

# Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 5, Number 5

Summer 2001

## Redbud Nature Area: The People-Plant Connection

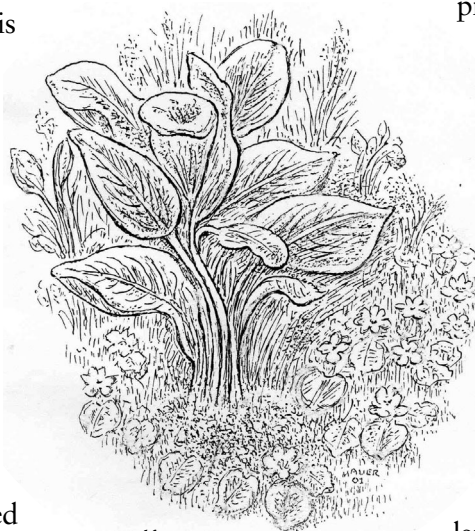
You've probably never heard of Redbud Nature Area. That's because it's only been a park for a couple of months. This 5.1-acre natural area is nestled between Malletts Creek and Parkwood Street on the southeastern side of Ann Arbor. Even though it is new to our park system, Redbud's magic has not gone unnoticed. Read on to see what two NAP staff members have to say about this newest addition.

### The Plants by Bev Walters

It was a gray November day several years ago when I first set foot in what is now Redbud Nature Area. Even at that late date in the growing season it was apparent that this area held promise to be a quality site. The wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) was still green beneath my feet and bright red clumps of Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) berries dotted the woodland landscape. The remnants of arrow-leaved aster (*Aster sagittifolius*) and horse-gentian (*Triosteum spp.*) stood about like tattered soldiers buffeted by the first wave of winter. Dry inflated fruits, dangling from the branches of bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*) bushes, rattled in the cool breeze. A few sedges (*Carex spp.*) lingered in the wetlands, as if keeping vigilance over the knobby black fruits of skunk cabbage

(*Symplocarpus foetidus*) that were strewn over the mucky soil. All would wait patiently for spring, as I also would have to do before seeing the area in its full glory.

And indeed when I returned the following spring, I was not disappointed. A small redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) tree whose branches were studded with small pink pea-like flowers stood sentinel at the trailhead. Upon entering the woods, I was greeted by the nodding flowers of white trout lilies (*Erythronium albidum*) far outnumbering the yellow (*E. americanum*). This was the largest population I'd encountered locally. The gathering of rich woodland wildflowers included the expected mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), cut-leaved toothwort (*Dentaria laciniata*), Solomon-seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*) and common trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), and also the less common richweed (*Collinsonia canadensis*) and drooping trillium (*Trillium flexipes*).



Wolfgang Hauer

Throughout the spring and summer, the wetland areas also revealed their treasures. The skunk cabbage revived first, sending up cloaked purple flowers before the snow had melted. When these ground-level flowers were overtopped by large, bright yellow-green leaves, the delicate white flowers of spring cress (*Cardamine bulbosa*), in the

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# Coordinator's Corner

## A Line in the Leaf Litter

There's a line through the middle of Bird Hills Nature Area. There are lines through Marshall, Furstenberg, and many other city parks, too. They are battle lines, drawn on maps after thoughtful strategizing, and delineated in the field by flagging, trails, or other landmarks. They are lines that mark the boundaries of the highest quality "nature preserves" that NAP will be defending against all foreign plant invaders.

This is not a radical new direction for NAP, just a maturing of our program and a refocusing of our efforts. After seven years of carefully inventorying the plants and animals in our parks, then undertaking some restoration activities, then re-inventorying the sites to monitor the response, we've come to some important conclusions. First, not all of our 1000 acres of City-owned natural areas are of the same caliber ecologically. Some are true remnants of Ann Arbor's original native landscape, models for our restoration efforts, and refugia for the historical plant and animal communities. Others are more disturbed and thus less useful as ecological models, but still valuable as plant and wildlife habitat, not to mention their value as public open space.

Second, *all* of our city natural areas are being invaded by exotic species. Even more sobering, control of these invaders is not a one-time effort, but a long-term commitment to follow up, monitor, and keep these areas free of the most threatening exotics. It does little good to remove all the buckthorn shrubs from a site if we then turn our backs on that site and let the buckthorn return. Because of that long-term commitment, we need to choose our battles carefully. NAP just can't effectively restore all 1000 acres of undeveloped park land.

