

Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 12, Number 4

Winter 2007

Park Focus: Recent Addition to Eberwhite Woods

by Nancy T. L. Stoll, NAP Office Volunteer

Eberwhite Woods, located between Liberty and Arbordale, is one of Ann Arbor's oldest and largest natural areas. With 32 acres of mature trees and a wide variety of plant and animal life, it also ranks as one of the more ecologically interesting sites in the city. Eberwhite Woods has not been featured in Park Focus before, as the land is owned and managed by the Ann Arbor Public Schools, not the City of Ann Arbor, so NAP does not have jurisdiction over the woods. In July, however, the City, utilizing the Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage, acquired 2.5 acres of land adjoining Eberwhite Woods from Zion Lutheran Church. This acquisition of land adjacent to Eberwhite has increased NAP's interest in stewardship of the larger natural area.

Way-back-when to the present

In recent times an ancient conch shell was discovered buried in Eberwhite Woods. There was speculation that the shell is an artifact of The Hopewellian Indians who lived in this area as far back as 200 BC. Eber White, who came to Ann Arbor in 1824, is listed as the first "owner" of the land. He lived and farmed on adjoining land, as the area that is now protected was somewhat swampy and hilly, and kept these acres as his "back forty". In 1915 when most of Eber White's estate was being subdivided for homes, the University of Michigan purchased the wooded portion for management and use by the School of Natural Resources, Forestry Department. During this time the land was used for biological research and education by university researchers. The Spotted Salamander is an example of a critter that was studied there. There is also a species of fungus, *Bolitus eberwhitei*, first identified in Eberwhite in 1965, that is named after

the woods. The Forestry Department managed the timber on the land by removing commercially undesirable trees and cutting those they could sell for fuel wood. By 1942 the entire woods had been selectively cut over at least twice. Metal markers from this time can still be seen in the woods. In 1946 the University transferred the land to the Public Schools, and Eberwhite Elementary School

was built on a portion of it. Since then, staff and volunteers at the school have maintained trails and conducted nature activities in the woods. For many years, there has been a committed group of parents and neighbors (currently called the Eberwhite Woods Committee) who provide stewardship and advocate for the woods.

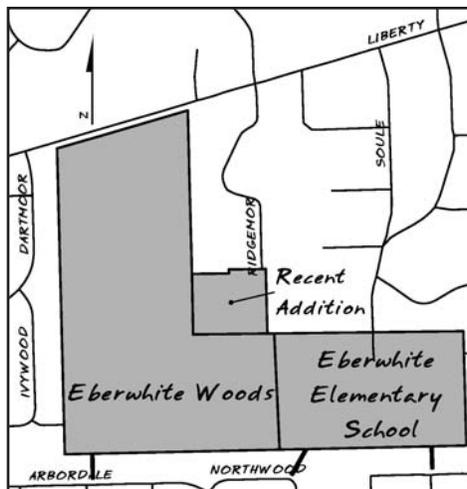
Land acquisition

The new acreage is located on the east side of the woods (see map). The acquisition of more land for Eberwhite benefits the natural area not only by increasing its size and the space available for plant and animal habitat, but also by providing a buffer to surrounding residential areas. In addition, it is a space that can be used for hands-on nature activities with school children without concern for threatening more ecologically sensitive areas.

Eberwhite today

Walking Eberwhite's trails today, visitors can see a variety of mature oak, hickory, black cherry, black walnut, beech, and elm trees. The Kentucky Coffee tree is a species of "special concern" in Michigan. More recently, sugar maples have seeded into the woods and are on their way to becoming dominant. Smaller trees include sassafras, dogwood, and buttonbush. There are at least eighty types of wildflowers growing here, including a few threatened plants in Michigan. The

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Coordinator's Corner

Community Restoration

I've been thinking about the concept of "community" lately. The Ann Arbor community is a very diverse and dynamic one. It is also one marked by a large number of citizens who get very involved in all aspects of running a community. Ann Arbor is more than just our mailing address, it is our home, and we work together to make it so.

Ecologically, a community is very similar. It is characterized by a diversity of plant and animals - including fungi, bacteria, insects, and the staggeringly large number of other organisms we often overlook in nature. But it takes more than large numbers of organisms to make a natural community, just like it takes more than a cluster of houses to make a human community. "Community" is all about the interactions, the complex network, the intricate connections, the "web of life."

