

NAP

NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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WINTER 2016

Park Focus: Cedar Bend Nature Area

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Outreach Assistant

Of the beautiful and diverse natural areas that dot Ann Arbor's humming cityscape, none is quite so historically significant as Cedar Bend Nature Area. Purchased in the early 1900's, it was one of Ann Arbor's first parks. Cedar Bend was designed by O.C. Simonds, a landscape architect who had an understanding of the importance of native landscaping that was ahead of his time. He insisted on keeping the park as close to the natural landscape as possible, helping to preserve the biodiversity and native plant population that make Cedar Bend such a beautiful Nature Area today.

Through the years, the landscape of Cedar Bend has changed. The view of the Huron River has evolved, as shrubs, young trees, and native wildflowers have established and spread. However, the timeless feel of this nature area remains. Wander down the winding trails on a quiet morning and find yourself in a towering stand of hickory and oak. Elegant branches arch ever upward, hosting songbirds and squirrels in their branches. In the cold, still grip of winter, delicate petals of spring wildflowers are gone, and no leaves remain to filter light through the



Upland boneset (Eupatorium sessifolium) is a rare wildflower in Michigan, listed by the state as Threatened. It is only found in oak openings and oak savannas. These open oak woodlands were once common across southern Michigan but are now almost completely wiped out. The upland boneset in Cedar Bend grew after invasive shrubs were removed and controlled burns were used to help restore habitat in the park.

canopy. Nonetheless, evidence of life can be found around every bend: delicate bird footprints in bright snow, the scrabbling of a squirrel's foot across rough bark, or the glimpse of a cottontail picking its way through the brittle stalks of dry winter grasses. Cooper's hawks perch in the high limbs, ever vigilant for signs of activity from songbirds in the trees and mice under the snow.

The steep slopes leading down to the Huron River add a dramatic aesthetic to the dry upland hickory, oak and cherry forest that makes up most of this natural area. Tragically however, the natural beauty of Cedar Bend is threatened by many non-native plant species that compete with native species. Wildlife rely on these native

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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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Capital Improvements Millage.*

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

No pain - No gain

Dave Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager

This fall my daughter started high school and decided to join the Crew team. None of us had any idea what we were getting into: three-hour practices every day after school; carpools to and from practice; regattas nearly every weekend. The pace was hectic. The commitment was significant. And the whole experience was pretty intense. My poor daughter suffered through grueling practices, sore muscles, and painful blisters. But she slept well at night!

Why would someone put themselves through this difficult experience? I guess it is because of the promise that all the hard work and dedication will pay off in the long run, that there will be some reward at the end of the arduous challenge. No pain, no gain. In the case of my daughter's Crew team, there seems to be some real promise of that potential for reward: both the team and individual rowers have previously won national championships.

But what about those intrepid souls who volunteer in the work of ecological restoration? Certainly hardy NAP volunteers have endured plenty of grueling workdays in lousy weather being challenged by mosquitoes, wasps, poison ivy, and thorns, as well as their own blisters and sore muscles. Why would they put themselves through this difficult experience? It's a good question, and one that we ask ourselves frequently. Although NAP's efforts have greatly contributed to the Huron Arbor Cluster's repeated wins in the Stewardship Network's annual "Garlic Mustard Challenge," my guess is that our volunteers are not driven by the allure of taking home a trophy. Nor is there any hope that volunteering with NAP will lead to a college scholarship (though the experience does look good on ones resume).

No, the motivation typically comes from somewhere much deeper, I believe. It comes from a deep connection with Nature – that "environmental ethic" some of you feel, and that NAP tries to foster in others. It comes from a sense of responsibility, a sense of stewardship, that we feel about taking care of our special place here on the planet. The enemy we face is not an opposing team of athletes, with the same human limitations that we possess. The battle is between our native southeastern Michigan ecosystems and the invasive species that threaten them. We fight this war not to defend ourselves, but to defend our home. The analogy is intentional: this is a "war" against the invasive species that threaten to destroy forever the prairies, oak woodlands, and wetlands that have been our natural heritage here for the past 5000 years. And we work on two battle fronts: nurturing our native ecosystems, and removing the invasive species threatening those ecosystems.

It's a tough fight. The work can be grueling. You might go home with blisters and sore muscles. And the war will likely drag on for years, although the victory in individual battles will help keep you motivated. But you'll sleep well at night! And you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you are fighting the good fight - helping us preserve our native ecosystems for generations to come. I hope you'll join us!

