



NAP

# NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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

Volume 23, Number 3  
Autumn 2018

## Park Focus: Braun Nature Area

*Chris Robey, Conservation Worker*

On a tip from Mike, one of NAP's Stewardship Specialists, I've sought out a bluff he says offers an unparalleled view of Braun Nature Area. True to his word, the bluff overlooks the park where it abuts a gentle bend in Mallett's Creek, Ann Arbor's main stormwater outlet.

Upstream, a doe and her fawn, growing into lanky adolescence but still spotted on its sides, wade neck-deep into the current and make for the opposite bank. Clambering up into the brush, they pause, shaking droplets agleam with sunlight from their russet hides, before moving on.

Edging the stream at times are willow and dogwood thickets. The open spaces between them spill over with prairie species—an array of goldenrod, sedges, bromes and wild rye. Scattered throughout are swatches of wildflowers—fragrant monarda, purple allium like little bottlerocket bursts, cup plants with their huge clasped leaves, and golden Alexanders abound.

Downstream, a red-bellied woodpecker posts itself atop a snag's outstretched arm. It lingers there, sunning and preening. I crouch behind the nearest tree, fumbling with the knobs on a borrowed pair of binoculars.



Below my vantage, the bank drops down to the creek's edge. The frayed edges of buried erosion control netting jut from among a similar mix of prairie and riparian species, all planted there to stabilize the bank after it was shaped and filled in by excavators.

Six years ago this placid bend was a job site, part of the multi-million dollar restoration project that also created the detention basin at Mary Beth Doyle Park and the re-graded streambank at County Farm Park. The bluff I'm crouched on once had been an undercut mat of roots hanging like an overbite over the flashy, silt-laden waters below.

To mitigate this, the bank was completely reconstructed—scooped out and rebuilt with the added support of terraced layers of riprap and packed earth swathed in netting

***Mallets Creek runs through Braun Nature Area.***

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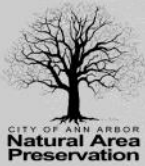
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A unit of the City of Ann Arbor  
Community Services Area, Parks  
and Recreation Services.

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

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*Natural Area Preservation is  
funded by the voter-approved  
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Capital Improvements Millage.*

# It's Been 25 Years!

## Where Are They now?

One of the great benefits of spending 25 years at NAP is the privilege to have worked with so many fine staff and volunteers over the years. Really dedicated, passionate, competent folks. Some of them, especially the volunteers, have stuck around for decades and continue to give NAP the benefit of their many talents. Others, and especially those staff who were in temporary positions here at NAP, used their time here as a springboard into other exciting opportunities or professional positions. It's really quite fun for me to look around the audience at someplace like the annual Stewardship Network conference in E. Lansing and count how many former NAP staff are there in attendance, now representing different sister organizations, but still united with NAP in our shared mission to protect and restore native ecosystems. In the past quarter century, NAP has employed nearly 200 staff at various points in their professional careers. It's much harder for me to track the lives of the thousands of volunteers who have touched NAP, but I know that they are out there, and we would love to hear from any of them who would like to share with us about their experience with NAP.

As for the past staff, I remain in contact with many of them. So in anticipation of NAP's 25th anniversary, I reached out to them with a simple request to let us know what they'd been up to since they left NAP, and to share any other reflections they had of their time here. The rest of this article is their responses. Some have been edited to fit into this newsletter. I encourage you read their full responses on our website at [www.a2gov.org/NAP25Years](http://www.a2gov.org/NAP25Years).

Thank you to all the volunteers who have contributed to NAP over the years. And thank you to all the staff, current and former, who have helped to shape NAP and make it what it is today. Enjoy these reminiscences. Even if you don't recognize the staff member's name, I think you will be amazed at what NAPpers have gone on to do with their professional lives, and where their experiences at NAP have led them!

- Dave Borneman, NAP Manager

**Irene Frentz (1994):** As an intern from the UM-SNRE, I was thrilled to work with NAP! I learned so much! I took endless notes. I loved assisting with water quality monitoring of the Sister Lakes. I truly enjoyed working with NAP that summer and was very motivated by it. After getting my Ph.D. at the University of Arkansas, my family and I ended up in Virginia. I have now been with Virginia State Parks for over 12 1/2 years, involved in many things I first did at NAP: prescribed burning, water quality monitoring, inventories, invasive species control, etc. I work with many young people, including staff, AmeriCorps, and volunteers, and I always try to convey my enthusiasm and motivation, as my time with NAP and Dave motivated me!



