

Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 14, Number 1

Spring 2009

Park Focus: Riverwood Nature Area

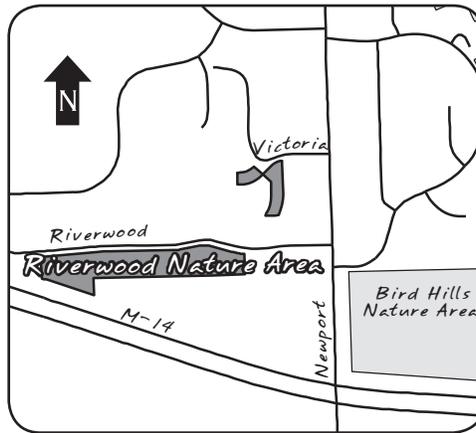
by Sara Jackson

Located just northwest of the intersection of M-14 and Newport Road, Riverwood Nature Area's five acres pack in quite a variety of native species and natural features. Being adjacent to the larger Bird Hills Nature Area makes it worth a quick visit on days when you feel like adding a little bit of extra adventure to your hike. A trail into the nature area can be accessed along Riverwood Drive, just north of the Bird Hills entrance off Newport Road.

The natural area, which lies stretched out along an extended slope, was established as a park in 1998 when the City negotiated a development plan for Newport Ridge Subdivision. The agreed upon development plan was successful in preserving many of the existing wetlands and unique trees on the site, as well as the beautiful and well established trillium and trout lily populations. The nature area now serves as a lovely natural buffer between the subdivision and M-14.

There are several rare native plant species in Riverwood Nature Area. Two particularly charming flowering natives are buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*). Buttonbush blossoms resembling large, white pin cushions, are very attractive to bees and butterflies. The plant also serves as an excellent food source for several species of waterfowl and mammals. Turtlehead is easy (and amusing) to identify, as its white flowers do indeed look like turtle heads. The plant ranges from one to four feet tall and has odd-

shaped, white flowers growing in a cluster around the tip of the stem. Both of these plants can be found in full bloom from July to September, enjoying the conditions of the damp stream banks in the area.



Bitternut hickory (*Carya cardiformis*), swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) and the spectacular flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) are native and rare trees found in Riverwood Nature Area. Bitternut hickory is the only hickory having bright sulphur-yellow winter buds. The Latin name for swamp

white oak, *Quercus bicolor*, translates literally as “two colors” and refers to the dramatic difference between the whitish-green on the underside of the leaves and the dark green on the upper sides. And who can deny the beauty of the flowering dogwood? Not only are its blooms in spring a showy and cheerful sight, but the tree is extremely valuable to wildlife as a food source.



Flowering dogwood by Thaddeus Hejka

The tree's bright red fruit clusters, called drupes, are enjoyed by a significant number of birds and mammals.

NAP's continuing work at the park is helping to preserve these native plants and habitats for all of us to enjoy.

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Coordinator's Corner

It's OK to Be SAD

I feel it every winter. The long, dark nights separated by short, dreary, gray spells that never really feel like daytime. My mood is often just as gray and dreary. And no matter how early I go to sleep, I just can't seem to drag myself out of bed the next morning until the sun comes up. All classic symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD.

A few years ago I read an article extolling the virtues of light therapy to treat SAD. Half an hour of sitting under really bright lights was supposed to help my mood and give me tons more energy. It all sounded great! But then the article said, almost as an aside, that light therapy really helps to even out the energy peaks and valleys that SAD sufferers experience through the seasons; you get more energy in the winter, but you lose some of that extra energy boost that SAD sufferers get in the spring, when the sun is back in full force! Golly! I didn't want that!

Now I'm no doctor, and SAD and light therapy are not the focus of this article. The point is this: If getting more energy in the winter means that I might have less energy in the spring, I'll stick with being tired and grumpy all winter! Spring is such an energetic, exuberant season in nature, and it's no less frenzied here at NAP.