Winter Bird Watching Opportunities in the Ann Arbor Parks

Juliet Berger, City Ornithologist

Ann Arbor parks can be positively teeming with birds in spring, summer and fall. If you are like many Ann Arborites, you may have thought winter birding was pretty slow in our parks and nature areas. In that case, you'd be mistaken! Ann Arbor parks offer a wealth of winter birding delights.

The parks along the Huron River corridor (Barton, Argo, Bandemer, Riverside, Island, Forest, Furstenberg, and Gallup) can be major water bird overwintering areas. Ducks, swans, geese, and grebes take advantage of open water areas on the Huron, to feed and congregate where the flowing river has prevented ice from forming. On the river you can see and hear many species that do not breed here, but which spend the winter in these favorable conditions. Imagine a flock of over 30 native Trumpeter Swans gathered in Geddes Pond at Gallup Park, loudly trumpeting their greetings to each other. This can be a common occurrence at Gallup. The paved trails maintained for walkers and runners make winter birding easier at Gallup Park, and access to the open water areas is available to birdwatchers. Last winter, diving ducks such as Greater and Lesser Scaups, Ring-necked Ducks, and Common and Hooded Mergansers, along with Redheads, Canvasbacks and Common Goldeneyes were all in abundance. Northern Shovelers could be seen on South Pond, just north of East Huron River Drive, from winter through late Spring. Sometimes rare species such as the Cackling Goose, a smaller relative of the Canada Goose, can be found here as well, if you are lucky!

Last winter some friends and I decided to go on a snowshoe birding adventure in Furstenberg Park. This park along the Huron, just west of Gallup, has marsh, prairie and oak savanna habitat, with boardwalks through some of the wetlands. In the summer there are nesting Eastern Bluebirds, several woodpecker species, Baltimore Orioles, Warbling Vireos, and other colorful songbirds. In the winter the resident birds take over, along with a few species that come down from the far north to winter in Michigan.

We saw familiar species like the Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Downy Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch, but also noted winter species such as the Dark-eyed Junco and American Tree Sparrow (pictured right). We strapped on our snow shoes in search of the elusive Winter Wren, a small brown bird with an almost nonexistent tail, that likes to hide in brush piles and shrubby areas. The Winter Wren had been found at Furstenberg by previous birders, before the snowfall. We found cross country ski tracks made by other park visitors, taking advantage of the flat terrain and stunning winter scenery for a ski trip of their own. Though we clomped through the snow on our snow shoes along the boardwalk and through the woods for several hours, the Winter Wren eluded us. Still we saw a good list of other birds, and got a great deal of exercise!

Whether you are interested in songbirds, woodpeckers, or waterfowl, Ann Arbor's parks have something for you to enjoy in the winter. Don't forget that our parks are great places to bird any season of the year!



American Tree Sparrow in winter, photo by Robert Feldman.



This mixed flock of redhead and canvasback ducks was seen in the Huron River near Barton Nature Area.

Photo by NAP Volunteer John Lloyd.



Cardinals (like this female) are common winter residents



NAP

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

Winter 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 sturdy shoes good for wet ground or snow, and dress in layers. 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.

DECEMBER

Stewardship Workday Saturday, December 3, 9 a.m. to noon Ruthven Nature Area

Ruthven Nature Area's unique landscape includes a kame, a sandy hill left behind by melting glaciers. The hill overlooks Gallup pond and the Huron River valley. The slopes and different soils in this park make for lots of wildflower diversity here. We'll be cutting invasive shrubs that threaten to overwhelm the native plants. Please meet at the Gallup Park boat launch parking lot, on the south side of Geddes Road just east of Huron Parkway.

Stewardship Workday Saturday, December 10, 9 a.m. to noon Miller Nature Area

Miller Nature Area's 22 acres include magnificent trees, breathtaking spring wildflowers, and miles of winding trails. Help us maintain the unique landscape

that Miller has to offer by removing invasive shrubs such as buckthorn and honeysuckle. Meet us at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue.

JANUARY

Stewardship Workday - Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Monday, January 16, 1 to 3 p.m. Black Pond Woods Nature Area

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service is an opportunity to make your "day off" a "day on" for community service. Help improve a park and protect biodiversity by removing invasive shrubs from Black Pond Woods Nature Area. Meet at the entrance on Tibbits Court. If you would like to learn more about the MLK Day of Service mission, please visit www.mlkday.gov.

Citizen Pruner Training Saturday, January 21, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Love trees? Looking for a new and unique way to volunteer in the community? Consider becoming a Citizen Pruner! Citizen Pruners volunteer for workdays to care for newly planted city trees. We'll teach you everything you need to know. Training includes both indoor and outdoor time, so come prepared to be comfortable in both settings. Please register by January 17, email tstephens@a2gov.org or call 734.794.6627.



