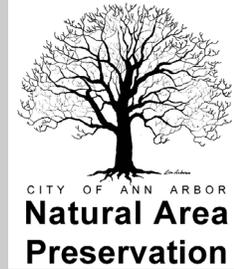
830 Wood frogs, 703 Spring peepers,
45 Chorus frogs, 45 American toads,
82 Spotted Salamanders, 7 Small-mouthed Salamanders, 1 Blue Spotted Salamander, 88 Red-spotted Newts, 5 Redbacked Salamanders



Reptiles:

135 Eastern Garter Snakes,
110 Northern Brown Snakes, 27 Redbellied Snakes

**Most of these species have already been relocated to other sites. Look for a complete report of this exciting project in our next NAP News.*



Natural Area Preservation

is a Division of the City of Ann Arbor
Public Services Area

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.

1831 Traver Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Phone

734.996.3266

Fax

734.997.1072

E-mail

nap@ci.ann-arbor.mi.us

Web site

www.a2gov.org/nap

Manager

David Borneman

Technician

Jason Tallant

NAP Specialist

Maggie Hostetler

Outreach Coordinators

Jason Frenzel

Laurel Malvitz

Conservation Workers

Ricardo Aruirre

Becky Clingerman

Shelley Gladwin

Laurel Malvitz

Amanda Sprader

Inventory Staff

Dea Armstrong, *Ornithologist*

Barb Barton, *Entomologist*

David Mifsud, *Herpetologist*

Work Study

Sabrina Hepburn

For up-to-date information on stewardship activities, call the "hotline" at 734.996.3266.

If you would prefer to receive your next newsletter via e-mail please call NAP.

Prairie Rose *by Bev Walters*

I love the first days of summer, after the spring wildflowers have finished their blaze of glory but before the hot, hazy days of full summer have set in. The prairie rose (*Rosa setigera*) welcomes these days with me, coming into full bloom in June. Unlike most of its cultivated cousins, it has only 5 petals, but this simplicity is very appealing. The rich, pink flowers, adorned in the center with a fluff of golden stamens, are often numerous on their branches, so having fewer petals doesn't diminish the eye-catching beauty of this bush in the least. Prairie rose had been listed by the Michigan DNR as a Special Concern species (possibly in danger of becoming Threatened), but after it was located at more sites (several of them right here in Ann Arbor!), it was de-listed. So how will you know if the pink-flowered rose you come across as you explore Ann Arbor's natural areas is a



prairie rose, and not one of the other native roses, or even a cultivar that jumped the fence? First, count the leaflets. Prairie rose has only 3-5 leaflets, which is far fewer than most other roses. Then take a closer look at a small detail in the flower (and enjoy a whiff of its delicate fragrance in the process...). In the center of the stamens, the hairless styles are united together almost all the way to the top, appearing as a single structure. These joined styles are almost as tall as the stamens. Prairie rose grows in prairies, of course, as well as fencerows, edges of woods, and old fields. Look for it at the very west end of Gallup Park, or in Brown Park just northwest of the freeway pedestrian bridge. A small prairie rose even showed up in Swift Run prairie after several prescribed fires, looking very at home in its namesake habitat!

Screech Owl Houses in Dicken Woods *by Stephanie Hunter*

As part an ongoing relationship with Dicken Elementary School, the Friends of Dicken Woods (FoDW) raised \$1,000 to be used by teachers for environmental education and special projects in the woods during the 2004-2005 school year.

One recent project involved the fourth grade classes and their animal behavior unit. In early January Dody Wyman, Director of the River Raisin Raptor Center, visited Dicken Elementary with four non-releasable "ambassador" birds—a red-tailed hawk, a screech owl, a barred owl, and a turkey vulture. The students learned the characteristics of raptors and the special adaptations of these and other birds. They also learned about the importance of proper habitat and of the dangers—mostly man-made—facing these and other wild animals.

Later in January, I guided Ms. Wyman and each fourth grade class through Dicken Woods. The classes studied the habitat needs for screech owls and located good trees for hanging screech owl houses. These houses were constructed according to strict specifications by Burt Perry, FoDW member, and were put up on January 29 by several FoDW volunteers.

