

Natural Area Preservation News

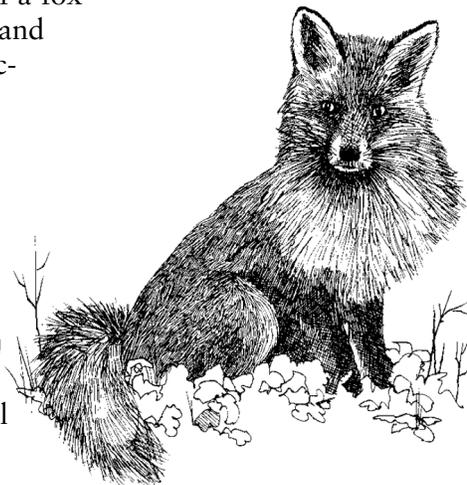
Protecting and restoring Ann Arbor's natural areas and fostering an environmental ethic among its citizens

Volume 5, Number 4

Spring 2001

Park Focus: Brown Park by Christopher Cookingham

Quietly I walked along the dirt path through a tunnel of greening vegetation. Suddenly, at the very edge of my vision, a streak of brownish-red sliced through the underbrush. Fox squirrel, I thought, and began to dismiss it. Something—curiosity, intuition, I don't know what—made me stop and take a second look. Long seconds slid by, but nothing materialized. Just as I began to question my eyesight and move on, the long, thin, red shape of a fox detached itself from the backdrop and padded down the path in my direction. Closer and closer it came, warily casting glances from side to side, yet apparently not seeing me. When no more than 15 feet separated us, it lifted its head and looked straight into my eyes. With undisguised surprise and shock, the fox accorded into itself as if hitting an invisible wall and, quicker than thought, bounded off the trail into the underbrush and was gone.



As a member of the NAP field crew, I get to see a lot of Ann Arbor's natural areas, and experiences like this have made Brown Park one of my favorites. Located in the southeastern corner of the city, Brown's 82.62 acres make it one of our larger parks, as well as an important link in a natural corridor stretching from County Farm Park through Buhr Park, Brown, Swift Run Drain, Mitchell Scarlett Woods, Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area, and ending in Turnberry

Park. A broad range of habitat types and natural features exist there, including forest, old field, new field, shrubland, a retention pond, and Mallett's Creek. Most of the park's topography is flat and low-lying, having poorly drained soils prone to flooding. The exception is a large manmade hill to the southwest, created with dirt removed from digging the retention basin. At the pond, Mallett's Creek pauses for a moment before continuing its journey downhill to mingle with the waters of the Huron River.

Covering the park's eastern side, a woods dominated by oak, hickory, basswood, and ash tells a story of the logging and grazing that occurred here in the past. In some areas small trees struggle silently against one another for an advantageous position, while in others, large, open-grown giants, arms outstretched, preside over the younger generations that will one day replace them. On a recent visit, as I crunched through the late January snow, I thought about the approach of warm weather and ensuing meltwater that would nourish a profusion of spring wildflowers such as buttercups, white and yellow trout lilies, bloodroot, common and nodding trillium, marsh marigold, and spring avens. Overhead, Downy Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and American Robins chatted, scolded, and called to each other. I wondered if they might also be

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Coordinator's Corner

Paying Your Dues

As I write this I'm sitting in the jury waiting room at the US District Court in Detroit. I have jury duty, so for the second time in two weeks, I've canceled my plans for the day, skipped work, and made the one-hour drive into downtown Detroit. But despite the hassle, I'm not bitter about my service.

Maybe I've been brainwashed by the inspirational video and orientation they give to all prospective jurors, but I do feel good about what I'm doing. I enjoy living in a free society and I believe that donating a few days of service is a small price to pay for reaping the many benefits of our judicial system the rest of the year.

In fact, I like this system so much I've decided to implement it at NAP! We've instituted a lottery system and all of our readers are now on it. Just check the back of this newsletter—if your name appears on the label, it means you're being called for service! Of course we'd like to be more accommodating than the court system, so we won't dictate the exact date you must report. Just look through the calendar on page 5 and pick a few events you'd like to have count toward your service. It's a small price to pay for the many benefits you reap from our urban natural areas.

And in what we think is an improvement over the jury system, we can promise you additional personal benefits from your days of service to NAP. You'll get some exercise in a stress-reducing outdoor environment with a much friendlier group of people than you'll find in any courtroom. And, of course, you'll feel really good about helping to restore a part of Ann Arbor's natural heritage.