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, Tuesday, December 13 | Bee Safe Ann Arbor

The Bee Safe Neighborhoods campaign is a grassroots effort developed to bring neighbors together by creating toxic free and nectar rich spaces for pollinators. Our goal is to have multiple Ann Arbor neighborhoods of 75 contiguous yards that provide places where honey bees and other pollinators, including native bees, other insects, birds and other animals, can thrive without the effects of toxic chemicals.

Tuesday, January 10 | Tools for Restoration

Restoration is a hands-on process and can require a lot of physical work. Learn about tools to make the job a bit easier and how to keep your tools properly maintained.

Tuesday, February 14 | Controlled Fire

Fire is our most historically accurate restoration tool. What is the role of fire in ecosystems? What invasive species is fire particularly useful for removing? What are some of the obstacles to using fire in an urban setting and how do you address them? Stewards will discuss these tough questions.

Tuesday, March 14 | River and Stream Restoration

A lot of our conservation focus is spent on terrestrial ecosystems and restoration; however, it is just as important to protect our rivers and streams. Join us for a discussion about rivers, fluvial ecosystems, and the best practices to protect them.

FEBRUARY

Stewardship Workday - World Wetland Day Saturday, February 4, 1 to 3 p.m. Barton Nature Area

Take advantage of this winter opportunity to explore and improve one of Ann Arbor's special wetlands, usually inaccessible in warm months. Rare native wetland plants along the river here are threatened by invasive exotic shrubs. Help NAP protect the natural diversity in this park by using hand tools to remove invasive species. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot off Huron River Drive.

Stewardship Workday Sunday, February 12, 1 to 3 p.m. Furstenberg Nature Area

Build a "Fursty the Snowman" after participating in cutting invasive shrubs like honeysuckle and buckthorn at Furstenberg Nature Area. With the ground frozen, we can work in the wetlands here, protecting rare wetland wildflowers. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School.

Stewardship Workday Monday, February 20, 1 to 3 p.m., Presidents' Day, Gallup Park

Gallup Park is one of Ann Arbor's most popular recreation areas, and also contains a high quality sedge meadow. The meadow is rich with special native plants that are adapted to living in wet soils. We'll use the frozen ground to get in and remove invasive woody shrubs that crowd out native species. From Gallup's main entrance, drive across the wooden bridge, meet in the first lot after the bridge.

Public Meeting: Controlled Burn Program Wednesday, February 22, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave.

Fire is used as a restoration tool in many of Ann Arbor's natural areas. This meeting will be a discussion about our Controlled Ecological Burn Program. Ask questions and learn more about the benefits of effectively and safely using fire as a restoration tool. All persons are encouraged to participate in public meetings. Accommodations, including sign language interpreters, may be arranged by contacting the City Clerk's office at 734.794.6140; via email to: cityclerk@a2gov.org; or by written request addressed and mailed or delivered to: City Clerk's Office, 301 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Requests made with less than two business days notice may not be able to be accommodated.

Volunteer Burn Crew Training Thursday, February 23, Noon to 5 p.m. Nature House, Leslie Science and Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd.

Become a part of NAP's Volunteer Burn Crew! This is the required training session for anyone interested in assisting with NAP's controlled burns. Burns typically take place Monday through Friday between noon and 7 p.m. **Registration is required by February 21, as enrollment is limited.** Call 734.794.6627 or email NAP@a2gov.org to register or for more information. Some training will be outdoors.

MARCH

Salamander Survey Kick-off & Training Saturday, March 11, Noon to 2 p.m. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road

Did you know we have at least five species of salamanders in Ann Arbor? If you have a willingness to get muddy, you're invited to help monitor populations and the health of their habitats. Surveying is done three to six times in early spring at multiple sites, and each round is a few hours long. Please register by March 9. Admission to the Gardens is free, but parking is \$1.50/hour, to a maximum of \$5 per day. For more information or to register call NAP 734.794.6627, or send us an email at NAP@a2gov.org.

Frog and Toad Survey Kick-off & Training Saturday, March 11, 2:30 to 5 p.m. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road

Everyone is invited to join us to help monitor frog populations in Ann Arbor! It's fun learning to identify the frogs of Michigan by ear and eye. No previous experience required. Family-friendly! Surveying is done three to six times from early spring through June, and each round lasts a few hours. Please register by March 9. Admission to the Gardens is free, but parking is \$1.50/hour, to a maximum of \$5 per day. For more information or to register call NAP 734.794.6627, or send us an email at NAP@a2gov.org.

