

Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 11, Number 3

Autumn 2006

Park Focus: Dicken Woods *by Erica Uramkin*

Writing the park focus this season gave me the opportunity to learn about a new park and the Friends of Dicken Woods (FoDW). I hadn't been there, so I hopped in the truck and headed for the west side of town to investigate. As I strolled along in this 10-acre woods on a rainy afternoon, I took note of a few things: there were maps set out to let me know where I was and where I should go, clear trails that were nicely woodchipped, and seats made from stumps along the way. I had heard that in the spring of 2004, when the city acquired Dicken Woods as a natural area, it was pretty hard to walk through, which is no longer the case. This is definitely a park that has people who care for it. I knew I had to meet these FoDW who had accomplished so much in the past two years.

Later that week, I went to the music room of Dicken Elementary School and sat in on the FoDW general membership meeting. FoDW is a group of neighbors and interested community members who got together in 2003 to save the woods when it looked as though it might be developed. Their present focus is working together to conserve and improve habitat in the natural area. They also hold fundraisers to give grants to the Dicken Elementary School for environmental projects.

I was impressed with the efficiency of the meeting and the general organization of the group. Even more so, I was excited to see their continued enthusiasm as volunteers. The members are still going strong because people use their strengths and skills to do what naturally

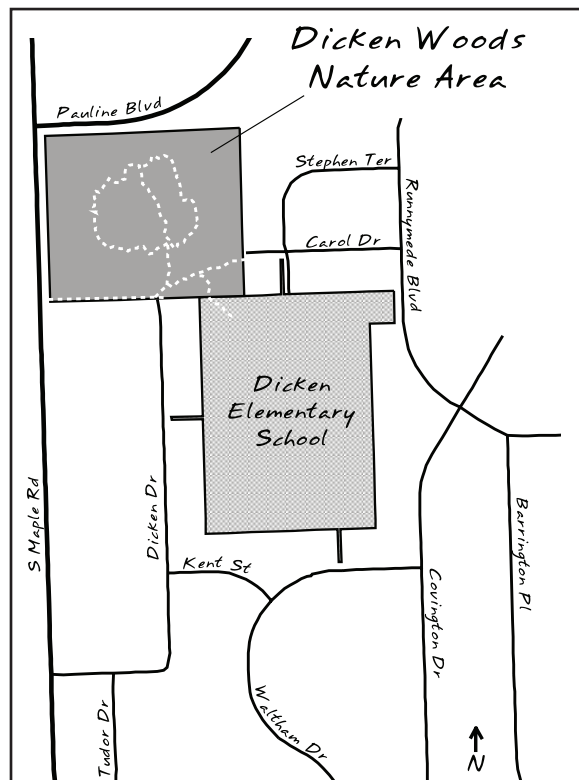
interests them. They have put together a stewardship plan that outlines short-term and long-term objectives. This helps the members tackle and accomplish smaller projects without getting overwhelmed by the greater goals. Some people have yet to cut down an invasive buckthorn, and others aren't sure how that fundraising dinner at Max & Erma's got organized, or when the screech owl houses went in, but they all know that a lot is getting accomplished.

After talking with the Park Stewards and getting e-mails from some of the board members and neighbors, I realized that Dicken Woods has become part of their lives. They're out with their families and dogs, their children are doing hands-on environmental projects with the elementary school, and they're unwinding from the day with a walk in the park. The members told me they have become more tied into their community and their school through involvement with the FoDW. They see each other at workdays, fundraisers, and on the trails in the woods. Amanda Koeller, Secretary of FoDW, writes, "Through the FoDW I have been able to meet so many of our neighbors. It provides a safe, secure feeling for both myself and my children to know that we are

surrounded by friends. In my opinion, that is what makes a neighborhood priceless."

