

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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Park Focus: Earhart, Earhart West, Glazier Hill, and Glacier Highlands

Katie Carlisle
Park Steward Coordinator

You may know one or two of Ann Arbor's natural areas, or maybe ten or more, but did you know there are over 80 of them? Our natural areas range in size from over 150 acres to as small as an acre or less. A Park Steward recently told me that he lived a couple of blocks away from his neighborhood park for ten years before exploring it.

My challenge to you is to find a new park or natural area, and take some time to get to know it. It might not be as large as some parks, and all are in different stages of restoration, but I'm sure you'll find something to appreciate. I did just that recently while exploring some small neighborhood natural areas around Ann Arbor: Earhart, Earhart West, Glazier Hill, and Glacier Highlands.

Earhart Park

Earhart is located on the west side of Earhart Road between Geddes Road and Glazier Way. It is approachable by foot (no parking) and recognizable by a sign on the East side of the natural area. At first, one will notice that there are no paths going into the nature area. When Earhart was first acquired by the Parks Recreation before 1980, there was a wood-chipped trail that left from Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary



School and made a loop around the pond. This trail, including its lookout points, and the rest of the property, was used by the school for field trips.

Nowadays, this path is no longer evident. This didn't stop me from exploring, however. It was a nice change to choose where I wanted to traverse, instead of following a predetermined route. This set the tone for my walks throughout the day by encouraging me to be more observant of what lay ahead.

Speaking of observations, I could hear many birds enjoying the day. The wind was blowing and the trees were swaying. A population of frogs live in the pond and surrounding marsh within the park. Of all the natural areas I visited, Earhart was highest on the scale of habitat quality and plant composition.

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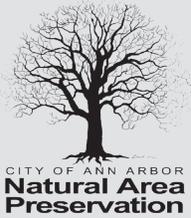
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A unit of the City of Ann Arbor
Community Services Area,
Parks and Recreation Services.

*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.*

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

Time to Learn Some New Songs

David Borneman, Deputy Manager for Volunteerism and NAP

I started playing the guitar in college, many years ago. I even took lessons for a year, which gave me much greater focus than me just banging out chords on my own. In that time, I learned a few good songs that I really loved to play. But then my interests changed, as they do when you're in college. I'd set my guitar aside for a few days, or weeks, or months. When I did finally pick it up again, I'd have to start from scratch, re-building the calluses on my fingers, re-learning those same songs I once knew. Unfortunately, that's been my pattern with the guitar ever since college. I'd sometimes go for years without touching it. Then I'd pick it up and re-learn those same old songs again. But I've been better about that the past five years. I've actually stuck with it, and I've been able to finally learn those old songs pretty well. The only problem is that they're the same old songs I've been playing for the past three decades! And even though they're still great songs, I think it is time for a change, for something new. So now I'm learning new songs. Stretching myself. Growing. Trying something new. Getting out of my rut. And it feels good! I'm finding a new love for the guitar that I haven't felt for many years.

How about you? Are you ready for a change? Maybe you've been visiting the same parks for many years, going to the same workdays, doing the same activities. Oh, those are still fine parks to visit and activities to do. But maybe it's time for a change, or at least an addition to that routine. Maybe it's time to venture out to a different one of Ann Arbor's 158 city parks and help at a workday there. Or maybe it's time to try something completely new and get involved in one of our wildlife inventories. Help with the breeding bird survey, or come to our first ever BioBlitz at the Leslie Science and Nature Center/Black Pond Woods. Or maybe it's time to step up and take on the responsibilities of being a Park Steward in your favorite natural area. Whatever your interest, this is your invitation – and nudge – to take a chance and try something new at NAP!

I bet you'll be happy if you do. It's too easy to stick with the familiar, the tried and true, the comfortable. The same path through the same woods, at the same time of day. Although there's something therapeutic about that ritual, with definite benefits, there are also benefits of reawakening your senses, taking in different sights and sounds that are outside of our usual routine. Sometimes we have greater appreciation for natural beauty at a new park than at our usual destinations.

So how about it, ready for a change? Ready to learn some new songs? Check out the NAP calendar on pages 4-5 for some new opportunities. If nothing there grabs you, contact the office at 734.794.6627 to discuss other ways we can help you stretch and grow!

