



NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

Protecting and restoring Ann Arbor's natural areas and fostering an environmental ethic among its citizens

Volume 26, Number 1
Spring 2021

Park Focus: Devonshire Park

Max Miley, Conservation Worker

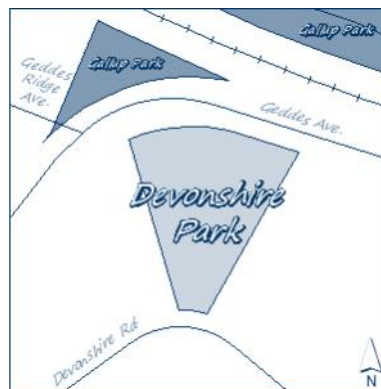
If there's one thing I've come to learn from working at NAP, it's that the folks who live in Ann Arbor, more than most, appreciate the natural spaces in their city. Our largest natural area, Bird Hills, is almost 150 acres, but did you know we have 100 parks and natural areas which are smaller than two acres? These tiny patches of green are seldom the ecological oases of our larger parks, though they provide the solace and convenience which make living in Ann Arbor so pleasant.

Devonshire Park does just that. At 1.16 acres, most visits are short-lived, but the function of this park is essential. The single paved path which cuts through Devonshire Park connects the eastern tail of Devonshire Road with Geddes Ave. This corridor creates easy access to Gallup Park for walkers, runners, and bikers who get a short break from the monotony of human structures while they take a few deep breaths of fresh oxygen.

Many red oaks (*Quercus rubra*) and a few white oaks (*Q. alba*) dominate the canopy, while the understory is fighting an intrusion of invasive honeysuckle (*Lonicera*



Sycamore Flower, by Harold Eyster



spp.). A lone sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) watches over the path, greeting each passerby silently. I encourage you to visit throughout the spring, and as you walk through Devonshire Park, notice how the neighboring structures disappear among the unfurling leaves, and enjoy your moment of solace.

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COORDINATOR'S CORNER

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
2020-2026 Park Maintenance &
Capital Improvements Millage.*

There is always light...

I tried to start this article around January 6, as the world watched the US capitol being attacked by US citizens. Like many, I was unable to pull myself away from the news as I watched the horrifying scene unfold. For days afterward, I continued to seek out news about the event, hoping – I guess – to hear something that would help me make sense of it all and then put it behind me. For me, the release from that news addiction came on Inauguration Day. More specifically, it came in the hopeful words of America's First Youth Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, and her poem *The Hill We Climb*, that ended with the words *"There is always light, if only we are brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it."*

Tears came to me as the impressive Ms. Gorman delivered her powerful words so eloquently and so passionately. After what the country had just been through the previous few weeks, her message of hope and inspiration was just what I needed. Indeed it was exactly what I had been longing for: new hope, renewed passion, the boldness to think that we really were going to be able to move past this, a flickering sense that maybe things really were going to be alright in the future.

I suppose some may attribute Ms. Gorman's hope to youthful innocence and naïveté. Maybe. But even if those are the dreams of a naïve youth, they are an inspiration to me.

As then-candidate Biden predicted during one of the presidential debates last fall, it has been a long, dark winter. How absolutely joyful this February to feel the stunningly bright sunshine reflecting off a brilliantly white snowfall, and to watch the days slowly lengthen, minute-by-minute, as we march hopefully toward spring. I'm fortunate this winter to be living a bit closer to nature than usual, away from our suburban home, at a cabin in the Northwoods. So I feel this transition to spring a bit more viscerally than I do most years. I watch the sun rise and set just a bit further north every single day. And I have just a few minutes longer every afternoon to sneak in a quick ski out my back door.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, spring should be in full swing. I encourage you, this year especially, to get outside and witness this phenomenon. Don't just watch it out the window. Walk in the woods. Drink your morning coffee outside and listen to the amazing diversity of bird songs in your backyard. Stop by a vernal pool in the evening and soak up the cacophony of frog calls. Peel off those heavy winter layers and feel the sun warm your skin; really feel it. Take off your sunglasses and enjoy the brilliance of the sun on your face. And remember, *"There is always light, if only we are brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it."*

