

# Natural Area Preservation News

Volume 2, Number 1

Spring 1997

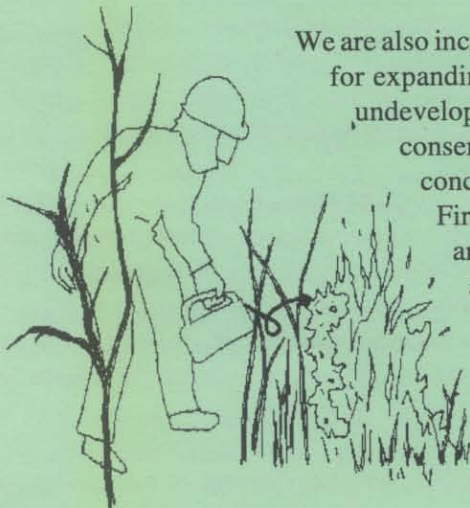
*The mission of the Natural Area Preservation Division is to preserve, protect, and care for the natural areas of Ann Arbor, especially those in the City's park and recreation system.*

## Burn, Baby, Burn, Take II

by David Mindell

Yes, patient readers, it's that time of year again. As winter's snow does its imitation of the Wicked Witch of the West ("I'm melting!"), NAP staff and volunteers again prepare for the prescribed burn season. While last spring's season was an unqualified success (17 burns covering almost 100 acres), the fall season was over before it began due to cold temperatures and wet weather. None of our ten woodland burn sites were touched, leaving us a long list of sites to burn this year.

Those who have read the NAP News or have burn experience remember the value of burns for our numerous fire-adapted ecosystems: reduced woody plant growth and reduced growth of cool-season grasses; creation of warmer conditions for hot, dry-loving plants; and stimulation of numerous native plant species. The effect we have seen most dramatically from the last two burn seasons is the reduction of shade from shrubs. Dramatic changes can be seen at Barton, South Pond, Foster, and Furstenberg Parks. We have also received great feedback from the sites themselves, with a rare, state-listed species appearing in Furstenberg park where it was not formerly found, and an explosion of prairie docks (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*) at Foster as examples. We take such ecological responses as an indication that we are doing the right thing.



We are also increasingly realizing the efficacy of fire for expanding our management activities within undeveloped sites. The work that the NAP conservation crew does is intensively concentrated in five to ten parks each year. Fire complements their work better than anything else we could do. In a single afternoon of burning, we are able to effectively remove invasive species in an area that would otherwise require weeks of manual effort.

In addition, our prescribed burns

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**Parks & Recreation**  
CITY OF ANN ARBOR

*Natural Area Preservation is a Division of the City of Ann Arbor Department of Parks and Recreation.*

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*Natural Area Preservation is funded by the Ann Arbor Department of Parks and Recreation's voter approved 1993-1998 Park Maintenance and Repair Millage.*

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have offered an invaluable educational outlet. Prior to the burn season, approximately 200 households neighboring each burn site receive letters explaining what we will be doing near them and why. Articles in the Ann Arbor News, Observer, and Michigan Daily further inform residents of the value of fire. Our extensive use of signs during the burns and the availability of literature on the topic enable us to reach passers-by.

The burns are effective and exciting! Get involved. You can volunteer on the burn teams (see training information on page 8) or you can simply talk to your friends and neighbors about the burns. The more people know about our activities, the more they will understand, accept, and embrace this wonderful management tool.

Look for burns (and their results) in the following sites: Argo, Bandemer, Barton, Bird Hills, Black Pond Woods, Bluffs, Brown, Cedar Bend, Foster, Foxfire South, Furstenberg, Gallup, Hansen, Huron Parkway, Kuebler Langford, Leslie Science Center, Marshall, Ruthven, South Pond, and Turnberry Parks and Swift Run Drain.

## **Coordinator's Corner: Coming Full Circle**

I hope you noticed the fine print at the top of the front page of this newsletter, "Volume 2, Number 1." This signifies two things: 1) We have completed our first full year of *NAP News*, and 2) We're going to do it all over again!