So what do you say? Don't make us issue a summons because you failed to report for duty! Come join us for a workday.

David Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Coordinator, was not selected to sit on a jury, but looks forward to the next time he has the opportunity to serve!

Winds of Change

You may have noticed that your Natural Area Preservation News looks a bit different this spring. Along with this new layout, we are in search of a catchier title for our quarterly rag. After rejecting such staff suggestions as "All About Nature" and "Plants, Trees, and Stuff," we've decided to hold a naming contest. If you've been thinking to yourself, "What a boring name for a newsletter," this is your chance to spruce it up! The winner will receive the prestigious prize of having their title atop the NAP newsletter. So brainstorm a little and share your ideas by calling our "Name the Newsletter" Hotline at (734) 996-3266 or emailing nap@ci.ann-arbor.mi. The contest deadline is June 1, so don't delay!



Natural Area Preservation

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

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

Our Address:

1831 Traver Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
phone: (734) 996-3266
fax: (734) 997-1072
e-mail: nap@ci.ann-arbor.mi
website: <http://www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/framed/parks/index.html>

Manager

David Borneman

Techician

Kirsten Conduct

Outreach Coordinator

Tara Griffith

Clerk II

Katherine O'Brien

Administrative Assistant

Nancy Novitski

Conservation Workers

Kristie Brablec
Chris Cookingham
Jennifer Lewis
Michelle Michney
Jana Vanderhaar

Inventory Staff

Dea Armstrong
David Mifsud
Bev Walters

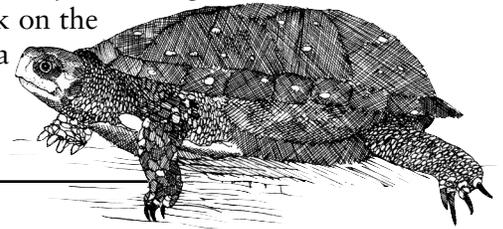
For up-to-date information on stewardship activities call the "hotline" at (734) 996-3266



Take a Walk on the Wild Side by Tara Griffith

Henry David Thoreau once wrote, “We need the tonic of Wildness...” In our age of high-tech, fast-paced living, this has never been more true. It is no surprise that many of us seek refuge in the few “wild” places we have left. In Ann Arbor, this refuge can be found in our surrounding woodlands, wetlands and prairies. Natural Area Preservation works to protect these areas and also offers folks a chance to give something back to the land that has given so much to them! There are many ways that you can contribute to the conservation of your favorite wild places. A good place to start is with our Volunteer Stewardship Calendar (see page 5). Join us for a workday and help remove invasive species, maintain trails, and collect

native seed. Folks with green thumbs may enjoy lending a hand in one of our Native Plant Demonstration Gardens. There are opportunities to get involved with our Natural Features Inventory by surveying the parks for breeding birds, butterflies and frogs and toads. You can also help document our restoration efforts as a Photo-Monitor. You may just enjoy yourself so much that you become a Park Steward and begin leading other volunteers in restoration projects! There is an activity for everyone: individuals, couples, families, and groups! So what are you waiting for? Take a walk on the wild side as a NAP Volunteer!



Park Boundary Marker Project by Nancy Novitski

As an Ann Arbor resident, you know the location of Furstenberg Nature Area, right? You know where Bird Hills is. You may or may not know where Oakwoods Nature Area is, but you do know that once you’ve found a park entrance, you’re on park property.

Around the edges of parks, it’s often not that simple. Not all parks and nature areas are fenced in; in fact, most aren’t. The line separating a park from surrounding backyards, vacant lots, or other property more often than not is an invisible one. This leads to a variety of problems. Unknowing park users sometimes trespass on private property accidentally. Those whose backyards abut nature areas have difficulty determining where their lawns end and park property begins. Unfortunately, this often leads to dumping of yard waste and encroachment onto park property in violation of city ordinances.

NAP has seen the results of these violations for the past several years. Some lawns are mowed ever farther into the park. Structures such as fences cut into park land as well. And despite the fact that yard waste consists of plant matter, piles of yard waste take years to decompose, hampering the natural cycle of decomposition within the natural area, and often introduce invasive plant species. The NAP conservation crew must continually re-evaluate where park boundaries lie to know where to do restoration work.