*Nature walk in 1994*

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**David Warners (1994-97):** Since working for NAP, I finished my PhD at UM and started a position in the Biology Department of Calvin College. I have been teaching and doing research there since then. When I worked for NAP, I helped generate botanical inventories of natural areas in the AA Parks. We applied the Floristic Quality Assessment tool so that comparisons could be made among the parks as to the level of their natural quality. This quantitative approach was new back then, but since then it has gained in popularity and I have used it hundreds of times in my work here in West Michigan. The field botany work I did for NAP also informed and deepened my interests in plant ecology and evolution, interests that have continued to develop since those days. I also have lots of wonderful memories of the relationships I developed with other NAP staff and volunteers, some of whom remain friends to this day.



*One of NAP's first burns, 1995*

**Bev Walters (1994-2004):** As one of the original NAP botanists I was with NAP through its first decade, then moved on to Michigan Natural Features Inventory where

I conducted rare plant surveys, and from there to UM Herbarium, where I've enjoyed working with the Michigan Flora Project. NAP gave me the opportunity to gain some local field experience, but more importantly, I learned about the importance of having places where people can connect with nature. I retired this summer from UM and am very much looking forward to sharing more time in nature with my grandchildren.



*Huron River Day, 1996*

**Bill Schneider (1995):** I was at NAP for only about 9 months though I believe it was a very productive period where we began in earnest to address invasive species and conducted the first prescribed burns within the city park system. I met many people who I am still work with closely today. I left NAP and moved to Wyoming briefly. When my wife and I returned in July 1996 I began Wildtype, a company that operates a native plant nursery and provides ecological services. We are located in Mason, Michigan. Been doing that every single day since.

**David Mindell (1995-98):** I left NAP in May 1998 to start my own business (PlantWise) doing many of the restoration-based things that NAP does. Now, more than 20 years later, I'm still doing the same thing! With a staff of 10, we're able to complete burns and invasives removal, implement numerous native plant landscape projects, and inventory plant and animal species across thousands of acres each year. NAP was instrumental in helping me to read the landscape from a restoration-perspective, learn many management techniques, appreciate the beauty of intact natural areas, and understand the importance of bringing all stakeholders into the decision-making process. I've also had the pleasure of working with many former NAPers over the years!

**Catriona Mortell (1995-98, 2000):** I've been at the UM - Mattheaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum (MBGNA) for just about 16 years and I am still loving it here. My job with NAP was a significant part of my career development. From the people I worked with - both staff and volunteers - to the work we did in the parks, to my own personal learning, it really was a great experience. Memories include trying to burn at Dhu Varren during a snow fall, delivering cookies after burns and workdays, seed collecting in fall, and the wonderful potluck parties.



*Burn Crew party, 1997*

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# Where are They Now?

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*Training seed collection volunteers, 1998*

Extension for most of the last 20 years. I work with natural resource volunteers, just like I did at NAP, and I continue to be inspired by the contributions of enthusiastic community members. In the last 5 years, I've been working on a project called Nature Groupie, an effort launched with help from The Stewardship Network in Michigan (so NAP connections are still at work!). We connect volunteers to nature-based stewardship and citizen science projects across New England. I have great memories of NAP: amazing and committed volunteers (the best!), Dave leading the staff in outdoor card games at lunch, worm composting, filling in with the burn crew, watching my first woodcock sky dance at Barton Nature Area and wading through a wet meadow somewhere along the Huron River with Joe Pye Weed way over my head.

**Dea Armstrong (1996, 1998-2015):** I was a NAPper who left NAP at age 65+, so I did what everyone wants to do and RETIRED! As I told most folks, seems funny to say that because I loved what I did so much that it seemed like I hardly worked at all! Since then I have taken a car trip across country, (yes of course I birded!) and did a BIG YEAR and ended up with 563 species for the lower 48 states. I often travel to enjoy my two grandchildren. Being a grandmother is the best "job" there is. Travel is great too so I plan to go to Borneo next year. I still teach a birding class in

**Bridget Fahey (1996):** I've spent the last 20 years working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Endangered Species Act implementation in California, Colorado, and now in our Headquarters Office in the greater DC area. My current job includes overseeing the processes to list species as threatened or endangered and to delist them when they are recovered. At NAP, I loved training volunteers to identify all of Michigan's frogs and toads by call. I even got pretty good at my green frog and American toad imitations, and still will bust one out every now and again when the occasion calls for it. I'm also very proud of getting to contribute to "Along the Huron," which is still on my bookshelf!

