

CITY OF ANN ARBOR  
Natural Area  
Preservation

NAP

# NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION

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SPRING 2017

## Park Focus: Sugarbush Park

*Drew Zawacki*  
Conservation Worker

One of my favorite things about living in Ann Arbor is the number of parks we have in our community. It seems like wherever you go, there's bound to be a natural area nearby. When I started working for NAP, I was amazed by how many parks I had driven by for years, completely unaware that they were there. One of these awesome natural areas is Sugarbush Park. Although it is small, this park has a unique assortment of plants, including several rare species.

Sugarbush is a quiet neighborhood park south of Green Road in the northeast corner of town. It covers 25.6 acres, including a small natural area at the north end, between Green Road and Rumsey Drive. South of Rumsey is the developed area of the park, which extends east across Yellowstone Drive. This area includes a ball diamond, playground, and a couple of tennis courts. At the southern end of the park, bordered by houses on Georgetown Boulevard, and Bluett and Yellowstone Drives, is a natural area with high diversity of native plants. Part of how we protect these important plant species is through the use of controlled burns.

Last November, NAP's prescribed burn crew was able to conduct a burn in Sugarbush for the first time. NAP



*Sugarbush: The woods at the south end of the park is over 80 years old, and it's likely that the land there was never plowed.*

staff expect the reintroduction of fire into this area to benefit fire-adapted native wildflower species, and they'll respond with more abundant blooms this spring than in the past. If you are like me and wildflowers are one of your favorite things about spring, I urge you to stop by and see which ones are out at Sugarbush Park this year. Some spring wildflowers that you might encounter there include bloodroot, May-apple, and both common trillium and uncommon (and sometimes deep red) drooping trillium. Later in the spring, you may be lucky enough to find some rarer plants like wood-betony and black snakeroot.

One of the things that sets Sugarbush apart from the other parks in Ann Arbor is its pawpaw grove. Pawpaws are small trees that grow under taller

Continued on page 6

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Park Focus  
Page 1

Coordinator's Corner  
Page 2

Citizen Science in the A2 Parks  
Page 3

Stewardship Calendar  
Pages 4-5

Staff Updates  
& NAPpenings  
Page 7

19th Annual  
Garlic Mustard  
Weed Out Day  
Page 8





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  
2013-2018 Park Maintenance &  
Capital Improvements Millage.*

# COORDINATOR'S CORNER

## Welcome to the Family!

*Dave Borneman, Natural Area Preservation Manager*

Long-time readers will know that whenever something major happens in my personal life, it usually finds its way into this column. So it would be odd if I didn't at least mention the fact that I got engaged in December! A big "thanks" to those of you who have, or will, congratulate me and wish us well. Of course, I'm pretty excited.

But what I really wanted to talk about here was the wonderful, warm welcome that I've received from my new family. My future father-in-law even sent me a gift and a nice card that started with the words, "Welcome to the family." What a kind thing to do. It's always a little scary to venture down a new path in life, especially one that requires such a big commitment. It's really nice to know that, as I start out on this new adventure, I'm being welcomed, supported, and encouraged by those whom I am joining.

You see where I'm going with this. Maybe you've been checking out a variety of volunteering opportunities around the area. Maybe you've been wanting to keep your options open and not commit to any single organization. Maybe you aren't sure how long of a commitment you're ready to make, and would prefer to just take it a day at a time. That's all OK. Do what feels right to you. NAP will welcome any volunteer effort that you are able to grant us. Come to a single workday by yourself, or bring your entire family, or your co-workers, or your neighbors, or your club. Or get trained to be a Workday Leader and help us lead some huge workdays with hundreds of people. Come to our burn training and be part of the burn crew this spring, carrying around backpacks filled with water; or just come and do "smoke monitoring" for us. Volunteer to be a Park Steward in your favorite natural area. Join our frog and toad survey, or our salamander survey, or be a Turtle Steward. Volunteer for the Breeding Bird Survey or the Butterfly Survey. Sign up to go take pictures in the parks and be a Photo Monitor. Or share your administrative skills and come volunteer in the office.

