



NAP

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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

Volume 25, Number 1
Spring 2020

Park Focus: Evergreen Park

Krissy Elkins, Workday Coordinator

Evergreen Park is a small park with a big history. Located on an irregularly shaped 3.5-acre lot on the western edge of town, Evergreen Park is cherished by its neighbors. One long-time park patron and neighbor just recently took on the job of becoming the park's first NAP Park Steward!

Meg Szczygiel first heard about Evergreen Park when she, her husband, and her kids moved to Ann Arbor in 1992. The neighborhood, called "The Evergreens," was built in the late 20's according to the old map Meg received when she moved in, dated 1929. The choice to move here was easy; low interest rates due to the Gelman Plume made the area affordable for Meg and her family, which allowed her kids to attend Ann Arbor's esteemed public schools.



Sign at Evergreen Park

In the original plans for the neighborhood, the north-south street called Parkwood veered south and connected to Valley Drive. Additionally, Kingwood Street connected through to Pinewood Street, completing the grid pattern of the neighborhood. Houses were built along Parkwood, lining both sides of the street. There was a tiny piece of land on the northeast corner of Kingwood and Barber that was designated to be the neighborhood park for the new development. Meg suspects the houses were hard to fill in the midst of the Great Depression. Eventually, the houses along the southern half of Parkwood were torn down and the property became what we know as Evergreen Park. As for that tiny piece of land across Kingwood Street, it is still city property and adds to the unique shape of the park.



IN THIS ISSUE:

Park Focus: Evergreen Park
Page 1

Coordinator's Corner
Page 2

Chorus of Frogs of Spring
Page 3

Stewardship Calendar
Pages 4-5

NAPpenings
and Staff Updates
Pages 6-7

Garlic Mustard Weed
Out Day
Page 8

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6





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

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

3875 E. Huron River Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Phone: 734.794.6627

Email: NAP@a2gov.org

Website: a2gov.org/NAP

facebook.com/ann.arbor.NAP

twitter.com/a2NAP

Natural Area Preservation

Manager:

David Borneman

Stewardship Specialists:

Becky Gajewski

Michael Hahn

Inventory Staff:

George Hammond, Field Biologist

Juliet Berger, Ornithologist

Conservation Workers:

Amy Lipson

Hart Davis

Josh Doyle

Matt Connors

Nick Scobel

Trish Brockman

Volunteer and Outreach

Coordinator:

Tina Stephens

Outreach Assistants:

Dana Novak

Hannah Bradshaw

Kristina Elkins

Meija Knafel

*Natural Area Preservation is
funded by the voter-approved
2020-2026 Park Maintenance &
Capital Improvements Millage.*

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Where there's smoke...

Over the next few months, Ann Arborites may be seeing smoke on the horizon when NAP is out doing one of our controlled, or “prescribed” burns. We’ve been burning for the past 26 years, since the earliest days of NAP. Fire is probably our single-most effective and important ecological management tool. Among other things, it discourages most invasives and gives a competitive advantage to most natives. Spring has always been the “high, holy season of burning” for many of us in this profession. Some years we’ll also have a short “reprise” in the fall, after the oak leaves fall and things go dormant.

But for years, the prescribed fire community nation-wide has been talking about the benefits of *growing* season burns. Historically, we know that Native Americans burned at different seasons of the year for different purposes. And a common mantra among fire practitioners today is “pyro-diversity creates biodiversity.” The theory is that if we always burn at the same time of year, we only benefit one group of plants and animals. Burning on a more varied schedule, with diversity in frequency and intensity, leads to greater diversity of native species. Additionally, because one of our primary burn objectives is to discourage invasive shrubs, it makes sense to time those burns when the shrubs are most easily killed with fire, which is not during the dormant season.

That all sounds good in theory. The challenge has been actually making it happen. There are many good reasons to burn in the cool months of March and April before things green up: less smoke (always a major concern); fewer park users, and fewer open windows in park neighbors’ houses; fewer wildflowers blooming, and fewer animals active. Logistically, it’s also easier to do all of our burning during one brief but intense spring burn season. After weeks of preparation in late winter, we finally have everything ready for the first dry spring day. Other activities get put on hold and it’s “All hands on deck!” at the NAP office. The burn gear is ready to go at a moment’s notice. Water tanks are full in the truck beds. And staff keeps a constant, close eye on weather forecasts and on-site conditions. It’s an intensity that’s hard to maintain for more than 6-8 weeks. But we’re an efficient burn operation during that burst. After that we get busy with garlic mustard and other invasives, volunteer workdays, wildlife surveys, etc...

