

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

NAP's mission is to protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural areas and foster an environmental ethic within the community.



Erythronium spp.

Park Focus: Mary Beth Doyle Park

Ethan Glassman, Conservation Crew Leader

The forest floor at Mary Beth Doyle is carpeted in trout lilies (*Erythronium spp.*), their mottled purple-green leaves like little flags announcing the long-awaited arrival of spring. As temperatures warm and days lengthen, a cavalcade of blooms will follow in short succession, the nodding yellow and white flowers of trout lily and trillium species. Tussocks of sedges (*Carex spp.*) surround seasonally wet, low-lying areas; mosses cover downed ash trees, once a prominent member of this

Ferns spring up in pockets, and sedges serve as vital host plants for countless native insect species.

forest community; dappled sunlight filters through oak (*Quercus spp.*) and hickory (*Carya spp.*) canopies, with blue-beech (*Carpinus caroliniana*) and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) making up the understory.

The park property, formerly known as “Brown Park,” was acquired by the city in the early 1970s, and in 2006 was formally named in memory of prominent local environmental advocate, Mary Beth Doyle, who passed away in 2004. Doyle’s career included pivotal roles with the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and Ann Arbor’s Ecology Center. Also in 2006, the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office and the City of Ann Arbor completed construction of a 12-acre wetland at the park, to collect

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PARKLAND ACQUISITION: MARY BETH DOYLE PARK

APPLICATION

February 2020. The City begins consideration of an application for possible purchase of the 3.77-acre site adjacent to Mary Beth Doyle Park.

EVALUATION

Park staff coordinate evaluation of the site:

- Input from City Planning Department
- Expertise from NAP
- Feedback from Park Planners

PARKS STAFF REPORT

Parks staff compile a report for the Parks Advisory Commission (PAC). Part of the report uses a scoring matrix to rate the site. This site scored in the 96th percentile of all site applications on record.

PAC REVIEW

Over the course of two meetings, PAC examines the report and discusses the application. After deliberation, PAC issues the recommendation to City Council to purchase the site.

COUNCIL VOTES

February 2021. City Council review the recommendation and unanimously authorize purchase of the site.

PURCHASE

August 2021. Staff complete due diligence and the City closes on the \$1.48M purchase—increasing the size of Mary Beth Doyle to 85.17 acres and the City’s total parkland to a staggering 2,210 acres.

Mary Beth Doyle Park

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storm water runoff. This slows the flow of water into Mallets Creek—a tributary of the Huron River—that runs along the northern edge of the park.

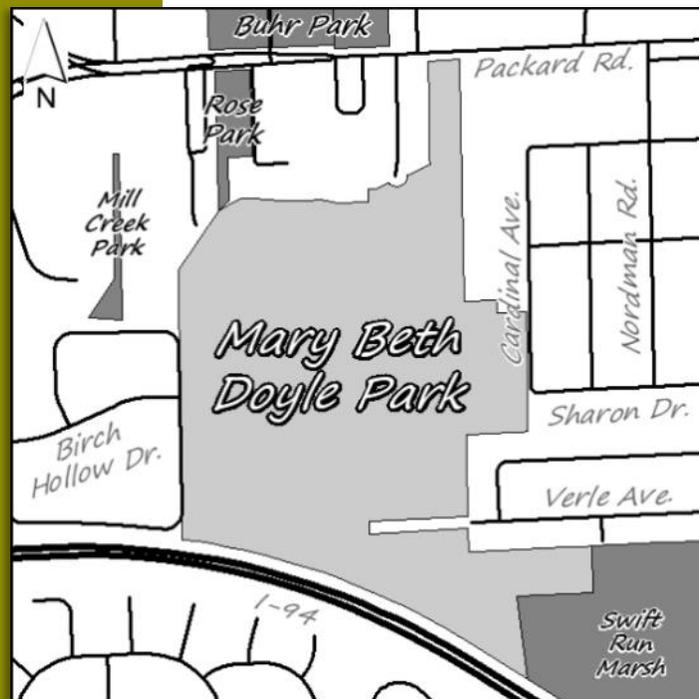
Moist, nutrient-rich soils in the northern part of the park make up the historic Mallets Creek floodplain, and are host to native species such as sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) and swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*). Ferns spring up in pockets, and sedges serve as vital host plants for countless native insect species. As summer approaches, green dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*), one of southeast Michigan’s more bizarre-looking wildflowers blooms.

