

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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Park Focus: Stapp Nature Area

Morgan Boyer
Crew Leader

Stapp Nature Area is a true gem hidden away among Ann Arbor's busy roads and tall buildings. The park is named in honor of the late Dr. William B. Stapp, whose global contributions to environmental education still resonate today through programs such as the Global Rivers Environmental Education Network, which brings diverse communities together to explore, maintain and protect river quality.

The park itself is tucked in a corner along Traverwood Drive and Huron Parkway, nestled between Tuebingen Park and the Traverwood outpost of the Ann Arbor District Library. Visitors will be pleasantly surprised to find a small oasis not only for people, but for a variety of wildlife as well.

Starting from the trail head located next to Tuebingen Park, one is met with a small forest brimming with a variety of mature hickory and oak trees. Looking ahead to autumn, these trees will be among the last to lose their leaves. Visitors will be able to admire the spectrum of yellows and reds adorning the canopy while shuffling through the already fallen leaves of young maples that are chasing the oak trees skyward.



As one moves along the trail, the din of the city becomes muted and is replaced with the sounds of birds singing and small mammals rustling through the brush. The trails have gentle slopes along the north end of the park, but as one ventures southward, the smooth slopes become slightly more challenging, creating a diverse walking experience for any park explorer.

As fall progresses, the local wildlife can be seen beginning their preparations for winter. Blue jays and fox squirrels will start forming their caches of food, composed mainly of acorns and other nuts, buried in the ground or stowed away in the hollows of dead trees. However, not all of these caches will be consumed, and in

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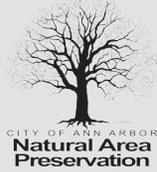
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A unit of the City of Ann Arbor
Community Services Area,
Parks and Recreation Services.

*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

Conservation Workers:

Morgan Boyer
Dan Engel
Erin Todd
Sam Davis
Tanner Bricker

Inventory Staff:

Patrick Terry, Herpetologist
Juliet Berger, Ornithologist

Volunteer and Outreach

Coordinator:

Tina Stephens

Outreach Assistants:

George Hammond
Logan Nevins
Dana Novak
Madison Roze
Katie Carlisle

*Natural Area Preservation is
funded by the voter-approved
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COORDINATOR'S CORNER

“Don’t Boo. Vote!”

Dave Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager

It’s election season. Maybe you’re one of those political junkies who just can’t get enough of the campaigning. Or maybe you’re at the other end of the spectrum and have already had your fill of politics. Regardless of where you fall on this continuum, and regardless of your political leanings, there is still some wisdom, I think, in that directive from President Obama’s recent speech: “Don’t Boo. Vote.”

It makes a lot of sense. If you aren’t content with the current state of affairs, or in the direction things are headed, then participate in the democratic process and help to shape the future.

As I reflect on this, it occurs to me that this is sound advice for all of us, in many different aspects of life. In particular, I’m thinking about those of us who enjoy Ann Arbor’s natural areas. Maybe we’ve appreciated the carpets of spring wildflowers or the cool shade in our forested areas. Or perhaps we’ve enjoyed the splashes of color in our prairies and wetlands from the birds, butterflies, and flowers that inhabit them throughout the summer. Maybe the deafening din of spring peepers is what we most appreciate about our parks. Or maybe it’s the brilliant fall colors that we’re now beginning to see as the seasons turn.

Whatever it is that we most enjoy about our natural areas, we must remember to not take them for granted. None of these things is guaranteed to be around into the future. Carpets of diverse wildflowers can easily be replaced with monocultures of garlic mustard. There’s still the threat of Rachel Carson’s “silent spring,” if not from DDT, then simply from degradation of the high-quality wildlife habitats that currently support our spring peepers and songbirds. Even the brilliant fall colors we all enjoy are not “a given” just because we live in Michigan. We learned that when the Emerald Ash Borer came through and wiped out our beautiful ash trees, which once added their spectacular hues to the palette of fall colors.

This slow decline in many of our natural areas is happening all around us, although typically it doesn’t happen as quickly as we saw with the loss of our entire population of ash trees. You may see it happen in your favorite natural area if you’ve been visiting there for more than just a couple years. It is quite shocking how quickly garlic mustard, or purple loosestrife, or buckthorn can take over an area if left unchecked. Here in our urban environment, with such an abundance of landscaping plants that have escaped cultivation, there is tremendous pressure on our natural areas and the rich biodiversity they possess.