So, after checking our inventory records and our maps, and applying our knowledge of the sites, we're starting to delineate what we feel are the finest remaining parcels of native ecosystems in our park system—our "nature preserves." These are core areas where we feel the battle with invasives is worth fighting because 1) there's a lot to lose if we don't, and 2) we think we can win! Thus, the "line in the leaf litter" and the pledge to make and keep these areas invasives-free. It's a big commitment! Every spring from now on we'll be scouring the top priority woodlands to make sure they are still free of garlic mustard and dame's rocket, and every summer we'll be checking the nicest wetlands to make sure there is still no purple loosestrife there. Eventually, after a few more years of cutting buckthorn and honeysuckle, we may even be able to declare our nature preserves free of these ubiquitous exotic shrubs as well. Then, once we've achieved this goal, we can begin expanding these areas and more actively restoring some of our other natural areas.

Please don't think that we're ignoring the lower priority areas. We're trying to be as effective as we can by focusing in areas where we'll get the most ecological "bang for our buck." Of course, as our volunteer corps increases, the number of areas in which we can work effectively also increases. So come over to our side of the line in the leaf litter and help us defend our nature preserves from the foreign invasion. Nature needs your help!

*David Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager*



Parks & Recreation  
CITY OF ANN ARBOR

### Natural Area Preservation

is a Division of the City of Ann Arbor  
Department of Parks and Recreation.

*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.*

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For up-to-date information on  
stewardship activities call the  
"hotline" at (734) 996-3266.

# Love 'Em and Leash 'Em by Nancy Novitski

Like many other cities in the U.S. today, Ann Arbor is growing. It is growing in size and in population. Unfortunately, one of the results of the outward growth of Ann Arbor and the surrounding communities is a decrease in habitat for many kinds of flora and fauna. Animals that once had several places to choose from when making their homes may now have fewer options. Many populations of migrating songbirds, for example, are already declining; remaining populations are increasingly reliant on the natural areas protected within city parks.

At the same time, there are more humans using the parks. And many of us who enjoy the quiet escape that our park natural areas provide want to share that natural connection with our dogs.

So what happens when you have more humans and dogs in the parks that wildlife is increasingly reliant on? A delicate and difficult situation. One important step in maintaining a balance between our increased park use and wildlife habitat preservation is for everyone to keep dogs on leashes when in parks.


Most people have very friendly, well-behaved dogs. But even a friendly and obedient dog may innocently cause stress to small mammals or destroy the homes of


ground-nesting birds. The only way for folks to be completely sure that they do not disturb the wildlife is to keep all dogs on leashes. This also helps keep them on the trail, preventing erosion and the destruction of wildflowers.

Those are not the only reasons. Plenty of people, both children and adults, are scared of dogs. And this you may not know: it is the law. The fines for having your dog off leash begin at \$50. This actually applies to the entire city of Ann Arbor! Here we highlight the special importance of complying with this ordinance in parks, and especially in park natural areas. The impact of a single person or a single dog may be minor, but the combined impact of all of us truly threatens the balance of the few remnants of native ecosystems left in our city. The next time you take your dog for a walk, please consider the ecological benefits of using a leash. There has never been a better time to start!

*NAP has been working with Nichols Arboretum, Washtenaw County Parks, and other divisions of the Ann Arbor Parks Department to figure out ways to help minimize our negative impact on park land. We have developed a fact card listing the above reasons for keeping dogs on leashes. To receive a copy of our dog fact card, please call the NAP office.*


## Top 5 Reasons to Leash Your Dog in Our Parks & Nature Areas and Remove Its Waste





**5.** Wildlife may not survive an encounter with a free-roaming dog. Even a very friendly and obedient dog may innocently destroy the homes of ground-nesting birds or stress small mammals.

**4.** Keeping your dog on leash and on designated trails in natural areas helps prevent erosion and destruction of off-trail plants.



*American Woodcock*

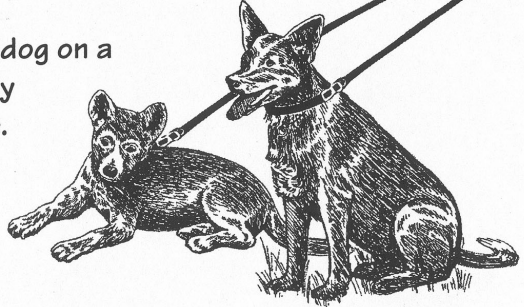
**3.** Many park visitors feel scared or uncomfortable when they encounter free-roaming dogs.

**2.** Dog feces are an unpleasant experience for all park visitors, and disrupt the natural balance of the ecosystem by adding excess nutrients to the environment.