NAP has attempted many solutions to this problem. Series of letters have been sent to park neighbors informing them of the issues and rules, offering assistance in determining the location of residential lot and park boundaries, and requesting compliance. The dumping and encroachment have continued, however. For these reasons and others, the Department of Parks and Recreation is beginning a pilot project to mark the boundaries of nature areas in Ann Arbor. We hope that if people know where the park boundaries are, park users will be less likely to trespass and park neighbors will be less likely to mow or dump yard waste beyond their property boundaries. If not, these markers will also make the ordinances easier to enforce. The NAP crew has already begun installing markers along the boundaries of Oakwoods Nature Area and other parks. These markers are four-foot-high, five-inch-wide, brown, fiberglass stakes labeled with the City logo and decals reading “Park Boundary” and “No Dumping.” The plan is to place one marker at each corner of every residential lot abutting a park natural area. We will continue installation this year until we’ve installed all 250 of the signs in this trial run.

So if you or someone you know sees a small, brown boundary marker appear along the edge of a nature area in Ann Arbor, think about what you can do to help protect that nature area, for the sake of the local environment and for the sake of the humans enjoying it. For more information or to obtain our “Park Neighbors and Yard Waste” Fact Sheet, please contact our office.

NAP•penings



Lupine
Lupinus perennis

The Wildflower Association of Michigan will host the **14th Annual Michigan Wildflower Conference** on March 4 and 5 at the Kellogg Center at Michigan State University. This year's conference, "Creating a Native Tradition: The New American Garden", is filled with a variety of informative sessions. Neil Diboll, internationally acclaimed Midwest Prairie Ecologist, author, and president of Prairie Nursery in Westfield, Wisconsin, will

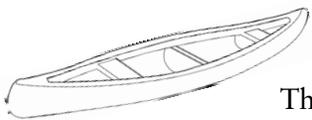
share his insight into the future partnership of gardening and ecology during the keynote address on Monday. For additional information, go to the WAM web site at www.wildflowersmich.org or contact the Registrar, Marilyn Case, at (616) 781-8470.

Learn about controlling the spread of purple loosestrife the biological way: *Galerucella* leaf beetles!

A training workshop will be held on Sunday, March 18, at the Leslie Science Center. Volunteers will receive a complete kit for raising beetles in a sunny window. Newly emerged adult beetles will be collected for wetland release. Attendance is limited so please call Jan Blaine at (734) 622-5159 for a workshop application. K-12 teaching units are also available. The workshop is sponsored by Washtenaw Audubon Society Co-operating Biological Control Site (CBC) of the MSU Purple Loosestrife Program. You can check out their web site at www.msue.msu.edu/sea-grant/pp.



Purple loosestrife
Lythrum salicaria



Grab a paddle and head on down for **Huron River Clean-Up Day!**

This annual event will be held on Saturday, April 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Volunteers will work in teams and travel by canoe as they collect trash from the river. The driving force behind this event is local scientist, canoeist and fisherman,

David Fanslow. Dave has been inspiring folks to take care of the river for the past eight years and expects 100 participants this year! Interested folks must pre-register by contacting Dave at (734) 741-2353 or fanslow@glrl.noaa.gov. Be sure to sign up early as space is limited!

MIPC rhymes with "Ypsi" and stands for the **Michigan Invasive Plant Council**. This is a collaborative effort between many different state, federal, and local agencies (such as NAP), and other non-profit organizations—anyone concerned about the threat of invasive species. After one year as an independent group, MIPC is now an official affiliate member of the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council, the granddaddy of all EPPCs, which will probably change its name at some point to reflect the fact that many states outside of the southeastern US are now affiliated with it. Affiliating with SE-EPPC was a convenient way to attain not-for-profit status and to connect us with activities and decisions at the national level. MIPC membership will eventually be open to individuals as well. For more information, check out MIPC's web site at www.msue.msu.edu/mipc.



SMPFC is a harder-to-pronounce acronym for the **Southern Michigan Prescribed Fire Council**. Dave Borneman just authored an article on their behalf to appear in the April issue of *Michigan Out-Of-Doors*, published by Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC). The article is a general overview of the benefits of prescribed burning. Contact the NAP office if you'd like a reprint.

NAP has recently teamed up with the **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** to help spread the word about our stewardship opportunities. RSVP invites older adults to put their experience to work in their community and offers great benefits such as supplemental accident and liability insurance, mileage reimbursement, newsletters, and recognition events. If you or someone you know is over 55 and interested in volunteering at NAP, you may be interested in joining RSVP. Call RSVP Program Coordinator Paula Dana at (734) 712-3625.