I'm not just talking about the newsletter. I'm referring to the burns, the workdays, the inventories, the seed collecting, the planting, the walks, etc... No, they won't simply be repeats of 1996, but they will build on last year's successes and pick up where we left off in the fall. Our burn program will run even smoother and safer than last year. Our workdays will continue pushing back the advancing wall of invasive shrubs. Our inventories will add new species of plants and animals which either evaded the surveyors last year, or simply weren't present under the dense shade of buckthorn.

*Natural Area Preservation* is a process, not a quick fix. The damage that has been done to the natural environment has occurred over the span of many decades, and continues today. The recovery and the healing that's needed will also happen slowly over time. But each workday leaves Ann Arbor's natural areas a bit healthier, and each year of inventory reveals a slightly more diverse ecosystem emerging in the city.

So as we finish compiling last year's data, as we plan this year's workdays and burns, as we re-assess the highest priority work that needs to be done, we realize that winter is a time for both reviewing the past, and planning for the future. At the same instant we complete the circle, we begin it again. Please join us in 1997 for another round of stewardship and fellowship, recreation and restoration.

*Dave Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Coordinator*

## **NAP Restoration Focus**

by David Mindell

The Conservation Crew will begin work in several new sites this season. The floodplain of Huron Parkway Park was found to be one of the more floristically interesting spots within the parks system. Work will focus on removing the numerous invasives that are shading light in the understory. Kuebler Langford Park and a new park, Bluffs, are sites that closely mirror each other. They offer wonderful potential for high quality woodlands and prairie remnants. Argo Park will be the site of a concerted garlic mustard (*Aliaria petiolata*) control effort.

In addition to these previously untouched (except Argo) spots, restoration activities will continue in most of our old favorites: wet meadow restorations in Bandemer, Barton, and Foxfire South; invasives control in Bird Hills, Hansen, and Brown; savanna restoration in Black Pond Woods and South Pond; mesic forest and fen improvements and continued savanna restoration in Foster; ongoing work of all sorts in Furstenberg; wet prairie work in Gallup; and continued garlic mustard and woody control in Marshall.

It promises to be an extremely busy season with no shortage of work to be done. Look for us (or our signs) anytime you're out in a natural spot!



## NAP - penings

### Expanded Native Landscaping Brochure

Natural Area Preservation has received a MDNR Natural Heritage Grant, (made possible by citizens who contribute to the Non-game Wildlife Fund on the Michigan Income Tax form or who gave a direct donation to the fund.) We will use the funds to expand our brochure entitled: *Your Landscape and Our Natural Areas*. We plan to hire an intern to research, photograph and write about the native species listed in the brochure. The plan is to have more detailed information available on each of the plants recommended for landscaping.

### Earth Day

Earth Day festivities will be held at the Leslie Science Center on April 20 from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. This family-oriented day is sure to be a great event. Natural Area Preservation will have a booth under the "Organizations" tent. We are seeking two volunteers to work with our NAP crew to help staff the booth. This will be an opportunity to talk with others about the work you are doing with Natural Area Preservation. (Shifts will be from 12:30 to 3:00 and from 3:00 to 5:30 pm.) Please call Catriona at 996-3266 if you are interested.

### Winter Time Volunteers

We have the good fortune to be able to work with 25-30 students from Greenhills High School on a community service project in Cedar Bend Park. The students work after school, a few times per month to carry out stewardship and restoration activities in the park. They started in January and hope to work through March. It has been wonderful working with these students, their enthusiasm and interest in the project is refreshing during our long winter. Look for signs of their activity, cutting non-native invasive shrubs, along the hillside at Cedar Bend Park.

We have also received great help with some office tasks - thanks to Anthony and Alfredo.

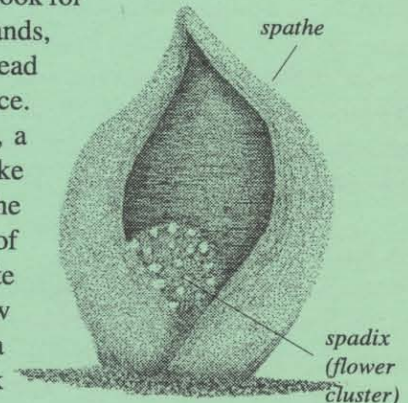
### Native Species Challenge:

### Skunk Cabbage, *Symplocarpus foetidus*

by Cara Rockwell

A plant that is sure to be smelled before it is found is the aptly named skunk cabbage, *Symplocarpus foetidus*, also known by its other common names, skunk weed and clumpfoot cabbage. With aliases like these, there should be no doubt that the reputation of this indigenous perennial is well-deserved. The species name, *foetidus*, means "evil smelling".