The students and the neighbors are proud of this valuable addition to the woods. We hope that owls will soon be moving in. In fact, this fall the Raptor Center plans to release rehabilitated, orphaned screech owls into the woods as they believe this to be a wonderful location to do so.

"I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree." - Joyce Kilmer



Summer 2005 Natural Area Preservation Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

NAP is located at the Leslie Science Center, 1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor, 48105 734.996.3266 (phone). 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.

June

June 4, Saturday (S)

**A2 Landfill Grasslands Bird Walk,
7:30 am to 9:30 am**

Join City Ornithologist, Dea Armstrong, at the small parking area just inside the Platt Road entrance, which is south of the intersection of Platt and Ellsworth Roads. These walks are for all levels of birders, but beginners are especially welcome. Binoculars are nice but not essential.

June 4, Saturday (W)

**Dicken Woods Stewardship Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

We will spend the morning in Dicken Woods removing invasives and cleaning up the park, and we'll have a great time doing it! Meet us at the Dicken Elementary School parking lot, off of Runnymede Boulevard. At the end of the workday we'll spend a little time exploring the ecology of Dicken Woods.

June 4, Saturday (NE)

**Furstenberg Stewardship Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Enjoy an afternoon at Furstenberg with your friends and neighbors while combating herbaceous invasive plants like dame's rocket and garlic mustard. Weeds to pull and snacks provided! We'll meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School. At the end of the workday we'll take a short nature hike through Furstenberg.

Legend:
**C = Central, NE = Northeast,
S = South, W = West**
**For a map of these locations see
our webpage.**

June 11, Saturday (NE)

**Gallup Park Bird Walk
7:30 to 9:30 am**

Join City Ornithologist, Dea Armstrong, as she leads a morning walk to look for birds in Gallup Park and Furstenberg Nature Area. Bring binoculars if you have them, but they are not absolutely necessary. A great walk for beginning birders! Meet at the paddleboat dock at Gallup.

June 11, Saturday (W)

**Miller Stewardship Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to work we go! It's time to spruce up the trails at Miller, so come out for this morning workday with neighbors, friends, and family. Meet us at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue. After the workday, NAP staff and the Miller Park Steward will lead a short nature walk.

June 11, Saturday (W)

**Lakewood Stewardship Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Lakewood is a beautiful place for nature study or an afternoon hike! Come and be part of the solution as we maintain the trails and remove litter. Meet us at the Lakewood Elementary School parking lot off of Gralake Avenue, three blocks south of Jackson Avenue. Bring friends and family!

June 26, Sunday (NE)

**Furstenberg Native Plant Garden,
9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

Park Steward and Master Gardener, Aunita Erskine, will lead a wonderful cleanup workday and botanical walk. Join her in improving the demonstration garden. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School.

July

July 9, Saturday (W)

**Hollywood Stewardship Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

This small neighborhood park has a great diversity of native wildflowers that will benefit from the removal of invasive shrubs. Help us clear and restore this beautiful spot! Meet us on Sequoia Parkway near the intersection of Archwood Drive. A short nature walk with NAP staff will explore some of the diversity of native plants at Hollywood.

July 9, Saturday (W)

**Sunset Brooks Stewardship Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

We'll be out at Sunset Brooks this afternoon doing maintenance work on some of the trails. Trail work is fun for all ages, helps out the community, and protects the ecology of neighborhood parks by reducing the impact of human use. Why wouldn't you want to join us? Meet at the park entrance on Sunset Road, at the end of Brooks Street.

July 23, Saturday (NE)

**Leslie Woods Stewardship Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

Join us as we maintain trails and spruce up Leslie Woods. Enjoy the morning with neighbors, friends, and family. Meet us at the park entrance at the north end of Upland Drive, north of Plymouth Road. When we're done working in the park we'll take a short nature walk and have some snacks!

August

August 6, Saturday (W)

Bluffs Stewardship Workday

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

We're heading out to Bluffs to pull the spotted knapweed that has taken root there. Come out and pull some of these problematic invasive plants! Meet us in the parking lot of the James L. Crawford Lodge (220 Sunset Road, near Wildt Street).