Check the calendar on pages 4-5 and you'll see plenty of stewardship activities to get you out in the parks and soaking up some sunshine. You can be on a prescribed burn crew, survey amphibians and birds, pull garlic mustard, clear trails, or do photo-monitoring... The list goes on and on.

It can be difficult to pick and choose. My advice: celebrate the return of the sun and do all of them! You've been tired, grumpy, and semi-hibernating for the past 4 months. You've paid the price of having SAD. Now reap the benefits! Get out there and re-immense yourselves in our lovely natural areas that you've been dreaming about all winter. Get back to nature. Play. Work. Re-connect to NAP. There's so much going on this spring. We'd love to have you come along and be a part of it!

Dave Borneman, Manager

"Tug on anything at all and you'll find it connected to everything else in the universe." - John Muir



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.

Address: 1831 Traver Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Phone: 734.794.6627

Fax: 734.997.1072

E-mail: nap@a2gov.org

Web site: www.a2gov.org/nap

Blog: www.a2nap.blogspot.com

Manager

David Borneman

Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator

Jason Frenzel-Wright

Outreach Assistants

Shira Diem

Tina Roselle

Nancy Stoll

Bonnie Wessler

Technician

Jason Tallant

Conservation Workers

Matt Demmon

Sara Jackson

Billy Kirst

Laura Mueller

Molly Murphy

Steven Parrish

Volunteer Workday Coordinator

Evelyn Frenzel-Wright

Technician

Lara Treemore-Spears

Inventory Staff

Dea Armstrong, *Ornithologist*

David Mifsud, *Herpetologist*

If you would prefer to receive your next newsletter via e-mail, just call or email us!

Research in the Parks

by Jason Tallant

In 2006, we gave a synopsis of some of the ecological research projects taking place in City of Ann Arbor natural areas and parks. As these ongoing projects are completed we'd like to publicize their results and share how they are affecting our stewardship activities.

Some of you may remember reading about research conducted by Mary Beth Dechant M.S., examining the impact of prescribed fire on salamander populations in Black Pond Woods Nature Area. As part of the research, NAP conducted a prescribed fire to the specifications of the experimental design. From our perspective, this prescribed fire conducted at Black Pond Woods in the fall of 2005 was representative of the fire behavior and intensity we typically see during the course of our fire season. The fire was patchy (did not consume all of the available fuel) in many areas of the burn unit, while still meeting NAP's vegetation management objectives.

The field season of surveys following the 2005 prescribed fire found that for Red-backed Salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*) there was no significant impact to the population following this low-intensity prescribed fire. Survey results for other salamander and newt species were not significant enough to infer a positive or negative impact on these additional populations. However, the spring of 2006 had large numbers of breeding salamanders in Black Pond.

In conclusion NAP believes that conducting fire in the way we typically do will not significantly harm Red-backed Salamander species.

Another recently concluded research project looked at a complicated stewardship issue we face as restorationists and land managers. Susan McMahon M.S., of Eastern Michigan University, studied Wild Indigo Duskywings (*Erynnis baptisiae*), a special concern, indigenous butterfly with a population at Olson Park. Present in only four counties in Michigan, Wild Indigo Duskywing is an interesting case study in the resilience of species and their ability to adapt in the presence of altered environments. Historically, Wild Indigo Duskywing larvae preferentially fed on yellow wild indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*), but with decreased distribution of this host plant, Wild Indigo Duskywing has switched to the non-

native crown vetch (*Securigera varia*). The effects of this host switch on Wild Indigo Duskywing were assessed through a series of experiments conducted on the native and non-native host plants. What was found through



Black Pond Woods prescribed burn during the spring of 2005.

these experiments was increased fitness of individual caterpillars reared on the native host, wild indigo, as well as a strong feeding preference on wild indigo when presented with both host plants.