The FoDW truly care about this natural area. Dave Marx, a Dicken Woods neighbor, writes, "Not every patch of woods or field can carry the dramatic scenic

Continued on page 3



In This Issue

Park Focus.....	1
Coordinator's Corner.....	2
Beve Shepard.....	3
Bioreserves.....	3
Volunteer and Stewardship Network Calendar.....	4 & 5

Staff Updates.....	6
NAPpenings.....	7
Photo Contest.....	7
Invasive Alert: Multiflora Rose.....	8

Coordinator's Corner

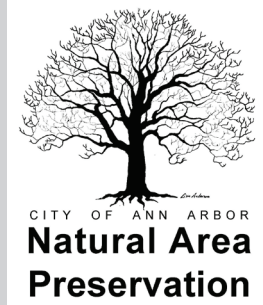
NAP – A Brief History

This fall, the parks millage that funds NAP will again come before the voters of Ann Arbor. The official ballot language of this property tax proposal should be finalized by the time you read this. As we approach this November, I thought it might be useful to our readers to provide a little history/summary of NAP's activities over the past 13 years:

- Funding for NAP first became available July 1, 1993 following the voters' approval of the newly proposed Parks Maintenance and Repair Millage in April of that year. The five-year millage "replaced" an expiring Land Acquisition Millage. The funding for a "Natural Area Preservation Coordinator" was included in the portion of the millage dedicated to "Care for New Parks," and I was fortunate to start in that new position on November 15, 1993.
- NAP held its first volunteer workday at Bird Hills Park on Super Bowl Sunday in January 1994.
- That spring, I hired the first additional NAP staff: an intern, and 3 part-time botanists to organize and train volunteers to do plant inventories so we could begin to locate the most restorable parts of the park system. We also did our very first prescribed burns that spring.
- That fall (1994), I hired staff to begin doing restoration work in these nicest natural areas, removing invasive species and repairing eroding trails.
- In 1995, we expanded our popular inventory efforts to include frogs and toads, butterflies, and breeding birds. These surveys have revealed a surprisingly high biodiversity in our City natural areas, including about 30 species of plants and animals that are Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern in Michigan.
- As these plant and animal inventories continued to provide interesting information about the biodiversity in our parks, we turned them into a book, *Along the Huron*.
- In 1997 and 2002, voters again passed ballot-initiatives to support Park Millages that funded NAP, at increasingly high levels, bringing our annual budget up to about \$570,000.
- These funds have allowed our ecological restoration efforts to increase over the years. Of the 1200 acres of city parkland that is undeveloped or "natural," we're actively conducting ecological stewardship activities in about 315 high-quality acres. And of those, we've been able to eradicate virtually all the invasive plant species from the nicest 180 acres.
- Volunteer efforts have also increased dramatically over the years, with about 600 volunteers now contributing 5000 hours annually. (A big THANKS to those 600 folks!)
- Besides these activities, we've continued to be involved in parkland acquisitions, reviews for park projects and other new construction developments, revising City ordinances, and many other environmentally related issues with the City.

Those are some of the highlights, milestones, and statistics of the past 13 years. More details are available for anyone who is curious. And once the language for the ballot proposal is finalized, we'll be able to make some estimates about what additional things NAP (and all our volunteers!) could accomplish should voters again approve the millage.

-David Borneman, NAP Manager



Natural Area Preservation
is a Division of the City of Ann Arbor Public Services Area.

The mission of the Natural Area Preservation Division is to protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural areas and to foster an environmental ethic among its citizens.

1831 Traver Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Phone
734.996.3266

Fax
734.997.1072

E-mail
nap@a2gov.org

Web site
www.a2gov.org/nap

Manager
David Borneman

Technicians
Jason Tallant
Lara Treemore Spears

NAP Specialist
Maggie Hostetler

Conservation Workers
Tamara Convertino-Waage
Suzanne Ewing
Shelley Gladwin
Billy Kirst
Bill Sterling
Erica Uramkin

Inventory Staff
Dea Armstrong, *Ornithologist*
David Mifsud, *Herpetologist*
Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator
Jason Frenzel
Outreach Assistants
Shelley Gladwin
Dana Wright

If you would prefer to receive your next newsletter via e-mail please call NAP.