So, what to do about it? Well, we can stand up and boo loudly. Or we can step up and do something about it. We can “vote” on the future state of affairs with our time and our efforts. We can pull weeds and create wildlife habitat to keep our natural areas “natural” and beautiful, and melodious, for future generations to enjoy. I hope you’ll join us. - **Don’t boo. Vote.**

Celastrus orbiculatus: A Bittersweet Decoration

Mike Hahn, Stewardship Specialist

Native to Asia, Oriental (Asian) bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is used in the landscape trade as an ornamental woody vine. It grows quickly and covers any structure it touches. During the fall you will find it adorned with bright orange husks, scarlet red seeds, and twining branches. These decorative and colorful elements are why it is sought after for fall floral arrangements and wreaths. Unfortunately, discarded decorations are aiding in the spread of this invasive vine. The seeds do not break down easily in compost piles and discarded wreaths are often thrown in the back forty, giving this invasive weed the opportunity to establish and spread.

Oriental (Asian) bittersweet first appeared in the United States in the mid 1800s, but was not identified in Michigan until the 1970s.

According to the University of Michigan Herbarium, it has been identified in seventeen counties, with the main populations located in the southern portion of the state. Once planted as a food source for wildlife and as a stabilizer for steep embankments, land managers now know that it causes more harm than good to our natural communities.

Oriental (Asian) bittersweet threatens Michigan's native plant community with its sprawling growth, out-competing native plants of vital nutrients and sunlight. Due to its aggressive nature, it easily smothers ground vegetation and twines around trees so tightly that it eventually girdles them. Even more, the tangled mess of vines taking over its host's canopy creates extra weight on the tree, adding additional stress to the branches. From oak openings to woodland edges, old fields or even prairies, Oriental bittersweet is versatile in the ecosystem that it thrives, giving it the opportunity to cause degradation to the many different habitats in our community.

American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), which is native to southeast Michigan, can easily be confused with the non-native variety. According to the Forest Invasive Plants Resource Center, the best way to differentiate between these species is by looking at the location of the flowers or fruits. American bittersweet flowers and fruits will form at the tips of the branches in a single clump, while Oriental bittersweet flowers and fruits form where the leaves join the stem. American bittersweet will typically have larger clusters of flowers and fruits, as well as larger leaves – almost two times the size of Oriental bittersweet. Please note that leaf size can be relative and may vary depending on growing conditions, making flower and fruit locations the most accurate way to identify between the two species. In the near future, however, it may become even harder to differentiate between Oriental (Asian) and American bittersweet due to potential hybridization between the two species.

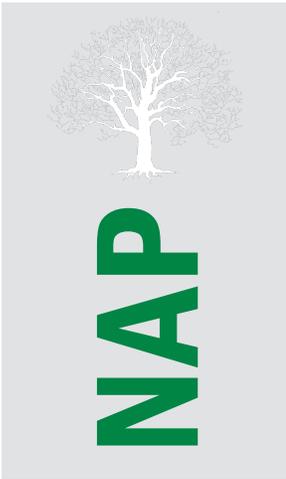
It is easy to see why people are attracted to using Oriental (Asian) bittersweet in fall arrangements. Between the brightly colored seeds and the corkscrew branches, it has a unique appearance. Before buying a wreath this fall, though, think about how that one decoration is greatly affecting the natural communities here in town. The Michigan Native Plant Producers Association is a great resource in helping to find a suitable alternative.

If you purchase decorations made with Oriental (Asian) bittersweet, please be sure to discard of properly, by burning.



Monika Chandler with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture





VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

Autumn
2016

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. Contact NAP at 734.794.6627 or NAP@a2gov.org.

SEPTEMBER

Nature Walk with Ann Arbor District Library
Thursday, September 8, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Stapp Nature Area

Stapp Nature Area is a small park adjacent to the Traverwood Branch of the AADL. It contains mature oak-hickory forest and a vernal pond that is home to plentiful frogs, toads, turtles and salamanders! Parking will be available at the Traverwood Branch of the AADL, and we will meet at the entrance to the park on Huron Parkway. Some of the AADL Science Tools will be available for use during the walk, too!

Stewardship Workday
National Day of Service
Saturday, September 10, 9 a.m. to noon
Stapp Nature Area

Stapp Nature Area is one of our more pristine natural areas, with native plants composing nearly eighty percent of the total flora. Join us to cut back invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn to make even

more room for our native plants to flourish. Please meet us at the park entrance on the corner of Huron Parkway and Tuebingen Parkway.