With this new information NAP has made some management decisions which should bolster the duskywing population at Olson Park. NAP has supplemented a native wildflower planting done in 2007 with yellow wild indigo plugs to help develop a healthy native host plant population. This will hopefully increase the fitness of the Wild Indigo Duskywing population and allow for NAP to manage the invasive, non-native crown vetch in the area

Restorationists are faced with many difficult questions and decisions when making ecological adjustments. Can managing for the success of a single species diminish overall habitat quality of a natural area? Conversely, will habitat management (e.g. fire or invasive species control) acutely impact rare species' populations in ways that will potentially make their recovery difficult? Do we preserve what's present — or what could be present. This dilemma is in the forefront of our thinking as stewards every day.



Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

March

March 1, Sunday
Salamander Survey Kick-Off
1831 Traver Rd.

10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Be part of the 6th year of Michigan's original Salamander Monitoring Program! With your help, we will learn more about these species' population abundance and distribution around town. If you have some identification experience and a willingness to get muddy, please apply. Register by **February 27**.

March 1, Sunday
Frog and Toad Survey Kick-Off
1831 Traver Rd.

1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
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** to participate in the survey. Route sign-up will also take place. Please register by **February 27**.

*Please wear pants and closed-toe shoes to all workdays. Minors must be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form. Snacks, water, and tools are provided.

March 3, Tuesday
Public Meeting
1831 Traver Rd.
7:30 pm to 9:00 pm

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 the Prescribed Ecological Burn Program.

March 4, Wednesday
Prescribed Burn Crew Training
1831 Traver Rd.
12:00 pm to 5:00 pm

This training is for all new volunteers interested in assisting with NAP's prescribed burns. Burns take place Monday through Friday between 12:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Pre-registration is **required** by February 27.

March 14, Saturday *
Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area Workday

12:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Learn basic invasive shrub identification and help protect the diversity of native plants in this large area by removing woody buckthorn and honeysuckle. Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot off Lorraine St.

March 21, Saturday
Photo Monitoring Kick-Off
1831 Traver Rd.

10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Do you like photography and spending time outdoors? We need volunteers to take photos at specific locations during the year to document and track the progress of our restoration work. Your own digital camera is required. Join us at this informational meeting for more details about this opportunity!

March 28, Saturday *
Miller Woods Workday

12:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Get out in the spring air by helping us remove invasives, and do trail maintenance. Meet us at the Arborview Blvd. entrance, just east of Wildwood Ave.

April

April 4, Saturday *
Cranbrook Park Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join in the fun with other enthusiastic volunteers. During this morning workday we will be planting native trees and removing trash from the park. This is a great morning to get your family outdoors and help transform this park area! Meet in the Church of Christ parking lot at 2500 S. Main.

April 5, Sunday *
Dolph Park Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Did you know that Dolph Park is home to the only natural lakes in Ann Arbor? Trails running through this park are situated to offer fantastic views for bird-watching, stunning colors, and wildlife amidst birdsong. Please bring a friend and join us in maintaining the trails! Meet at the parking lot off Wagner Rd.

April 18, Saturday *
Furstenberg Native Garden Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join Park Steward and Master Gardener, Aunita Erskine, for her annual spring cleanup and botanical walk. Workday orientation starts promptly at 9:00 am. Meet in the Furstenberg parking lot off Fuller Rd., across from Huron High School.

April 18, Saturday *
Sugarbush Nature Area Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Come out to help in this woodland area to maintain trails and preserve native plants! Amongst wildflowers and trees you will find a small grove of pawpaws, an under-story tree that bears the largest fruit native to North America! Meet us between the two cul-de-sacs on Yellowstone Dr., just south of Bluett Rd.

April 18, Saturday *
Stapp Nature Area Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

We need your help in removing invasives this spring to maintain this rich habitat and breeding ground for Tiger salamanders! As always, this workday is a great opportunity to bring your family outside in the fresh air! Meet in the parking lot of the new Traverwood Library.