Skunk Cabbage is one of the first herbaceous plants to greet us in the early spring. Look for it in swamps, marshes, and other wetlands, with its green blub-like flower head peeking out from beneath the ice. Surrounding the flower is the spathe, a mottled green and dark purple hood-like cover. Both the color and odor of the plant attract carrion flies, the pollinators of skunk cabbage. After the flies pollinate the plant, the leaves uncurl and grow more than two feet in length and up to a foot in width. You can find skunk cabbage blooming from March to May, its flowers fairly small and forming a knob-shaped cluster, or "spadix", underneath the covering of the spathe.



The temperature within the buds of skunk cabbage has been found to be up to 27 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the outside air. The heat protects the bud from the winter cold and allows it to emerge from the frozen ground early. The temperature also strengthens its odor, attracting more pollinators.

It's hard to believe that people have ingested skunk cabbage as a medicinal remedy, but *Symplocarpus foetidus* was once thought to cause permanent sterility in both men and women, and was thus valued as a contraceptive. It has also been used for everything from asthma and other respiratory problems to rheumatism and skin irritations. For those desperate hikers needing an emergency food supply, the plentiful skunk cabbage's root is said to be delicious baked or fried. A word of warning,-- the root is also hot to the taste and slightly narcotic.



# 1996 Frog Survey Results

by Bridget Fahey

In March of 1996, we started the "herping season" with the 2nd Annual Frog Survey Kick-off hosted by Natural Area Preservation. We got frog-wild and decided to more than double the number of sites which were monitored in 1995, for a total of 117 sites in and around Ann Arbor. Why survey frogs? Surveying amphibian populations is an excellent way to monitor the health of wetlands. The more information we have on local "herp" populations, the better we can protect our wetlands from the impacts of urbanization.

The frog surveys work as follows: volunteers select a route of 10-15 sites which they visit a minimum of three times per season. After dusk, our volunteers listen at each site for 5 minutes to determine which species of frogs are calling in the area. Luckily for us, the 8 breeding frogs of Ann Arbor are easily distinguished by both the sound of the calls themselves, and the time in the season when they are calling. This year we ended up with excellent data for 4 of our 8 routes, data which we will be able to send to the MDNR for use in their long-term state-wide monitoring project (started one year after ours)!

## Be A Part of It!

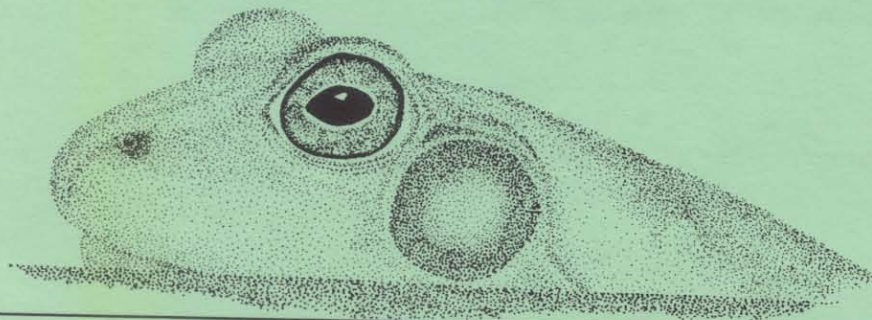
Volunteers are absolutely crucial to our frog surveys. This year, volunteers logged over 100 hours in our efforts to make Ann Arbor the city with the best documented frog populations in the world! If you are interested in learning more about our frog survey program, come to our 3rd Annual Frog Survey Kick-off which takes place March 6th from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Leslie Science Center. The time involvement to participate in our surveys is about 10 hours over the course of the season, and the expertise is minimal--we'll teach you all you need to know to identify frogs by their calls!

## The Results!

The following table displays the species of frog and the number of sites where its presence was recorded. The frogs are ordered from those which call early in the season to those which call late.