Stewardship Workday
National Day of Service
Sunday, September 11, 9 a.m. to noon
Kuebler Langford Nature Area

This park features a prairie remnant, but invasive shrubs are encroaching on this beautiful habitat. Come out to help us remove these harmful species and help this prairie thrive! Please meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive.

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, September 17, 9 a.m. to noon
Huron Parkway Nature Area

Huron Parkway is full of many types of wildlife – everything from birds to turtles can be found in this nature area. During this workday we will remove invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn to allow more native species to become

established and provide habitat for wildlife. Meet us at 3470 Woodland Road off East Huron River Drive, home of one of the Park Stewards.

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, September 18, 1 to 4 p.m.
Foxfire West Park

This little park is nestled in a neighborhood in the northern reaches of Ann Arbor. Help us remove invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn to improve the habitat for the many frog and toad species that call this area home. Meet us at the park entrance on Birchwood Drive between Hickory Point Drive and Timbercrest Court.

Stewardship Workday
National Public Lands Day
Saturday, September 24, 9 a.m. to noon
Argo Nature Area

Come enjoy a day by the river in this 22-acre park. Learn how to identify and cut invasive species such as buckthorn

STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

STEWARDS' CIRCLE

**SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY
MONTH, EACH EVENT HELD**

FROM 7:30 TO 8:30 a.m.

BRUEGGER'S BAGELS
709 N. UNIVERSITY AVE.

Are you interested in learning more about how to care for our 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!

For more information go to www.StewardshipNetwork.org.

Stewards' Circle: Tuesday, September 13

This month's topic: Ducks Unlimited: Ducks Unlimited was created in 1937 to restore and protect North American waterfowl populations where severe droughts were threatening their habitat. Ducks Unlimited is now the world's leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation. Join us for a discussion on DU and their conservation projects in Michigan with Jason Hill, Manager of Conservation Programs for the Great Lakes Regional Office located in Ann Arbor.

Stewards' Circle: Tuesday, October 11

This month's topic: Risks and Precautions for Insect and Invertebrate Borne Disease: Even when covered in bug spray, we all get the occasional sting or bite from mosquitoes, ticks, and chiggers. What is our risk of contracting West Nile, Lyme Disease, or other insect/invertebrate borne disease? Join us for a chat about risks and precautions.

Stewards' Circle: Tuesday, November 8

This month's topic: App's for Restoration and Nature Exploration: Most of us are carrying around these magical little computers in our pockets everywhere we go. Join us for a discussion about the best app's for exploring nature, documenting invasive plants, and recording wildlife observations. Bring your smart phone and download some app's with us.

and honeysuckle. Doing so will allow native species to thrive and provide natural habitat for wildlife. Meet in the parking lot north of the Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Drive.

Bird Walk

Friday, September 30, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Argo Nature Area

Join City Ornithologist Juliet Berger for a walk through Argo Nature Area and the Argo Cascades in search of southward migrating songbirds and waterfowl! Meet in the Argo Canoe Livery parking area. Bring binoculars if you have them, but they are not necessary. Be prepared for uneven terrain, mosquitoes and rainy or muddy conditions.

OCTOBER

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, October 2, 1 to 4 p.m.

Bluffs Nature Area

Tucked away within Bluffs' 39 acres is an open field filled with native prairie species. Come out and help us preserve this beautiful habitat by removing invasive shrubs, such as buckthorn and honeysuckle, which are encroaching on the prairie. Meet at the park entrance on Sunset Road.

Nature Walk with Ann Arbor District Library

Thursday, October 6, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Mary Beth Doyle Park

Mary Beth Doyle Park is an 81-acre park located a couple blocks east of the Malletts Creek branch of the AADL. During October, late fall wildflowers will be in bloom! We'll be meeting in the parking area off Packard Road just east of Cobblestone Farm on the south side of the street. Some of the AADL Science Tools will be available for use.

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, October 8, 9 a.m. to noon

Marshall Nature Area

This large nature area, which abuts a county park and University of Michigan property, is a valuable piece of wildlife habitat in the northeast part of the city. Come out to help us improve the habitat by removing invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, October 8, 1 to 4 p.m.

Oakwoods Nature Area

This oak-hickory woodland includes a small pond and wetland, which are great spots for bird watching or listening for frog calls. We'll be cutting and removing invasive shrubs such as buckthorn and honeysuckle to improve the habitat. Please meet at the park entrance off of Dunwoodie Road.

Autumn 2016

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, October 9, 1 to 4 p.m.