Beve Shepard

NAP received a piece of sad news early this summer. Longtime photomonitoring volunteer Beve Shepard passed away in Ann Arbor from chronic lung disease. Beve had volunteered with NAP for the past eight years photographing Furstenberg Park. She took hundreds of photos of the park's prairies, savanna, and woods; not only at the official photopoints but also many pictures recording the beauty of individual wildflowers she came upon. Beve, who worked at the UM Medical Center maintaining their slide collection, was a dedicated amateur photographer, using 35 mm technology to capture the beautiful outdoors wherever she found it. She entered and won a number of photo contests. Beve's work for NAP was an invaluable contribution to our photo archive that will help us to trace the progress of our restoration work at Furstenberg for years to come. All of us at NAP will miss Beve's sense of humor, her artistic sensibility, and her great dedication to nature.



Furstenberg Photopoint by Beve Shepard-August 31, 2004

Preserving Our Water Resources: Huron River Watershed Council's Bioreserve Program Continues

by Kris Olsson

In the next year and a half, HRWC will enhance an existing map of the natural areas in the Huron River and develop a volunteer field assessment method for those areas.

The current map shows the locations of nearly 1,700 natural areas in the watershed, totaling 237,000 acres. The map uses a computer model to rank the areas based on seven ecological criteria: size, presence of wetlands, presence of water, groundwater recharge, geological and topographical diversity of the site, and potential presence of rare, remnant ecosystems such as lakeplain prairie. The map is available on the web at: <http://www.hrwc.org/1publications.htm> under Land Use Program.

With new funding, HRWC will add more criteria (such as restoration potential) to the map, and create a rapid field assessment method. The field assessment will provide on-the-ground verification of the natural areas as ranked by the computer model, and it will help land conservancies and government conservation programs decide where to invest in further ecological inventories.

HRWC needs volunteers to help create and test the rapid assessment method. If you are interested in learning a new skill, helping preserve natural areas, or just getting outside and enjoying the watershed's woods and wetlands, contact Kris at kolsson@hrwc.org or 734.769.5123.

Park Focus: Dicken Woods

values of a Muir Woods or Yellowstone National Park, and not every city-owned park need rival New York's Central Park, London's Hyde Park or even our own Arb for cultivated, planned beauty. In Dicken Woods I see potential all around, as every plant and animal strives to find a new home in the wake of human occupation and cultivation...I'm more than happy to watch as that natural community evolves." In May, the President of FoDW, Tom Ivacko, saw a mother duck with 8 ducklings waddling across the school parking lot into the woods. He said, "You can't help but smile and feel happiness at a sight like that. Simple pleasures like that

Continued from page 1

really increase the quality of life."

You can see that the Friends of Dicken Woods are aptly named. A couple of years ago it was just woods and wetlands that needed some assistance. Now, this little natural area gives joy to many and the friends of the woods have become friends to each other.

To meet the Friends of Dicken Woods and see the park, come to the Dicken Woods stewardship workday, Saturday, September 30, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

Autumn 2006 Natural Area Preservation Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

NAP is located at the Leslie Science Center (1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor, 48105), 734.996.3266.
Workday orientations start promptly at listed times. Please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes.
Minors must either be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form.
Our website is www.a2gov.org/nap

September

September 9, Saturday
Invasive Plant Control Techniques Workshop
Brighton State Recreation Area
9:00 am to 4:00 pm



How do you control garlic mustard, buckthorn, and purple loosestrife? Have you ever wondered which invasive plant you should be tackling first, which you can leave for later? Did you know that proper timing is key to successfully controlling specific invasives? This workshop costs \$60 for Stewardship Network members or \$90 for non-members, which includes registration, materials, and lunch. Register at www.stewardshipnetwork.org or 734.996.3190.