Modern Day Treasure Hunting In Our Natural Areas

Becky Gajewski, Stewardship Specialist

Have you ever wanted to go on a treasure hunt? You don't have to venture off to an exotic beach or a dangerous jungle – you can experience the fun of a treasure hunt right in your neighborhood park or natural area! All you need to play is an internet connection and a GPS or smartphone, and you can join in the global game of geocaching.

Geocaching (*JEE-oh-CASH-ing*) is a treasure-hunting game that is played using a handheld GPS receiver or a geocaching app. Participants try to find “caches,” containers filled with prizes or tradable items, which are hidden on public lands. Coordinates to the caches and hints for where to find them are posted online at www.geocaching.com. All you need to do is put those coordinates into your GPS, and you're ready to start the hunt!



Widely available GPS units helped popularize geocaching

Caches are hidden in many different ways and in a variety of different containers. Some are hidden on the ground under logs and branches, while others are hung in trees. The containers range in size from large ammunition boxes and plastic jugs to tiny magnetic capsules that may be disguised to look like something innocent, like a nut and bolt. As a general rule, caches are not buried. All caches are rated on the geocaching website according to how difficult they are to locate. More difficult caches may be in hard-to-find containers, or may require you to travel over rough terrain to find them.

Once you discover a geocache, open it up to see what's inside! All geocaches will contain a logbook for you to sign, and the larger caches often contain small items that you can take as a prize. If you take something from a geocache, however, you must replace it with another item. Some caches will contain special items called travel bugs or geocoins, and these are not meant to be kept. Each travel bug or geocoin has a special tracking number on it, giving them the nickname of “trackables.” The tracking number is logged into the geocaching website, where you can see where the trackable has been. Some trackables have traveled thousands of miles! If you find a trackable, you can take it to another geocache to help it along its journey.

You can also get involved with geocaching by hiding a cache yourself. If you would like to hide a geocache in one of Ann Arbor's parks, please visit NAP's website and fill out an application for a geocaching permit. We will review the cache location you propose in order to make sure it is not within a sensitive habitat that could be damaged by repeated foot traffic. We will also make sure it's not within one of our prescribed burn units, where the container could be damaged by fire.

Geocaching has grown into a worldwide phenomenon since the first cache was hidden in May of 2000. Today, there are over 2.8 million geocaches hidden around the world, and 15 million geocachers. There are over 300 geocaches hidden just within 5 miles of Ann Arbor! If you decide to give geocaching a try, please be mindful of our natural areas as you do so. Don't leave any trash behind, and try not to trample the vegetation. Above all, enjoy yourself while you are on your treasure hunt! Take pictures of the things you discover in our parks, and feel free to share them with us. You may find that the game of geocaching offers many rewards besides the ones hidden in the containers.

NAPpenings

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to the groups who volunteered with NAP recently. We could not make such a difference without you: UM Delta Sigma Phi, Temple Beth Emeth, EMU GREEN Club, EMU Greek Life, Greenhills Schools, Ann Arbor MSU Spartan Alumni Association, SBD North American, Fresh Start Clubhouse, St. Pauls Lutheran Church, Community High School, Huron High School, Canton Preparatory High School, King Elementary School, Cub Scout pack 131 and U of M Circle K Environment Committee.

WELCOME, NEW PARK STEWARDS!

Mark Lee - Hollywood Park



NAP

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

Summer
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.

JUNE

Nature Walk with Ann Arbor District Library Thursday, June 2, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Black Pond Woods Nature Area

Join us for a walk through Black Pond Woods Nature Area, led by NAP staff in partnership with AADL. The site is a 34-acre woodland with a pond and wetlands, located north of Leslie Science and Nature Center. We'll meet in the parking lot at 1831 Traver Road. Wear comfortable shoes and bring water and bug spray if desired.

Bird Walk Saturday, June 4, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Wheeler Service Center

The Wheeler Service Center is the only place within the city where Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks nest. Please come prepared to walk in fields of tall grass. Bring binoculars if you have them, but they are not necessary. Use the Platt Road entrance and look for us in the small parking lot at the first turnoff on the right.