Spring 2001 NAP Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

MARCH

March 17, Saturday
Dolph Park

10:00am - 1:00pm

Spring is almost here! Join us as we maintain and improve trails at Dolph Park. Meet in the parking lot on Wagner Road.



March 24, Saturday
Brown Park

10:00am - 1:00pm

Help us spruce up the trails at Brown Park. Volunteers meet in the parking lot at the Packard Road entrance.



March 31, Saturday
Cranbrook Park

10:00am - 1:00pm

It's "spring cleaning" time! Join us at Cranbrook Park for trash pick up and trail maintenance. Meet in the Church of Christ parking lot at 2530 S. Main. (The park is located between S. Main and Ann Arbor-Saline Road., north of Eisenhower Parkway.)



APRIL

April 7, Saturday
Sugarbush Park

10:00am - 1:00pm

Trails, Trails, Trails! Help us spruce up the trails in Sugarbush Park. Meet at the park entrance on Lexington Street - parking is available on Georgetown Street off Plymouth Road.



April 18, Wednesday
Butterfly Survey Kick-off

Leslie Science Center Nature House
7:30 - 9:00pm

If strolling through the parks looking for butterflies sounds like a nice way to spend your time, then join us for our annual field survey! This meeting will provide general information about the survey, park assignments, and training walks. Meet at LSC's Nature House at 1831 Traver Road.



April 21, Saturday
Fritz Park

10:00am - 1:00pm

Help us maintain trails and remove invasive plants in Fritz Park. Park at the east entrance of Fritz, off Russet Street. We will meet at the park shelter.



April 21, Saturday
Furstenberg Native Plant Demonstration Garden

10:00am - 1:00pm

Join NAP Volunteer, Aunita Erskine, as she shares her love and knowledge of native plant gardening! Bring your work gloves and come prepared to do general garden maintenance. Meet in Furstenberg Park off Fuller Road, by the circle drive.



April 22, Sunday-EARTH DAY
Black Pond Woods

10:00am - 1:00pm

Celebrate Earth Day and help out with trail maintenance in Black Pond Woods! This stewardship event is in conjunction with the Earth Day Festival held from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at the Leslie Science Center. Meet in the LSC parking lot at 1831 Traver Road. * Due to the festival, parking will be limited. Please park on Traver Road or the lower lawn of the Leslie Science Center.



April 25, Wednesday
Breeding Bird Survey Kick-off

Leslie Science Center Nature House
7:30pm - 9:00pm

Calling all bird watchers! Join the field survey team to track nesting birds in our parks. This meeting will provide info. about the survey and training walks. Park assignments to be determined. Meet at LSC's Nature House at 1831 Traver Road.



MAY

May 5, Saturday
3rd Annual Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day

10:00am - 1:00pm

Join in this citywide effort to stop the invasive garlic mustard from taking

over our natural areas!

Young garlic mustard is easy to pull so this is a good activity for all ages! Pick one of these locations:

Argo - Meet in the parking lot north of the Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Drive.

Cedar Bend - Meet near perennial garden on Cedar Bend Drive.

Bird Hills - Meet at the park entrance on Bird Road, west of Huron River Drive. Additional parking is available in the Barton Dam parking lot.



Marshall - Meet at the Marshall parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.

May 12, Saturday
Brown Park

10:00am - 1:00pm

Join us to remove invasive, non-native plants from Brown Park. Meet in the parking lot at the Packard Road entrance.



May 12, Saturday
Furstenberg Native Plant Demonstration Garden

10:00am - 1:00pm

Help in the garden and learn about using native plants in the landscape with NAP Volunteer Aunita Erskine. Bring your work gloves and be prepared to do general garden maintenance. Meet by the circle drive at Furstenberg Park off Fuller Road.



May 19, Saturday
Bird Hills Nature Area

10:00am - 1:00pm

Help the native wildflowers continue to thrive in Bird Hills! Join us in removing invasive plants from this beautiful natural area. Meet at the Bird Road entrance west of Huron River Drive. Additional parking is available in the Barton Dam parking lot.



JUNE

June 2, Saturday
National Trails & River Day
Argo Nature Area

10:00am - 1:00pm

Lend a hand in honor of our local rivers and trails! Help control erosion along the Huron River and keep the trails looking good too! Meet in the parking lot just north of the Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Drive.



