Volume 28, Number 6
July 2022

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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

Exploring Life in Dead Trees

Becky Hand, Stewardship Specialist

We occasionally get comments and questions at NAP about standing dead trees in our natural areas. Some people believe dead trees are unsightly and should be cut down. Some wonder why we don't remove them to make room for new growth. *What purpose could dead trees possibly serve?* The truth is that dead trees are a critical component of healthy ecosystems, and standing dead trees, often called "snags," provide many benefits that aren't always easy to see.

Dead Tamaracks, Michael Seabrook

Standing dead trees, also called "snags" are a critical component of healthy ecosystems.

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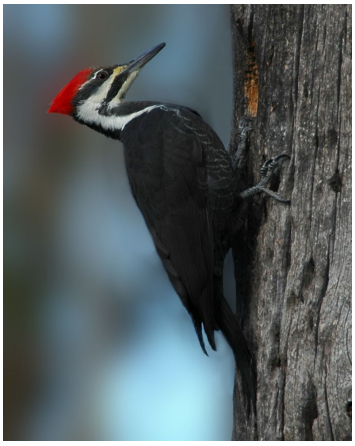

Pileated Woodpecker, Darlene Friedman

A safe place to rest and raise young

Although it may not look like it, dead trees are teeming with life! We don't cut down dead trees because they provide critical habitat for many species of wildlife that use snags for nesting, roosting, and perching. **Woodpeckers** excavate cavities in the soft, dead wood in order to build their nests. **Raccoons and owls** take advantage of dead trees for the structure they provide for nesting, seeking out existing cavities and broken tops of trees, which enables them to raise their young high above the forest floor to keep them safe from predators. Other species of birds, like **eagles and hawks**, perch on dead branches where they can get a clear view of their hunting grounds. **Bats** roost under loose bark and in cracks in the trunk. **Mourning cloak butterflies** spend the winter in crevices in bark before emerging in the spring.

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CITY OF ANN ARBOR Natural Area Preservation

Parks&Recreation CITY OF ANN ARBOR

Standing dead trees provide benefits to humans as well as wildlife

Snags host many mosquito-eating species, like purple martins and bats. These insectivores can eat hundreds or even thousands of mosquitos every night! Reducing mosquito populations helps to reduce the transmission of mosquito-borne illnesses like West Nile Virus to humans. Snags store more carbon than trees that have fallen. The process of decomposition releases carbon into the atmosphere, and atmospheric carbon is a main driver of climate change.

Snags decompose more slowly than logs on the ground, mainly because logs that are in contact with the soil take up more moisture and have more readily available nutrients, which allows decomposer organisms like fungi and microbes to more rapidly break down the wood. In contrast, standing snags remain drier and are more slowly colonized by organisms that break down wood, so they release their stored carbon much more gradually.

Dead Trees are Full of Life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

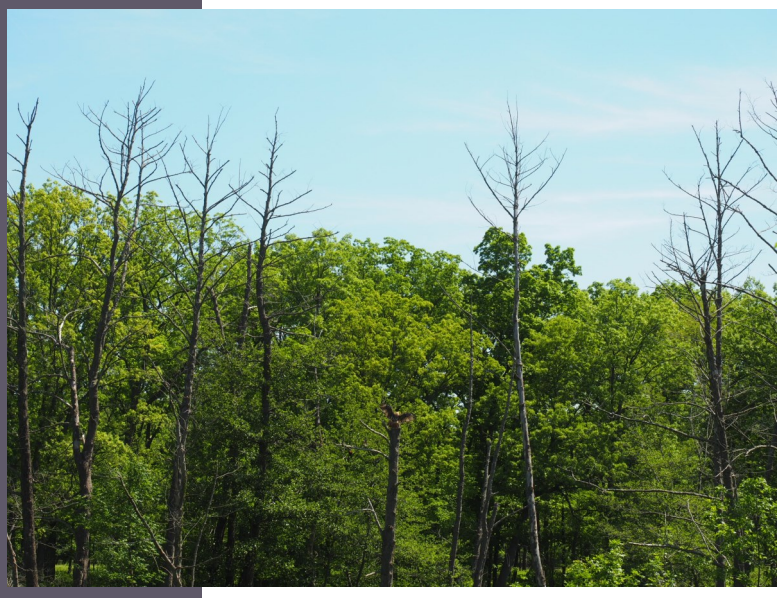
Raccoon Face, Thomas Bethell

A reliable place to find and store food

Snags are a very important source of food and food storage for wildlife. Many bird species eat insects that live under bark and in decaying wood. Snags become especially important in the winter, when snow covers the ground and makes it harder for birds to find food on the forest floor. Birds pick insects out of snags, some of which are pest species that can harm living trees if left unchecked. Other wildlife use the structure of snags to store food collected from elsewhere. Most commonly, **squirrels** use cavities in snags to store nuts for the winter, hiding their precious food away from other competitors. **Red squirrels** go a step farther and will wedge mushrooms they've collected into the crooks of branches, where they will dry out. The dried mushrooms can be added to the squirrel's food stores, where they will keep for many months.