Stewardship Workday National Trails Day Saturday, June 4, 9 a.m. to Noon Bird Hills Nature Area

The 3 miles of trails in Bird Hills give some lovely views of the Huron River. Join us at the Bird Road entrance on the north side of this park, west of Huron River Drive. There is limited parking at the entrance, but more is available nearby, near the dam in Barton Nature Area.

Stewardship Workday National Trails Day Saturday, June 4, 1 to 4 p.m. Ruthven Nature Area

There's a new trail at this park! Help maintain it and remove invasive plants. Please meet at the Gallup boat launch parking lot, on the SE corner of Huron Parkway and Geddes Road.

Stewardship Workday Sunday, June 5, 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 trails and remove invasive garlic mustard plants. This is a great park for families to enjoy a day outdoors. Please meet at the Tibbits Court entrance to the park.

**Mayor's Green Fair
Friday, June 10, 6 to 9 p.m.
Main Street between Huron St. & William St.**
The City of Ann Arbor Mayor's office is hosting the 16th annual Mayor's Green Fair to celebrate our community's environmental leadership as exhibited by citizens, nonprofits, government and businesses. Ann Arbor's downtown Main Street will be closed to car traffic between Huron and William Streets. Visit us at NAP's table.

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.

Tuesday, June 14, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

The Stewardship Network!

Join staff and representatives of the Huron-Arbor Cluster for a lively discussion of ongoing programs and new opportunities at the Stewardship Network. Topics will range from the Garlic Mustard Challenge to new TSN staff in Clusters across the Great Lakes and New England!

Tuesday, July 12, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Establishing a Rain Garden

Rain gardens are shallow gardens that collect rain water before it enters the municipal stormwater pipe system. Rain gardens alleviate flooding, recharge the ground water supply, filter water before it enters local rivers, provide habitat for wildlife, and enhance the beauty of yards and communities. Join us discuss how you can incorporate rain gardens into your own landscapes.

Tuesday, August 9, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Forest Health

Our woods are under attack - You may know all about Emerald Ash Borer, but can you identify signs of Oak Wilt or other tree pests? Bring your questions and join us for a discussion about threats to urban forests.

**Stewardship Workday
National Get Outdoors Day
Saturday, June 11, 9 a.m. to Noon
Bluffs Nature Area**

Come on out for Get Outdoors Day! Volunteers are needed to remove invasive plants that are not food for wildlife and that crowd out native wildflowers. Meet at the park entrance on Sunset Road.

**Stewardship Workday
National Get Outdoors Day
Saturday, June 11, 1 to 4 p.m.
Kuebler Langford Nature Area**

Join families across the country and get outdoors on National Get Outdoors Day. Volunteers will help restore this site by removing spotted knapweed and other invasive plant species, making more room for the rich diversity of wildflowers. Meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive.

**BioBlitz with NAP and
Leslie Science & Nature Center
Sunday, June 12 - Friday, June 17
Black Pond Woods**

Make history and celebrate LSNC's 30th Anniversary during our first-ever BioBlitz! Participants will assist local experts by helping to identify and record data about trees, plants, insects, birds, and more. Due to the small size of each event, interested participants are required to pre-register at www.lesliesnc.org or call 734.997.1553.

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, June 18, 9 a.m. to Noon
Argo Nature Area**

Bring family and friends out to remove invasive weeds, opening space for tree seedlings and native wildflowers. Owls and hawks nest in the woods here. Meet in the parking lot north of the Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Drive.

**Stewardship Workday
Native Gardening
Saturday, June 25, 9 a.m. to Noon
Furstenberg Nature Area, Native Garden**
Park Steward and Master Gardener Aunita Erskine will lead this workday, maintaining the Native Garden at this park. The Garden is a living demonstration of the beauty of native wildflowers. Please meet in the parking lot off of Fuller Road.

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, June 25, 9 a.m. to Noon
Furstenberg Nature Area**

This park along the river has lots of great ecological diversity, including restored prairie and oak savanna. Help is needed to protect it from invasive weeds that crowd out natives and provide little food for wildlife. Please meet in the parking lot off of Fuller Road.