Mary Beth Doyle Park

The 81 acres of Mary Beth Doyle Park include a nature area, disc golf course, playground, and a storm water retention pond. Help us manage the nature area and improve wildlife habitat by gathering and dispersing seeds and removing invasive shrubs like honeysuckle and buckthorn. Please meet at the park entrance at the end of Verle Avenue.

Public Meeting – Controlled Ecological Burn Program

Thursday, October 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**NAP Office, 3875 East Huron River Drive
7 to 8:30 p.m.**

Fire is used as a restoration tool in many of Ann Arbor's natural areas. This meeting provides information and an opportunity for discussion about NAP's Controlled Ecological Burn Program. This is the perfect opportunity to ask questions, learn more about the ecological benefits of burning, and hear about the specifics of effectively and safely using fire as a restoration tool. Burns are conducted in city parks throughout the spring and fall.

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, October 15, 9 a.m. to noon

Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area

Come help preserve the mature oak hickory woodland in this diverse natural area. We will be cutting and removing invasive shrubs like honeysuckle and buckthorn to maintain this quality woodland. Meet at the park entrance near Scarlett Middle School. The school parking lot is off of Lorraine Street.

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, October 16, 1 to 4 p.m.

Onder Nature Area

By connecting with other natural areas and features, Onder serves as a landscape corridor and provides convenient habitat and migration for birds, mammals, reptiles and insects. Help is needed to restore Onder's oak savanna by removing invasive shrubs such as buckthorn. Meet at the park entrance on Brookside Drive.

Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Thursday, October 20, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard Road

All volunteers, past, present, and future, are invited to our annual appreciation event! Let's celebrate our collective accomplishments while sharing food and community. Games, door prizes, and fun activities for all. Please bring a dish to pass and friends or family. Costumes are encouraged. RSVPs appreciated. Call 734.794.6627 or email us at NAP@a2gov.org by October 18.

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, October 23, 1 to 4 p.m.

Black Pond Woods Nature Area

Come on out to experience a woods filled with oak, hickory, maple and dogwood. Volunteers will work on removing invasive shrubs, which have a negative impact on wildlife habitat. This is a great way to bring families out to enjoy a day outdoors. Please meet at the Tibbitts Court entrance to the park.

NOVEMBER

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, November 5, 9 a.m. to noon

Redbud Nature Area

Redbud Nature Area is home to many native plants that are competing with invasive species like buckthorn and honeysuckle. Help us remove these species so more natives can thrive and provide food and habitat for wildlife. Meet at the park entrance at the intersection of Parkwood Avenue and Jeanne Street.

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, November 6, 1 to 4 p.m.

Bird Hills Nature Area

Bird Hills is our largest nature area and is home to a wide array of plant and animal species. Come out and help us remove invasives like buckthorn and honeysuckle to help provide more natural habitat for all of the park's great wildlife. Join us at park entrance on Bird Road, west of Huron River Drive.

Stewardship Workday

Saturday, November 19, 1 to 4 p.m.

Barton Nature Area

Barton Nature Area is a very popular location for many different bird species throughout the year. Help us provide better native habitat for the birds and other wildlife by removing invasive shrub while also collecting native seeds in the vast prairies. Please meet at the Barton Dam parking lot off of Huron River Drive.

Stewardship Workday

Sunday, November 20, 1 to 4 p.m.

Sunset Brooks Nature Area

Sunset Brooks features 7.8 acres of beautiful wetlands and rolling woods dotted with oaks and hickories, dogwood groves and wildflowers. Come learn how to identify and remove the invasive species threatening this much-loved park. Please meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive.

Stapp continued from page 1

the following spring some of these lost hoards may germinate into a new generation of oaks and hickories.

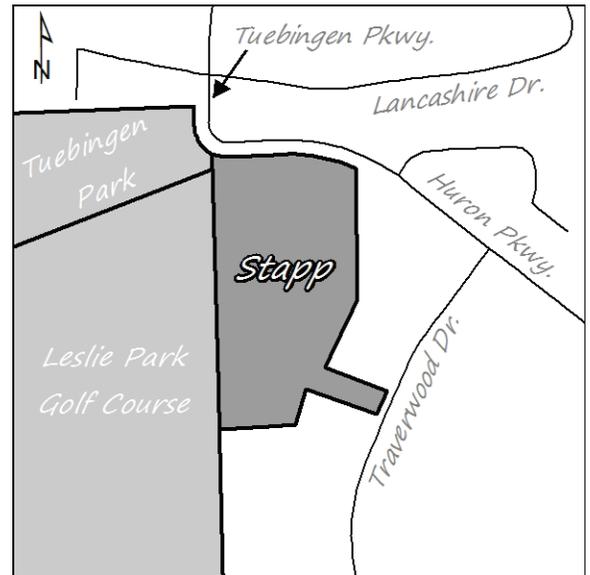
As temperatures drop, American toads and chorus frogs will gorge on insects while they last, but eventually will begin burying themselves in the bottom of the vernal pool in the northeast corner of the park before the ground freezes. This pool is an important refuge that is hard to come by for small organisms that cannot move large distances, so the frogs and toads of Stapp Nature Area eagerly seize upon such a close shelter.