-David Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager

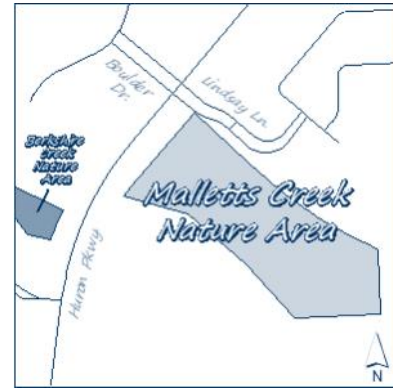
Park Focus: Malletts Creek Nature Area

Ethan Glassman, Conservation Worker

Malletts Creek has an eleven square-mile watershed, and Malletts Creek Nature Area takes up approximately three acres of it. Although the park has no formal trails, it provides great opportunities for birdwatching from neighboring properties.

With ten miles of open water, Malletts Creek flows through a channel cut by a glacier over 14,000 years ago. Malletts Creek Nature Area is just one stop on the journey, as the creek passes through parks like Mary Beth Doyle, Huron Parkway Nature Area, and Braun Nature Area, before flowing into South Pond—right next to the NAP office—and finally depositing itself in the Huron River.

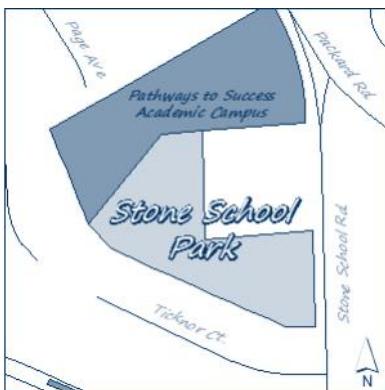
One of the major obstacles threatening the health of Malletts Creek is urban runoff. As a result, Malletts Creek suffers rather low insect diversity in the creek itself and is, unfortunately, emblematic of issues many urban watersheds face. Fortunately, the park consists



of a riparian wetland that helps to shield the creek from urban runoff, and in recent years the creek has received increased attention in restoration projects to reduce the effects of runoff as well as to improve the diversity of native benthic populations – the various microscopic species that play vital roles in aquatic ecosystems.

Park Focus: Stone School Park

Max Miley, Conservation Worker



Stone School Park is a 4.62-acre wooded park nestled between Stone School Road and the old Ann Arbor Stone High School, now called Pathways to Success. Surrounded by local Ann Arbor history, the park bears the name of the original Stone School opened in 1826 which still resides across the street as a co-operative preschool. One can imagine the land on which Stone School Park lies must have been enjoyed by generations of school children over the course of three centuries, still providing recreation and relaxation today.

I recommend parking in the Pathways to Success parking lot and slowly approaching the entrance of Stone School Park, taking note of the monstrous white oak (*Quercus alba*) trees

growing just on the west side of the park boundary. Each tree has a diameter of well over five feet, and the branches stretch incredible distances from the trunk. This pair of oaks allows me to look back in time at what the oak-savannas of pre-industrial Ann Arbor must have been.

As you walk through the park east towards Stone School Road, you may hear the calls of spring peepers or other frogs hoping to find a mate. (And if you do hear any frog-calls, drop us a line! We want to know about it!). The park's wetlands may serve as a safe haven for frogs to link up and reproduce. I encourage you to visit the park yourself, see what wildlife you can find, and possibly take a step back in time.



NAP

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR **SPRING 2021**

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!

Pre-registration through Rec-1 is now required for workdays, as space is limited. Meeting location will be provided during registration. Participants must wear a mask and maintain a 6-ft distance from others at all times. If you have a large group (more than five people) that is interested in attending a volunteer stewardship event, please contact our Workday Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of the event.