**JULY
Nature Walk with Ann Arbor District Library
Thursday July 7, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Barton Nature Area**

Barton Nature Area is a 102-acre park located along the Huron River. The main part of the park is known as the oxbow, and contains dry prairie, wet meadow, mesic forest, old field, and other unique ecosystems. Join us for nature walk led in collaboration between AADL and NAP. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

**Stewardship Workday
Sunday, July 10, 9 a.m. to Noon
Barton Nature Area**

Restoration work here has brought back a grassland in this park, but it is being invaded by exotic weed species. Volunteers will help protect the park's diversity by removing them. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

**Huron River Day
Sunday, July 10, Noon to 4 p.m.
Gallup Park**

This event is full of fun, free, family oriented activities including river exhibits, live music, animals, food vendors, a guided canoe trip, and more! For more information visit www.a2gov.org/HRD or call 734.662.9319.

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, July 30, 9 a.m. to Noon
Furstenberg Nature Area**

This park along the river has high ecological diversity, including restored prairie and oak savanna. Help is needed to protect it from invasive weeds that crowd out natives and provide little food for wildlife. Please meet in the parking lot off of Fuller Road.

**Stewardship Workday
Native Gardening
Saturday, July 30, 9 a.m. to Noon
Furstenberg Nature Area, Native Garden**
Park Steward and Master Gardener Aunita Erskine will lead this workday, weeding and maintaining the Native Garden at this park. The Garden is a living example of how native plants can be used in landscaping. Please meet in the parking lot off of Fuller Road.

**Stewardship Workday
Sunday, July 31, 9 a.m. to Noon
Bandemer Nature Area**

A patch of dry prairie lines the Border-To-Border Trail in this park along the river, with many plants that are uncommon in our area. Help maintain this patch of special habitat by hand-pulling exotic weeds. Please meet at the south end of the park, in the parking lot off Lake Shore Drive (via Main Street).

**AUGUST
Nature Walk with Ann Arbor District Library
Thursday August 4, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Kuebler Langford Nature Area**

This nature walk is a collaboration between the AADL and NAP and is one of a series that take place each month throughout the summer and fall. For this one, we will meet in the parking lot on the western shoulder of Huron River Drive. Wear comfortable clothes and bring water and bug spray if desired. Some of the AADL science tools will be available for use during the walk, too!

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, August 6, 9 a.m. to Noon
Kuebler Langford Nature Area**

What was once a construction yard for M-14 is now a natural grassland. Exotic invasive plants are invading this open habitat, and volunteer help is needed to remove them. Please meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive.

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, August 6, 1 to 4 p.m.
Mary Beth Doyle Park**

Walk along Malletts Creek, watch the birds at the pond, or play a game of disc golf – no matter what you're doing in this park, you're sure to see the effects of restoration work. Help continue the effort by removing trash and invasive weeds in this park. Please meet at the end of Verle Road, two blocks west of Platt Road.

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, August 13, 9 a.m. to Noon
Olson Park**

This park has come a long way from its past as a gravel quarry. Volunteers are needed to hand-pull invasive weeds where they are invading open meadows. Please meet at the entrance on Dhu Varren Road, just east of Pontiac Trail.

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, August 20, 9 a.m. to Noon
Marshall Nature Area**

Volunteers are needed to help remove invasive plant species that are invading the open woodlands and meadows here. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.

**Stewardship Workday
Saturday, August 27, 9 a.m. to Noon
Barton Nature Area**

This riverside park has an open old field habitat that is used by American woodcock, field sparrows, and other breeding birds. Help pull invasive species in these open grasslands, creating more space for native grasses and wildflowers. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

Earhart Continued from page 1

In the spring, one might find rue anemone blooming here, a native perennial wildflower with small white to pale pink flowers. The park also contains a swamp white oak, an uncommon tree that has become rarer in this region with the disappearance of wetlands.