When joining our stewardship events, please keep an eye on the weather and dress appropriately. Long pants and close-toed shoes are required for your safety.

Park Focus: Brown Park *continued from page 1*

thinking of the coming spring and all it entails: the displaying, mating, nest building, and endlessly hungry young mouths to feed.



A rapid transition occurs at the southern edge of the forest into a dense and formidable shrubland dominated by hawthorn, gray dogwood, and European buckthorn. As I ducked, dodged, and sidestepped my way through, shapes partially melted into the pellet-littered snow spoke of the deer whose paths made my passage through the tangle possible. Almost near enough to touch, Tufted Titmice and Black-capped Chickadees called from all around, yet wisely stayed under cover of

twig and thorn as a Cooper's Hawk considered the scene from a nearby tree.

West of the woods and shrubland, I entered a large field that stretches across the remainder of the park between hill and pond. Since it was taken off the mowing schedule in 1995, this field now constitutes one of the largest non-landscaped open areas in our parks and is undergoing the slow process of returning to a more natural state. Already, hopeful red cedars poke through the snow amidst the winter skeletons of last year's asters, grasses, and Queen Anne's lace. Although not of a high floristic quality, this field provides a haven for a variety of birds: Red-tailed Hawks, Savannah Sparrows,

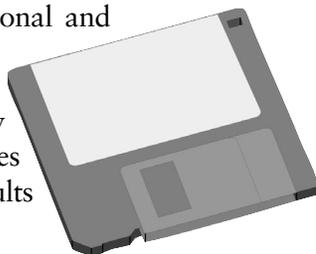
American Woodcock, Eastern Meadowlark, successfully nesting pairs of Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, and numerous spring migrants.

Before leaving that day, I sat on top of the hill looking north, from where it is possible to view almost the entire park. Usually I go to natural areas in search of calm and quiet, but the chaotic scene surrounding me was anything but this. Eastern Bluebirds swirled about, landing sporadically here and there, curiously examining shrubs, trees, and nesting boxes. At the retention pond, the hoarse commotion of Canada Geese accompanied a thin whizzing of Mallards circling overhead. And in the distance, a pair of dive-bombing American Crows harassed a Red-tailed Hawk, who conceded the point and flew deliberately toward the horizon. On second thought, maybe it's this very lack of quiet that makes Brown Park so special to me: there's always something new and interesting to see and experience.



Where's My Data?

For all those anxiously awaiting a glimpse of the Natural Features Inventory data from the 2000 field season, don't lose hope! This fall and winter, NAP Botanist Bev Walters has been wearing a new hat, working closely with the City's Information and Technology Services Division to refine a database program for managing the NFI survey data. At the end of this process, we will have a much more functional and uniform database. Until then, data entry is severely limited, so we do not yet have inventory results available. Keep your eyes peeled for a whole slew of results in the future!



Breeding Bird Survey Kick-off

Volunteers of a feather flock together to the seventh Annual Breeding Bird Kick-off on April 25th from 7:30pm to 9:00pm at the Leslie Science Center's Nature House (1831 Traver Road). Our staff Ornithologist, Dea Armstrong, will go over last year's big finds and assign the parks to be surveyed this year. Volunteers are welcome to contact Dea in advance if there is a particular park that you'd like to cover. While we ask that our volunteers have some ability to identify birds in the field, this is also a great opportunity to learn how we survey our parks for birds. Come and join fellow birders for an interesting evening! Email Dea at ddarm@umich.edu or call the NAP office for more information.

Frogs, Toads & Beyond

By the time you read this article, the Frog and Toad Survey will have already “kicked off,” sending trained volunteers out listening for calls, but it’s not too late to get involved! We still need help collecting data on these amphibious friends to help understand the ecosystems in our local nature areas.

This spring NAP will be extending its surveying of amphibians within the City to include a study of salamander populations in Black Pond Woods. The major focus of the study will be to see how many salamanders are present within the park during the breeding season. Much like the frogs and toads we strain to hear for the

survey, salamanders are difficult to study because of their secretive nature. By observing them during their spring migration to their breeding wetlands, we can then photograph and count all the male and female salamanders that breed in Black Pond. With this information, we will be better able to assess the health of the salamander populations within the park. This year will be a trial run of what we hope to be a five-year study. For more information about this study or to get involved in the Frog and Toad Survey, please email NAP Herpetologist David Mifsud at cheloneman@aol.com or call the NAP office.