Frog Species	Number of sites
Spring Peeper	61
Chorus Frog	52
Wood Frog	11
Leopard Frog	3
American Toad	23
Gray Treefrog	17
Green Frog	26
Bullfrog	1

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# Butterfly and Breeding Bird Inventories

by Michael Kielbaso

Once again, it's time to prepare for the spring and summer surveys of birds and butterflies in the natural areas of Ann Arbor. Last year's efforts were very successful, and we hope to continue the program's accomplishments in the coming field season.

## Get Involved!

Volunteers play an active role in data collection for both the breeding bird and butterfly surveys. In either the Breeding Bird or Butterfly Inventories, each volunteer will adopt a park (or parks) to survey, and then visit the site throughout the survey season (approximately three months.) With each visit, the volunteer



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## Other Stewardship Opportunities:

**Huron River Watershed Council - Adopt A Stream Program** - Please contact Joan Martin at 313-769-5971. Assist with stream monitoring through the "Stream Search - Bug Day Collection" on April 12, and "Stream Search - Bug ID Day" on April the 27.

**Michigan Chapter of The Nature Conservancy** - Please contact Liesl Kardatzke at 517-332-1741. All workdays are held from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Ives Road Fen Preserve (Tecumseh) March 8, 22, April 5, 12, 26, May 3, 10, 17 for non-native weed management. Hillside Prairie (Ypsilanti) March 1, 29, April 12 for pre-fire management. Nan Weston Preserve at Sharon Hollow (Manchester) March 22 for general maintenance.

**Nichols Arboretum - University of Michigan** - Please contact Susan Letts at 313-763-5832 Stewardship and restoration work sessions are held the second Saturday of each month.





# 1997 VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

## Natural Area Preservation Division, City of Ann Arbor Department of Parks and Recreation

Call 313-996-3266 for more information and directions to sites and meeting locations.