**1.** It's the law. Fines begin at \$50 for first offenses.

serve our Parks and Nature Areas  
k users.

Keep your dog on a  
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SCHOOL OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
& ENVIRONMENT

SAGINAW FOREST



# NAPpenings

Join the Huron River Watershed Council and other local environmental groups for the Third Annual **River Day** on **Saturday, June 2**. This day brings people together to spotlight the beauty and resources of south-east Michigan's river system. Everyone is invited to attend a free Kick-off Breakfast at 9:30 a.m. at Delhi Metro Park. After breakfast, folks of all ages can explore the "living river" on a guided nature walk and choose from a variety of activities along the watershed. Or you can celebrate River Day by joining NAP at our own riverside park and venture down to Argo Nature Area at 10:00 a.m. for a NAP Stewardship Day (see Volunteer Stewardship Calendar on page 5 for details).

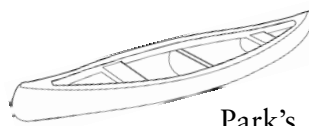


Be sure to stop by Gallup Park for the 21st Annual **Huron River Day** (not to be confused with River Day) on **Sunday, July 8**. Events start at 9:00 a.m. and include canoe and foot races, music, food, and environmental activities for the whole family. See the Volunteer Stewardship Calendar on page 5 for information about NAP-sponsored events. For a complete listing of events, check the local newspapers or the Dept. of Parks & Recreation website: [www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/framed/parks/index.html](http://www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/framed/parks/index.html).



The 2nd Annual Meeting of the **Southern Michigan Prescribed Fire Council** will be held Friday and Saturday, August 3 and 4, in Bath, Michigan, just north of Lansing. They've expanded the meeting to two days to cover a wider range of topics. Although anyone is welcome to attend either day (or both), the topics for each day are targeted to different audiences. Friday will

be focused on ecological issues of burning that may interest agency personnel already using fire. Saturday will be a broader discussion of prescribed fire, aimed more at private citizens who may be interested in burning on their property. David Borneman is a member of the Fire Council's Steering Committee and active in the Public Outreach Committee, for whom he authored an article on prescribed burning in the May 2001 issue of Michigan Out-of-Doors magazine. Contact him at 994-4834 for more information or to get on the Council's mailing list.



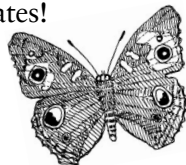
Come enjoy a guided tour of wetlands along the Huron River-by canoe! Gallup Park's **Wetlands by Canoe** program provides an opportunity to learn first-hand about the functions and values of these amazing buffers between land and water. Trips are 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on June 3 & 30 and July 8 & 22 and are led by NAP staff. Meet at the Gallup Park Canoe Livery off Fuller Road. Please call 662-9319 for reservations and fee information.

If you see border collies chasing Canada Geese at Leslie Park Golf Course, Huron Hills Golf Course, or Gallup Park, they are probably Kirk Mehlhaff's dogs Ellie, Dexter, Logan, and Breezy. Kirk and his dogs comprise **Gooseworks**, and they will be helping the Parks Department encourage the geese to nest elsewhere. Also interested in the nesting patterns of Canada Geese, **Curt Mykut** from MSU banded a few geese with radio telemetry collars this April to study their molt migration patterns.

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## Staff Update

**Barb Barton** is NAP's new Entomologist. Barb has always loved butterflies and spent five years with the Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania studying the last colony of Regal Fritillaries in the eastern United States. Barb is originally from Lansing and is glad to be back home in Michigan. You can join Barb on one of her scheduled Butterfly Walks this summer. See the Volunteer Stewardship Calendar on page 5 for dates!



After over one-and-a-half years of service as a member of the NAP Conservation Crew, **Michelle Michney** has jumped ship and joined the ranks of the Native Plant Nursery, whose owners, Greg Vaclavek and Mike Appel, both have strong ties to NAP. Although we cautioned her against such a move, knowing she could never be happy working for those two tyrants in the native plant sweatshop industry, we lost the battle. So with heavy hearts we bid Michelle adieu and wish her well with her new job! We're also glad the Native Plant Nursery is doing well enough to hire more staff!

# Summer 2001 Natural Area Preservation Volunteer Stewardship Calendar



## JUNE

**June 2, Saturday**  
National Trails Day  
and River Day

**Argo Nature Area, 10:00AM - 1:00 PM**  
Lend a hand in honor of our local trails and rivers! Help control erosion along the Huron River and keep the trails looking good, too. Meet in the parking lot off Longshore Dr., just north of the Argo Canoe Livery.