We have volunteer opportunities to match whatever level of commitment you are ready to make. Maybe you're still in the early stages of volunteering and are most interested in exploring a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Or perhaps you are now ready to make a deeper commitment with NAP. Maybe you're ready to sign up as a long-term park steward in your favorite natural area. Wherever you are along that continuum, NAP is here to offer training, support, encouragement, and whatever else you need to make your volunteer experience as satisfying and worthwhile as possible. We'd love to have you get more involved!

**Welcome to the family!**

# Citizen Science in the Ann Arbor Parks

George Hammond, Inventory Staff

Have you noticed anything outside today? A passing bird? Buds on a branch? That's valuable information! As the climate changes and ecosystems respond, scientific studies across the country are eager for volunteers to help them collect more information about these changes. Smart phones and internet access make it easier than ever for you to help contribute to conservation and ecology. Many projects need information that anyone can collect, and you'll be learning even while sharing what you find. There are valuable data to be found just outside your home, but we hope you will look in our parks too! Here are a few of the many projects you can get involved in, and places to find more.

**Happening now:** Birds! While some plants and animals are dormant now, the birds are active and fun to watch. eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)), run by the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, collects bird observations from around the world. They have millions of observations already, and are finding important patterns. You can use their system to record and report what you see. There are also special programs for folks who feed birds ([www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org)), or can check on nests ([www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org)). Savvy bird-watchers who know their bird calls are strongly encouraged to join NAP's own Breeding Bird Survey. BBS volunteers focus on the birds of one or more assigned parks, and do walking surveys and point counts in the spring, using eBird to record the birds they see and hear. The survey kickoff is the evening of April 13. *See the NAP calendar in this issue for details.*

**Coming soon:** Budburst and Herpmapping! Project Budburst ([www.budburst.org](http://www.budburst.org)) is one of the easiest citizen science projects to get involved in. No expertise is necessary, and you can do it in your yard neighborhood or in our parks! Volunteers follow the life stories of plants – when do they bloom? When do leaves open? The timing of these events change with the climate and they are important for predicting the future of our ecosystems. This project has lots of opportunities for kids, and plenty of support for teachers.

Herp mapping (“herp” is zoology shorthand for reptiles and amphibians) involves locating these animals and recording their locations. NAP has volunteer surveys of frogs, salamanders, and turtles. The frog and salamander surveys kick off on March 11, and turtles on April 15. Frogs have distinct calls, just like birds, and we'll help you learn them as part of the training. You can use the Herpmapper app on a mobile device, or [www.herpmapper.org](http://www.herpmapper.org) online, to record your observations.

As plants leaf out and insects emerge, it's time to watch for invasive species. The Midwest Invasive Species Information Network is hosting three citizen science programs: Eyes On The Forest (volunteers monitor “sentinel trees” that they choose), MI-Mast (notes production of native wild fruits and nuts that are crucial foods for wildlife) and the Backyard Beetle Project (build a simple trap that collects and preserves bark beetles for experts to study). [www.misin.msu.edu](http://www.misin.msu.edu).

You can focus on more lovely (and mostly native) insects by joining the NAP Butterfly Survey, in partnership with the statewide Michigan Butterfly Network. Volunteers survey routes in parks, and report their data on the Butterfly Network site. The kickoff is on May 6 (details in our calendar) and more information and resources can be found on the Michigan Butterfly Network site: [www.michiganbutterfly.org](http://www.michiganbutterfly.org).

These are just a few of the many citizen science projects that you might enjoy! We've focused on nature observation, but there are others that are more analytical. SciStarter is a great site that compiles hundreds of citizen science opportunities around the country. [www.scistarter.com](http://www.scistarter.com).

There are lots of opportunities for you to be a citizen scientist in our parks. We hope you'll get involved!