MARCH

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, March 21, 1 to 4 p.m.
Lakewood Nature Area

Lakewood is truly a springtime wildflower gem! Join us to remove invasive species and keep the habitat open. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Lakewo032121>

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, March 27, 1 to 4 p.m.
Hansen Nature Area

Hansen is 9 acres full of spring wildflowers and mixed hardwood forests. Help us keep the park healthy by removing invasive species. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Hansen032721>

APRIL

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, April 11, 1 to 4 p.m.
Folkstone Park

The spring wildflowers in this oak-hickory forest will knock your socks off! Join us to remove non-native plants. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Folkst041121>

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m. to noon
Berkshire Creek Nature Area

"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt." Margaret Atwood. Join us and protect this part of the Huron River system by removing non-native plants. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Berksh041721>

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, April 18, 9 a.m. to noon
Lakewood Nature Area

Lakewood is an important habitat location—you can make a big impact at Lakewood. Come help us remove invasive species. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Lakewo041821>

EARTH DAY!
Stewardship Workday



Thursday, April 22, 1 to 3 p.m.
Furstenberg Nature Area

Join us on Earth Day to remove invasive plants from this very special and biologically diverse park! Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Furste042221>

EARTH DAY WEEKEND!
Stewardship Workdays



Saturday, April 24

Celebrate the 51st anniversary of this global stewardship event by volunteering at one of these parks:

Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Pre-register at: <https://tinyurl.com/Scarle042421>

Bluffs Nature Area
9 a.m. to noon

Pre-register at: <https://tinyurl.com/Bluffs042421>

Sunset Brooks Nature Area
1 to 4 p.m.

Pre-register at: <https://tinyurl.com/Sunset042421>

GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, April 25, 1 to 4 p.m.
Marshall Nature Area

Global Youth Service Day is the largest youth service and civic action event in the world—but there is no age limit to join us at Marshall while we remove non-native plants. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Marsha042521>

PRE-REGISTER FOR WORKDAYS

tinyurl.com/NAPWorkdays

At all NAP workdays, please remember to dress for the weather and wear shoes suitable for uneven terrain and working off-trail. Please wear long pants, closed-toed shoes, a mask, and gardening gloves. Please bring a snack and bottle of water. All minors should be accompanied by a guardian.

HURON RIVER DAY

This year we will be celebrating Huron River Day—for the whole month of May! This annual event seeks to educate citizens about the importance of water quality and Huron River preservation.

HRD Stewardship workdays in May that take place at parks on the Huron River are noted with this symbol so you can easily participate!

COVID-19 and NAP Workdays

NAP is closely monitoring recommendations from city and other health officials, and adapting workday protocols accordingly.

- Attendance is limited,
- Pre-registration is required at tinyurl.com/NAPWorkdays.
- Pre-registration closes at noon on the Friday before the workday.
- Participants must wear a mask and maintain a 6-ft distance from others at all times.

MAY

ARBOR DAY

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 1, 1 to 4 p.m.
Mary Beth Doyle Park

While most holidays celebrate something that has already happened, Arbor Day represents a hope for the future. Join us to remove non-native plants and to celebrate our community's hope for the future. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/MaryBe050121>

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 1, 9 a.m.
Huron Parkway Nature Area

Mallett's Creek flows along the eastern border of Huron Parkway Nature Area. Help us restore this scenic nature area by pulling invasive weeds. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/HuronP050121>

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, May 2, 9 a.m. to noon
Leslie Woods Nature Area

Help us keep this small pocket of natural wonder healthy for our wildlife (and beautiful for our park users) by pulling invasive plants. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Leslie050221>

STEWARDSHIP NETWORK STEWARDS' CIRCLE

Second Tuesday of every month
7:30 to 8:30 a.m.
Zoom link: tinyurl.com/SCZoom2021

Find more info at: stewardshipnetwork.org

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, May 2, 1 to 4 p.m.
Argo Nature Area

HRD

Invasive plants threaten the health of the river and push out native flowers that support pollinators.