**June 2, Saturday**  
Breeding Bird Survey Walk  
Barton Nature Area, 7:30 AM

Join NAP Ornithologist Dea Armstrong and survey volunteers to learn more about our local feathered friends. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot off Huron River Dr., just north of Bird Rd.



**June 2, Saturday**  
Butterfly Survey Walk  
Barton Nature Area, 9:30 AM

Join NAP Entomologist Barb Barton and survey volunteers to learn more about our local butterflies. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot off Huron River Dr., just north of Bird Rd.



**June 3, Sunday**  
Breeding Bird Survey Walk  
Gallup Park & Furstenberg  
Nature Area, 7:30 AM

Join NAP Ornithologist Dea Armstrong and survey volunteers to learn more about our local feathered friends. Meet at Gallup Canoe Livery.



**June 10, Saturday**  
Furstenberg Native Plant  
Demonstration Garden  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Help in the garden and learn about using native plants in the landscape with NAP volunteer and Master Gardener Aunita Erskine. Bring your favorite work gloves and tools. Meet in the Furstenberg parking lot off Fuller Rd.



**June 16, Saturday**  
Furstenberg Nature Area  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Join us in removing the invasive spotted knapweed from this beautiful prairie area. Meet in the Furstenberg parking lot off Fuller Rd.



For your safety, long pants and closed-toe shoes are required at Stewardship Days. For more info, call NAP at 996-3266.

**June 16, Saturday**  
Breeding Bird Survey Walk  
Ann Arbor Landfill  
(4210 Platt Rd.) 7:30 AM

Join NAP Ornithologist Dea Armstrong and survey volunteers to learn more about our local feathered friends. Meet at the small parking area at the Platt Rd. entrance.



**June 26, Tuesday**  
Bluffs Nature Area  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Help us maintain trails and remove invasive spotted knapweed. Meet at the Elks Pratt Lodge parking lot off Sunset Rd. (call NAP for directions).



**June 30, Saturday**  
Butterfly Survey Walk  
Dhu Varren and Foxfire South  
Nature Areas, 9:30 AM

Join NAP Entomologist Barb Barton and survey volunteers to learn more about our local butterflies. Park on Omlesaad Dr. south of Dhu Varren Rd. and meet at the north end of Placid Way Park.



## JULY

**July 7, Saturday**  
Furstenberg Native Plant  
Demonstration Garden  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM, See June 10.



**July 8, Sunday**  
Huron River Day  
Gallup Park  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

It's a riverside celebration for the whole family! Events include canoe and foot races in the morning, and entertainment, activities, and environmental education in the afternoon. Be sure to visit the following NAP-sponsored events:  
**10:30 AM** - Botanical Tour of the Gallup Wet Prairie led by NAP Botanist Bev Walters. Meet at the Exhibit Tent.  
**1:00 PM** - Furstenberg Native Plant Demonstration Garden Tour led by NAP Volunteer and Master Gardener Aunita Erskine. Meet at the Exhibit Tent and walk or drive to Furstenberg.



**July 14, Saturday**  
Butterfly Survey Walk  
Furstenberg Nature Area  
9:30 AM

Join NAP Entomologist Barb Barton and survey volunteers to learn more about our local butterflies. Meet in the Furstenberg parking lot off Fuller Rd.



**July 21, Saturday**  
Brown Park  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Lend a hand as we remove herbaceous and woody invasive plants in this spectacular forest setting. Meet in the parking lot at the Packard Rd. entrance.



**July 28, Saturday**  
Foster savanna in  
Barton Nature Area, 9:30 AM

Join NAP Entomologist Barb Barton and survey volunteers to learn more about our local butterflies. Meet at the second pull-off north of Warrington Rd. on Huron River Dr.



## AUGUST

**August 4, Saturday**  
Butterfly Survey Walk  
Northeast Area Park, 9:30 AM

Join NAP Entomologist Barb Barton and survey volunteers to learn more about our local butterflies including some rarities found at this site. Meet at the Dhu Varren Rd. entrance just east of Pontiac Trail.



**August 7, Tuesday**  
Foxfire West Park  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Help remove herbaceous and woody invasive plants from one of our newest parks and nicest sedge meadows and fens. From Dhu Varren Rd., take Omlesaad Dr. north. Turn left (west) onto Foxway Dr. The park entrance is currently unmarked, so park on the street and look for the NAP vehicle



**August 12, Sunday**  
Furstenberg Native Plant  
Demonstration Garden  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM, See June 10.