September 12, Tuesday
Huron Arbor Stewards' Circle
Bruegger's Bagels on North University Ave.
7:30 to 8:30 am



Controlling Woody Invasives. Dealing with those difficult shrubs like buckthorn and honeysuckle? What are best practices? Challenges? Come chat about strategies and control techniques

September 18, Monday
Forever Wild - with Walkin' Jim Stoltz
WCC, Morris Lawrence Bldg, 4800 E. Huron River Drive
7:00 pm



Celebrate America's rich natural heritage through stunning photography, live wilderness music, and gripping stories from 26,000 miles of walking from coast to coast and border to border. This event is free of charge.

September 23, Saturday
Furstenberg Native Plant Garden
9:00 am to 12:00 noon



Park Steward and Master Gardener, Aunita Erskine, will lead a cleanup workday and botanical walk. Join her in improving the demonstration garden. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School. A short nature walk will be held at the end of the workday.

September 30, Saturday
Dicken Woods Nature Area Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 noon



We will spend the morning removing the invasives that usurp valuable light and nutrients from other plants, and we'll have a great time doing it! Meet us at the end of Dicken Drive, off of South Maple Road. At the end of the workday we'll spend a little time exploring the ecology of Dicken Woods.

September 30, Saturday
Herbicide Wand Workshop
Leslie Science Center, 1831 Traver Road
9:00 am to 12:00 noon



Would you like to learn how to build an herbicide wand? Jason Tallant and Jason Frenzel will show you how to build a local favorite and supply you with the parts to build two, one for your use and one to donate to the Stewardship Network's tool sharing program. The cost is \$25 for Stewardship Network members and \$35 for non-members. Register at www.stewardshipnetwork.org or 734.996.3190.

Native Gardening Workshop

Monday September 11, 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Leslie Science Center Nature House - 1831 Traver Road



Interested in native plants?
Would you like to learn how to establish them in your yard?

Then this workshop is for you!

Topics will include site assessment,
preparation, and plant selection.

You will be inspired by existing native plant gardens.

Program fee: \$15

Please pre-register by September 4, by calling NAP at
734.996.3266.

October

October 10, Tuesday
Huron Arbor Stewards' Circle
Bruegger's Bagels on North University Ave.
7:30 to 8:30 am



Fundraising. Want to know how to find opportunities, grants, endowments, mini-grants, etc...? Also interested in discussing writing and submitting proposals? Come on out and talk about it together.

October 14, Saturday
Greenview Nature Area Stewardship Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 pm



Invasive shrubs out-compete native spring and summer wildflowers. We need many hands to help us get rid of these shrubs in the woodland. Meet at the Greenview Park sign, on Greenview Road, across from Barnard Road.

October 14, Saturday
Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm



Come remove invasive shrubs! We'll have lots of fun. Afterwards we'll have a short nature walk to ID some natives and learn more about ecosystems in the park. Meet us at Scarlett Middle School, off of Lorraine Street, in the parking lot at the bus turn around.

October 21, Saturday
Workshop on Native Trees and Shrubs
First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Ann Arbor
4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road
10:00 am to 12:00 noon



Native trees and shrubs can be a valuable part of your landscape. Learn about choosing woody plants that fit your soil and site plans, and practice planting techniques at this hands-on workshop. Register at www.stewardshipnetwork.org or 734.996.3190.

October 28, Saturday
Brown Park Stewardship Workday
9:00 am to 12:00 pm



Come help and have fun distributing native plant seeds! Buckthorn and honeysuckle will also be available for chopping. Afterwards, have a pleasant snack and a nature walk through the woods. Meet at the end of Verle Road, three blocks west of Platt Road.

October 28, Saturday
Hollywood Park Stewardship Workday
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm



This small neighborhood park has a great diversity of native wildflowers. Help continue to restore this beautiful park by sowing seeds and planting seedlings! Meet us on Sequoia Parkway near the intersection of Archwood Drive. A short nature walk with NAP staff and the Park Steward will explore some of the native plants at Hollywood.