**Malin Ely (1996-97):** After leaving NAP, I moved to New Hampshire and have worked at the University of NH Cooperative



*Cutting Buckthorn, 1999*

April, volunteer at the Bird Lab at University of Michigan and ALWAYS work the polls on election days. I love being retired!



*NAP Staff in 2001*

**Michelle Barnwell-Boerger (1999-2000):** I left NAP in September of 2000 to get married and move to Cincinnati, Ohio. I worked for the City of Mason, Ohio as their Landscape Inspector. Being on the NAP Crew was such a great experience. It was so much fun getting to know Ann Arbor's many parks and working out in them every day. I always came home exhausted with interesting stories to tell. Whether it was a prescribed burn, tagging Canada geese, pulling garlic mustard, removing purple loosestrife, repairing park trails, gathering seeds or wielding a chain saw, I loved every minute of it.

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**Kee Condict (1999-2002):** Has it really been 16 years since I was working alongside my fellow NAPpers, managing natural areas through prescribed burns, invasive species removal and volunteer work days? Since I left NAP, I ventured down to Nashville, TN to work as a Data Manager for the Division of Natural Heritage for 4 years. Made my way back to the Mitt and worked for the MDNR helping to manage the conservation crew at Island Lake Recreation Area. After some soul searching, I decided to go back to school and earn my Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. Currently I am working as a PT at the UM Trauma Burn Center where I evaluate, treat and manage patients with physical impairments and try and get them back to their functional baseline, much like we did with Ann Arbor's natural areas. So, in some ways, you could say I've come back home, but just managing the health of a different population now. I'm ever grateful for my time and experience at NAP. I wouldn't have traded it for the world.



*Burn training in the snow, 2002*

**David Mifsud (2000-13):** I continue to run my business, "Herpetological Resource and Management," dedicating my career to the conservation and management of amphibians and reptiles in Michigan. I have also published a Best Management Practices manual focused on amphibians and reptiles and co-authored the Rev. Ed. of Amphibians and Reptiles of the Great Lakes Region. In addition to my local work, I keep busy conducting field work and helping with turtle conservation in Vietnam, South Africa, and Madagascar. I credit much of my early professional success to the influence and mentoring of people like Dave and the opportunities I received while working with NAP, and am forever grateful.

**Barb Barton (2001-04):** Went back to school and got my Master's in Ecology, worked at MNFI for a spell, put out four CDs and wrote two books, continued my wild food foraging and wild ricing, and now work for MDOT as a water quality specialist. What I remember most about working at NAP was the people. It was the best group of folks I had ever worked with, they were cool, funny, charming, beautiful, inspiring, helpful, and wacky. One fellow brought me a piece of the Great Wall of China from his trip there. Dave helped me work through finding a dead body in South Pond Nature Area. I could go on. I feel so blessed to know these fine people and to continue to call them my friends.



*Outreach Coordinators in 2004*

**Dana Wright (2001-03, 2005-09):** After NAP, I went to Legacy Land Conservancy as the first person there dedicated to stewardship. I see my time with NAP as a springboard into the larger community of ecological restoration. Many relationships I started in my time at NAP continue to be important in my life professionally as well as personally. In looking around at the SE Michigan restoration people I see a lot of NAP influence. I see in other NAP "graduates" a common bond. Even folks that pre-dated me or moved through NAP after, I feel connected to through NAP. I absolutely love seeing park stewards around town and catching up on their park and other NAPpenings. I learned so much, and while I would never go back, I still highly value my time there.

**Eric Ellis (2002-04):** Since NAP, I finished graduate school, worked for a non-profit removing dams and restoring habitat in northern Michigan, worked as a regional wildlife biologist and grant writer, and managed the natural resources department for the Huron-Clinton Metroparks. I am now managing large restoration projects with the Great Lakes Commission. My time with NAP was a springboard early in my conservation career where I was given the opportunity to help plan and implement restoration activities and get significant and meaningful experience with prescribed fire, working with the public, species surveying, and invasive species control. I have found myself talking about this experience in job interviews ever since. I also made many lifelong friends who are never far from my thoughts. Not surprisingly, every one of them is still employed someplace where they have the opportunity to improve and protect the natural world in the Great Lakes region. That is a testament to the type of person that is drawn to work at NAP and where that experience can lead.