It would be harder to stay “geared up” or to “re-gear” just so we could do a couple burns here and there during the growing season, but that’s what we’re hoping to start doing, especially in August or September, after nesting season, during the driest parts of the summer. Logistically there will be challenges. But we think the ecological benefits are worth it. Questions about this? Concerns? Interested in learning more about the benefits of growing season burns? Feel free to contact us. We’re still trying to work out the logistics, but we’re happy to hear your thoughts and include you in the conversation. Look for our smoke this summer!

-David Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager

Chorusing Frogs of Spring

George Hammond
Field Biologist

Just as the warming days of spring inspire birds to sing during the day, frogs start to sing (well, *call* anyway) after dark. Here in southeast Michigan we have 13 species of frogs and toads, and at least 8 or 9 of them will be calling in Ann Arbor parks this year. Each species has its own unique call, and sing in their choruses at different times and places.

Frogs call for one main reason: to attract a mate. In the species found here, males do nearly all the calling. They gather in ponds and pools, or along the river, trying to be chosen by a female. Each species has a unique “advertisement call” that males make to attract females and show off their qualities as potential mates. Males listen to each other, adjusting their timing and assessing the competition. They sometimes push and shove for the best calling spots, but a

strong enough call may be enough to keep weaker males at bay. When females arrive, they are ready to lay eggs. They try to choose the best males, but when there are many, many frogs in the pond at once, things can get a bit hectic. Males will try to grab on to anything that looks like a female, and they are not choosy. Many species have a “release call” that males use to tell another male, “Get off me, I’m a male too!” Often a female chooses a male and lays her eggs in a single night, but males will linger in hopes of attracting another female.

The timing of frog calling depends on the weather and on the species. Some species call very early in the spring even while there is still some ice on the ponds. Some call later in the spring and a few are still calling in early summer. All frogs call mainly at night, so they can’t be seen by predators, and will call most strongly when it is relatively warm and the air is damp. In some species, Wood Frogs for example, all the calling and egg-laying happens in a very short period of time, just 2 or 3 nights at any one pond. In other species, like Spring Peepers, American Toads, and Green Frogs, males may call for several weeks. The first frogs to call, starting as early as mid-March, are Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers, and Chorus Frogs. All 3 use very temporary pools that dry up in late summer, and they lay eggs as soon as they can. Later in the spring, from mid April through May, American Toads, Gray Treefrogs, and Leopard Frogs are calling. They use temporary pools too, but also breed at the edges of permanent waters, if there is enough vegetation for their tadpoles to hide in. Finally in mid-to-late-May, Green Frogs and Bullfrogs start to call, and they may carry on into July. They need permanent waters with lots of vegetation, because their big tadpoles need more than one summer to finish growing.

Since each species has its own call, and they are pretty easy to tell apart, we can use the choruses to monitor frog populations. Natural Area Preservation has been organizing volunteers to check on the frogs in our parks since 1995. Every spring, volunteers go out at night to listen to the choruses and record the species they hear. This survey is one of several wildlife inventories that we organize with volunteers every year. We also look for salamanders (much harder, they are silent!), breeding birds (if you know bird songs, we need your help!), butterflies (literally a walk in the park), and turtles (we spot them basking on sunny days). Please check the calendar on page four for training dates if you are interested, and check out our website at a2gov.org/NAP for more information about our wildlife work.



Chorus Frog Calling by Martha Hitchiner



Gray Treefrog Calling



NAP

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR SPRING 2020

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

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

To register for trainings, call or email us at 734.794.6627 or NAP@a2gov.org.

MARCH

World Wildlife Day Stewardship Workday
Sunday, March 1, 1 to 4 p.m.
Black Pond Woods Nature Area



Celebrate World Wildlife Day by volunteering with us to support wildlife! Meet at the park entrance off Tibbits court. #WorldWildlifeDay

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, March 7, 1 to 4 p.m.
Barton Nature Area

Join us in cutting invasive shrubs in this beautiful and unique nature area. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

Salamander Survey Kickoff and Training
Sunday, March 8, noon to 2 p.m.
Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave

Learn how to help NAP monitor salamanders in Ann Arbor's parks. Volunteers will learn how to identify these rarely-seen amphibians and will select parks to survey on cold rainy nights in the spring. Please register by March 5.