MARCH			
<p><b>6</b> Frog and Toad Inventory - Kickoff Session (Thurs 7-9pm, Leslie Science Center) General information on joining frog/toad inventory; April session will demonstrate field techniques</p> <p><b>10</b> Public Meeting (Mon 7-8:30pm, Leslie Science Center) Concerning the prescribed burning program</p> <p><b>12</b> Volunteer Burn Crew Training (Wed 12-5pm, Leslie Science Center) Registration required: 996-3266</p> <p><b>13</b> Burn Training Review Session (Thurs 2-4pm, Leslie Science Center) Registration required: 996-3266</p> <p><b>15</b> Scarlett Mitchell Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm.) Invasive species removal and trail work</p>	<p><b>5</b> Molin Nature Area - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p> <p><b>17</b> Stewardship Restoration Workshop Part I (Thurs 7-8:30pm, Leslie Science Center) The first of a 2-session workshop introducing you to NAP's work in the parks. Registration required: 996-3266 (free)</p> <p><b>19</b> Stewardship Restoration Workshop Part II (Sat 10-1pm, Bluffs Park) See April 17</p> <p><b>19</b> Bluffs Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p> <p><b>TBA</b> Frog and Toad Inventory Field training session; followup from March 6 Kickoff Session</p> <p><b>TBA</b> Huron River Clean-up Day</p>	<p><b>3</b> Hansen Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p> <p><b>7</b> Breeding Bird Inventory Kickoff Session Part I (Wed 7-9pm, Leslie Science Center) First of 2-part session; introduction to inventory</p> <p><b>8</b> Breeding Bird Inventory Kickoff Session Part II (Thurs 4-6pm, Furstenberg Park) Demonstration of field techniques</p> <p><b>10</b> Breeding Bird Inventory Field Training Session (Sat 2-3:30pm, Marshall Park) Demonstration of field techniques</p> <p><b>12</b> Slide Show/Discussion (Mon 7-8:30pm, Gallup Park meeting room) "Natural Areas of the Huron River Corridor"</p> <p><b>13</b> Butterfly Inventory Kickoff Session Part I (Tues 7-9pm, Leslie Science Center) First of 2-part session; introduction to inventory</p> <p><b>14</b> Butterfly Inventory Kickoff Session Part II (Wed 4-6pm, Furstenberg Park) Demonstration of field techniques</p> <p><b>15</b> "Prescribed Nutritional Burn" (Thurs 6:30-9pm, Leslie Science Center) End of the burn season celebratory potluck</p> <p><b>17</b> Butterfly Inventory Field Training Session (Sat 2-3:30pm, Marshall Park) Demonstration of field techniques</p> <p><b>17</b> Brown Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal...and check out the spring wildflowers!</p> <p><b>31</b> Marshall Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Continuation of Boy Scout conservation project, removing invasives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MAY</b></p>
<p><b>7</b> Folkstone Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p> <p><b>21</b> Dolph Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal and trail work</p>	<p><b>13</b> Huron River Day - (Sun - all day) Gallup Park</p> <p><b>23</b> Bird Hills Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Wed 6:30-8:30pm) Seed collection of woodland plants</p> <p><b>30</b> Furstenberg Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Wed 6:30-8:30pm) Second annual "Spotted Knapweed Pull"!</p>	<p><b>17</b> Brown Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal...and check out the spring wildflowers!</p> <p><b>31</b> Marshall Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Continuation of Boy Scout conservation project, removing invasives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MAY</b></p>
<p><b>2</b> Maryfield-Wildwood Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p> <p><b>6</b> Foxfire South Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Wed 6:30-8:30 pm) Help control purple loosestrife invasion!</p> <p><b>20</b> Fritz Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Wed 6:30-8:30 pm) Invasive species removal</p> <p><b>23</b> Argo Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p>	<p><b>6</b> Sugarbush Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p> <p><b>20</b> Hollywood Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Park clean-up and invasive species removal (please call NAP office before attending: 996-3266)</p>	<p><b>17</b> Brown Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal...and check out the spring wildflowers!</p> <p><b>31</b> Marshall Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Continuation of Boy Scout conservation project, removing invasives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MAY</b></p>
<p><b>1</b> Foster Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Wed 5-7pm) Seed collection and invasive species removal</p> <p><b>4</b> Miller Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Park clean-up and invasive species removal (please call NAP office before attending: 996-3266)</p> <p><b>18</b> Sylvan Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p>	<p><b>1</b> Foster Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Wed 5-7pm) Seed collection and invasive species removal</p> <p><b>4</b> Miller Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Park clean-up and invasive species removal (please call NAP office before attending: 996-3266)</p> <p><b>18</b> Sylvan Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal</p>	<p><b>17</b> Brown Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal...and check out the spring wildflowers!</p> <p><b>31</b> Marshall Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Continuation of Boy Scout conservation project, removing invasives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MAY</b></p>
<p><b>Natural Area Preservation has a corps of volunteers that assist us with stewardship activities. From March through November we hold volunteer stewardship workdays on weekends each month. In spring and summer we conduct inventories of nesting birds, plants, butterflies, frogs and toads. We welcome your participation.</b></p>			

## NOVEMBER

- 8** Greenview Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal and other projects
- 15** Cedar Bend Park - Volunteer Stewardship Workday (Sat 10-1pm) Invasive species removal
- 20** Volunteer Appreciation Night - Potluck Dinner (Thurs 6-9pm, location to be announced later)



# Botanica

by Bev Walters

As the NAP plant inventory effort enters its fourth field season, it's a good time to reflect on where we started, where we are now and what's to come. Initially, in addition to our own botanical work in the parks, Tim Howard, Dave Warners and I enlisted the help of numerous volunteers to help us cover the thousand or so acres of local natural areas. As we conducted training sessions in the volunteers' local parks and talked about what they had found, we were able to determine areas which were of ecological value and would benefit from restoration activities.



Trout Lily

Last year we filled some of the gaps in this initial inventory, going back to some areas that hadn't been covered thoroughly.

To date, 978 plant species have been found in a diverse array of habitats ranging from hot, dry prairie remnants to wet-to-your-knees wetlands. Although it's likely most additions to the inventory will be non-native plants, we can always hope for some nice things like the nodding plumes of sweet-grass (*Hierochloa odorata*) and the stately Indian plantain (*Cacalia atriplicifolia*) that turned up last year. We also found a small fen area that thrilled us with the golden flowered shrubby cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*) and, in the fall, the wax-like flowers of grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia glauca*), both not found elsewhere in the park system. To help us keep track of what's

growing where, all of our plant inventory information has been put into a new, more functional database and we're look forward to topping 1,000 plants this year!