**August 25, Saturday**  
Bluffs Nature Area  
(new addition)  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Join us as we spruce up the trails and remove invasive plants in this brand-new addition to Bluffs! Meet in the Elks Pratt Lodge parking lot off Sunset Rd. (call NAP for directions).



**August 25, Saturday**  
Butterfly Survey Walk  
Parker Mill County Park, 9:30 AM

Join NAP Entomologist Barb Barton and survey volunteers to learn more about our local butterflies. Meet at the main entrance on Geddes Ave., east of Dixboro Rd.



# Update: Furstenberg Native Plant Demonstration Garden

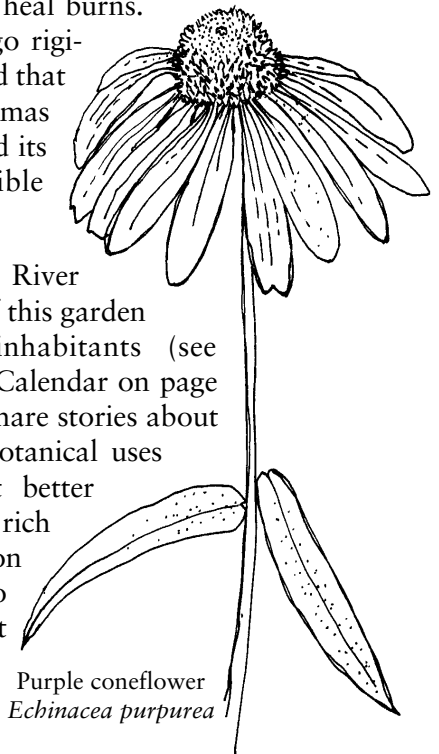
by NAP Staff with Aunita Erskine

The Furstenberg Native Plant Demonstration Garden's dedicated volunteers continue to impress the NAP staff. Volunteer steward Aunita Erskine recruits, coordinates, and, of course, gardens, with little help from staff. And volunteers at the first garden workday of the season on April 21 could not be stopped by "spring showers." NAP and Aunita wish to send a heartfelt thank you to the volunteers who gardened through not one, but two waves of heavy rain that day!

What Aunita and these volunteers are maintaining is more than just 65 species of prairie and open-woodland plants. Together these plants represent both the past biodiversity of southeastern Michigan and the history of its people. For example, Native Americans in Michigan used common mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*) to bait mink traps. It is also a very attractive and fragrant addition to your herb garden. Common evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) was exported by German settlers back to Germany, where its leaves and tender roots were prized as a salad green. The seeds of

this plant also contain linoleic acid, which has historically been used to help heal burns. Stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*) is the only goldenrod that has a milky sap. Thomas Edison once investigated its properties as a possible substitute for rubber!

Join Aunita on Huron River Day for a public tour of this garden and its interesting inhabitants (see Volunteer Stewardship Calendar on page 5 for details). She will share stories about the history and ethnobotanical uses of these plants. What better way to celebrate the rich ecosystems of the Huron River than to get to know the plants that grow near its banks?



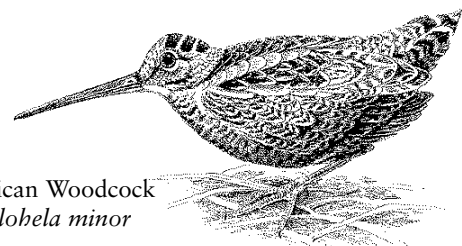
Purple coneflower  
*Echinacea purpurea*

## Tracking the Timberdoodle by Dea Armstrong

NAP's first annual Woodcock Week (April 1-7) was highly successful! The goal of this event was to educate park users about one unusual ground-nesting bird as an example of the possible impacts of unleashed dogs in natural areas. (To learn more about NAP's educational campaign, see the article on page 3.) Over 100 participants saw and heard male American Woodcocks do their extraordinary flight dance at Barton Nature Area. Most of us were also able to get a look at the bird giving his "peent" call on the ground as well. At least five male Woodcocks established singing grounds in Barton Nature Area, and their zigzag flight, warbles, and wing twitters could be seen and heard there from late March through mid-May. The nests that female Woodcocks make within 150 yards of these singing grounds are typically only a slight depression in the ground amongst the dead leaves. The female incubates the eggs for approximately three weeks before they hatch, and within a few hours of hatching, the chicks are able to leave the nest,

though they are not capable of even rudimentary flight for another two to three weeks. The hen finds worms for her chicks for the first few days, but after that they feed on their own, though the hen and chicks stay together for six to eight weeks. If you are lucky enough to see these chicks at Barton, they'll probably be standing perfectly still, because that is their only "defense" until they are capable of flight.