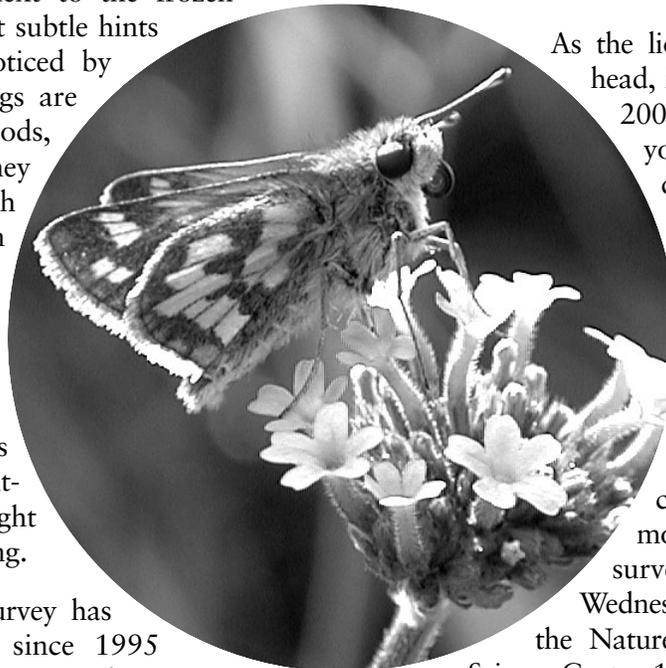


Wings and Things by Jennifer Lewis

When the last traces of snow are a fading memory and the breezes begin to blow a little warmer, if you listen very carefully, you may hear the crunching of powerful jaws and the flapping of wings that have traveled long distances to return to our latitude. The jaws belong to hungry larvae—voracious eaters after a long winter next to the frozen ground, stirring when the first subtle hints of spring were yet to be noticed by many of us bipeds. The wings are those of the scaled-wing hexapods, no doubt tired from their journey following the mild winds north after a winter spent down south! Of course, these creatures themselves are an unmistakable sign of spring and the warm weather to come: caterpillars that surprise us with their various shapes and sizes and full-fledged butterflies that make us feel as light of heart as they are on the wing.

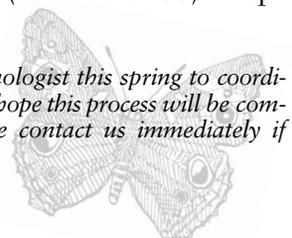
The annual NAP Butterfly Survey has been conducted every year since 1995 through the efforts of NAP volunteers. The purpose of the survey is to identify which species are present in Ann Arbor, as well as their distribution, phenology and relative abundance. Data from these forays in the field help us to see how populations change over time or in response to disturbance, including management efforts, and to educate the public about our natural areas. Since butterflies are important biological indicators, the accumulation of these data

helps NAP define management needs and strategies. By the time the cold weather chased us inside after the 2000 survey (no more butterflies to count!), there were lots of data to enter and numbers to crunch. A huge, heartfelt thank-you to all of the volunteers who provided this information. Look for a full report of the results in a future issue of the newsletter.



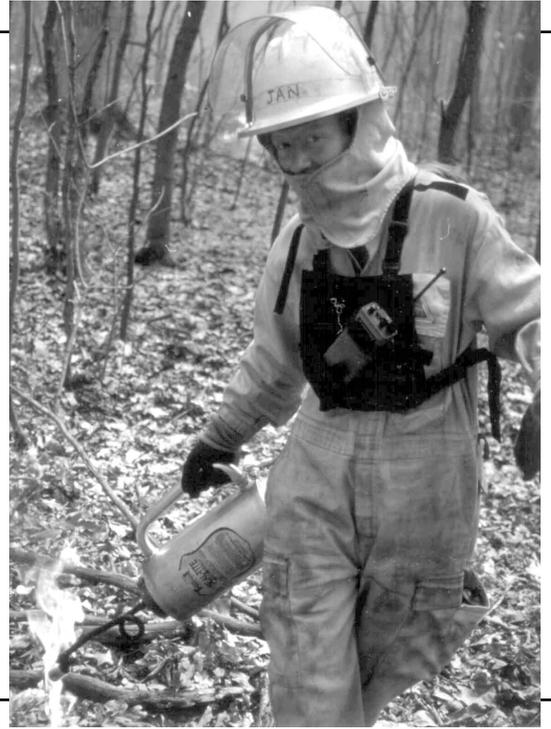
As the lion of spring rears its beautiful head, it is time to look forward to the 2001 butterfly season! If you think you could be lured into the outdoors on sunny days to track these flitting, floating and nectaring creatures in one of our parks for a couple of hours per month, then you, too, could be one of our volunteers. Even if you wouldn't know a Painted Lady if she bit you on the nose (don't worry—they don't!), we can help you learn! To find out more about our annual butterfly survey, come to the Kick-off on Wednesday, April 18th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Nature House (located at the Leslie Science Center, 1831 Traver Rd.). If you have any questions about the Butterfly Survey, give us a call at the Natural Area Preservation office (734-996-3266). Hope to see you there!

