



NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION NEWS – PRINTABLE VERSION
VOLUME 27, NUMBER 2 – OCTOBER 2021
A2GOV.ORG/NAP – NAP@A2GOV.ORG – 734.794.6627

Protecting and restoring Ann Arbor's natural areas and fostering an environmental ethic within the community.

In this issue:

- [Coordinator's Corner: Fresh Perspectives](#)
- [NAPpenings](#)
- [Thank you!](#)
- [Staff Updates](#)
- [Events](#)



Students from Concordia University receiving instruction at Ruthven Nature Area in August.

Coordinator's Corner: Fresh Perspectives

Careful readers may have noticed a slight change in the wording of NAP's mission statement recently, starting with last month's issue of this newsletter. We've changed from "To protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural areas, and to foster an environmental ethic among its citizens" to "To protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural areas, and to foster an environmental ethic within the community." (Italics added to highlight the change)

Not a big change, perhaps, but an important one. Like a lot of folks these days, we're checking ourselves to ensure that our language, our messaging, and our culture, are as inclusive as possible. Ann Arbor is a diverse community. Many people with many different backgrounds use and enjoy our parks. We hope all of them have a sense of stewardship for our natural areas, and we at NAP want to be available to help all of them develop that environmental ethic, whether or not they are actually "citizens" of Ann Arbor, or the U.S. That only makes sense. And we've always felt that way. But our language didn't say that, so perhaps it wasn't clear to everyone. Hopefully this will help to clarify our mission.

It's appropriate that we re-visit these things occasionally. Old language and old habits that we take for granted should be re-examined with a fresh perspective every so often. It may be difficult for those of us who have been looking at things the same way for many years to see them any differently. That's why we need new eyes, from a diverse audience, to help us see our blind spots.

I had the opportunity to benefit from such new insights recently while lecturing to a UM class on ecological restoration. I gave a version of the same presentation I've given dozens of times before, often to this same class. In it, I share a handful of historical quotes written about the Ann Arbor area from travelers visiting here in the early 1800s. They colorfully describe that native landscape, the huge wide-spreading oak trees, the rich carpet of beautiful wildflowers and grasses, and the frequent fires that Native Americans had been using for millennia to create these ecosystems. I always thought it was an effective way to paint a picture for the audience of what Ann Arbor looked like a mere 200 years ago. So I was surprised when one student spoke up during the Q and A to criticize that portion of my talk. She was respectful, but she questioned why I only had quotes from European Americans, rather than the indigenous people who had actually been burning and managing the landscape.

I didn't have a good answer for her. I'd found those quotes years ago and loved them because they seemed so "spot-on" to what I was trying to communicate. I've been using them ever since, never realizing that I might be sending a subtle yet powerful message to my audience by not giving a voice to Native Americans themselves. It took a young student with fresh eyes to point out my omission. I can now work to correct the situation, and am currently looking for appropriate quotes from indigenous voices.

May we all be open-minded enough to listen earnestly and non-defensively when someone with fresh eyes offers us a different perspective.

-David Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager



Michigan Community Scholars work in Bluffs Nature Area in August.

NAPpenings

October Stewards' Circle

Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. (Followed by happy hour nearby!), **Veterans Memorial Park Meeting Room**

Introducing a whole new Stewards Circle! For the last 10 years, the Huron Arbor Cluster of the Stewardship Network has been gathering monthly with a local expert to answer your

questions; now it's time to flip the script! You are invited to join us at the newly renovated Veterans Memorial Park Meeting Room to share your experiences and learn from your peers. **This month's topic:** planning resources. "What methods do you use to you keep track of your restoration work? Are there any tools for planning that have helped you? What doesn't work?" After the discussion group, join us for a happy hour just up the street at HOMES Brewery to further connect with other land stewards!

Thank you!

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

Eagle Corps

Greenhills School

U-M Pre-Surgical Club



Volunteers from the U-M Pre-Surgical Club at Cedar Bend in September.

Staff Updates

Farewell...



Max Miley

Conservation Worker

My one season with NAP could not have been more fruitful. I'm sad to be leaving, but I'm grateful for the skills and relationships I gained through valuable conservation work. I am moving on to work for the University of Michigan in a similar role to the NAP conservation crew where I'll continue to foster a healthy natural environment within the city of Ann Arbor! Thank you to the co-workers, volunteers, and everyone else that make NAP such a wonderful organization; you will all be missed, but I'll still see you at volunteer workdays!

Events

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Gathering

Sunday, October 3, 2021, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Olson Park Shelter

Drop in for our annual Volunteer Appreciation event!! We'd love to have you join us on Sunday, October 3, for a casual gathering to celebrate your hard work and stewardship. We will have some refreshments ready for you, as well as fun activities like guided walks, games, informal storytelling, and lots of time to chat, catch-up, and celebrate! Hope to see you there! Register for this event [here](https://tinyurl.com/NAPVolunteers2021). (<https://tinyurl.com/NAPVolunteers2021>)

Public Meeting – Controlled Ecological Burn Program

Wednesday, October 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

NAP Office, 3875 E Huron River Drive

This meeting will include an overview of Natural Area Preservation's controlled ecological burn program, and plans for the fall season of burns in parks. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion. For more information about this meeting or the burn program, contact us at NAP@a2gov.org or 734.794.6627, or visit our website at a2gov.org/NAPburn.

All persons are encouraged to participate in public meetings. Accommodations, including sign language, may be arranged with the Clerk's office 734.794.6140; cityclerk@a2gov.org; or by written request mailed or delivered to: City Clerk's Office, 301 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor MI 48104. Requests should be made at least two days in advance.

Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

Check out our volunteer opportunities and other events at a2gov.org/NAPEvents, and/or view and register at yhub.at/NAP.



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