*Spotted Salamanders like this one live in the woods and breed in the vernal pool in Sugarbush Park.*



*This species, the Northern Leopard Frog, is found in few locations in Ann Arbor, and is in decline across Michigan, so it's especially important to record when found. Photo by Sue B. Miller.*



**NAP**

# VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

Spring  
2017

*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 sturdy shoes good for wet ground or snow, and dress in layers. 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. Contact NAP at 734.794.6627 or NAP@a2gov.org.*

## MARCH

**Salamander Survey Kick-off and Training,  
Saturday, March 11, noon to 2 p.m.  
Matthaei Botanical Gardens,  
1800 N. Dixboro Road**

Did you know we have at least five species of salamanders in Ann Arbor? If you have a willingness to get muddy, you're invited to help monitor populations and the health of their habitats. Surveying is done three to six times in early spring at multiple sites, and each round is a few hours long. Please register by March 9.

**Frog and Toad Survey Kick-off and Training  
Saturday, March 11, 2:30 to 5 p.m.  
Matthaei Botanical Gardens,  
1800 N. Dixboro Road**

Everyone is invited to join us to help monitor frog populations in Ann Arbor! It's fun learning to identify the frogs of

Michigan by ear and eye. No previous experience required. Family-friendly! Surveying is done three to six times from early spring through June, and each round lasts a few hours. Please register by March 9.

**Photo Monitoring Kick-off and Training  
Saturday, March 25, 10 to 11 a.m.  
NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Drive**

Do you like photography and spending time outdoors? We need volunteers to take beautiful photos at specific locations each season to record the progress of our restoration work. Come join us at this informational meeting for more details about this volunteer opportunity! Please register by March 23.

**Workday Leader Training  
Saturday, March 25, noon to 5:30 p.m.  
NAP Office, 3875 E. Huron River Drive**

For volunteers interested in leading and/or co-leading NAP volunteer stewardship

workdays. We will focus on procedures, ecological considerations, tips and tricks to lead a successful event. An interest and background in ecology (and plant ID) is strongly desired, but not required. Participants should be dressed for classroom and possible field training. Minimum age of 18. Please register by March 19.

## APRIL

**Breeding Bird Survey Kickoff and Training  
Thursday, April 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
NAP Office, 3875 East Huron River Drive**

Learn how to survey for breeding birds in Ann Arbor's parks! Some experience in bird identification is necessary. Please register by April 10.

**Stewardship Workday - Saturday, April 15,  
1 to 4 p.m. Miller Nature Area**

Spring is here, and what better way to get outdoors after a long winter than enjoying nature at Miller Nature Area!

## STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

### STEWARDS' CIRCLE

**SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY  
MONTH, EACH EVENT HELD  
FROM 7:30 TO 8:30 a.m.  
BRUEGGER'S BAGELS  
709 N. UNIVERSITY AVE.**

Are you interested in learning more about how to care for our 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!

For more information go to [www.stewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org).

#### Tuesday, March 14 | River and Stream Restoration

A lot of our conservation focus is spent on terrestrial ecosystems, but it is just as important to protect our rivers and streams. Join us for a discussion about rivers, fluvial ecosystems, and the best practices to protect them.

#### Tuesday, April 11 | Optimizing Your Volunteer Experience

Your time is valuable and your dedication is admirable! Join us for a discussion on how to build a management plan to best utilize your generously donated time and energy, and how to optimize fulfillment as an environmental steward.

#### Tuesday, May 9 | Butterfly Surveys

Are you interested in Ann Arbor area's butterfly surveys? Come to this discussion with John Swales to learn more about what they are, and why they are important.

We will be pulling invasive garlic mustard to make room for native spring wildflowers. Meet us at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue.

**Stewardship Workday – Earth Day!  
Saturday, April 22, 9 a.m. to noon  
Marshall Nature Area**

You and your friends and family can help us celebrate Earth Day by removing invasive plants that crowd out native wildflowers. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.

**Stewardship Workday – Earth Day!  
Saturday, April 22, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Huron Parkway Nature Area**

This Earth Day, we will remove garlic mustard and other invasive herbs that would otherwise take over the park. Meet at 3470 Woodland Road, off East Huron River Drive.

**Turtle Steward Kickoff & Training  
Saturday, April 22, 4 to 7 p.m.  
Gallup Canoe Livery Meeting Room**

At least 6 species of turtles live and nest in the city! Help us protect nest sites, monitor populations, and look for turtles along the river and creeks! We'll cover species identification, nest monitoring, and how to report your turtle observations. This training will be indoors. Please register by April 13.