NAP is committed to safety

Even though standing dead trees provide a tremendous benefit to forested ecosystems, NAP will remove them if they are a safety hazard. Sometimes dead trees fall across trails, or they may fall and get hung up in a living tree. If you notice a fallen tree blocking a trail, or a dead tree leaning over a trail, please let us know by calling our office at 734.794.6627, or by sending an email to NAP@a2gov.org. Please describe the location of the tree or mark it on a map if you can.



Can you spot the Red-tailed Hawk above? (answer on page 6)

Red-tailed Hawk at Gallup, Stew Nelson

NAPPENINGS

Thank you!

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

- Ann Arbor Open 6th Graders
- Community High School Students and Forum Leaders
- Emerson School 7th and 8th Graders
- Stantec Architecture Ann Arbor and Detroit offices
- Sunset Brooks Neighborhood Association
- UM Treasurer's Office
- Youth Volunteer Corps

Staff Updates

Welcome...

Leah Jones

Outreach Assistant

NAP is excited to welcome a new member to the Outreach Team! She'll be helping with various Outreach tasks, and will be especially helpful when other Outreach Team members go on their breaks. She just completed a BS in Anthropology from Eastern Michigan University and is a parent to three kids. She enjoys fishing and photography in her spare time. Welcome, Leah!

Volunteer Appreciation Event

Mark your calendars! A fun, family-friendly event to celebrate *you* is coming up on September 16 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Island Park Shelter B. Past volunteers, future volunteers, friends, and family are all welcome. Register at tinyurl.com/NAPappreciation

EVENTS

July-August Volunteer Workdays

Find full details at a2gov.org/NAPEvents

- Bluffs Nature Area 7/9
- Olson Park 7/10
- Furstenberg Nature Area 7/23
- Ruthven Nature Area 7/23
- Bird Hills Nature Area 7/30
- Brokaw Nature Area 7/30
- Kuebler Langford 8/7
- Bandemer Park 8/13
- Olson Park 8/13
- Gallup Park 8/20
- Barton Nature Area 8/27

Summer Nature Walks

Nature walks are a collaboration between the Ann Arbor District Library and Natural Area Preservation. Some of AADL's Science Tools will be available to admire! Registration is strongly encouraged so we can accommodate everyone.

Nature Walk at Buttonbush Nature Area
Sunday, July 31, 1 to 2 p.m.

This natural area was named for the large buttonbush swamp. Buttonbush is a 6-12 ft. native shrub with long-lasting, unique ball-shaped flowers. Sometimes resembling pincushions, the one-inch blossoms can be white or pale pink. Meet at the entrance at the end of Hickory Point Drive (map: tinyurl.com/ButtonbushHickoryPoint). Register at tinyurl.com/ButtonbushWalk073122

Nature Walk at Sunset Brooks Nature Area
Sunday, August 28, 1 to 2 p.m.

Join a nature walk through the rolling woods and wetlands of Sunset Brooks. Though small, this park has a number of interesting and uncommon species within. Remember to bring your binoculars, as you may encounter some of the birds which call this park home. Meet at the park entrance on Sunset Road, at the end of Brooks Street (map: tinyurl.com/SunsetBrooksSunset). Register at tinyurl.com/SunsetWalk082822.

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

Parks&Recreation CITY OF ANN ARBOR

CITY OF ANN ARBOR Natural Area Preservation

Community High School's Spring Day of Service

Thank you to the student body, Forum Leaders, and all the other volunteers who came out on May 5 to volunteer at several natural areas around the city!

COMMUNITY HIGH AT MILLER NATURE AREA

COMMUNITY HIGH AT WEST PARK

Community High School's Spring Day of Service

Thank you to the student body, Forum Leaders, and all the other volunteers who came out on May 5 to volunteer at several natural areas around the city!

COMMUNITY HIGH AT BLUFFS

COMMUNITY HIGH WITH GIVE365 AT RIVERSIDE PARK

SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT FROM MIKE TO THE CHS FORUMS AT BLUFFS

Thank you everyone for all your hard work. Pictured is the winning group from our pulling contest!

COMMUNITY HIGH AT FULLER PARK

OLSON PARK PRIVATE WORKDAY JUNE 6

Emerson School

SCARLETT MITCHELL NATURE WALK, MAY 29

Can you find the red -tailed hawk?
Answer from page 2