April 19, Sunday *
Miller Woods Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Join us in continuing to transform this park's trails, and bird habitat by removing invasive plants. Miller Woods is easily accessible by bus and is an important downtown greenspace to preserve. Meet us at the Arborview Blvd entrance, just east of Wildwood Ave.

April 21, Tuesday
Breeding Bird Survey Kick-Off
1831 Traver Rd.

7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
This is the night to sign up for your favorite park and pick up materials for our annual survey. Some experience in bird identification necessary. City Ornithologist Dea Armstrong will also report on the 2008 data and survey highlights. Please call our office to register by April 17th.

April 25, Saturday *
11th Annual Garlic Mustard Weed-Out 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Barbeque 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Join NAP pulling garlic mustard city wide! Please see our website or page 8 to find a location near you. Afterwards, we'll have a BBQ potluck at LSNC. Please bring a dish to share. We'll provide food made from garlic mustard! All are welcome. Please RSVP if you plan to attend the potluck.

April 26, Sunday
Earth Day Festival
1831 Traver Rd.
12:00 pm to 4:00 pm
This free, family-friendly event features displays from local environmental, non-profit, and governmental organizations; live animal exhibits; hands-on activities; live entertainment; and the green building features of Leslie Science & Nature Center.

May

NAP Photo Contest Reminder
Our Fourth Annual Photo Contest is now open! Contest categories are "Native Trees & Shrubs of Southeastern Michigan" and "Stewardship: People Caring for Nature." Check our website for contest information, rules, and an entry form. Photo entry deadline is September 4th.

May 2, Saturday *
Greenview Nature Area Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 pm
NAP works cooperatively with the neighborhood group and Ann Arbor Public Schools to preserve this public greenspace in conjunction with Pioneer Woods. Come join the team to spread woodchips, maintain trails, and clean up the area for all to enjoy! Meet at the Greenview Park sign, on Greenview Dr., across from Barnard Rd.

May 2, Saturday *
South Pond Nature Area Workday
12:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Join Park Steward, James Bardwell, in cleaning up this city haven for birds and other wildlife. Volunteers meet at the Park Steward's house, 4150 Thornoaks Dr., to pile into canoes and head out to the park. Bring a canoe and a wet suit if you have them; if not wear rubber boots and use one of the available boats. Please pre-register by April 24th.

May 3, Sunday
Redbud Nature Area Workday *
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Beautiful native species, including white trout lilies, trillium, and wild ginger, flourish in this small preserve. This is the perfect opportunity to practice your plant identification skills and pull invasive plants to maintain this exemplary floodplain forest. Meet at the park entrance at the intersection of Parkwood Ave. and Jeanne St.

May 15, Friday
Bird-Watching Walk
Gallup Park
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Free for all ages and family-friendly! Join City Ornithologist Dea Armstrong as she leads a walk to look for birds in Gallup Park and Furstenberg Nature Area. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at the paddleboat dock in Gallup near the canoe livery.

May 16, Saturday *
Adopt-a-Park Kick-Off
Would you like to help beautify your neighborhood park and learn more about it? Would you enjoy planting a tree or some native flowers to make it more beautiful? We rely on volunteers to support stewardship efforts in city parks! Training, tools, and support is provided. For more information contact the Adopt-A-Park coordinators at 734.794.6627 or Adopt-A-Park@a2gov.org, or visit us at <http://www.a2gov.org/adopt-a-park>.

*Please wear pants and closed-toe shoes to all workdays. Minors must be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form. Snacks, water, and tools are provided.

May 16, Saturday
Downtown Cleanup Day
9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Help plant flowers throughout the downtown area! This is a fun opportunity for your whole family! Please meet coordinators at Liberty Plaza at the corner of Division and Liberty to volunteer. Free pizza and pop lunch. To pre-register, or for more information call 734.994.4176.