Using these criteria, a buckthorn thicket is not much of a community. Neither is a cornfield or a manicured lawn. These are all just large mono-cultural stands of one plant species - biological deserts in comparison with what was there historically. It is important to remember as we go about the business of ecological restoration that the goal is not to just kill the buckthorn - but to restore the native community. If all we do is kill off the "bad plants," we have failed in our mission.

Read NAP's mission to the right of this article and you will see that we are trying to do even more than just restore the ecological community. We are trying to restore a healthy interaction between people and nature, between the ecological and the human communities. We are really about the business of community restoration. We hope you will join us in this endeavor!

-David Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager

Editor's Note:

Join us in building human and ecological community by attending some of our workdays and trainings this year. If you'd like to "build" your own native plant community, make sure to check out the Huron Arbor Cluster's Native Landscaping Workshop Series, a joint project of NAP and The Stewardship Network in April 2008.

THE NAP PUZZLER!

At what park was this photo taken? Hint: You're looking north.



City of Ann Arbor
**Natural Area
Preservation**

A unit of the City of Ann Arbor
Public Services, Field Operations

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

Volunteer of the Year

We'd like to congratulate NAP's 2007 volunteer of the year – AC Tanner. AC has helped NAP for years, taking on many different roles. He is one of NAP's longest-term volunteers, starting his volunteering with us in 1995 at our early workdays. Over the years AC has worked at virtually billions of workdays for NAP, but it wasn't enough for him – he wanted more! He has worked on independent projects in Barton, Swift Run, Doyle, and Scarlett Mitchell; cutting invasives shrubs, removing purple loosestrife, and collecting seeds. This makes AC the Park Steward of the most parks in NAP's history! Adding to his skills, AC has recently started co-leading workdays. (When we're in a pinch and need some extra leaders AC is one of the Stewards who often comes to NAP's aide.) AC has also been on our burn crew for the past two years, increasing his arsenal of invasive-removing tools. But AC hasn't always been a buckthorn-killing machine, it's been a long path of learning for him.



AC Tanner - NAP's Volunteer of the Year

A couple decades ago AC's volunteering adventure started with a short stint with the Boy Scouts and then a longer jaunt with Washtenaw Literacy Society, where he helped increase literacy through one-on-one reading. AC recalls that 15% of US-born people were, at that time, non-literate. A turning point for the focus of AC's volunteering was in 1982 when he saw an article for the Master Gardener Certification. He notes that the MG course was very comprehensive, its goal being to teach people about gardening, soils, plants, and pests; then to get those people out into the community with that knowledge. Through this process, and his volunteering for the MG Hotline (a helpline for gardening), AC started his interest in natural landscapes. In 2000 AC decided that his NAP work could easily be applied at other nature areas, like nearby County Farm Park. So he decided to volunteer himself for the County Parks, transferring his knowledge and propensity for killing invasives to this new location. He has done such good work for the County Parks that they decided to start paying him this year!

AC still volunteers at non-ecosystem work too. At the Nursing School Clinic he helps nurse practitioner students and student nurses practice in-home consultation interviews. This is a volunteer job that he fell into while going to the clinic for his own healthcare. AC has also been volunteering for the past year at Neighborhood Senior Services, whose goal is to keep seniors living independently. AC gives about two rides per week, driving low-income seniors to and from medical appointments. AATA subsidizes the drivers in this program, bringing the cost for the seniors down to only five dollars per ride. AC also found this volunteer work through his personal use – when he once needed a ride to a medical appointment. AC notes that the seniors are all quite “with it,” they're just starting to get around more slowly and it's been great to help some wonderful folks.

AC has been a wonderful volunteer for NAP and many other organizations! AC tells us, “it's been a good leadership and social experience.” Thank you AC!

Park Focus: Recent Addition to Eberwhite Woods

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woods have several ponds that are home to frogs, turtles, and wetland plants. Black squirrels, a recent arrival in this part of Michigan, may also be seen. Due to the hard work of dedicated volunteers, very few invasive species are found in Eberwhite!