**Ann Arbor Area Earth Day Festival  
Sunday, April 23, noon to 4 p.m.  
Leslie Science & Nature Center,  
1831 Traver Road**

Join us for an afternoon of celebrating the Earth through entertainment, education, exploration, and fun! This free, family-friendly event features displays from local environmental, nonprofit, and governmental organizations. For more information please visit [www.lesliesnc.org/a2earthday](http://www.lesliesnc.org/a2earthday).

**Stewardship Workday – Earth Day Weekend  
Sunday, April 23, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Huron Hills Golf Course Woods**

Help us celebrate Earth Day by removing invasive species from Huron Hills Golf Course Woods to make room for native spring wildflowers! We will also be doing trail maintenance. Meet us at the entrance on Hunting Valley Road off of Provincial Drive.

**Nature Walk with Ann Arbor District Library  
Thursday, April 27, 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
Mary Beth Doyle Park**  
Mary Beth Doyle Park is an 81-acre park

located east of the Malletts Creek branch of the AADL. Spring wildflowers here are spectacular! Meet us at the parking lot off Packard Road, across from Easy Street, or park at the Malletts Creek branch library and walk one-half mile east on the south side of Eisenhower and Packard.

**Stewardship Workday – Arbor Day Weekend  
Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m. to noon  
Furstenberg Nature Area - Native Garden**

Love gardening? At this stewardship workday, we will be planting and prepping Furstenberg's native garden space! Meet us in the parking lot off of Fuller Road.

**Stewardship Workday– Arbor Day Weekend  
Saturday, April 29, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Bird Hills Nature Area**

Bird Hills is our largest nature area and is home to a wide array of plant and animal species, some of which make their homes in this nature area's many towering trees. We will be removing garlic mustard and other spring invasives to make room for native wildflowers. Join us at the Beechwood entrance off of Sunset Road.

**Stewardship Workday– Arbor Day Weekend  
Sunday, April 30, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Mary Beth Doyle Park**

The woods in this park contain many uncommon species, including hazelnut, flowering dogwoods, and chinquapin oaks. Help us manage the nature area and improve wildlife habitat by hand-pulling spring invasives. Meet us at the parking lot off Packard Road, across from Easy Street.

## MAY

**Stewardship Workday  
Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m. to noon  
Molin Nature Area**

Help us support native wildflowers and other understory plant species by removing invasive garlic mustard, dame's rocket, and other herbaceous invasive plants. Meet at the park entrance at the intersection of Powell Avenue and Columbia Avenue.

**Butterfly Survey Kickoff & Training  
Saturday, May 6, 1:30 to 4 p.m.**

Search for beautiful butterflies throughout the spring and summer. No experience in butterfly identification is necessary, though it is helpful. Space is extremely limited, so please register by May 3.

**Stewardship Workday  
Sunday, May 7, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Oakridge Nature Area**

Oakridge is 8 acres of fen and oak-hickory woods with over 100 native plant species, some of which are rare or threatened. Get involved in preserving this beautiful habitat by removing invasive garlic mustard and dame's rocket with us. Meet at the southwest corner of Glazier Way and Huron Parkway.

**19th Annual Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day  
Saturday, May 13, 9 a.m. to noon**

Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day is an annual tradition! We will need lots of hands to pull invasive garlic mustard in natural areas all around Ann Arbor. This is a great volunteer opportunity for families. See page 8 for details.

**Stewardship Workday  
Saturday, May 20, 9 a.m. to noon  
Dolph Nature Area**

Trails winding around the lakes here offer fantastic views for bird-watching and wildlife sightings. Help us make room for native spring wildflowers by removing invasive garlic mustard. Meet us at the parking lot on the east side of Wagner Road, between Liberty and Jackson Road.

**Stewardship Workday  
Saturday, May 20, 1 to 4 p.m.  
Lakewood Nature Area**

Come help native wildflowers thrive by removing invasive garlic mustard, dame's rocket and other spring invasive plants from this 13-acre woodland. Meet us at the Lakewood Elementary School parking lot, 344 Gralake Avenue.