“Visitors will be able to admire the spectrum of yellows and reds adorning the canopy while shuffling through the already fallen leaves of young maples that are chasing the oak trees skyward.”

Creatures dwelling within the park property are not the only ones to benefit from Stapp Nature Area. Birds and mammals regularly move through the green corridor created by natural areas such as Leslie Park and Stapp, Black Pond Woods and Dhu Varren Nature Areas, finding food and habitat within this ecological network. Insectivorous birds in particular benefit from the forest edge these parks create around Leslie Golf Course, as they nest within the woods and then fly out to catch insects that might be bothering golfers.

You can visit this park anytime during the day to explore and meet its residents, be it the mighty oak tree or the diminutive downy woodpeckers hopping along its trunk.

For a special experience with this park, join in on a nature walk that NAP and the Ann Arbor District Library will be hosting on Thursday, September 8th from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Many different critters are moving around at this time, so you never know who you will see! If you are looking for more than a walk in the woods, consider joining the stewardship workday on Saturday, September 10th from 9 a.m. to noon. where we will be clearing out invasive species to improve habitat for wildlife and make room for more of the wonderful native plants you can find at Stapp Nature Area!



STAFF UPDATES

WELCOME ...



TANNER BRICKER – FIELD CREW

I've been a lifelong nature enthusiast, and I developed a strong passion for conservation while obtaining a biology degree from Central Michigan University. I am thrilled to join the NAP field crew and for the opportunity to combine my passion for ecological restoration with my love of reconnecting people to nature. It is truly an honor to serve the great city of Ann Arbor and to work alongside the vast network of volunteers and park stewards in the area. I look forward to applying my skills toward the improvement of Ann Arbor's natural areas and learning from the talented team here at NAP.



MADISON ROZE - OUTREACH ASSISTANT

Soon after earning my undergraduate degree in environmental studies from the University of Toledo, I was thrilled to accept the position of Outreach Assistant at NAP. Here, I hope to continue cultivating my lifelong love of ecology and inspire the public to protect and conserve Michigan's beautiful and diverse natural areas.

CONGRATULATIONS ...



ERIC ELLIS

Eric Ellis, (NAP Conservation Crew Leader, 2002-04) was recently hired by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) as the Manager of Natural Resources and Regulatory Compliance. He will be overseeing the stewardship of 25,000 acres of land in the five county regional parks system serving Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne counties. Ellis is replacing the retiring Paul Muelle who worked in this position for many years.

NAPpenings

THE STEWARDSHIP NETWORK CONFERENCE

January 13-14, Kellogg Conference Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing

This will be the 10th anniversary of the Science, Practice and Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems conference. Presenters will cover topics such as environmental justice, traditional ecological knowledge, watershed conservation, and more! See www.stewardshipnetwork.org for more information.



MAYOR'S MONARCH PLEDGE AND BEE CITY, USA

The City of Ann Arbor is working hard to protect pollinators! Mayor Taylor has taken the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, and Ann Arbor has recently become a Bee City USA. By joining these initiatives, the City certifies that it is actively working to protect and restore habitat for the monarch butterfly and other pollinator species. For more on these exciting projects visit nwf.org/mayorsmonarchpledge and beecityusa.org.

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to the groups who volunteered with NAP recently. We could not make such a difference without you! A2 Active Aging, University of Michigan Xi Psi Phi, Ann Arbor Academy, The North Face, Emerson Middle School, Rudolf Steiner School, Rubicon Genomics, inVentiv Health, Youth Volunteer Corps and Ann Arbor MSU Spartan Alumni Association.

**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.**



NAP

Autumn 2016

Natural Area Preservation
City of Ann Arbor
3875 E. Huron River Dr.
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

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CITY OF ANN ARBOR



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Annual Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Thursday, October 20, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard Road

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

RSVP by October 18 to
NAP@a2gov.org or 734.794.6627