Into the future

The plot of land known as Eberwhite Woods has passed through many changes, as Native American stomping ground, white settler woodlot, research space, managed forest, outdoor classroom, and nature preserve. Undoubtedly it will change in the future. Under the current regime of ecological preservation and restoration,

it can grow and bloom with presettlement diversity. Winter dormancy breaks to the cacophony of spring wildflowers and frog calls, summer light filters through the canopy of brilliant green, which changes to dazzling yellow and orange in the fall. Anyone walking through the woods can enjoy the textures of bark and leaves, be surprised by a startled chipmunk, meet a new wildflower, and experience the serenity of proximity to nature.

Thank you to Steve Bean, Dorothy Blanchard, Dave Borneman, Ed Diehl, and Ginny Trocchio for their help with writing this article.

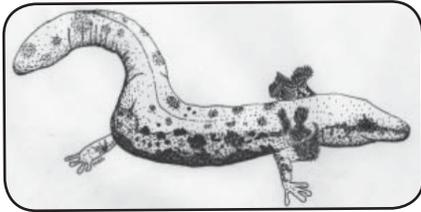


Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

WINTER 2008

Natural Area Preservation
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DO NOT FORGET TO MARK YOUR CALENDAR:



January 20, Sunday
Mudpuppy Survey Kick-Off Meeting!
LSNC

12:00 noon to 4:00pm

This will be our first year surveying for mudpuppies (a type of salamander which lives its life entirely in waterways). If you'd like to help us evaluate the populations of these wonderful animals, or are simply looking for an excuse to get outside in the winter, we'd love to have your help! Please register by calling NAP at 734.996.3266 by January 15.

March 1, Saturday
Salamander Survey
Kick-Off Meeting!
LSNC

10:00am to 12:00 noon

Join Michigan's first Salamander Monitoring Program in its fifth year! With your help, we will learn more about these species' population abundance and distribution around town. Volunteers with a bit of identification experience and a willingness to get muddy, please apply! To register, please call NAP at 734.996.3266 by February 22.

March 1, Saturday
Frog and Toad Survey
Kick-Off Meeting!
LSNC

1:30 to 3:00pm

Volunteers can learn more about Ann Arbor's amphibians while contributing to our inventory efforts. The meeting will cover general information about the annual survey and is required training to participate in the survey. Route sign-up will also take place. Please call the NAP Office at 734.996.3266 to register or for more information.

March 4, Tuesday
Public Meeting: Prescribed
Ecological Burn Program
LSNC

7:30 to 9:00pm

Fire is used as a restoration tool in some of Ann Arbor's natural areas. This meeting will provide information and an opportunity for discussion about the Prescribed Ecological Burn Program conducted by Natural Area Preservation. Burns will be conducted in City Parks throughout the spring and fall.



March 5, Wednesday
Prescribed Burn Crew Training
LSNC

12:00 noon to 5:00pm

This is a required general training session for all new volunteers interested in assisting with the prescribed burns held this spring and fall. Burns take place Monday through Friday some-time between 12:00 noon and 5:00pm. Pre-registration is required by March 2, as enrollment is limited. Don't miss out on the training, it is only offered once a year! Please call the NAP office at 734.996.3266 to register or for more information.

*LSNC=Leslie Science and Nature Center

Volunteer Year in Review

by Team OC (Outreach Coordinators)

Every year we write this article, and every year we tell you how cool NAP volunteers are. As in the past, we'd like to try and tell you something new and interesting. This year we'd like to note how much phenomenal work is being done in and by our community.

Over the last few years, and especially this year, we at NAP have noticed more and more land managers and land owners doing stewardship work. Volunteers are working at the land trusts, the county, the townships, and at the universities - improving their properties and natural areas, public and private. We, more and more, hear NAP volunteers talking about working on their own properties and helping with their neighbors' properties- all to benefit The Nature. NAP's volunteer programs continue to do amazingly well, and are also expanding.

This year we've had twice as many volunteers from the University of Michigan than last year. From the School of Natural Resources, the Business School, the Engineering School, to numerous sororities and fraternities, and the tons of other student groups, they've put in an amazing number of hours in our lovely parks!