August 6, Saturday (NE)

Sugarbush Stewardship Workday

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Come on out to Sugarbush and help us maintain the new trails. Meet on Rumsey Drive between Georgetown Boulevard and Yellowstone Drive. We'll explore Sugarbush with a short nature walk at the end of the workday.

August 20, Saturday (W)

Kuebler Langford Stewardship Workday

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

One of our most troublesome invasive plants is spotted knapweed. Today we hope to have a great group of volunteers help us get rid of it at Kuebler Langford! Meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive, north of Sunset Road.



Stewards' Circle

2nd Tuesday of the month,
7:30 to 8:30 am
Bruegger's Bagels
North University, Ann Arbor

June 14 Mowing habits and practices and how they impact natural areas

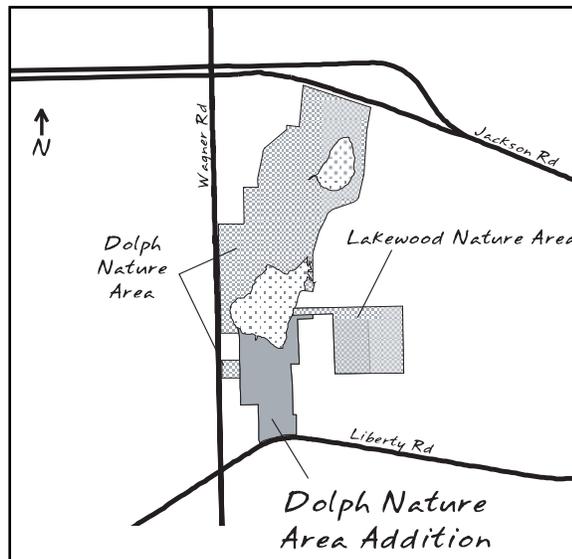
July 12 Wetland invaders, problems and solutions

August 9 Boardwalk designs and specifications

NAPpennings

THANKS!!!

- ~ The Giordani's for your continued support of NAP's efforts!
- ~ UM International Students for help at Argo removing dame's rocket and improving the trails
- ~ Macalister alumni for their assistance at the Cranbrook Workday
- ~ All of the UM students who participated in Hands on the Planet
- ~ Loyola University students for their help at Barton
- ~ The Friends of Greenview Park for all the coordination at this spring's workday



Dolph Addition Official

Dolph Nature Area has a new addition. An 18.1-acre parcel south and east of Second Sister Lake now provides continuous parkland all the way from Jackson to Liberty Road. The new area has some woods and an old-field area-as well as most of the remaining shoreline for Second Sister Lake! Paths already crisscross the area and should make exploring this new site simple. Enjoy!

Bald Eagle Sighting

In February, while walking their dog, Tom Kraft (Argo Park Steward) and family had the pleasure of watching a **Bald Eagle** circling overhead. Tom said, "It was so cool, I needed to share." Dea Armstrong notes that there were quite a few winter and spring reports of Bald Eagles in the parks that border the Huron River. Although pairs of Bald Eagles in Michigan have increased almost 10 fold since 1961, Michigan continues to include the Bald Eagle on its list of Threatened species.

Candlelight Walk Held in Dicken Woods on a Crisp February Night

On the evening of February 17th, 2005, well over 200 Dicken Elementary School students, family members, and friends walked a portion of the beautiful snow-covered trails in Dicken Woods. The east trail loop and access trail from Dicken School were bordered by candle-lit luminaries made by the students. Approximately 100 students spent a portion of their recess and lunch breaks working on the luminaries, which were fashioned from large glass containers with artistic sleeves and cans pierced with decorative patterns. The luminaries were set out by members of the Friends of Dicken Woods, and cookies and hot cocoa were provided by the Friends after the walk.