Earhart West Park

Earhart West is the smallest of the featured parks at 0.9 acres. It is nestled in a lovely neighborhood between a few houses on Fox Hunt Drive, off of Green Road. It's very appealing from the sidewalk with a grassy area that includes a picnic table for a nice sunny afternoon lunch. There is a small stream running through the natural area which provides a source of water to animals. It is a good mix of shrubs, trees, and wildflowers but the diversity of plants is low, and almost half of the species are invasive. Still, it gives the neighborhood and passersby some contact with nature.

Glazier Hill Park

Glazier Hill may be the least visited of these natural areas. The entrance is somewhat hidden between two houses just before the cul-de-sac on Dobson. It doesn't get many human visitors, but deer have made the park their own. I spotted at least four of them when I walked in to their resting place. There are no obvious human paths in Glazier Hill, but there are many game trails weaving through the honeysuckle. Over a hundred different native plant species have been found in Glazier Hill, including the fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), which is found in only a few sites within Ann Arbor.

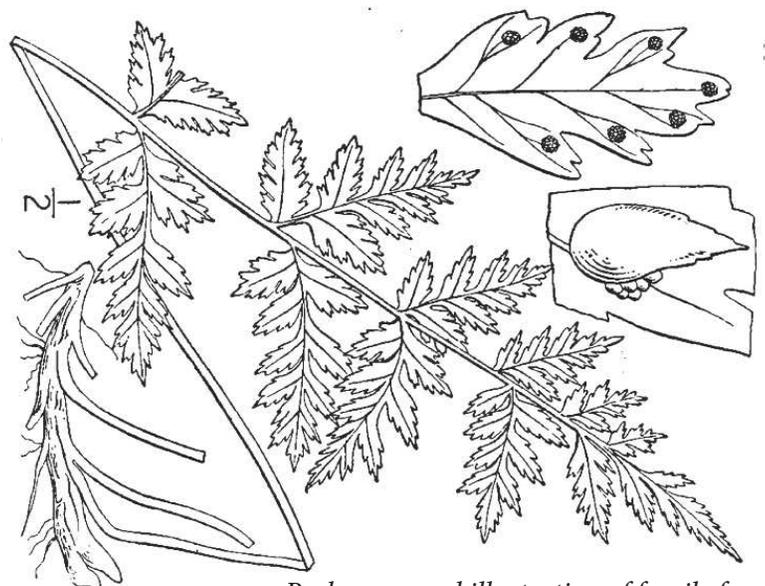
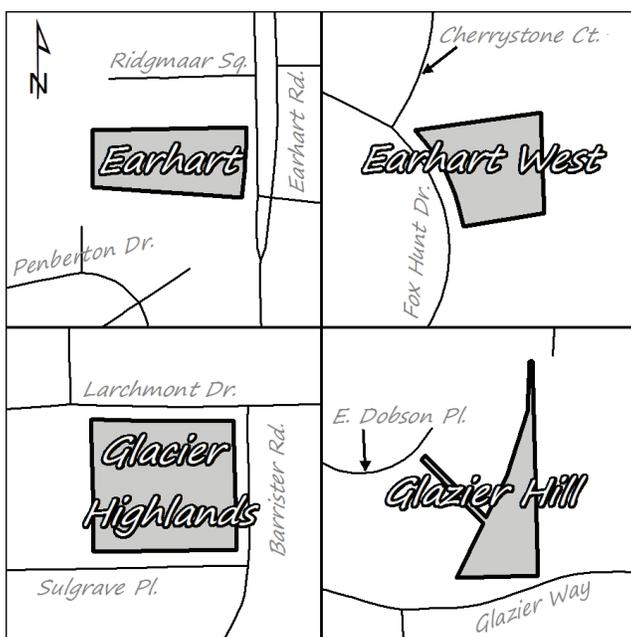
Glacier Highlands Park

Glacier Highlands is unique in the sense that it's mostly a developed park with a section of natural area in the center. It's a great balance of open space, developed land, and natural area in the middle of a lovely neighborhood. I picked a spot in the open field to observe my surroundings while kids played basketball on the court and a mom and daughter played on the park's playground. Glacier Highlands is home to the huge oak trees, characteristic of the city of Ann Arbor. On a hot summer day, I can imagine the open spaces full of neighbors having a nice picnic or playing Frisbee while others play volleyball, grill at the picnic table, or shoot hoops.