Contact the NAP office if your school, office, club, or other group is interested in planning a volunteer stewardship event. 734.996.3266

November

November 4, Saturday
Resources for Site Assessment
Washtenaw County Parks Administration Building,
2230 Platt Road, Ann Arbor
10:00 am to 12:00 noon



Gather information about your private property or park as a starting point for the development of a management plan or simply to deepen your understanding of a site. Come find out what resources are available to the public. Register at www.stewardshipnetwork.org or 734.996.3190.

November 4, Saturday
Barton Nature Area Stewardship Workday
1:00 to 4:00 pm



Fun for all ages! Come collect native seeds from the prairie and learn more about Michigan's native ecosystems on a nature hike. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive, across from Bird Road.

November 4, Saturday
Huron Hills Golf Course Woods Workday
1:00 to 4:00 pm



Help us get rid of those invasives! We will be cutting invasive shrubs in the woodland to let more sunlight through to our native sedges and flowers. Meet us on Hunting Valley Drive off of Provincial Drive at 1:00 pm.

November 5, Sunday
Huron Parkway Nature Area Stewardship Workday
1:00 to 4:00 pm



Your last buckthorn opportunity for the season! We will cut invasive shrubs to reveal a small pond. It'll be satisfying work. We'll meet at the Park Steward's house—3470 Woodland Road, off of East Huron River Drive.

November 14, Tuesday
Huron Arbor Stewards' Circle
Bruegger's Bagels on North University Ave.
7:30 to 8:30 am



Starting a Volunteer Program. Have great ideas for events or workdays and need the support of a volunteer crew? Looking for a way to reach more volunteers, or reach volunteers systematically?



Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Tuesday, November 14, 6:00 PM
Cobblestone Farm - 2781 Packard Rd

Everyone is invited!

Please bring a dish to pass, and a place setting.

Awards will be passed out to NAP's Volunteer Of The Year and Photo Contest Winners!

Please contact NAP to RSVP
734-996-3266



Staff Updates

hello...

Bill Sterling

Hailing from Midland, MI, I received my BS in Biology and Anthropology from Alma College. I moved to Ann Arbor to work at the U of M hospital, but all that time inside just was not my style. I have landscaped, worked for an arboretum, and have been a wildlife technician in my past years – NAP suits me just fine. Aspects of the job I enjoy so far include any and all manual labor, trail maintenance, chain sawing, and moving heavy stuff; this is the reason why I have adopted the nickname “Heavy B.” I’m looking forward to my first prescribed burn as well as spending time with volunteers on weekend workdays. I am an Aries, I enjoy long walks on the beach, and I hope to be around next summer to defend my title at the annual NAP/LSC watermelon seed-spitting contest.



Billy Kirst



Good day fellow NAPpers. I am very happy to have been accepted into the wonderful world of Ann Arbor’s Natural Area Preservation. By the grace of universal goodness I was transported to this wonderful city last August and have loved every moment of living here: especially since joining NAP. I hail from Chicago, via the cornfields of central Illinois where I earned a BS in Plant Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I was also lucky enough to spend a year studying ecosystem and plant ecology in Perth, Australia. You may find me romping around at Argo and Bandemer parks with my lovely partner Nell and our two wild dogs, Havana and Ramona. Look forward to seeing y’all around town!

Jessica Templeton

Hello All! I am currently a senior at UM studying Biological Psychology, and this summer I was a community-based research fellow, sponsored by the UM Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program. With my project I worked with NAP to develop an ecological monitoring system that will allow for more efficient management of the restoration work done in the parks of Ann Arbor. When not on the computer or surrounded by books, I like to be on the water and soaking up the sun, or out enjoying all that Ann Arbor has to offer. I enjoyed working with



such a great crew of NAPpers for the summer and am pumped to have had this opportunity to brush up on my frisbee skills during evening Ultimate Frisbee games, make enemies with the invasives, and gain research experience, while continuing to learn about ecological restoration.