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# VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR AUTUMN 2018

Volunteers assist NAP in all aspects of our work. Community involvement is vital to the success of NAP's conservation and education efforts. Please join us for one of these events!

For all of our **Stewardship Workdays**, please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Workdays are **free** and suitable for all ages. Minors must be accompanied by a guardian or have a signed release form. Contact NAP for release forms. Tools, snacks, and know-how provided.

## SEPTEMBER

### **National Day of Service and Remembrance Stewardship Workday** **Sunday, September 9, 9 a.m. to noon** **Oakwoods Nature Area**

We can honor those lost on 9/11 by serving our community. Join us in our efforts to remove invasive shrubs such as buckthorn and honeysuckle so that wildlife can thrive. Meet us at the park entrance off Dunwoodie.

### **National Day of Service and Remembrance Stewardship Workday** **Sunday, September 9, 1 to 4 p.m.** **Arbor Hills Nature Area**

The anniversary of the 9/11 attacks has been declared a day of service. Come protect this unique nature area by removing threatening invasive shrubs. Meet at the park entrance on Ashburnham Road.

### **Bird Walk** **Sunday, September 9, 5 to 6:30 p.m.** **Mary Beth Doyle Park**

Join NAP's Ornithologist on a walk around this diverse park. Search for migrating waterfowl on the pond and songbirds in the woods. Bring binoculars if you have them, and be prepared for muddy areas. Meet us in the parking lot at the end of Birch Hollow Drive. No pets please.

### **Stewardship Workday** **Sunday, September 16, 9 a.m. to noon** **Stapp Nature Area**

Stapp Nature Area is a mature forest with a vernal pond. Help us maintain this habitat by cutting non-native shrubs. Meet at the park sign at the corner of Huron Parkway and Tuebingen Parkway.

### **Stewardship Workday** **Sunday, September 16, 1 to 4 p.m.** **Foxfire West Park**

Help NAP cut invasive shrubs to keep this diverse area healthy. Meet us at the park entrance on Birchwood Drive between Hickory Point Drive and Timbercrest Court.

### **National Public Lands Day Stewardship Workday** **Sunday, September 23, 1 to 4 p.m.** **Kuebler Langford Nature Area**

Join us, on this day dedicated to restoring public lands, to remove invasive shrubs. Meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive, north of Sunset Road.

### **Nature Walk with AADL** **Thursday, September 27, 6 to 7:30 p.m.** **Marshall Nature Area**

Join NAP and AADL staff on a family-friendly nature walk. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road. Some of AADL's Science Tools will be available for use during the walk!

### **Stewardship Workday** **Saturday, September 29, 9 a.m. to noon** **Argo Nature Area**

Help us cut invasive shrubs in this riverside park to allow more native plants to grow. Meet in the parking lot north of the Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Drive.

### **Stewardship Workday** **Saturday, September 29, 1 to 4 p.m.** **Onder Nature Area**

Help us make it a beautiful day in this neighborhood park by removing invasive shrubs. Meet at the intersection of Hilldale Drive and Brookside Drive.

### **Stewardship Workday** **Sunday, September 30, 1 to 4 p.m.** **Marshall Nature Area**

Marshall Nature Area is home to a variety of birds that nest in the oak hickory forest. Join our team in removing threatening shrubs while enjoying the song of the woods. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.

## OCTOBER

### **Stewardship Workday** **Sunday, October 7, 1 to 4 p.m.** **Mary Beth Doyle Park**

Help us protect the exceptional diversity of native plants here by cutting invasive shrubs such as honeysuckle and buckthorn. We will also collect native seed in the prairie. Meet at the parking lot off Packard Road, across from Easy Street.

## PUBLIC MEETING

**Controlled Ecological Burn Program**  
**Monday, October 8, 7 to 8:30 p.m.**  
**NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Drive**  
This meeting provides information and time for discussion about NAP's Burn Program. All persons are encouraged to participate in public meetings. Accommodations, including sign language, may be arranged with the Clerk's office 734.794.6140; cityclerk@a2gov.org; or by written request mailed or delivered to: City Clerk's Office, 301 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Requests should be made at least two days in advance.