Frog and Toad Survey Kickoff and Training
Sunday, March 8, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave

Learn to identify frogs by ear and eye. Then sign up to travel a route through the city at night, stopping to listen for frogs along the way. Most routes require driving. Please register by March 5.

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, March 21, 1 to 4 p.m.
Hannah Nature Area

Join us in maintaining a lovely little neighborhood park. Help us take back the space from invasive shrubs! Meet at the entrance at the end of Bath Street.

Photo Monitoring Kickoff and Training
Saturday, March 28, 10 to 11 a.m.
NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Drive

Do you like photography and spending time outdoors? We need volunteers to take photos at specific locations to record our restoration work progress. Please register by March 25.

NAP Workday Leader Training
Saturday, March 28, noon to 3:30 p.m.
NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Drive

This training is for volunteers interested in leading and/or co-leading NAP volunteer workdays. An interest and background in ecology and plant ID is strongly desired, but not required. Minimum age of 18. Please register by March 25.

APRIL

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, April 4, 1 to 4 p.m.
Oakwoods Nature Area

Join us in this oak-hickory woodland as we work to open up more views of the pond and wetland. Meet at the park entrance on Dunwoodie Road.

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, April 5, 1 to 4 p.m.
Evergreen Park

Help us restore this small but mighty neighborhood greenspace, featured in this newsletter! Meet us at the park entrance on Valley Drive.

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, April 11, 9 a.m. to noon
Berkshire Creek Nature Area

Join us as we remove the non-native species threatening this park. Meet at the end of Warwick Road off Glenwood, north of Washtenaw Avenue.

Breeding Bird Survey Kickoff and Training
Tuesday, April 14, 7 to 9 p.m.
NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Drive

Learn how to survey for breeding birds in Ann Arbor's parks! Some experience in bird identification is necessary. Sign up for your favorite park, and learn about the 2019 survey results. Please register by April 10.

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, April 18, 1 to 4 p.m.
Folkstone Park

Come meet some neighbors, spend a spring afternoon outdoors, and make Folkstone Park more beautiful as we pull invasives! Meet at the park entrance at the north end of Folkstone Court.

Earth Day Stewardship Workday
Sunday, April 19, 9 a.m. to noon
Marshall Nature Area



Celebrate Earth Day and help native flora and fauna thrive by removing aggressive non-native and invasive plants. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Rd.

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m. to noon
Sunset Brooks Nature Area

Help us maintain Sunset Brooks' beautiful trails that provide views of the stream and flowering dogwood grove. Meet us at the Beechwood entrance off of Sunset Road.

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, April 25, 1 to 4 p.m.
Bird Hills Nature Area

Come view lots of wildlife and help us make room for more native plants. Meet at the Bird Road entrance to the park, west of W. Huron River Drive.

STEWARDSHIP NETWORK
STEWARDS' CIRCLE

7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Second Tuesday of every month

Bruegger's Bagels

709 N. University Avenue

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

www.stewardshipnetwork.org.

March 10: City Nature Challenge and iNaturalist

During the City Nature Challenge 2019, over 130 species were observed in our area by citizen scientists using an online tool, iNaturalist. Learn about the tool, how to use it, and how to get involved in this year's City Nature Challenge as we discuss increasing community involvement with nature.

April 14: Carbon Neutrality and the A2ZERO Initiative

The City of Ann Arbor, in partnership with more than 50 partner organizations launched A2ZERO, an initiative to support a just transition to carbon neutrality, community-wide, by 2030. Learn about this new initiative, carbon neutrality, and other city sustainability efforts.

May 12: What Did I Sign Up For? Creating Better Volunteer and Staff Experiences

Many environmental volunteer programs started out "grassroots" and now strive to balance that "feel" with more program structure. How do we balance the autonomy of our volunteers with the empowerment and leadership of our staff? Learn about how creating clear volunteer job descriptions, handbooks, and trainings may help volunteer programs offer even better experiences for volunteers and the staff that lead them.

Turtle Steward Kickoff and Training

Saturday, April 25, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Optional outdoor event 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave

Help us maintain and protect nest sites, monitor populations, and look for turtles in habitats along the Huron River and nearby waters! The required training will be indoors at the Senior Center, with an optional outdoor session immediately following at Gallup Park, 3000 Fuller Road, until 4:30. Please register by April 22.