Suzanne Ewing

Having been born and raised in the Ann Arbor area, I’m excited to be back to explore my homeland, particularly its natural areas, as a crew member! A brief history of me: After graduating from Huron High, I ventured to the foothills of the White Mountains. Fortunately, this resulted in the completion of a four-year degree (in four years!) in Biology and some sweet backpacking. From there I headed to a year of destitution, New Jersey accents, wandering the Pinebarrens, and evading the Jersey Devil, which I thoroughly enjoyed, through the Student Conservation Association. In Jersey, I also further developed my passion for conservation, EMTing, rugby, and fire. Repeated attempts at a return to Michigan succeeded this past March when I began an indefinitely long nuclear family reunion with Jill, Sean, and Rex.



farewell...

Erica Uramkin

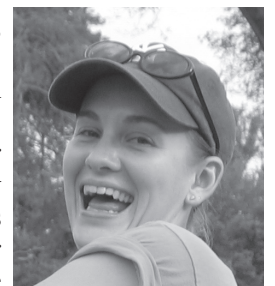


Our time together has come to an end. I want to say thanks to everyone at NAP for making my stint here so enjoyable. You guys are amazing and I am truly going to miss being around. I’m off to Boston to close the gap on a long distance relationship. I’m sad to go, but also very excited about starting this next phase.

(As anyone on staff can vouch for, since it’s all I talk about!)

Shelley Gladwin

By the time you get this newsletter, I’ll be just getting to San Francisco. This will be my second move from Ann Arbor to SF in the last 4 years. Like Erica, I am also moving for love. My partner, Josh, is currently living it up, working at the world’s largest search engine. It’s hard for me to leave here, for I have made so many good friends and found the best community I can think of. I’m searching for the most NAP-like job there is in California. Love and Peace to you all.



NAPpennings

The Michigan Prescribed Fire Council's annual workshop will be held Friday and Saturday, September 8-9, 2006 in Cadillac, Michigan with the theme, "Perceptions, Partners, and Prescribed Fire." This year's workshop is co-sponsored by the Society of American Foresters, so if you're interested in the activities of either of these two organizations, you may be interested in attending. Registration for both days is \$70 and includes lunches. To register, or for more information, go to www.firecouncil.org.

Upland Sandpipers at the A² Airport

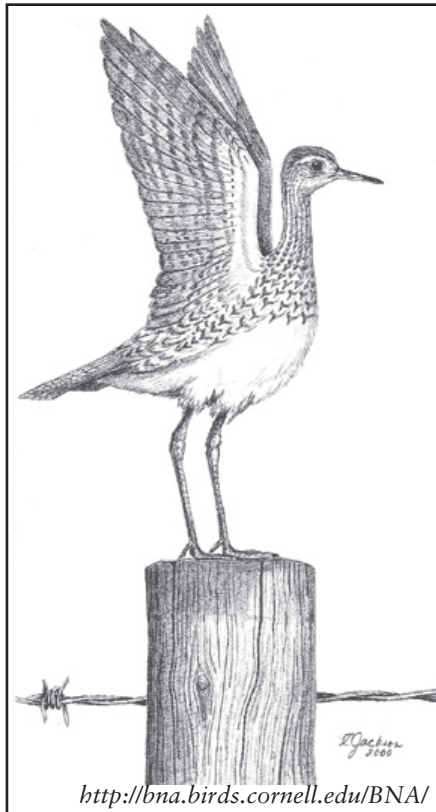
When the folks at the Ann Arbor Airport found out they had a pair of these uncommon grassland birds on the premises, they delayed their mowing for grassland areas that were not involved with the safe operations of the runways. Because the mowers waited until early July, grassland species that nest at the airport had a chance to complete a nesting cycle. "We feel like protective parents!" the mowing staff said when told of the impact this simple solution would have. They learned to identify the bird and were able to spot an adult bird with a youngster in late June. The Upland Sandpiper (rare in southern Michigan) prefers dry grasslands for its ground nests. It has a unique, eerie call, almost like a "wolf-whistle".