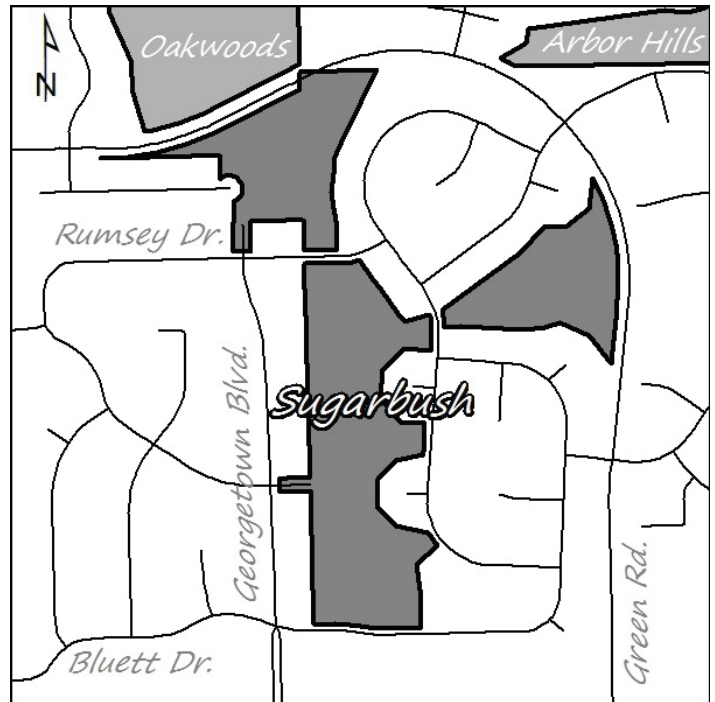
**Nature Walk with Ann Arbor District Library  
Thursday, May 25, 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Bird Hills Nature Area**

Bird Hills is the city's largest nature area, and is rich in spring wildflowers! Come for a nature walk in the woods and be prepared for hilly terrain! Meet at the Newport Rd. entrance, just north of M-14. These nature walks are a collaboration between the AADL and NAP that take place once a month, April through September. Wear comfortable clothes and bring water if desired. Some of AADL Science Tools will be available for use during the walk!

## Sugarbush continued from page 1

trees and along forest edges, typically in moist areas. They grow to a height of 15-25 feet and form groves when a single plant sends out root suckers. Pawpaw trees have leaves that are distinctively large and obovate (widest just behind the leaf tip), dark green, and often hang down like “dog ears” from the twig. Their leaves have a tropical look to them, and they are hard to confuse with other leaves once you get to know them. When present, the fruit of the pawpaw is definitely the most distinctive characteristic of this plant. A pawpaw fruit looks like a short, fat banana, and are the largest tree fruits native to North America. Pawpaws usually ripen around late September or October.

Blue ash or four-angled ash is another unusual woody species that can be found at Sugarbush. It receives these names from the blue dye that was made from its inner bark, and from its twigs which are usually more square than round. We only have this species in one other park in Ann Arbor. Another notable tree that can be found at Sugarbush is flowering dogwood. These small native trees have large white flowers in the spring.



Plants are not the only interesting things that can be found in Sugarbush Park. In a small vernal pool in the southwest corner of the park, whole communities of invertebrates and amphibians have evolved to use this temporary aquatic habitat. The Spotted Salamander and the Red-Backed Salamander are two of the five species of salamander living in the Ann Arbor area, and both have been found at Sugarbush. Spotted Salamanders lay their eggs in the water, where their young become top predators in these small ecosystems. If you're interested in learning more about salamanders or other wildlife in our parks, you can join NAP's volunteer wildlife surveys. We need help keeping track of salamanders, frogs, turtles, birds, and butterflies in our parks and nature areas. Survey kickoffs are in March and April. Check the calendar in this issue for details.

### We need your assistance:

Central Michigan University graduate student Stephanie Weems is partnering with NAP to research volunteer recruitment and diversity. We hope that this research will help us better understand how to engage and enhance the environmental ethic of all of the citizens of Ann Arbor. Please help in this endeavor by using the link below to participate in a survey about your volunteer experience.