Arbor Day

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, April 26, 9 a.m. to noon

Leslie Woods Nature Area



Come celebrate Arbor Day with us in Leslie Woods Nature Area! This forested area is home to some of Ann Arbor Parks' largest oaks and hickories, a perfect spot for Arbor Day volunteering. Help us pull garlic mustard to make more room for those lovely trees and other native plants. Meet us at the park entrance at the north end of Upland Drive, north of Plymouth Rd. #TimeForTrees

MAY

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, May 3, 1 to 4 p.m.

Molin Nature Area

This long, narrow neighborhood haven has no shortage of nature to take in. Help us pull garlic mustard within the park and see why we have such dedicated park stewards here! Meet at the end of Powell Avenue on Columbia Avenue.

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, May 9, 9 a.m. to noon

Lakewood Nature Area

Join us as we pull invasive garlic mustard to make room for even more beautiful wildflowers. Meet us at the Lakewood Elementary School parking lot off Galake Avenue.

World Migratory Bird Day

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, May 9, 1 to 4 p.m.

Dolph Nature Area



Come visit the beautiful home of over 140 bird species as you help us remove invasive garlic mustard. Meet at the parking lot off Wagner Road. #BirdDay

Mothers' Day

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, May 10, 1 to 4 p.m.

White Oak Park

Join us as we pull invasives with our dedicated park stewards in this cozy woodland. Meet us at the park entrance on White Oak Drive.

22nd Annual Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day

Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m. to noon

See Page 8 for details!

Butterfly Survey Kickoff & Training

Saturday, May 16, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Drive

Come learn our survey protocol and help us search our prairies and woodlands for these important pollinators throughout the summer. Space is extremely limited, so please register by May 14.

Huron River Day

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, May 17, 9 a.m. to noon

Fuller Park

Celebrate Huron River Day by restoring native habitat near the river. This floodplain forest contains many water-loving species. Meet at the Island Park parking lot at the end of Island Drive.

World Biodiversity Day

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, May 23, 9 a.m. to noon

Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area



There is plenty of wildlife to appreciate in this expansive nature area, as well as plenty of non-native plants to remove. Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot off Lorraine Street.

Bird Walk

Friday, May 29, 6 to 8 p.m.

Gallup Park

Take an evening walk in Gallup Park and Furstenberg Nature Area with NAP's Ornithologist. Bring binoculars if you have them, but they are not necessary. Meet at the Gallup Canoe Livery, 3000 Fuller Road.

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, May 30, 1 to 4 p.m.

Mary Beth Doyle Park

Join us in pulling invasive garlic mustard from this beloved nature area. You'll be treated to views of the many wildflowers and songs from the numerous birds that reside here. Meet us in the parking lot at the end of Birch Hollow Drive/Chelsea Circle.

Evergreen Park

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Many remnants from the land's previous life remained on site for decades. Even today, the main path through the park, uncommonly and unnaturally straight, is thought to be what is left of the old stretch of Parkwood Street. Meg has found old kitchen appliances like refrigerators and ovens as well as leftover cement blocks from the houses. Ornamental garden plants cling to the ground from years past landscaping projects.

Much of the land in the park is low and wet. A temporary pool borders the artificially raised main path where Meg hears choruses of frogs in springtime. The landscape is pimpled with mounds of soil,



No Dumping Sign

little hills, and brush piles, as well as depressions, holes, and ditches. Struggling with dumping issues and invasive species, city staff have installed a "No Dumping" sign at one of the three park entrances, which has helped in recent years.

Navigating Evergreen Park, even though it is small, is a bit tricky. The property boundaries are unclear and unauthorized trails weave through the woods, most of which quickly fade into an overgrown thicket of honeysuckle, buckthorn, and wintercreeper. A few years ago, some neighborhood kids spent countless hours building a loop trail through the woods, intersecting the main path.

While no longer passable, the banked corners of this trail can still be seen today. There is even a viewing bench off this loop trail; unfortunately, the only view from this bench is twigs and branches of invasive shrubs.

With the help of Meg and support from the community, NAP is excited to spend more time in this neighborhood park. Even though invasive species have aggressively established, native plants are fighting back. Oaks, cherries, and tulip trees mingle in the forest canopy while goldenrods sway in the breeze along Valley Drive. We are excited to work together to make space for native plants and wildlife to thrive!