May 16, Saturday *
Wurster Park Workday
10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Bring friends and family out for this workday to lend a hand pulling invasives and wrap your arms around the champion oak tree growing in the park! Meet at the cul de sac of Edgewood Place off of W. Davis Ave.

May 16, Saturday *
Buhr Children's Wet Meadow Workday
4:00 pm to 6:00 pm
The Buhr Park Children's Wet Meadow provides habitat for native plants and animals, an attractive educational site for visitors, and an environmental filter for storm-water runoff. We need help from you and your family to ensure that the invasive species do not out-compete the native species in these meadows. Bring a dish to share and a place setting to conclude the afternoon's hard work with a potluck celebration! Meet in the playground parking lot next to the tennis court at Cobblestone Farms.

May 17, Sunday *
Bird Hills Nature Area Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
NAP staff will help guide volunteers with the process of trail construction, closure, and maintenance throughout this afternoon workday and during the following series of workdays in this park. Everyone is invited! We need your help to make a new trail together! Meet at the Newport Rd. entrance, just north of M-14.

May 23, Saturday *
Lakewood Nature Area Workday
10:00 am to 1:00 pm
This will be a fun planting day for the whole family! Learn about local native plants like bloodroot, hepatica, and jack in the pulpit as you help them get established at Lakewood! Meet us at the Lakewood Elementary School parking lot off Gralake Ave, three blocks south of Jackson Ave.

May 31, Sunday *
Bird Hills Nature Area Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Everyone is invited to join the dedicated volunteers working on maintaining and creating the trail systems in this park! This park just keeps getting better! Meet at the Newport Rd. entrance, just north of M-14.

Visit our website
www.a2gov.org/nap or give us
a call at 734.794.6627 for more
information on any of our listings.

NAPpenings

Thank you...

- ♥UM Alpha Phi Omega for help at Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area
- ♥Greenhills' School 7th grade class for dedication to environmentalism by helping build boardwalks, erosion control structures, and trails
- ♥Pioneer High Rowing Team for help in removing buckthorn from the prairie at Bandemer
- ♥Berkshire neighbors for making progress on ridding the park of invasives to make room for native plants
- ♥UM Environmental Action Group for removing invasives from Forest Park
- ♥Huron High Rowing Team for removing invasive shrubs from Argo
- ♥Ann Arbor Adventist Elementary for helping woodchip the trails at Barton
- ♥to the Giordani family and the Mendenhall family for their generous support
- ♥Rob Isenberg for his Eagle Scout Project at Mary Beth Doyle Park (see below for more information)

The **Huron River Impoundment Management Plan (HRIMP)** committee, has entered Phase III of its work plan. This includes holding public meetings to solicit input on scenarios for river management developed from Phases I and II of the committee work. To stay abreast of HRIMP developments go to the city's website www.a2gov.org and type HRIMP in the search tab.

NAP has a new phone number, but don't worry, our old number will work for awhile as well. Our new main-line phone number is 734.794.6627. Use this number to reach all of us!

November 15th was **NAP's 15th anniversary**. We celebrated with an open house at LSNC. It was great to see a lot of old friends! Thanks for coming! Read about some of our former NAPpers in the Staff Updates section.

To see some graphic results of our volunteer work in 2008 check out our blog at <http://a2nap.blogspot.com/> for Friday January 2, 2009.

The **Wildflower Association of Michigan** conference will take place March 8 & 9 at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. This year's theme is "Building a Web of Life" For more information view their website at www.wildflowersmich.org/.

a little help...

NAP is looking for volunteers interested in photography to take pictures at historic photopoints for us. Call the office and talk to JT or Shira for more information.

We also need volunteer(s) to maintain our web PR. Call our office and talk to Jason or Evelyn for more information.

Be the first to know when new information is on our website! Go to our website and click on the "**Sign up to receive NAP e-mail updates**" icon on the far right of our homepage. You will be sent an update via email when we make any changes to our web pages. This is a free service.