STEWARDSHIP NETWORK  
**STEWARDS' CIRCLE**

**7:30 to 8:30 a.m.**

**Second Tuesday of every month**

**Bruegger's Bagels**

**709 N. University Avenue**

Are you interested in learning more about how to care for natural areas? Then join the Stewardship Network's Huron Arbor cluster for an informal discussion on a monthly topic with volunteer and professional land stewards, plus others interested in nature. Free and open to anyone interested.  
[www.stewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org).

**September 11: Ann Arbor's Bees**

Come learn about the diversity of wild bees in the area, their ecological importance, and reasons for the declining populations of many bees. We'll discuss ways to manage lands to promote the well-being of wild bees, and strategies for engaging the public in understanding and protecting these essential pollinators

**October 9: Partnering with UM SEAS**

Learn how the UM School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) engages with local stewards, practitioners, and educators involved in conservation and restoration. SEAS has many partnerships from student research on the avian use of Ann Arbor rain gardens, to an educational tool on Phragmites control in the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge, to public stewardship opportunities in university-owned properties. How can SEAS partner with you?

**November 13: Prioritizing Conservation Work**

With so much work to do, how do you prioritize which areas will receive resources for conservation work? What are some tools that can be used to make these decisions? Join us to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using certain criteria to determine priorities.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, October 14, 9 a.m. to noon**

**Furstenberg Nature Area**

Furstenberg's habitats include tall grass prairie, oak woodland, and wetlands. Spend the day enjoying the beauty of this park while removing non-native shrubs. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, October 14, 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Ruthven Nature Area**

Much work has been done to restore the native plant communities here. Lend a hand by cutting invasive shrubs and collecting native seeds. Meet us at the Gallup boat dock parking lot, at the southeast corner of Huron Parkway and Geddes Road.

**Volunteer Appreciation Potluck**

**Thursday, October 18, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.**

**Cobblestone Farm— 2781 Packard Road**

All are invited to our annual appreciation event! Games, door prizes, and fun activities for all. Please bring a dish to pass and friends or family. RSVP appreciated. Call us at 734.794.6627 or email [NAP@a2gov.org](mailto:NAP@a2gov.org) by October 16.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, October 21, 9 a.m. to noon**

**Sunset Brooks Nature Area**

What better way to spend a crisp fall morning than exploring the woods? Enjoy nature while helping to maintain it by removing threatening, invasive shrubs. Meet at the Beechwood entrance to the park.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, October 21, 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Bird Hills Nature Area**

Come see how gorgeous Bird Hills is in the autumn while helping to protect it by removing invasive shrubs. We'll also collect native seeds. Join us at the Beechwood entrance off Sunset Road.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Saturday, October 27, 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Miller Nature Area**

This once-disturbed site is returning to its natural beauty. Join us to cut non-native shrubs to increase the native biodiversity. Meet us at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue.

## NOVEMBER

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, November 4, 9 a.m. to noon**

**Braun Nature Area**

Mallets Creek runs through Braun Nature Area and wetland plants thrive along its banks. Join us to remove invasive shrubs, allowing the native plants to flourish. Meet at the park entrance on Chalmers Road.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, November 4, 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Huron Parkway Nature Area**

We need your help maintaining the quality of this habitat by removing invasive shrubs and collecting native seeds. Meet at the Park Steward's house— 3470 Woodland Road, off East Huron River Drive.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Saturday, November 10, 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Cedar Bend Nature Area**

Autumn is a magical season of migration in the riverside nature area of Cedar Bend. Enjoy spotting birds while cutting down the invasive plants menacing this habitat. We'll also collect native seeds. Meet us at the Island Park parking lot, at the end of Island Drive.

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, November 11, 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area**

Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area is not only 88 acres of diverse plant communities, it is also the location of many school field trips. Help our kids continue to enjoy the natural native wonders of this area by removing invasive shrubbery. Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot off Lorraine Street.