Many of the NAP Park Stewards have been expanding their skills and responsibilities too. Park Stewards were trained as Workday Leaders this year, and have started leading their own workdays. Numerous workdays. Other

Stewards have begun the process of becoming certified to use herbicides. This is one of the "bottlenecks" we experience - herbicide follow-up after shrub-cutting workdays is often time consuming and difficult for the crew. Finding everything that was cut is nearly impossible, which means some of the shrubs end up resprouting. By getting some of the wonderful Park Stewards to help us (in a very safe way) we will have the ability to improve NAP's invasives removal significantly!

Our Photo Monitors have also met the challenge, working with NAP staff to streamline our photo sites, while continuing to help us tell the story of all the intensive work that's being done in the parks. The frog, toad, and salamander volunteers have, as in so many years, have come out in mass. Many bird surveyors have been off working on the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas (good job all!), but we look forward to their return in 2008! The burn volunteers have also been recruited to put in more time, as we now have two working burn crews - effectively doubling our area covered on any given burn day, but also requiring twice as many volunteers!

More and more, NAP is also the beneficiary of other individual volunteers who seek us out and are willing to do just about anything we ask of them, like data input and shed painting! We thank you all for the wonderful work you have done to support the ecosystems of Ann Arbor.

2nd Annual NAP Photo Contest Winners!

by Dana Novak

We really enjoyed seeing all of the wonderful entries for the 2007 NAP Photo Contest. Our judges had some difficult decisions to make. We extend a huge thanks to our wonderful judges: Don Werthmann, digital photographic artist and faculty member at Washtenaw Community College; David Cappaert, professional Entomologist and "bug" photographer; and Dave Borneman, NAP Manger! Also, a big NAP THANKS to our prize sponsors: Ritz Camera and Image; and Ann Arbor Canoe Liveries!!!

In the Volunteer Enthusiasm category, 1st Prize was awarded to Ann Novak for her photo of Greenhills Middle School 7th grade students chipping trails at Barton Park. Michael Seabrook, of Shadows in Reflection Photography, was awarded 1st Prize in the Native Landscape category for his autumn landscape. The Youth Category winner was 13 year-old Harold Eyster's photo of his sister walking in a

tranquil winter scene. The judges had so many great shots to pick from that they decided to add a Detail category, and chose Patricia Cornett's photo of a blooming swamp thistle as 1st Prize.



Photo by Pierre Wickramarachi,
Honorable Mention NAP 2007
Photo Contest

Two photos received Honorable Mention awards - Pierre Wickramarachi's fall maple leaves and Michael Seabrook's rowboat on Mill Lake.

See our website for all of this years winners! They are also featured in our first ever NAP Calendar - which you should have received by now. (Call the office if you need a copy.)

The 2008 Photo Contest is just around the corner so don't let the shorter, colder days of winter keep you from getting out and capturing some shots of nature. Our themes for the 2008 Contest will be Nature Up-Close and Spirit of the Seasons. The entry deadline will be September 5, 2008.

Reflections From the Crew:

by Suzanne Ewing, Billy Kirst, Molly Murphy, and Bill Sterling

Who likes to read stories about angry bees? NAPper Billy Kirst knows all too well about these ferocious insects. On a sunny day in September, the NAP crew was busy cutting buckthorn and honeysuckle. Suddenly, a yelp came out of Billy, catching the attention of the rest of the crew members. Fearing for his life or loss of limb, the NAPpers rushed to his aid only to see Billy running out of the woods (limbs and all) feverishly swinging his arms like a tree in a tornado. Trying to put the pieces together, the confused crew needed to look no further than the large swarm of bees surrounding the still-

running brush blade. "It is just bees. I thought he cut his leg off or something" a crew member proclaimed. "Now, let's go find Billy!" Down the trail and around the corner, Billy was found in a nearby stream wet up to his teeth trying to rid himself of the bees. He suffered a multitude of bee stings to his arms, back, ears, and neck. The quick remedy to soothe Billy's wounds was found at a nearby staff member's house, where frozen packages of shrimp cocktail eased his pain. So, if you are reading this, remember that cocktail sauce is essential when packing your restoration tool kit!

Staff Updates

hello...

Anna Shipley - I received my B.A. in Environmental Policy from Michigan State University in 2006. As one of the new Outreach Assistants, I am looking forward to my upcoming adventures with NAP.