Join us to keep their habitat safe. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Argo050221>

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 8, 9 a.m. to noon
Brokaw Nature Area

As all NAP volunteers know, volunteering is for the birds! Join us pulling spring invasives to protect what makes migration possible—diverse and healthy habitat. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Brokaw050821>

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 8, 1 to 4 p.m.
Miller Nature Area

Spend a spring afternoon pulling spring invasives, and helping to protect habitat for wildflowers like jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*). Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Miller050821>

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 15, 9 a.m. to noon
Buttonbush Nature Area

Named for the dramatic thickets of buttonbush shrubs that bloom in late July, Join us to remove non-native plants. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Button051521>

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 15, 1 to 4 p.m.
Oakwoods Nature Area

Join us to help keep up the fight against invasive plants, and experience the woodland and wetland wonder for yourself. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Oakwoo051521>

Are you interested in learning more about how to care for natural areas? 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 and open to all interested.

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, May 16, 1 to 4 p.m.
Cedar Bend Nature Area

HRD

Be a part of history at one of the oldest parks in Ann Arbor, as we remove garlic mustard and other invasive weeds. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/CedarB051521>

WORLD BIODIVERSITY DAY

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 22, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Bird Hills Nature Area

HRD

Bird Hills is habitat for many reptiles, amphibians, and birds.

Join us to pull spring invasives. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/BirdHi052221>

Stewardship Workday
Saturday, May 22, 1 to 4 p.m.
Barton Nature Area

HRD

Join us to pull invasive plants and protect Barton Nature Area, a location that is vital to protecting the Huron River. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Barton052221>

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, May 23, 9 a.m. to noon
Black Pond Woods Nature Area

Come learn about the mysterious name of this natural area while we remove non-native plants. Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/BlackP052321>

Stewardship Workday
Sunday, May 23, 1 to 4 p.m.
Onder Park

After 13 years of workdays at Onder Park, volunteers like you have dramatically improved this "green corridor." Pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/Onder052321>

Spring Trainings and Kickoffs

PHOTO MONITOR TRAINING

Saturday, March 20, 11 a.m. to noon

Zoom Meeting

Do you like photography and spending time outdoors? We need volunteers to take photos at specific locations throughout the year. Pre-register by March 17. For more info or to register call NAP at 734.794.6627 or email NAP@a2gov.org.

WORKDAY LEADER TRAINING

Saturday, March 20, 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

For volunteers interested in leading and/or co-leading volunteer workdays. A strong commitment to preserving the environment, while fostering community and engaging the public is necessary. Minimum age of 18. Please register by March 17. For more info or to register call NAP at 734.794.6627 or email NAP@a2gov.org.



BREEDING BIRD SURVEY KICKOFF

Thursday, April 15, 7 to 9 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Learn how to record survey results, sign up to survey your favorite park, and hear about last year's survey. Experience in bird ID by sight and sound is necessary. Please register by April 13. For more information, or to register, call NAP at 734.794.6627, or send us an email at

TURTLE SURVEY KICKOFF

Saturday, April 24, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

At least 6 species of turtles live and nest in the city, maybe more! This training will cover: species identification, nest maintenance and monitoring, and reporting your observations. Please register by April 21. For more info or to register call NAP at 734.794.6627, or email NAP@a2gov.org.

BUTTERFLY SURVEY KICKOFF

Saturday, May 22, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Ann Arbor is home to 80 species of butterflies! Join us to learn our survey protocol and help search our prairies and woodlands throughout the summer. No experience in butterfly identification is necessary, though it is helpful. Please register by May 19. For more info or to register call NAP at 734.794.6627, or email NAP@a2gov.org.