[Note: NAP will be hiring a new Entomologist this spring to coordinate the butterfly survey. Even though we hope this process will be complete by the time you read this, please contact us immediately if you're interested in applying!]

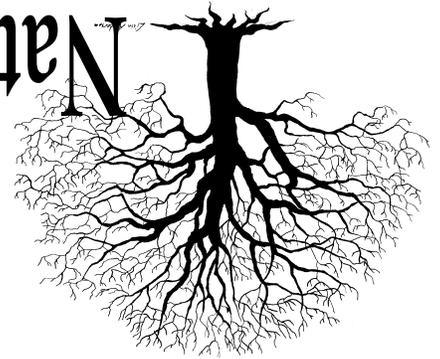


Smoke Signals by David Borneman

If you're reading this on a sunny weekday afternoon in March, chances are we NAppers are out burning somewhere! With a list of nearly 30 targeted parks, and a narrow window of acceptable weather conditions during the spring, we do our best to take advantage of every single "burn day" that we get. Weather permitting, our burns will continue into early May. So, follow our smoke some day and come see what we're doing. Our burns are almost always open to the public for viewing from a safe distance, and we always have a "PR person" on site to answer questions, explain the benefits of prescribed burning, and describe the operation. Or, if you'd like to be notified of our burn plans on a daily basis, contact the office and ask to be added to our e-mail distribution list. As always, you can also contact us to obtain written information about our prescribed burn program or a complete list of our spring burn sites.



Natural Area Preservation News



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Natural Area Preservation
City of Ann Arbor
Department of Parks and Recreation
1831 Traver Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

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starting last April, Ursula was struck by the effects of NAP's spring prescribed burn in Gallup Park, only to find the burned areas overgrown with vegetation after the summer rains. Finding the photopoint locations then "became almost like an Easter egg hunt," she says. Overall, she says photomonitoring has been "an enjoyable and beautiful experience, and very educational."

Are you looking for a way to spend time in your favorite park while also helping with a vital component of ecological restoration? NAP can always use more photomonitors! All you need are a camera with a wide-angle lens and the willingness to learn. We will show

Purple Plant-Eaters by Jana Vanderhaar

Kee and I had an odd feeling potting and fertilizing purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) plants. We nurtured them, gave them plenty of water, and pruned them to ensure bushy growth and an abundance of those familiar magenta flower spikes. What on earth were we NAPpers doing, you may wonder? Aren't we supposed to be working to eradicate this European invader? Believe it or not, we were!

In March we attended a Washtenaw Audubon Society workshop that taught us all about the new biological control effort developed to set back purple loosestrife: Galerucella beetles. Three species of this European leaf-eating beetle (*Galerucella californiensis*, *G. pusilla*, and *Hylobius transversovittatus*) have undergone extensive testing in the U.S. to determine their safety, host specificity, and effectiveness. The USDA approved use of the beetles as biological control agents for purple loosestrife in 1992. Michigan State University and Sea Grant Michigan have set up the Purple Loosestrife Project to raise and release these beetles. Several populations of the beetles have been established in Michigan by the DNR and by MSU Purple Loosestrife Project scientists.