These are a few examples of natural areas found within Ann Arbor's neighborhoods. I can imagine that they provide wonderful natural playgrounds for kids and families to explore birds in trees, plants in wetlands, or bugs under logs. I hope you will be inspired to get outside and explore the nature retreat in your own neighborhood.



Oak trees along a path in Glacier Highlands.



Park maps and illustration of fragile fern.

STAFF UPDATES



MIKE HAHN - STEWARDSHIP SPECIALIST

Life takes unexpected twists and turns sometimes. This past February, Mike was in a serious sledding accident that resulted in nerve and ligament damage. Considering the severity of his accident, he is lucky not to have suffered any broken bones or permanent injuries. His healing process is expected to take the better part of a year and may involve multiple surgeries, but fortunately he will be able to walk again. While his body is healing, you won't see him out in the field as much, but he will still remain in his role as Stewardship Specialist, managing many of the behind the scenes tasks at NAP. We invite you to send your well wishes to MHahn@a2gov.org.

WELCOME . . .



ERIN TODD - FIELD CREW

I recently graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.S. in Environmental Science and a minor in Plant Biology. I look forward to gaining hands-on experience, supporting diverse and resilient natural areas in the city I've called home for almost 4 years. Before joining the crew, I worked as an intern for Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum and led many volunteer workdays. I am excited to continue meeting more enthusiastic and dedicated Ann Arbor community members and NAP's amazing volunteer base!



JULIET BERGER - ORNITHOLOGIST

I'm a lifelong birder, so I am thrilled to join the NAP staff as the new Ornithologist. With my backgrounds in both social work and science, I operate at the nexus of birding, bird science, and community organization. I have been President of Washtenaw Audubon Society for two years, and I love to lead bird walks and answer bird-related questions. I am a coach for Feathered Friends, a Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad event about birds, and I am a longtime NAP Breeding Bird Survey volunteer. I am excited to work with all the amazing NAP volunteers and staff.



KATIE CARLISLE - PARK STEWARD COORDINATOR

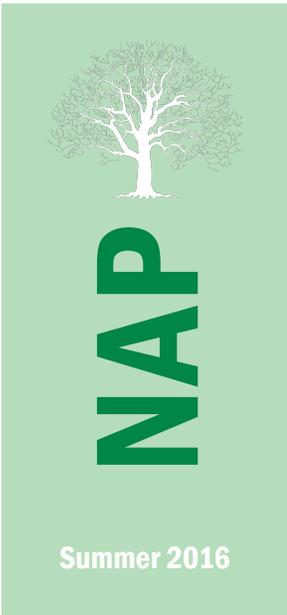
With a strong passion for the natural world and a diverse science background, I'm excited to be working with NAP as your new Park Steward Coordinator. I recently relocated back to Michigan from the Pacific Northwest where I was working as an outdoor environmental educator near Seattle and attended school at Boise State University. I am eager to work alongside all the dedicated volunteers and stewards in Ann Arbor's natural areas.



SAMANTHA "SAM" DAVIS - FIELD CREW

I recently graduated from U of M with a B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Previously, I worked for the Grand Traverse Conservation District and the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. I love being outdoors and working to restore our natural ecosystems. I look forward to becoming even more involved in ecological restoration by joining the conservation crew here at NAP. I am very excited to work with all the other great staff and volunteers that keep our parks enjoyable for everyone!

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.



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NAP's Apps of Interest - Bird apps

George Hammond, Inventory and Outreach Assistant

Since 1990, 235 species of birds have been observed in Ann Arbor's parks! Here are a couple of great tools that can help you identify birds you see, record what you saw, and share it with NAP and the world.

The Merlin app poses a few questions about where you are and what you are seeing or hearing, and presents a list of common bird species that match your description. The app includes photos, information and songs for each species. <http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

eBird Mobile lets you store and share your observations using the amazing eBird database. The eBird app and website are also great tools for learning where to find different bird species, wherever you are. <http://help.ebird.org/customer/en/portal/articles/1848031-ebird-mobile-apps-overview>

Birding is a great way to get outside and enjoy our parks and natural areas, and these apps will help you have more fun in this pursuit.