We've also been keeping a close eye on the areas where the NAP crew and volunteers have burned or cleared. The botanical team is very impressed with the work that's been done so far. Three years ago, we often had to fight our way through buckthorn or honeysuckle finding few or no plants in the process. Now in many of these same areas, we're able to walk easily, encountering a pleasant variety of plant life. Some plants, such as wood anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*) and golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*), seem to have rebounded quickly in some of the burned areas, and in Gallup Park the fall flowering closed gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) has grown in abundance in places that were cleared of invasive shrubs. Now that selected areas will be experiencing their second or third year of NAP management, this coming season could result in an even greater diversity as some of the plants that are slower to respond to the changing conditions are enticed to emerge from their slumber.



Bee Balm

## Management Issue Update

by Catriona Mortell

In the last issue of *Natural Area Preservation News*, we brought your attention to the controversy over stewardship in Cook County, Illinois. All stewardship projects had been stopped until public hearings could sort through the public confusion and disagreement over stewardship projects in the Cook County Forest Preserves. The confusion stemmed from forest preserve board members not knowing the answers when questions were raised about the stewardship activities. Controversy focused on stewardship methods used in the forest preserves. With the conclusion of the public hearings, the Cook County Board President, John Stroger, admitted the restoration program was poorly supervised. Stroger proposed restrictions on tree removal and brush burning. His plan would lift the moratorium on stewardship activities. The Board promised more involvement by forest preserve personnel in supervising volunteers (who do the bulk of the restoration work). Residents who live near restoration projects would be consulted before projects proceed in these areas. These proposals have yet to be approved by the county board.

Critics of the volunteer-based stewardship and restoration program were not satisfied with the outcome of the hearings. They contend that the new guidelines do not show significant changes from current stewardship practices. Supporters of the program feel the recommendations are sufficient, and that they complement the procedures in place for the volunteer-based stewardship program.

We are watching the proceedings of the Illinois volunteer stewardship program closely. At NAP we are trying to make every effort to keep people involved and informed about our restoration efforts in park natural areas. Please let us know how we are doing, or if you have any suggestions on what we should be doing differently.



continued from page 4....

### Frog Survey

Spring peepers are the most common (and loudest) frog to be heard in Ann Arbor. They also called for the longest period last year; the earliest was recorded on April 11th at Kilburn Park, and the latest gave one last peep on June 11th at the Courtyard Motel. Chorus frogs were our second most abundant species, calling from many of the same spring ponds in which peepers were found.



American toads and green frogs are heard from many sites in Ann Arbor, slightly later in the season than peepers and chorus frogs. Toads can be heard at the highest abundances at Bandemer Park, Eberwhite Woods, Furstenberg Park, and Forest Park, while green frogs are abundant at 1st Sister Lake, Black Pond Woods, Goss Pond, and Mitchell Scarlett Pond. Our most opportunistic breeder seems to be the gray treefrog, calling from sites where no other frogs were recorded, including ditches along roadsides. More conventional sites yielding gray treefrogs were in Arbor Hills, Gelman Science property, Ruthven Park, and the Sister Lakes areas. Leopard frogs are the second rarest frog in our area, since they prefer to breed in fields and other agricultural areas. We found them at three sites along the edges of Ann Arbor.

Bullfrogs are a species to watch out for in the future, as only one (heard at Foster Park) was recorded this year. Data from 1995 showed them at South Pond, but repeated visits to South Pond last year yielded no sign of the elusive bullfrog. It should be interesting to see (or hear) if they turn up in our 1997 surveys.



continued from page 4....*Butterfly and Breeding Bird Inventory*

records what is found or seen. These reports are then turned into the NAP staff coordinating the survey program for tabulation and analysis. To prepare volunteers to help with a survey, the kick-off session will provide an orientation to the expected bird or butterfly species, procedures and survey locations. A field session is scheduled for the following day to provide volunteers with hands on field techniques. The kick-off session for the Breeding Bird Inventory will take place on May 7, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Leslie Science Center, with the field session on May 8 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Furstenberg Park. The Butterfly Inventory kick-off session will be held May 13 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Leslie Science Center, with the field session to take place on May 14 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at Furstenberg Park.