**Family Volunteer Day**

**Stewardship Workday**

**Sunday, November 18, 1 to 4 p.m.**

**Barton Nature Area**

Family Volunteer Day celebrates families that work together to improve their communities. Bring your family and join the NAP family in removing invasive shrubs and collecting native seeds. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

## Where are They Now?

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**Jason Frenzel (2002-11):** I'm still in the Ann Arbor area, now at the Huron River Watershed Council, managing volunteers to monitor and improve water quality. With over a decade and a half of volunteer management experience (all thanks to NAP), I'm now the President of the National Association of Volunteer Managers.

**Lauren Theodore (2003-04):** Since leaving NAP, I got a Master's degree, got married, lived in six states, worked for two federal agencies and two state agencies, had two kids - oh, and I turned 40! I currently work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program as a Restoration Biologist. I live in Freeport, ME, which I love and my work takes me all over New England. I think of NAP all the time as my job involves identifying, funding and helping to implement all kinds of natural resource restoration projects (from invasive plant removal to dam removal). And I still keep in touch with many of the folks I worked with at NAP - they are friends for life!



*Staff singing at the potluck, 2006*

**Laurel Malvitz (2003-05):** What I'm doing now and what I've done since I left NAP are almost one and the same! I've been working as a Natural Resource Steward for the MDNR, Parks and Recreation Division. I started and continue to grow the Volunteer Steward program in Southeast Michigan state parks, leading volunteer workdays year-round

to combat invasive species and restore high quality ecosystems, and coordinating independent monitoring/ surveying projects. I learned so much about ecological restoration and working with volunteers in my years at NAP that have helped me grow and have so many good memories from working at NAP. Highlights include time prescribed burning, pulling garlic mustard in the snow, working with fellow crewmembers, Park Stewards and staff.



*NAP Crew in 2007*

**Suzanne Ewing (2006-08):** I've been living in Avon, Colorado for 10 years. I'm a critical care/search and rescue paramedic for Eagle County. I've been working on a low carbon footprint driving a hail-damaged Volt and taking advantage of Colorado sun with 22 solar panels! NAP mapping, birding and botany skills have come in handy.

**Matt Demmon (2007-12):** Since I left NAP I've spent a long stretch working for PlantWise as their "Director of Native Landscapes". I helped out in all aspects of the business; invasive plants, prescribed fire, and native landscape maintenance, but mostly was designing and installing native landscapes. I've recently branched out on my own and am starting a business that focuses on native landscape design and installation in the Ann Arbor area. The name of the business is Feral Flora.

**Shafkat Kahn (2008):** I got my PhD from the U of Georgia. I also spent some time in the prairies of northern Florida, where the fire-dominated ecosystem put my time with NAP, especially prescribed fire, into clearer perspective! Currently I'm working at Miami University where I teach graduate students in conservation and biology. I just taught a course in India, where we were examining the relationship of local people with nature and their conservation practices. During this course too, my time with NAP and seeing how local community support was garnered certainly helped me connect the dots for my US students about community-based conservation in an urban setting in the US.



*Fourth of July Parade, 2009*

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*NAP Staff in 2011*

**Steve Parrish (2008-11):** Much of what I learned about restoration ecology I learned in the 4 years I worked at NAP. Since I left NAP I've had the good fortune to become the Natural Areas Manager at UM-MBGNA. There, I am carrying on the good work of caring for the land and teaching interns and volunteers to do the same. I have fond memories of intimate lunch conversations, kickball tournaments and perhaps...the fine South Pond buckthorn berries.

**Christine Chessler-Stull (2010-13):** I can't thank NAP enough for the connections and experiences that have shaped my career in environmental education and volunteerism in Ann Arbor. After NAP, I worked as an Outreach Coordinator for Recycle Ann Arbor, 2013-2018. As of this September, I'm the Volunteer Coordinator at UM-MBGNA. It's been great to stay in the same circles as former NAPpers and volunteers over the years.

**Rachel Maranto (2012-13):** Since 2014 I have been working for the Michigan Nature Association, first as the Regional Stewardship Organizer for our southeast Michigan sanctuaries, and now as the Stewardship Coordinator for staff and sanctuaries across the Lower Peninsula. MNA is a statewide land conservancy dedicated to protecting Michigan's endangered species and the habitats they need to survive.