NAP 2009 Wall Calendar Corrections:

Oops!

Please change: July 13th Bird Walk should be JUNE 13th

Please add: March 21st Photomonitoring Kick-Off

New Path for Doyle

by Rob Isenberg

This walkway in Mary Beth Doyle Park was constructed for my Eagle Project with Troop 4, BSA. It extends over 270 feet along one of the paths in the park. The purpose for the construction of this walkway was to keep people out of the mud that forms every spring and summer. To avoid the mud, people would walk to the side on top of the plants next to the path. Through repetition of this act, the plants would die and the path would widen, creating more mud. This cycle is what my project fixed. Now, people can pass through the park with ease in any conditions without causing harm.



Having finished construction, I am now in the fundraising phase. The total cost for supplies came out to around \$800. Donations of any size are welcome and are 100% tax-deductible. To donate to the cause, send an email to: walkway@rickmktg.com and I will provide you with further information.

Staff Updates

former NAPpers...

Cara Rockwell – Conservation Crew, 1996-1998

I am currently a PhD candidate with the School of Forest Resources and Conservation at the University of Florida. For the last four years, I have been working in Acre, Brazil, collaborating with local communities involved in certified timber operations. I am hoping that the results from my study will be used to improve existing management plans, potentially protecting community forest resources from unsustainable harvesting practices. My desire to focus on natural resource conservation at the community level really started with my tenure at NAP, later progressing to time spent as a Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay. While at NAP, I first experienced that indescribable connection working alongside community volunteers who had a deep investment in conserving and improving their natural areas...it was an experience that has continued over 10 years!

When not in Brazil, I am based out of French Guiana, where I live with my husband, Chris Baraloto. We welcomed our first child in December, and I hope that one day she will be able to travel with us to Ann Arbor to see some of those remnant tallgrass prairies that we miss so much!



*Serefino Chiara Baraloto,
born December 15th, 2008*

Jon Williams – Conservation Crew, 2002-2005

I'm on winter sabbatical from my gig with the forest service in AK. My lady friend and I, along with my two dogs, are spending the winter in Homer, AK this year.

Things have been good with me, I get to live on a boat and fly around in helicopters all over coastal Alaska. The country is rugged and remote and the weather is usually pretty heinous but we have a great crew and are doing important work. Sometimes I think of taking a year off and returning for a burn season but can never pull myself away and actually do it. Right now I'm looking forward to a winter of skiing and paddling in Kachemak Bay. Hope all is well with you!



*Jon Williams in Alaska
(nice t-shirt!)*

Erica Aubin (formerly Uramkin) - Conservation Crew, 2005-2006

Things are great in Boston. I got married on October 11th and have been happily settling into life with a husband. We're getting ready to leave for our honeymoon to the Canary Islands and couldn't be more excited!



Erica and Ethan Aubin

I have been working for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. I'm a Forest and Park Supervisor in Urban Parks. I am really having a blast. No burns, but lots of fun equipment to try out! My hoisting license is the next goal!

Leaving Ann Arbor is of course hard for anyone, but the move to Boston seems to be working out! The only downside was that I didn't get to wear any of my MSU t-shirts around town this year! Go Green!!!