You'll have to wait until next year for another chance to attend Woodcock Week, but if you'd like to see more of the birds in our city parks this spring, join me on some of our bird walks! Check the Volunteer Stewardship Calendar on page 5 for dates.



American Woodcock  
*Philobela minor*

# Redbud Nature Area *continued from page 1*

mustard family, opened up. Later came the nodding orange flowers of the noble Michigan lily (*Lilium michiganense*) and, as fall pressed on, both yellow- and orange-flowered touch-me-nots (*Impatiens pallida* and *I. capensis*) produced their explosive fruits.

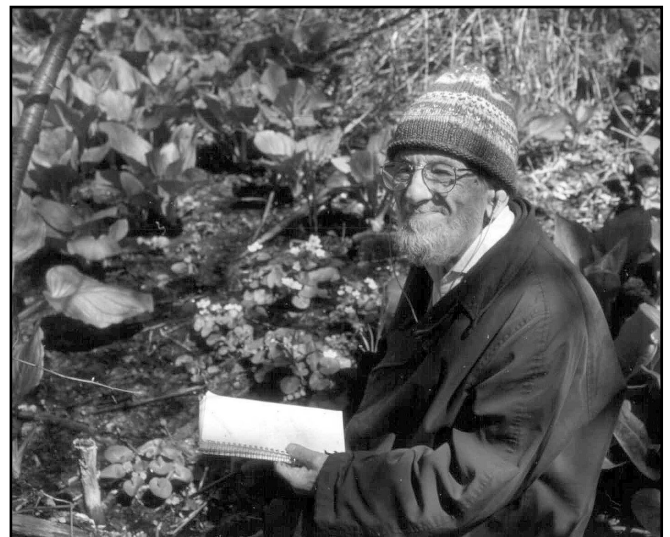
In addition to the rich herbaceous woodland and wetland flora, the twenty-four tree species present in this small parcel confirm that this is a high quality floodplain forest that has found refuge on the banks of Malletts Creek. This type of habitat is quite rare in the Ann Arbor area and, thanks to all who supported this purchase, future generations will now have the opportunity to experience this little gem tucked into our urban landscape.

## The People by Tara Griffith

Generations present and future are already enjoying the beauty of Redbud Nature Area! On a recent spring day, Bev and I had the pleasure of visiting the park with one of the women who helped save it from development, Jeannine Palms. Accompanying Jeannine was a troop of three- to five-year-olds from her Blossom Home Preschool. We had all gathered for an afternoon art lesson led by local artist and nature lover Wolfgang Hauer. We followed Bev down the winding path to a little area sprinkled with skunk cabbage and marsh marigolds-perfect subjects for our wildflower sketches! The children gathered around and found their drawing seats on the damp ground, while Wolfgang, 81, chose to sit comfortably on a nearby log. Once the sketching began, a calm seemed to replace the chatter and squirming. It was if everyone was lost in the tranquility of this little woods.

It is hard to believe that just two years ago this peaceful scene could have been lost to a housing development. When Malletts Creek Association member Jesse Gordon received a notice about the proposed development, he quickly spread the word. The group that formed to address this issue, including Jeannine Palms, Jesse Wood and countless other concerned citizens, collaborated with the City to preserve this area for the public to enjoy. Redbud Nature Area became an official park this past spring, and volunteers have already spent many hours on cleanup and restoration.

We watched the children peering over Wolfgang's shoulder as he sketched. "It is moments like this that make all of the hard work worth it," I said to Jeannine. She simply smiled.



*Wolfgang Hauer & Blossom Home Preschoolers sketch amidst the skunk cabbage.*

# Volunteer Focus: Photomonitors See the Changes

by Nancy Novitski



*Furstenberg Nature Area Photopoint: 2 days post-burn, 2 months post-burn, and 1 1/2 years post-burn.*

People often ask questions about NAP's restoration work, such as, How does NAP know what effect burning will have? How has my neighborhood park changed over time? Where did native plant species grow in the past?

The success of our restoration efforts is impossible to measure without a record of the changes that occur as a result of that restoration. One method of monitoring that NAP uses extensively is photomonitoring. Photos are taken regularly at certain designated "photopoints" in our parks and nature areas. This way we can see how a site looked before a burn or other restoration work, how it looks soon thereafter, and how it is affected in the long run. This information is essential to making future decisions about restoration.