Eagle Scouts Improve the Parks *continued from page 1*

Troop 111 member, **John Rykowski**, carried out another fence project at Bird Hills in 1997. Before Bird Hills was a park it was privately owned farmland that had been cleared and fenced. The hills were bare of trees and criss-crossed with barbed wire. As the woods slowly reclaimed the hillsides, some of the fencing remained stubbornly in place. One particularly bad spot was a line of barbed wire along a creek. The rusted tangle prevented park visitors from enjoying the scenic waterway. John and his crew of several dozen volunteers put in 135 hours cutting the wire into sections and hauling it away to the scrap yard.

The park entrances at Bird Hills Nature Area would also be very different today if not for the efforts of two Eagle Scouts. In the final report on his project, **Colin Riker** described the conditions at the foot of the hill at the Beechwood entrance.

This 60-foot section is very rough, jagged and uneven. During storms the water collects here, erodes the soil, and has exposed large roots and rocks. The greatest problem...is the vast quantity of mud. The trail is very wide at this point because many park visitors tend to avoid the mud by walking around it, off the trail...resulting in the destruction of shrubbery and plant life.

Colin and his Troop 7 crew put in 267 hours installing 25 log steps (known as waterbars), backfilling them with gravel, and laying out new trail liners.

Jerome Fletcher and members of Troop 4 completed a similar transformation at the Newport entrance where visitors struggled with a steep slope. He made 30 waterbars and fashioned them into a curving path to avoid disturbing established trees. Today the entrances at Beechwood Drive and Newport Road are much easier to access and the nearby vegetation is intact thanks to these two projects.

In 1999 **Devin Riker** (Colin's brother) participated in a service cleanup at Dolph with Troop 7. Devin noticed that one of the footbridges was in very bad shape. His report states, "Our troop was having trouble crossing the bridge because the wet, rotting wood was very slippery and too narrow to cross." He was inspired to construct a new bridge as his Eagle project. With the help of other scouts and adults, Devin cut up and removed the old structure, constructed the new bridge sections off-site, and installed them over the creek.

Also in 1999, Dolph was the site of a very ambitious Eagle Scout Project. **Wes Weaver**, his family, other scouts from Troop 4, and friends put in six days of work to build a bridge and blaze 500 feet of new trail on the western side

of the park. The trail led to a scenic pond overlook, which opened up a whole new section of the park to bird watchers and other visitors.

Two years later **Dan Mitchell** continued work in the overlook area. He and his crew from Troop 4 built more trail, topped it with slag stone, and created steps along this path. At the end of the trail they constructed wooden benches and fencing, formalizing the overlook for viewing the pond. Dan and his volunteers put in over 800 hours on this project!



Wes Weaver at Dolph Nature Area (1999)

Other parks have benefited from Eagle Scout projects as well:

Argo

1998-**Dana Ferguson**, Troop 4, cleaned up and improved the area around the boat launch on the Huron River.

Brown Park

1995-**Timothy Bair**, Troop 7, cleaned up and carried out restoration work.

2004-**Austin Riker**, Troop 7, constructed a bridge over a 3-foot deep stream.

Scarlett Mitchell

1995-**Anthony Phillips**, Troop 27, developed and cleared a trail and created a wildlife exhibit.

16 Parks

2001-**Dan Andersen**, Troop 88, built 16 wood duck and eastern blue bird nest boxes in parks throughout the city.

NAP gives a great big thank you to all of our Eagle Scouts and the volunteers they organized!

Staff Updates

farewell...



Reid Parker

Well, burn season wasn't coming fast enough for me, so I've decided to chase it down in the West. As a result, all of you volunteers need to pull an extra bag of garlic mustard this spring to pick up my slack. It was a pleasure to work with you all last year and I'll be sending warm thoughts your way in my travels.



Tracie Rexer

Goodbye, NAP! I am out in Colorado now, just starting school. I have had a great experience working on the crew, mostly because of the incredible people who are in the NAP community-the staff and volunteers are amazing. Someday I'll be back to visit and when I do, I'm sure I'll see all the great natives flourishing in the parks and wayyy less buckthorn, garlic mustard, and the rest of that pesky invasive bunch!