Photo Monitoring Kick-off & Training Saturday, March 25, 10 to 11:00 a.m. NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Dr.

Do you like photography and spending time outdoors? Photo monitoring may be the perfect volunteer opportunity for you! We need volunteers to take beautiful photos at specific locations each season to record the progress of our restoration work. Come join us at this informational

meeting for more details about this volunteer opportunity! Please register by March 19. For more information or to register call NAP at 734.794.6627, or send us an email at NAP@a2gov.org.

Workday Leader Training Saturday, March 25, Noon to 5:30 p.m. NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Dr.

For volunteers interested in leading and/or co-leading NAP volunteer stewardship workdays. We will focus on procedures, ecological considerations, and tips and tricks to lead a successful event. An interest and background in ecology (and plant ID) is strongly desired, but not required. A strong commitment to preserving the environment, while fostering community and engaging the public is necessary. Participants should be dressed for classroom and possible field training. Minimum age of 18. Please register by March 19. For more information or to register call NAP 734.794.6627, or send us an email at NAP@a2gov.org.



Cedar Bend continued from page 1

plants for food and habitat, and so the non-native plants threaten them as well. Lots of work has been done to clear these areas of invasive species such as buckthorn and autumn olive, but it is a constant battle. With the help of volunteers, NAP has been able to keep many of these invaders in check, clearing habitat for native skunk cabbage, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and even the rare upland boneset, which is threatened in Michigan. Areas of Cedar Bend with populations of native plants support a wider array of important animal species, and give park-goers an idea of what they might have seen in this park in the early 1900's when Simonds was still in his designing process.

One particularly unique feature of Cedar Bend is the so-called "hairpin turn" that can be found on the southeast side of the park. The sharp turn in this former road reflects a similar pattern made by the Huron River as it cuts back to the south, winding gracefully along the landscape. The continuity of these two features make for a unified aesthetic in this beautiful nature area, and with help from our amazing volunteers, native biodiversity at Cedar Bend will continue to thrive, providing an enchanting place for Ann Arbor's citizens to explore year-round.



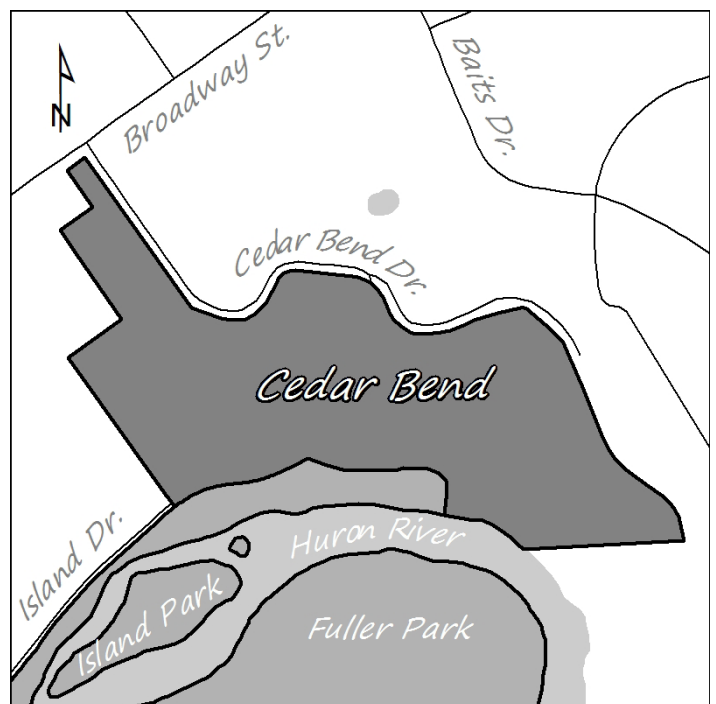
Changing views of the hairpin turn, first circa 1920.



1997 with a thick layer of invasive shrubs.



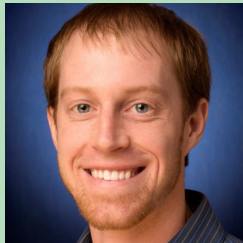
The hairpin turn in 2015 - return of an open native woodland.



Cedar Bend map.

STAFF UPDATES

FAREWELL ...