Molly Murphy - I was hired on to the NAP crew in early August. I am originally from Saginaw and just graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in Environmental Studies and Applications in the summer of 2007. I spent two summers studying the invasive weed garlic mustard. I also play trumpet in a ska band.



Georgia Richardson - I am a recent graduate from EMU with a B.S. in Anthropology and Human Nutrition. I wanted to work for NAP as a crew member in order to gain experience and knowledge of environmental restoration. I plan to pursue my graduate degree in Fisheries and Wildlife biology. I enjoy Sunday family get-togethers at my parents' house on the lake.



Dana Novak - I studied Environmental Science and Wildlife at The Ohio State University, then wandered around the states as a semi-professional volunteer before settling in Boise, Idaho, working in the realms of stormwater and environmental consulting. Recently, my husband and I transplanted ourselves back to the Midwest. I look forward to getting to know Ann Arbor's natural areas and the volunteers who work hard to keep them ecologically diverse.



farewell...

Shira Diem

After spending time as a Conservation Worker, Shira Diem has decided to go abroad. We wish her the best of luck as she ventures to Jerusalem to work as a nanny.

Sheara Cohen

Sheara Cohen has headed off to Harvard University to finish her Landscape Architecture degree. We wish her the best of luck and appreciate all the work she has done with NAP!

NAP Alumna News

Laurel Malvitz, a former NAP Outreach Coordinator, became engaged to Jason Draper on the 13th of October.

Eric Ellis, former NAP crew leader, received his Masters from the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources and is the new manager of the WildLink program in Traverse City, which helps private landowners improve plant and wildlife habitat on their property.

Nancy Novitski (Special Projects Coordinator 2000-2002) has just moved from San Francisco, where she was working at the Water Resources Center Archives (UC Berkeley), to live with her grandfather in Eugene, OR. "There will never be another NAP, but with a world of possibilities before me, I think there may be hope for me yet."

Dave Warners (Botanist 1994-1997) was recently doing research in the Talamanca Mountains in southern Costa Rica. Dave, his wife Teri, and three kids lived there until the end of July 2005. He studied cloud forest ecology and restoration dealing with strategies for re-establishment of wild avocados—a favorite food of the Quetzal (the threatened Guatemalan national bird!) Dave teaches in the Biology Department at Calvin College.

NAPpennings

Thank you...

- ♥ Bruno & Johanna Giordani for their ongoing monetary support
- ♥ EMU Community Plunge, UM Community Plunge, and Professional Volunteer Corps for all of their hard work at Argo. Combined efforts total 100 hours of shrub removal!
- ♥ Greenhill Schools 7th graders who woodchipped trails at Barton
- ♥ Northville Highschool, Alpha Phi Omega, and UM Community Scholars for their 100+ hours at Scarlett Mitchell removing shrubs
- ♥ Circle K for their work at Cedar Bend
- ♥ UM Indian American Students Association for their efforts at Cedar Bend
- ♥ UM Erb Institute for all of their helping hands at Dicken Woods
- ♥ Alpha Pi Omega for their help at Redbud
- ♥ Friends of Dicken Woods for their ongoing support and dedication
- ♥ Thank you to *Two Hearted* for playing some great bluegrass at our Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Happy 10 year anniversary to the Buhr Park Children's Wet Meadow!

Research in the Parks: The University of Michigan's Ecosystem Science and Dynamic Simulation Modeling Lab conducted research in several Ann Arbor Natural Areas this summer (Black Pond Woods, Scarlett Mitchell, and Eberwhite). Using soil and vegetation samples, they studied how geochemistry varies across a range of human population densities. Part of a larger regional project, this research should help explain how urban expansion patterns are affecting natural plant communities.

Attention Dog-owners: Through a joint City-County effort, Swift Run Dog Park has opened. Off-leash permits are required for entry and are available at the Ann Arbor Clerk's Office. Southeast Area and Olson Parks have also designated off-leash dog play areas. For more info, check out the city's website: a2gov.org.