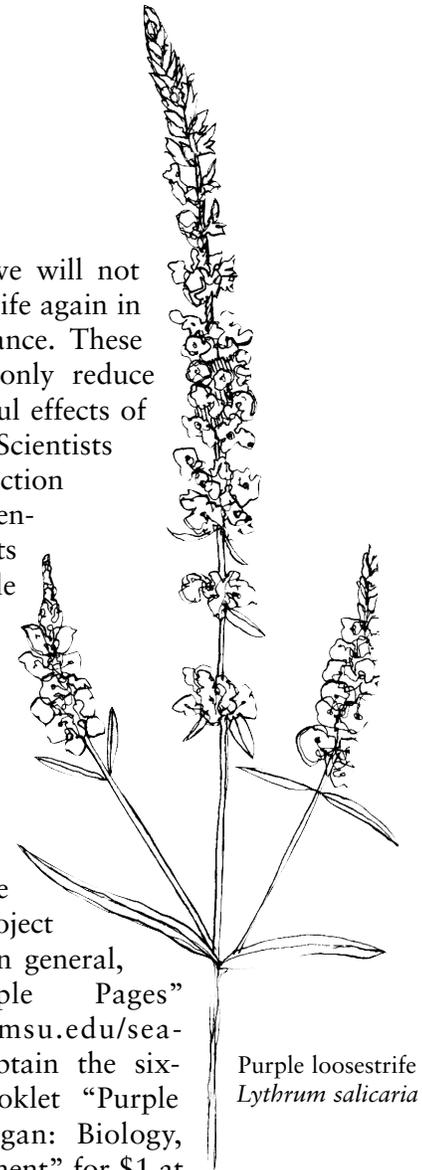
As part of this project, NAP and other volunteers have been growing these beetles on purple loosestrife plants for the last couple of months. We anticipate having hundreds of them to release in a nearby wetland! Hopefully, they will make thousands of babies there that will set back the *Lythrum salicaria* plants or even kill them. Once a population of beetles is established, a large percentage may migrate and spread to other purple loosestrife-infested wetlands in Washtenaw County.

you the ropes and provide you with film. Then you simply find a few hours once a month (April to November) for your park photo session. Just call the NAP office and ask for Outreach Coordinator Tara Griffith. Take this opportunity to watch a local park or nature area change throughout the years!

Will this mean that we will not see any purple loosestrife again in the future? Not a chance. These natural enemies can only reduce the density and harmful effects of this purple plague. Scientists hope for a 90% reduction in purple loosestrife density, leaving some plants to maintain the beetle population for the future. With luck, our native vegetation should then re-establish itself in our magnificent wetlands.

If you would like to learn more about the Purple Loosestrife Project or purple loosestrife in general, visit the "Purple Pages" website: www.msue.msu.edu/sea-grant/pp. You can obtain the six-page information booklet "Purple Loosestrife in Michigan: Biology, Ecology, and Management" for \$1 at the Michigan Sea Grant Publications Office, 2200 Bonisteel Blvd., Ann Arbor, phone: (734) 647-0768.

If you'd like to help NAP monitor our wetlands for new infestations of purple loosestrife, call our office at 996-3266.



Purple loosestrife
Lythrum salicaria

All Dressed Up and No Place to Burn!

by David Borneman

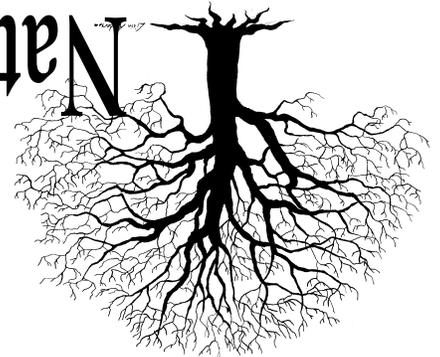
Well, another spring burn season has come and gone. It was not one of our best, due to strange spring weather that included Mother Nature's "April Fool's" prank of snow. But between snow flurries and rain showers we did manage to burn about seventeen sites on thirteen relatively dry days. By the time things dried out enough to burn, many of the woodland wildflowers were already in full bloom, so we never got to many of the wooded sites we'd hoped to burn. For these reasons, our total acreage was probably less than 100 acres, down considerably from previous springs. Luckily, we did manage to do quite a few woodland burns in the fall, and the benefits of those burns are evident this spring in the nice displays of wildflowers.

Anticipating the potential for a wet spring, we got an early start burning this year, holding our first-ever February burns. As far as burns go, they weren't great, but ecologically they were better than nothing and they did accomplish some invasive shrub kill. They also provided a good introduction to prescribed fire for some



new city neighborhoods that had no prior experience with NAP's use of this restoration tool. And those early burns served as great practice for some of the 20 volunteers who joined us on the burn crew this year. Good weather or bad, we always get great support from our many new and returning burn crew volunteers. Thanks so much for your efforts! We wish Mother Nature were as cooperative as all of you have been.

Natural Area Preservation News



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