More opportunities to enjoy Ann Arbor's parks



Whether you're volunteering, birding, or brushing up on your tree ID skills — chances are you you're already on your way to meeting the "Visit Every Park" challenge created by the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Services Unit. Locations and more info can be found at: [A2gov.org/VEPChallenge](https://www.a2gov.org/VEPChallenge)



The VEP Challenge is a great opportunity to record some data while you're out checking new parks off your list! We recommend the "Seek" app by iNaturalist, and we always like seeing more data come in from our citizen scientists! The "Seek" app is available through Google Play and the Apple App Store. For more information, visit: www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app

NAPpenings

Welcome, new Park Stewards!

Mark Hanss
Oakwoods Nature Area

Joann Constantinides
Bluffs Nature Area

Thank you!

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

Ann Arbor Jewish Religious
School's Beit Sefer
UM Men's Swimming and
Diving Team
The Center for Michigan

GARLIC MUSTARD WEED OUT WEEK

Saturday, May 22 – Sunday, May 30
Sunrise to sunset

Garlic Mustard Weed Out is an annual tradition! And for the second year in a row, Weed Out **Day** is Weed Out **Week!**

Garlic mustard is an aggressive invasive plant that can quickly crowd out native plant species and decrease biodiversity in the woods. Identifying and pulling garlic mustard is fun and easy for all ages, making this a great volunteer opportunity for families. AND—you can participate from anywhere!

Survey your own yard to find and remove target species, and spend some time pulling in your local City of Ann Arbor Nature Areas.

[A2gov.org/GMWOW](https://a2gov.org/GMWOW)



STAFF UPDATES

FAREWELL...



MEIJA KNAFL
Park Steward Coordinator

It's hard to believe it's been nearly three years since I first began to work as an Outreach Assistant here at NAP, and the seasons have just flown by! I have learned so much from my fellow staff and volunteers alike during my time with the city. I've explored new parks, seen all kinds of beautiful flora and fauna, participated in exciting controlled ecological burns, and gained a new appreciation for the power of volunteerism. I have accepted a position with the River Raisin Watershed Council in nearby Lenawee County, and hope to stay in touch with the NAP community even after transitioning into this new organization. Thank you fellow NAP staff and volunteers for all the time we've spent together!



BECCA NAUMENKO
Conservation Worker

I have thoroughly enjoyed working for Ann Arbor's Natural Area Preservation, but will not be returning this spring as I am moving to Minneapolis, MN. Ann Arbor has such an excellent sense of community which will certainly be missed. It will be an odd feeling for spring to not be marked by the wildflower growth at Mary Beth Doyle Natural Area, and by the amazing fun of burn season. I can't wait to come back and see how all our community's hard work has changed parks for the better.

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

Natural Area Preservation

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2021 IS BRINGING BIG CHANGES FOR NAP!

VolunteerHub launching in June

This year we are working to make major updates to the way volunteers will register for workdays, sign up to attend trainings and kickoff, track volunteer hours, complete waivers, find new events, and receive updates from NAP.



There is nothing you need to do just yet, but be sure to check back in the summer edition of the NAP Newsletter for details on how to create your own VolunteerHub profile and stay up to date with all that is happening at NAP.

Newsletter going all-online this fall

Hopefully you have heard of the City of Ann Arbor's plan to achieve a just, community-wide transition to carbon neutrality by 2030. NAP is



taking a close look at our operations to identify ways we can do better. One of the sectors identified for implementing carbon neutrality is resource reduction, which has the goal of working towards a circular economy by changing the way we use, reuse, and dispose of materials. To do our part in supporting this sector, the summer 2021 NAP Newsletter will be the final edition offered in print. If you currently receive the newsletter in print, please be sure we have your email address on file by dropping us a line at NAPnewsletter@a2gov.org or calling us at 734.794.6627. We will be sure to get you set up to receive all future editions via email.