The Michigan Association of Country Drain Commissioners published an in-depth article about the award-winning stormwater innovations at the park. Learn more at tinyurl.com/MACDC-MBD

Low, seasonally-wet areas known as vernal pools dot the landscape at the park. Filled by snowmelt and early rains, vernal pools often dry up by mid-summer, but during the spring, they serve as breeding grounds for amphibians. While no amphibian species have been documented breeding in these particular pools, they are known to host fairy shrimp—probably *Eubranchipus vernalis*—an important indicator species for vernal pool health. The tiny, pink crustaceans

(think sea-monkeys), swim upside-down around vernal pools, wriggling their 11 pairs of legs, feeding on little bits of organic matter. In the few weeks between when they hatch, mate, lay their eggs, and die, fairy shrimp serve as an important food source for other vernal pool dwellers and forest inhabitants. Their eggs survive over

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Mary Beth Doyle Park

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winter buried in the leaf litter at the bottom of vernal pools, in a state of dormancy awaiting spring. Moving south, following a slight rise in elevation, the forest transitions from floodplain forest into an oak-hickory woodland. Consistent efforts from volunteers and conservation crews throughout the years have been able to keep out encroaching invasive shrubs, freeing up the understory for an exceptional diversity of native trees and shrubs. Overhead, the calls of Downy Woodpeckers (*Picoides pubescens*), Red-bellied Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes carolinus*), and White-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta carolinensis*) can be heard, feasting on insects in the branches above.

Conservation efforts are ongoing to maintain the health of this diverse ecosystem. Through volunteer workdays and the dedicated work of park stewards and NAP staff, Mary Beth Doyle has been preserved as one of the City's highest-quality nature areas. Spring is the best time of year to explore this park, with wildflowers in full bloom. Hope to see you out there soon!

Editor's note: In the Summer 2008 issue of NAP News, Dana Novak wrote in her Park Focus article about the major stormwater project, and activist Mary Beth Doyle. Find it at tinyurl.com/NAPSum08



Blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*)

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Snapshots from our conservation crew while working in Ann Arbor Nature Areas.



Red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*)



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)



Dutchman's britches (*Dicentra cucullaria*)



Northern brown snake (*Storeria dekayi*)



Bumblebee (*Bombus* spp.)



Eastern newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*)

NAPPENINGS

New Park Stewards

Ellen Ward and Jim Young - Miller Nature Area

This couple who live near Miller Nature Area began exploring the park again during the pandemic and were pleased to see all of the restoration work there. They have both recently retired and are enjoying working with the other Miller stewards each week improving the park.

Thank you!

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

- Criteo
- EMU Beta Alpha Psi Accounting Club
- UM Chi Psi
- UM Ross Section 4
- UM Running Club
- UM Sigma Nu
- UM Tau Beta Pi

Staff Updates

Farewell...



KATHRYN BEAUCHAMP Workday Coordinator

I am very grateful for my time spent at NAP and have learned so much over the months I've spent working here. The passion and hard work from NAP staff

and volunteers continues to impress and inspire me. Though I'll be starting a new chapter at the State of Michigan, I will take with me the lessons I learned here throughout the rest of my career. Looking forward to coming back for a few volunteer workdays!

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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

EVENTS

May Volunteer Workdays

Find full details at a2gov.org/NAPEvents

- Huron Parkway Nature Area 5/7
- Molin Nature Area 5/7
- Fuller Park 5/14
- Argo Nature Area 5/14
- Bird Hills Nature Area 5/15
- Sunset Brooks Nature Area 5/21
- Cedar Bend Nature Area 5/21
- Marshall Nature Area 5/22
- Black Pond Woods Nature Area 5/22

Butterfly Survey Kickoff

Zoom meeting

Thursday, May 12, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Volunteers search for butterflies along a set route through a park in Ann Arbor, ideally six times from June through August. No experience in butterfly identification is necessary, though it is helpful. Register at tinyurl.com/ButterflyKickoff22.

Huron River Day

Gallup Park

Sunday, May 15

Noon to 4 p.m.

Enjoy the beautiful Huron River with free family-friendly activities. Learn, explore and have fun celebrating Ann Arbor's freshwater with discounted boat rentals, children's activities, river exhibits, nature walks, music and local food. For more information visit a2gov.org/hrd.



Spring Nature Walk with AADL

Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area

Sunday, May 29, 1 to 2 p.m.

Nature walks are a collaboration between the Ann Arbor District Library and Natural Area Preservation. Some of AADL's Science Tools will be available for use at the walk! Registration is strongly encouraged so we can accommodate everyone! Register at tinyurl.com/ScarlettWalk052922.



Photos from April 2022

Thank you for joining us for volunteer workdays and nature walks!



ONDER PARK PUBLIC WORKDAY, APRIL 9



BLUFFS NATURE AREA PUBLIC WORKDAY, APRIL 16

UM Running Club, UM Chi Psi

FIND UPCOMING WORKDAYS AT [A2GOV.ORG/NAEVENTS](https://a2gov.org/naevents)





FOLKSTONE PARK PUBLIC WORKDAY, APRIL 23



MARY BETH DOYLE PARK NATURE WALK, APRIL 24



BIRD HILLS NATURE AREA PRIVATE WORKDAY, APRIL 26

Criteo

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