### Results of the 1996 Butterfly Survey

During 1996, as a result of NAP's staff and volunteer efforts, we were able to add to the growing database on both breeding birds and butterfly occurrences in Ann Arbor parks. Our citywide survey efforts are unique in the nation for butterfly surveys, and we are only the second city in North America to conduct a breeding bird survey!

The cool wet spring last year may have had an adverse effect on some of the butterfly populations. Very few duskywings were seen in 1996, compared to five species seen in 1995. With only two years of data it is difficult to assess if these numbers represent a normal cycle or are related to weather patterns. Among those missed in 1996 was the Wild Indigo Duskywing, a state threatened species. The flowering cycle of the crowned vetch, a favored host plant for the Wild Indigo Duskywing, was so early that we found no adults during the late summer when most are typically seen. Many of the common butterflies were also recorded in low numbers, but it was just the opposite for some unusual species. The spectacular Giant Swallowtail was found in at least five natural areas, most containing prickly-ash, the favored host of the larvae. Harvesters continue to be found in the parks bordering on the Huron River, especially Furstenberg, Gallup, and Barton. This species is dependent on woolly aphids (another insect species) for survival. These aphids are the preferred prey of the Harvester caterpillar, our area's only carnivorous caterpillar species. The summer of 1996 seemed to be an abundant season for the aphid and an excellent one for the Harvester. Another butterfly found in the marshy meadows adjacent to the Huron River, the Baltimore, was found in abundance in 1996, while in 1995 very few were found. The same was the case for the two hackberry specialists: both the Tawny and Hackberry Emperor's were found in greater numbers in 1996.



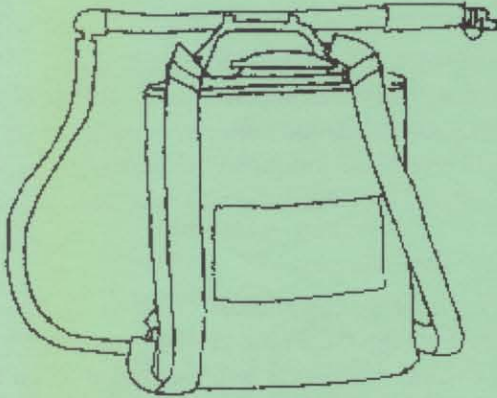
### Results of the 1996 Breeding Bird Survey

Excitement over new additions to the Breeding Bird Survey continues to mount, as volunteers located some nests of great significance. In Dolph Park, the greatest numbers of species nests were found, including those of the Green Heron and Brown Thrasher. While the Green Heron is a rather common summer resident, this is the first nest found in a city natural area. Hooded Mergansers took up residence in a Wood Duck nesting box at the small pond in Mitchell-Scarlett Woods. Mergansers were also observed at Thurston Pond. A new nesting pair of Cooper's Hawks were located at Cedar Bend, and other pairs were found nesting in Nichols Arboretum, Eberwhite Woods, Pioneer Woods, and near Turnip Green off North Maple.



## Training Opportunities

On **Wednesday, March 12 from 12:00 to 5:00**, NAP will offer a comprehensive burn training program for those who are interested in volunteering with us during the upcoming burn season March - May. If you plan to participate in the burns, you must complete a training class. This class is for anyone who has not actually participated in a burn with us (including those who attended a previous training). We will discuss the history of burning in the Ann Arbor area, planning issues and concerns, safety needs and practices, equipment use, burn roles, and (weather permitting) conduct a practice burn. Burns will take place weekday afternoons during the next two months, so if you can't make this class because of work, you likely can't make the burns. **Please RSVP by March 5 to receive a pre-class reading packet.**



If you have burned with us in the past, you are welcome to attend the training again. Otherwise, you need to attend the review session on **Thursday, March 13 from 2:00 to 4:00**. This review will help to get everyone up to speed after many months away from the drip torch. **Please RSVP for the review by March 7.**

*Also, check the calendar for other training: In March and April we begin our inventory work. Each inventory kickoff session is paired with a field session designed to get you started in field data collection. For an introduction to NAP's stewardship and restoration work, plan to attend the workshop in April.*

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