*Burn Crew in 2013*

**Yousef Rabhi (2012-14):** NAP has been a huge part of my life and professional development! After my 2 ½ years on the Outreach team I started working at UM-MBGNA as the Volunteer Coordinator, a job I held for nearly 3 years before being elected to the state legislature as the State Representative for the 53rd district. My time with the NAP Outreach team helped me to hone my people skills and build my public speaking. I also gained new and valuable knowledge about ecosystem management and new techniques of communicating to others about nature and natural systems.

This has been invaluable as one of the only state legislators with an environmental science professional background.



*Setting up for a workday, 2015*

**Kegan Schildberg (2013-14):** Since leaving NAP I have worked as Oakland County Parks & Rec.'s Natural Area Stewardship Manager. My favorite NAP memory would have to be that of my first day on the job, the infamous 14-hour Bird Hills burn. Probably the single hardest first day on the job in my life, but a memory that will last a lifetime. A burn so hot we spent the next day mopping up chimney trees.

**Patrick Terry (2014-17):** I work as a biologist for the US Air Force in Arizona. My job is to monitor the Sonoran pronghorn, which is federally endangered and happens to graze on an active gunnery range. Every day we drive into the Sonoran Desert to survey for pronghorn and close those targets they are grazing near. I also occasionally get the chance to help out the USFWS with their Sonoran pronghorn capture-release

program. This is always a rare treat because I get to work hands-on with the pronghorn. I am very happy with this work. It is exactly what a biologist job should be in the modern world, and I will always be grateful to NAP for giving me the experience to be here.

## Where are They Now?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

**Catie Wytychak (2015):** I work at the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's office in the rain garden program. I manage the maintenance, volunteer and education work in the public rain gardens. I also teach in schools about rain gardens, stormwater management and water quality. While working for NAP, I learned how to identify and prioritize the maintenance needs of a public natural area, which is a skill I now use every day. I also learned the importance of involving folks in volunteer, research and educational projects by building strong relationships.



*Staff members in 2016*

**Logan Nevins (2015-16):** I work at Ducks Unlimited in Memphis, TN as the Youth & Education Coordinator. DU and NAP both have a mission to restore and protect landscapes whether it's natural areas or wetlands. They both also have very passionate and dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure future generations have an opportunity to enjoy natural spaces. While at NAP I

was able to learn a lot about how important it is to build a relationship with your volunteers. Now I get to travel the country meeting DU volunteers who, like their counterparts at NAP, work hard at work worth doing. I am very proud to have been a part of NAP's history.

**Dan Engel (2015-16):** I work as a contract biologist for the USGS - Great Lakes Science Center. My work has focused on Phragmites control efforts. I have many fond memories of working at NAP! My favorites all involve fire or some remote corner of a natural area away from the hustle and bustle of the city. The field skills that I acquired have been invaluable in my current job, and I am very grateful for everything I learned from my NAP mentors. An unexpected lesson I learned was the value of volunteers to a habitat restoration program - without public support and active involvement, restoration projects are not able to achieve their full potential.



*Staff in costumes at the potluck, 2017*

**Katie Carlisle (2016-18):** Since leaving NAP, I have been working for Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation's Natural Areas Preservation Program as a Stewardship Coordinator. Working with NAP was my introduction to land preservation and management in addition to working with volunteers. I am grateful for these experiences as they have started the path I'm on today.

Do you have a memory of NAP you would like to share? Email us at [NAP@a2gov.org](mailto:NAP@a2gov.org)!

## NAPpenings

### Thank you!

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

Ann Arbor Academy  
Ann Arbor STEAM  
Ann Arbor Open School  
Community High School  
Cub Scout Pack 131  
Doris Duke Scholars  
Gross Electric  
Huron High School Biology Classes  
Ypsilanti Free Methodist Church



### The Science, Practice, and Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems Conference January 11-12, 2019

The Stewardship Network presents this annual conference at the Kellogg Conference Center in East Lansing. Presenters cover a wide range of topics including environmental justice, traditional ecological knowledge, watershed conservation, and much more! See [www.stewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org) to register or for more information.

### Praise for NAP

"Despite the intense heat of the day, this workday was impressive. The students had a great time and felt very accomplished. We enjoy our workdays with you and your crew and we credit your commitment to the trail for making the restoration a reality. Let us keep this educational partnership between our organizations going!"