To help us fight the invasive plants here, join us on Sunday, April 5, from 1 to 4 p.m. for our workday in Evergreen Park. See page four for details.



Evergreen at Evergreen



Sumac and Vinca

NAPpenings

Thank you!

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

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- EMU Beta Alpha Psi
- EMU Early College Alliance
- EMU Greek Life
- Girl Scouts Troop 40035
- Mercedes Benz R&D North America
- Noble Volunteers
- Sustainable Living Experience
- UM Circle K
- UM Delta Sigma Pi
- UM Engineering Honors Program
- UM Michigan Community Scholars Program

City Nature Challenge 2020

Over 250 cities around the world will be competing to see who can make the most observations of nature, find species, and engage people in the 2020 City Nature Challenge! In Ann Arbor, citizen scientists will take pictures of nature and try to identify the many different species that have been photographed in their community using iNaturalist, an online nature observation and identification tool. The challenge occurs April 24 through May 3rd and results will be announced on May 4th! Want to get involved or learn more? Visit citynaturechallenge.org. and join our project on iNaturalist.org by searching "City Nature Challenge 2020: Ann Arbor."

Nature Walks with NAP and ADDL 4th Thursday, April-September 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Join us on the fourth Thursday of each month, April through September, for Nature Walks with Natural Area Preservation and the Ann Arbor District Library. Some of AADL's science tools will be available! Check our website for locations. NAP@a2gov.org/NAPevents



STAFF UPDATES

WELCOME...



TRISH BROCKMAN
Conservation Worker

I grew up on the outskirts of East Lansing, running around in the forests and fields behind my house catching snakes, digging holes, building forts, and getting dirty. As a kid I was always fascinated by the natural world and wanted to learn more about it and how I could help protect it. I took that passion with me to college and graduated from Michigan State University with a Bachelor's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife and Zoology. Before working with NAP I spent time as a field technician with the Michigan DNR, tracking Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes in Michigan with MSU, conducting research on Timber Rattlesnakes in Pennsylvania for Penn State University, and serving with AmeriCorps at Leslie Science & Nature Center. In my free time I enjoy finding and photographing reptiles and amphibians, hiking, biking, illustrating and reading.



HANNAH BRADSHAW
Outreach Assistant

I am currently a student at the University of Michigan, and prior to coming to NAP I've spent time working at the UM Museum of Natural History and the Washtenaw County Conservation District. I love the outdoors and open spaces, so in my free time I like to be outside with my dog Blue or reading a good book. I am grateful to be a part of such a passionate team here, filled with truly kind people who care deeply about the work that they are doing. I'm really excited to have the opportunity to work with more volunteers here at NAP, as they're some of my favorite people to interact with and learn from.



NICK SCOBEL
Conservation Worker

Since a young age, I've been fascinated with nature and wildlife. I enjoy spending much of my spare time in the woods with my camera photographing wildlife. After graduating from Central Michigan University with a degree in Natural Resources, I've worked for various agencies and organizations on an array of conservation projects. This included two years working for the University of Florida on long-term crocodylian research in the Everglades. I'm looking forward to gaining new skills and knowledge from my time with NAP.

Would you like to be part of the NAP Staff team? Follow the city jobs website (a2gov.org/jobs).

Positions can open throughout the year. NAP also has unpaid internships that provide valuable experience!

For internship information contact NAP directly: NAP@a2gov.org or 734.794.6627.

Natural Area Preservation

City of Ann Arbor
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21st Annual Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day

Saturday, May 16, 2020, 9 a.m. to noon



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

Participating Parks:

- **Argo Park:** Meet us at the park entrance at the corner of Amherst Avenue and Longshore Drive
- **Black Pond Woods:** Meet us at the entrance off Tibbits Court, off Pontiac Trail
- **Cedar Bend Nature Area:** Meet us at the Island Park parking lot, at the end of Island Drive
- **Hannah Nature Area:** Meet at the west end of Bath Street, off 7th Street, just north of West Huron Street
- **Huron Parkway Nature Area:** Meet at the Park Steward's house - 3470 Woodland Road, off East Huron River Drive
- **Huron Hills Golf Course Woods:** Meet us on Hunting Valley Road off Provincial Drive