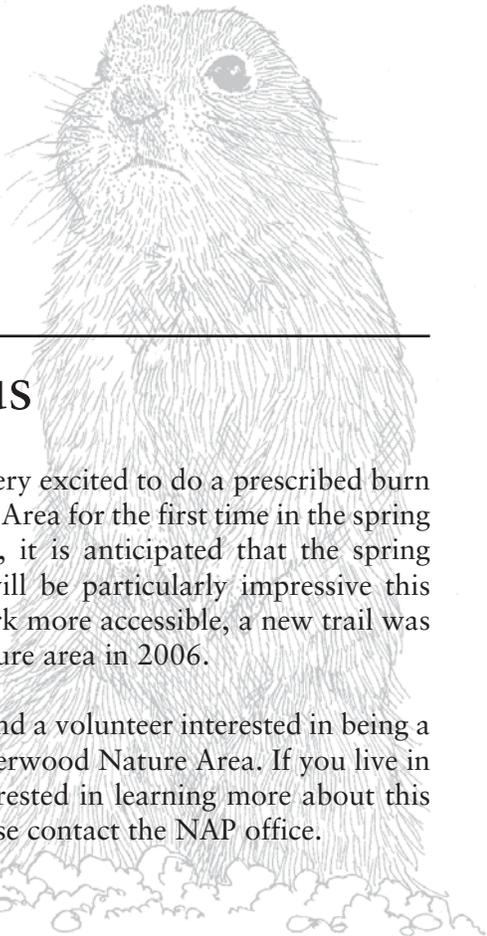
Park Focus

continued from page 1

The NAP crew was very excited to do a prescribed burn at Riverwood Nature Area for the first time in the spring of 2008. As a result, it is anticipated that the spring wildflower display will be particularly impressive this year. To make the park more accessible, a new trail was established in the nature area in 2006.

NAP would love to find a volunteer interested in being a Park Steward for Riverwood Nature Area. If you live in the area and are interested in learning more about this fun opportunity, please contact the NAP office.

Happy Spring!



Natural Area Preservation's 11th Annual Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day!

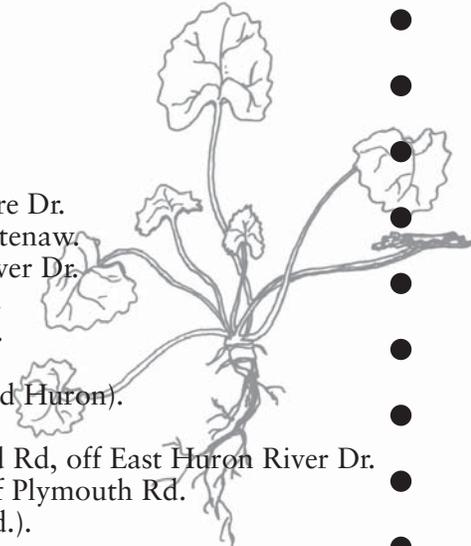
Saturday, April 25th

Weedout: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Barbeque: 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at LSNC

Choose from the following locations to pull garlic mustard:

- Argo Nature Area - Meet in parking lot north of Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Dr.
- Berkshire Park - Meet at the end of Exmoore Rd off of Glenwood north of Washtenaw.
- Bird Hills Nature Area - Meet at the park entrance on Bird Rd, west of Huron River Dr.
- Bluffs Nature Area - Meet in front of the Park Steward's house at 236 Sunset Rd.
- Cedar Bend Nature Area - Meet at the Island Park parking lot at end of Island Dr.
- Eberwhite Woods - Meet in the Eberwhite Elementary parking lot.
- Hannah Nature Area - Meet at the end of Bath St, west of 7th (between Miller and Huron).
- Huron Hills Golf Course Woods - Meet on Hunting Valley off Provincial Dr.
- Huron Parkway Nature Area - Meet at the Park Steward's house: 3470 Woodland Rd, off East Huron River Dr.
- Leslie Woods - Meet at the park entrance at the north end of Upland Dr, north of Plymouth Rd.
- Leslie Science and Nature Center - Meet at the LSNC parking lot (1831 Traver Rd.).
- Miller Woods - Meet at the Arborview Blvd entrance, just east of Wildwood Ave.
- Redbud Nature Area - Meet at park entrance at intersection of Parkwood Ave and Jeanne St.
- Stapp - Meet at the Traverwood Branch Library in the parking lot nearest the park.
- Sunset Brooks Nature Area - Meet at park entrance on Sunset Rd, at the end of Brooks St.



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