DAN ENGEL – CREW LEADER

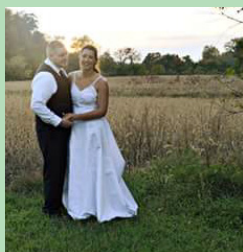
My time at NAP was more than I could have asked for, with my favorite memories being the controlled burns and working alongside volunteers to remove invasive plants. Unfortunately, it is time for me to say “Good-bye” as I am now working as a Phragmites Biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey—Great Lakes Science Center right here in Ann Arbor. Since I am still in the area, you may see me volunteering for the Breeding Bird Survey at Huron Parkway Nature Area or doing mop-up at a burn site. On second thought, “Good-bye” is the wrong word. Perhaps “See you around” is more appropriate.



LOGAN NEVINS - WORKDAY COORDINATOR

I would like to start by thanking all of the NAP staff and volunteers for making my time at NAP a great experience. While working at NAP over the past year I have had the pleasure of working alongside and getting to know some amazing people. NAP volunteers are unlike any others I have worked with because of their passion and dedication for protecting the natural areas within the city. Recently I accepted a position with Ducks Unlimited as the Youth & Education Coordinator. I look forward to taking everything I have learned about working with volunteers and applying that in my new endeavor working with youth volunteers throughout the country. Thank you all again for everything you have taught me. I am excited to come back and visit the wonderful natural areas that this city has.

CONGRATULATIONS ...



On October 15 Field Crew member Sam Davis married Nicholas Howard, in an outdoor ceremony at Ramsdell Nature Park in Clayton, Michigan. Congratulations Sam and Nic! We wish you long years of happiness together.

NAPpenings

THE STEWARDSHIP NETWORK CONFERENCE

January 13-14, Kellogg Conference Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing

This will be the 10th anniversary of the Science, Practice and Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems conference. Presenters will cover topics such as environmental justice, traditional ecological knowledge, watershed conservation, and more! For more information, see www.stewardshipnetwork.org.

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to the groups who volunteered with NAP recently. We could not make such a difference without you! Ann Arbor Spartans MSU Alumni Chapter, Ann Arbor STEAM School, Ann Arbor Ward 2 Cub Scouts, Ann Arbor YMCA Youth Volunteer Corps, Concordia University Ann Arbor, DTE Energy, EMU Community Plunge, First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor Grad Group, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan, Ypsilanti Day Camp, Greenhills School, Huron High School Interact Club, Toyota, U of M Alpha Phi Omega, U of M Indian American Student Association and U of M Michigan Community Scholars Program.

Thank you to the local organizations that donated prizes for our Volunteer Appreciation Potluck!

- Spun, a family-owned yarn shop - www.spunann Arbor.com
- 16 Hands Gallery - www.16handsgallery.com
- Radius Garden – radiusgarden.com
- Leslie Science & Nature Center – lesliesnc.org
- Old House Gardens - oldhousegardens.com
- Fairytale Baked Goods - bakedfairytale.wordpress.com

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.



NAP

Autumn 2016

Natural Area Preservation
City of Ann Arbor
3875 E. Huron River Dr.
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

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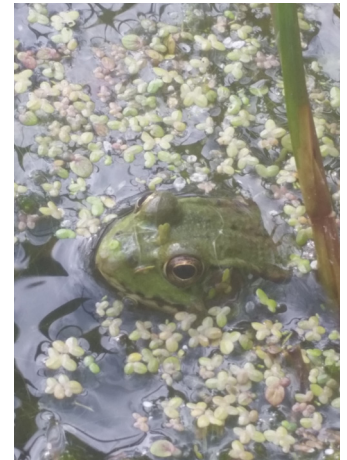
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NAP by the NUMBERS – Highlights of 2016

- This spring, volunteers and NAP staff removed **20,640 pounds** of garlic mustard and other herbaceous invasives, and burned **104 acres** of natural areas.
- Over the year, NAP crew worked in **37 parks!**
- The **25 volunteers** for the Bird Survey observed 150 species of birds and volunteered **299 hours**. Since 1990, **236 bird species** have been seen in city parks! We added one new species this year, the Willet, a tall shorebird seen on South Pond.
- This year Frog and Salamander Survey volunteers gave **972 hours**. They logged **1536 observations** of **23 species** of amphibians and reptiles in our parks. They also added a new species this year, the Eastern Milk Snake.
- Photomonitoring volunteers have contributed **50 hours** of effort in **12 parks**.
- Butterfly survey volunteers have contributed **36 hours** of effort in **8 parks**.
- Volunteers have contributed over **8000 hours** at workdays in **50 parks..**



HELP US GROW!
Volunteers help us keep track of the plants and animals in our nature areas. Check the calendar inside for the survey training and kickoff events coming in early spring. We would also be delighted to have you come to our public workdays, or contact us about organizing a private workday for your group!