While NAP staff perform much of this photomonitoring, we have trouble keeping up with all 350 or so photopoints in 28 of our parks and nature areas. Photomonitoring volunteers to the rescue! Our three dedicated volunteer photomonitors keep this record running.

After being a member of NAP's Frog & Toad Survey since it started in 1994, **Beve Shepard** two years ago traded amphibians for photomonitoring. As well as providing a service to Ann Arbor's parks, traipsing through nature areas with a camera or two has an added bonus for this amateur nature photographer: it helps her find interesting subjects for her own photos. The seven to eight hours Beve spends photographing Furstenberg Nature Area's photopoints each month offer an opportunity to see change occurring, whether it be the seasons, the natural cycles of growth and death, or changes due to restoration work. "I like being out-of-doors, and I especially like autumn and watch-

ing the leaves change," she says. And Beve has seen plenty of change as a result of NAP's restoration work. In particular, the plant growth after a burn is striking. As well as making a record of change in Furstenberg, Beve enjoys another valuable aspect of her volunteer job: talking with park-goers about what she is doing. "I think it's important for people to know that restoration is going on and that the parks are being cared for."

**Ralph Powell**, in his third year as a photomonitoring volunteer, echoes many of these sentiments. As a photographer, Ralph particularly enjoys nature and travel photography. His monthly trek around Barton Nature Area (oxbow and Foster savanna areas) with his wife, fellow NAP volunteer Barbara, provides an unusual chance to observe subtle transformations as they occur. "You appreciate the changes more," he says, "not just the seasons, but from year to year." The results of prescribed burning are some of the most noticeable changes. While Ralph says he sees many invasive shrubs killed by the burning, he observes that in places where those species "have a foothold, burning alone may not keep the area open." Photomonitors gain a first-hand understanding of the need for a multi-faceted approach to restoration.

As well as appreciating the cycle of changes from month to month, our newest photomonitoring volunteer gives another main reason for taking pleasure in her volunteer assignment. **Ursula Thompson** says photomonitoring is good for her health: "I needed a way to get out and walk." She also says her photomonitoring route in Gallup Park is even more enjoyable when she takes a friend along. Together, Ursula and her friend Joan Doman look for different plants and watch a variety of songbirds, as well as squirrels and ducks. After

*Continued next page*



starting last April, Ursula was struck by the effects of NAP's spring prescribed burn in Gallup Park, only to find the burned areas overgrown with vegetation after the summer rains. Finding the photopoint locations then "became almost like an Easter egg hunt," she says. Overall, she says photomonitoring has been "an enjoyable and beautiful experience, and very educational."

Are you looking for a way to spend time in your favorite park while also helping with a vital component of ecological restoration? NAP can always use more photomonitors! All you need are a camera with a wide-angle lens and the willingness to learn. We will show

## Purple Plant-Eaters by Jana Vanderhaar

**K**ee and I had an odd feeling potting and fertilizing purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) plants. We nurtured them, gave them plenty of water, and pruned them to ensure bushy growth and an abundance of those familiar magenta flower spikes. What on earth were we NAPpers doing, you may wonder? Aren't we supposed to be working to eradicate this European invader? Believe it or not, we were!

In March we attended a Washtenaw Audubon Society workshop that taught us all about the new biological control effort developed to set back purple loosestrife: Galerucella beetles. Three species of this European leaf-eating beetle (*Galerucella californiensis*, *G. pusilla*, and *Hylobius transversovittatus*) have undergone extensive testing in the U.S. to determine their safety, host specificity, and effectiveness. The USDA approved use of the beetles as biological control agents for purple loosestrife in 1992. Michigan State University and Sea Grant Michigan have set up the Purple Loosestrife Project to raise and release these beetles. Several populations of the beetles have been established in Michigan by the DNR and by MSU Purple Loosestrife Project scientists.