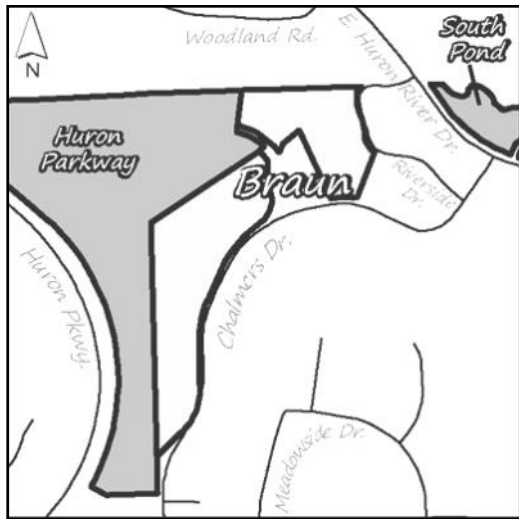
-Denise Chacon Lontin, Ann Arbor Open School (workday at West Park)

"Everything about this workday was great. I heard several of the parents comment that they routinely use the woods so they are happy that they can help take care of it."

-Stephanie Hunter (workday at Dicken Woods)

# Braun Nature Area

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



and a final matting of mulch blankets and seed mix for good measure. The willow and dogwood thickets on the opposite bank all sprouted from live cuttings that had been planted there for additional support.

Thus far, this pairing of revegetation and streambank reinforcement has served its purpose. It does, however, raise the question of whether Braun may properly be called a “natural” area. Braun’s recent history of disturbance is compounded by the encroachment of invasives like honeysuckle and reed canary grass, necessitating further interventions to keep them at bay. Some may draw a hard line, while others may find this an arbitrary distinction. I myself wonder: Can’t something be beautiful and well-suited to a purpose? Is human involvement in the landscape necessarily an intrusion? While a walk through Braun may not offer ready answers, it may at least offer some perspective.

As a conservation crew member, I have the pleasure of laboring for the benefit of Braun and other natural areas around Ann Arbor. I can see how the crew’s labors contribute to the legacy of hands-on stewardship that preceded us and will continue after us.

Early this past spring, we spread seed at Braun soon after conducting a controlled burn there, a full sun prairie mix containing big bluestem, Virginia and Canada wild rye, bottlebrush grass, Monarda, black-eyed susan, and Indian grass. We cast these seeds over bare patches left over from the burn, places where the flames had burned invasive plants’ stalks down to the nub, allowing the seeds to have good contact with the soil. With them, we cast our hopes that they would take root. Breaking seed pods between my fingers and breathing deep of their rich scent, I was reminded that this is involvement, the give and take of a sustained conversation with a place.

What’s natural or suitable to Braun at this point is hard to tell—along the stream you have something engineered to serve multiple functions, to work both as a drain for the county and as habitat for native species. Then, pushing in from the edges, you have invasives encroaching. Somewhere in the gaps between what we want Braun to be and what it may become if neglected, there are pockets where the land and the life it sustains may properly express itself.

In early summer, I returned to Braun with George, NAP’s field biologist, and Janelle, who’s interning with him for the summer. We pushed through the waist-high goldenrod and ducked beneath low-hanging catalpa and dogwood branches, seeking out a bend further up. There’s no established trail, no clear-set way, only upstream and downstream, nearer and further to useful waymarkers.

We rounded the bend, and came out to a clearer spot near a meander in the creek. There, obscured by tufts of weeds, we found what we were looking for—a turtle nesting mound built with sand used as fill for the streambank restoration project. George and Janelle plucked the weeds then searched for signs of nesting activity, scooping handfuls of sand and probing with their gloved fingers. A few minutes’ digging turned up a pair of withered egg shell fragments, cupped in George’s hands. Janelle’s eyes brightened. “Well, that’s something,” George said, smiling. A hopeful sign.

The labor is a loving act, a small if imperfect repayment for a legacy of carelessness and neglect. With time, we may change that story, and leave a legacy of renewal in its place.

Join us on November 4 for a workday at Braun Nature Area. See the calendar on pages 6-7 for details.



*George and Janelle look for signs of turtle nesting.*

**Natural Area Preservation**

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**CHEERS TO  
25  
Years!**

<b>OCT 18 Thursday</b>	<b>6:30 - 9:30 PM</b> <b>Cobblestone Farm</b> 2781 Packard St
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RSVP by Oct 15  
NAP@a2gov.org or 734.794.6627