A Popular Natural Area Added To the City Park System: If you have ever had any affiliation with the local Girl Scouts, you're probably aware of Camp Hilltop – that gem of a forest atop the high knoll right at the bend in Huron River Drive as you leave North Main Street. If you've hiked through Kuebler Langford or Bird Hills Nature Areas, you may have actually stumbled onto it by accident, since there was no boundary delineation and the trails meandered through all these sites. All 7.7 acres of **Camp Hilltop** has just been purchased by the City as parkland, so you no longer need to worry about trespassing as you enjoy hiking on these trails.



Photo by Lynda R. Ludy, NAP 2007 Photo Contest

The **Annual Convention of the Michigan Prescribed Fire Council and Michigan Association of Conservation Districts** will be at Shanty Creek Resort on December 3-5. Registration and further information are available at www.macd.org.

On Saturday, December 1 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, the **Stewardship Network's Huron Arbor** cluster will be holding its **year end celebration** at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Bring a dish to share and join the celebration, reflecting on goals for the year to come! To RSVP, call 734.996.3190.

The **Stewardship Network's Annual Conference** will be held on January 25 & 26 in East Lansing, MI. For more information and to register, visit www.stewardshipnetwork.org.

9th Annual National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week
The 9th Annual National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week will be held in Washington D.C. from February 24-29, 2008 to focus national attention on the impacts of invasive weeds. Events address the role of the Federal government in dealing with invasive weed problems. For more information, check out www.NAWMA.org.

The **Wildflower Association of Michigan Conference** will take place from March 2-3, 2008 at the Kellogg Center in Lansing. This year's theme is "Saving and Spreading the Wild." For more information, please check out their website at www.wildflowersmich.org/.



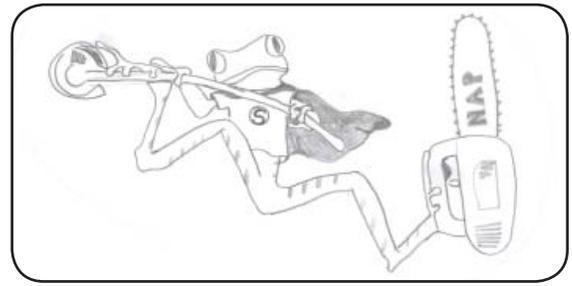
*Photo by Michael Seabrook,
Honorable Mention NAP 2007 Photo Contest*

Wild Weather, Wild Frogs

by David Mifsud

This has been another great year for amphibian surveys in Ann Arbor. Our salamander monitoring program, which started in 2004, has resulted in observations of six species of salamander: Tiger Salamander, Silvery Salamander, Spotted Salamander, Blue-spotted Salamander, Red-backed Salamander, and Red-spotted Newt. These species have been found in ten different parks throughout the City. All life stages were observed in 2007 indicating reproductive success and recruitment. We also began tracking the locations of each salamander observation this season. This information has been instrumental in helping us manage these natural areas.

Of course, salamanders are only the half of it! We also have had an intense and interesting field season for frogs and toads. It all started with a VERY crazy, early spring. In late March, we had a warm spell which resulted in six species (Wood Frog, Spring Peeper, Chorus Frog, Leopard Frog, Gray Treefrog, and American Toad) calling simultaneously, some of which do not typically call until May. Although not found calling, Bull Frogs and Green Frogs were also observed during this warm spell. This warm-up had an effect on the breeding success of some species. Wood Frogs completed all of their breeding in about a week (about half of the typical time period) and American Toads had a longer season than typically observed for this species. After the warm, early spring, below freezing temperatures returned, resulting in egg



Drawing by Evelyn Wright

damage or loss. Although metamorphs (including early season breeding species) were observed at a variety of sites, we will not know the true impacts until next season.

Thanks to all of our great volunteers, without whom the success we had this season, and in years past, would not have been possible. In case you can't wait until next spring to get your amphibian fix, don't forget that on January 20th we will have a Mudpuppy Monitoring Program kickoff! NAP is very excited about this new program - the first of its kind in the United States. The study is designed to measure water quality and ecosystem health, assess the species richness of City natural areas, and develop effective restoration and maintenance plans. This survey is a groundbreaking step for Ann Arbor, as there are no other contemporary studies confirming Mudpuppy status and distribution within the city. If you are interested in participating and learning more about these amazing animals, please contact the NAP Outreachers for details.

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