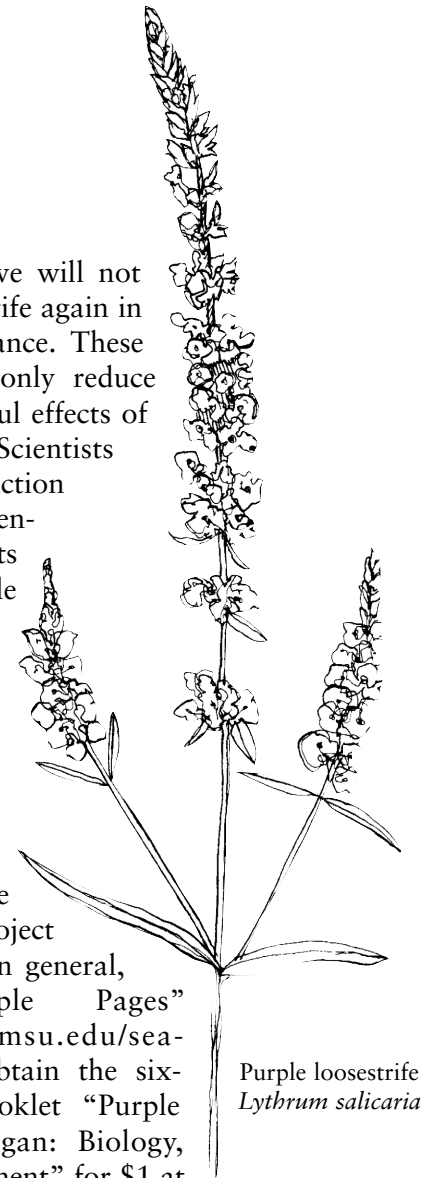
As part of this project, NAP and other volunteers have been growing these beetles on purple loosestrife plants for the last couple of months. We anticipate having hundreds of them to release in a nearby wetland! Hopefully, they will make thousands of babies there that will set back the *Lythrum salicaria* plants or even kill them. Once a population of beetles is established, a large percentage may migrate and spread to other purple loosestrife-infested wetlands in Washtenaw County.

you the ropes and provide you with film. Then you simply find a few hours once a month (April to November) for your park photo session. Just call the NAP office and ask for Outreach Coordinator Tara Griffith. Take this opportunity to watch a local park or nature area change throughout the years!

Will this mean that we will not see any purple loosestrife again in the future? Not a chance. These natural enemies can only reduce the density and harmful effects of this purple plague. Scientists hope for a 90% a reduction in purple loosestrife density, leaving some plants to maintain the beetle population for the future. With luck, our native vegetation should then re-establish itself in our magnificent wetlands.

If you would like to learn more about the Purple Loosestrife Project or purple loosestrife in general, visit the "Purple Pages" website: [www.msue.msu.edu/sea-grant/pp](http://www.msue.msu.edu/sea-grant/pp). You can obtain the six-page information booklet "Purple Loosestrife in Michigan: Biology, Ecology, and Management" for \$1 at the Michigan Sea Grant Publications Office, 2200 Bonisteel Blvd., Ann Arbor, phone: (734) 647-0768.

*If you'd like to help NAP monitor our wetlands for new infestations of purple loosestrife, call our office at 996-3266.*



Purple loosestrife  
*Lythrum salicaria*

# All Dressed Up and No Place to Burn!

by David Borneman

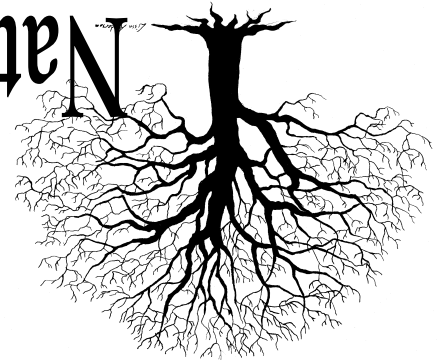
Well, another spring burn season has come and gone. It was not one of our best, due to strange spring weather that included Mother Nature's "April Fool's" prank of snow. But between snow flurries and rain showers we did manage to burn about seventeen sites on thirteen relatively dry days. By the time things dried out enough to burn, many of the woodland wildflowers were already in full bloom, so we never got to many of the wooded sites we'd hoped to burn. For these reasons, our total acreage was probably less than 100 acres, down considerably from previous springs. Luckily, we did manage to do quite a few woodland burns in the fall, and the benefits of those burns are evident this spring in the nice displays of wildflowers.

Anticipating the potential for a wet spring, we got an early start burning this year, holding our first-ever February burns. As far as burns go, they weren't great, but ecologically they were better than nothing and they did accomplish some invasive shrub kill. They also provided a good introduction to prescribed fire for some



new city neighborhoods that had no prior experience with NAP's use of this restoration tool. And those early burns served as great practice for some of the 20 volunteers who joined us on the burn crew this year. Good weather or bad, we always get great support from our many new and returning burn crew volunteers. Thanks so much for your efforts! We wish Mother Nature were as cooperative as all of you have been.

## Natural Area Preservation News



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