NAP Alumni News

Michelle (Barnwell) Boerger (Conservation Crew 1999/2000) and husband, Brad, are expecting their first little one July 2nd and are on the cusp of a move to Charleston, WV in August or September. Michelle has been working for the City of Mason, a suburb of Cincinnati, doing landscaping, bike paths, and grant writing with their City Planner.

Lance Cablk (Ecologist 1995) is currently living and working in Portland, Oregon. He will be moving to his partner, Deidre's, home in Auckland, New Zealand this summer, where exploring new plants (e.g. tree ferns) and ecosystems is high on his list of exciting things to do.

Courtney (Babb) Shosh (Outreach Coordinator 1998/1999) and husband, Ron, are expecting a daughter in mid-June and are currently in negotiations over names.

hello...



Ricardo Aguirre

I recently moved back to Ann Arbor after spending a season working for the Parks Department in Olympia, Washington (and managing to drive some 3,500 miles back to Michigan with no radio). Since graduating from U of M in the fall of 2000, I have been working for various park departments and non-profit organizations, and am currently looking forward to an exciting season of prescribed burns and battling invasives here at NAP.



Becky Clingerman

Hello everyone! I'm excited to be a part of NAP's crew and be reacquainted with my native landscape here in SE Michigan. I graduated from North Carolina State University with a degree in Environmental Science and have spent the past few years doing ecological restoration and botany work in the Mojave Desert, Northern Arizona, and the Canyonlands of Idaho. After six years away I am happy to be back in Michigan and learn about restoration ecology here in an urban environment. I'm eagerly awaiting spring when I will break out my hiking shoes and tent to continue exploring the endless nature and wilderness areas here in Michigan.



Amanda Sprader

After graduating from the University of Michigan in 2003, I headed east to manage livestock on a farm in Vermont. Having my fill of feeding and watering animals and shoveling manure, I am looking forward to taking care of plants here at NAP. Hearing about former "NAPPers" career paths now, I know that working for NAP will provide a solid educational background and many connections in the world of restoration ecology. When not eliminating invasive species in the parks of Ann Arbor, I can be found running on the roads training for my first marathon, having dinner with friends, or knitting hats for my sisters, which they will never wear.

Huron River Day

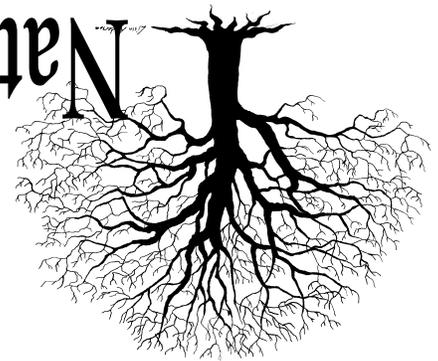


Since 1980, 400 billion cubic feet (3 trillion gallons) of water have flowed via the Huron River into Lake Erie and eventually into the Atlantic Ocean. Each year we celebrate this life-giving, natural process on the first Sunday after the Fourth of July. This year, on **July 10, 2005**, we will be celebrating our 25th anniversary of Huron River Day with food, music, educational exhibits, and fun events for the whole family. Come and join us at Gallup Park, Parker Mill, and the UM Arboretum for a very special tribute to the Huron River, the life-blood of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County. It's going to be a sturgeon of a party!

Wild Indigo Duskywings at Olson Park *by Barb Barton*

Wild indigo duskywing (*Erynnis baptisiae*) is a State Special Concern species that occurs in several of Ann Arbor's natural areas. The largest population was found in Olson Park (formerly Northeast Area Park). In 2001 NAP set out to relocate larvae before construction of the soccer fields began. The historic larval food-plant for this butterfly was wild indigo, a rare prairie plant. The butterflies have switched to using the non-native crown vetch, which has probably saved them from extinction. Crown vetch is quite abundant at Olson Park, so while the butterflies were in their larval stage, crews went out and removed several large swaths of vetch and transplanted them, larvae and all, into an area that was to be left untouched by construction activities. Wild indigos are still thriving at Olson Park, although their numbers are lower than before. We hope that by moving some of the larvae to a safe place, we have lowered the effects of the construction activity and preserved this little brown butterfly.

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