NAP is a Waste Knot Partner!

After years of regularly reducing, reusing, recycling, and buying recycled, we are now officially recognized by Washtenaw County as a Waste Knot Partner. This program recognizes schools, non-profits, and businesses in the area that are particularly "earth-friendly."

New Phosphorus Ordinance

The City of Ann Arbor recently passed an ordinance to reduce the amount of phosphorus applied to lawns with fertilizers. This is great news, especially for all of us who care deeply about protecting our local waters and the Huron River! Phosphorus is naturally abundant in southeast Michigan soils, which means that using lawn fertilizers high in phosphorus is not necessary to grow healthy grass. In fact, using fertilizers with phosphorus is damaging to our water. During normal watering or rainstorms, excess phosphorus applied to a lawn is washed into street storm drains, which flow directly into the Huron River. Once in the river, the extra phosphorus combines with nitrogen to promote the growth of algae. Algae on surface water blocks sun and depletes oxygen: killing aquatic plants, insects, and fish and degrading the water quality. This algae becomes most intolerable on those hot days when swimming is impossible in river lakes such as Ford and Belleville because of the slime and unpleasant odor. Phosphorus-free fertilizer is effective and readily available from major lawn care product manufacturers and distributors.



The Midwest Invasive Plant Network (MIPN) will again hold its annual meeting and symposium in conjunction

with the annual meeting of the North Central Weed Science Society. The location this year is Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the dates of the MIPN symposium are December 12-13, 2006. For more information, go to www.MIPN.org.



Photo Contest

It's not too late for you to be involved in NAP's new photo contest! We are looking for pictures that portray the photographer's enjoyment, or the subjects of the photo enjoying any of Ann Arbor's 150 parks and nature areas. They can be either black and white or color and must be submitted in digital and hard copy. All ages are encouraged to enter. Youth under 17 will be judged separately. Pictures must be sent by October 13, 2006 to be considered. Please refer to our website: www.a2gov.org/nap or call us at 734.996.3266 for more information, the entry/release forms, or a parks map. Prizes will be awarded at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Potluck on November 14th. Good luck and enjoy the parks!

Invasive Alert: Multiflora Rose - The Cursed Tangle

by Lara Treemore Spears

Many birders are familiar with multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) because of the excellent wildlife food and cover it provides. These features, as well as its potential use as a “living fence” for confining livestock, resulted in wide use by government and horticulture projects through the 1960s. As its propensity for forming dense impenetrable thickets became recognized, its use decreased. It is now considered an invasive shrub throughout the United States. Its thorny, sprawling stalks, which can reach a height of 15 feet, have earned it many names, but my favorite is “the cursed tangle.”

The popularity of its fragrance and ornamental berries has kept it in many backyards despite its aggressiveness. You may even have it growing in your own yard, or on your street. Unfortunately, it won't stop there. Birds, such as Robins, carry the seeds of multiflora rose away to natural areas, and seeds that are uneaten can remain viable for years.

To identify multiflora rose, look for an abundance of small, white flowers in May or June, followed by red rose hips in late summer and feathery leaf-like structures, called stipules, at the base of each leaf stalk. The stipules of native roses do not have feathery

margins, and the natives also produce fewer and larger fruits. In addition, the styles (floral structures) of multiflora rose are fused together into a column, while all native roses except for prairie rose (*Rosa setigera*) have separate styles. If you are in doubt, the plant's identity should be confirmed by a knowledgeable individual or by consulting appropriate books before attempting to eradicate it.



Multiflora Rose: Feathery stipules circled, with many white flowers

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