Your participation is anonymous and greatly appreciated! [www.surveymonkey.com/r/63cq5jm](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/63cq5jm).

### Society for Ecological Restoration – Midwest/Great Lakes Chapter



The Ninth Annual Meeting of the Midwest-Great Lakes Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan from March 24-26, 2017. This year's meeting theme is Assembling the Restoration Community.

Details at [chapter.ser.org/midwestgreatlakes/current-meeting](http://chapter.ser.org/midwestgreatlakes/current-meeting).

# STAFF UPDATES

## WELCOME ...



### ALEX SASYK

I graduated with a Bachelor's of Science from Grand Valley State University in Natural Resource Management with a minor in Biology. After learning the values and aesthetics of environments and ecosystems, I decided that I want to focus my career on conserving and restoring them in areas needed. I was excited to hear Ann Arbor does so much in conservation and restoration, and I am overwhelmingly excited to work for Natural Area Preservation and the City of Ann Arbor.



### AMY WELLS

My name is Amy Wells and I'm a graduate of the University of Michigan, with a degree in Plant Biology. As someone who has always loved exploring and protecting Michigan's natural areas, I'm thrilled to be joining the NAP Crew! I've worked for Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum as a natural areas intern, and also as a landscape foreman for a private gardening company. What I enjoy most about all these jobs is seeing the dramatic changes in landscapes as I remove weeds and invasive species to make way for gorgeous native plants and flowers. I'm looking forward to a great burn season this spring, and the wildflower blooms to follow!

# NAPpenings

## THANK YOU!

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

- Ann Arbor '04 Wolves Hockey Team
- Ann Arbor Spartans MSU Alumni Chapter
- Circle K, UM
- Delta Sigma Phi, EMU
- Delta Zeta, EMU
- Engineering Global Leadership, UM
- Go Like the Wind Montessori Schools
- Health Science Scholars Program Service Committee, UM
- Kappa Theta Pi, UM
- Michigan Community Scholars Program, UM
- Michigan Connections Academy
- Michigan Running Club, UM
- Music Matters, UM
- Sigma Chi Pledge Class of 2016, UM
- Youth Volunteer Corps

## FAREWELL...



Erin Todd: Thank you to everyone at NAP for making my time on the field crew interesting and teaching me so many new things. I am grateful that I got to spend my field season

improving the natural areas of beautiful Ann Arbor, which I consider my home. But now it is time for me to seek out new adventures on the west coast and I am relocating to Oakland, California. What I will miss most of all is the craziness of burn season and I will never forget the dedication of our volunteers and park stewards.

Editor's note: Erin recently let us know that she is now working as a science tutor for an Oakland middle school. Kudos Erin!

**Would you like to be part of the NAP Staff team? Follow the city jobs website ([a2gov.org/jobs](http://a2gov.org/jobs)). Positions can open throughout the year. NAP also has unpaid internships that provide valuable experience! For internship information contact NAP directly: [NAP@a2gov.org](mailto:NAP@a2gov.org) or 734.794.6627.**



**NAP**

Spring 2017

**Natural Area Preservation**

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## 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day

**Saturday, May 13, 9 a.m. to noon**

Garlic Mustard Weed Out Day has been an annual tradition since 1999! On the same day, volunteers hand-pull invasive garlic mustard in natural areas all around Ann Arbor! Garlic mustard is an aggressive Eurasian species which can quickly crowd out native plant species and decrease natural diversity in the woods. Identifying and pulling garlic mustard is fun and easy for all ages, making this a great volunteer opportunity for families. Please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. All minors must present a completed release form, and should be accompanied by a guardian. Tools, snacks, and know-how provided.

### Participating parks:

- White Oak - Meet at the park entrance on White Oak Drive.
- Hannah - Meet at the west end of Bath Street, off 7th, just north of West Huron Street.
- Black Pond Woods – Meet at the park entrance on Tibbits Court, off of Pontiac Trail.
- Marshall - Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro Road, north of Plymouth Road.
- Riverwood - Meet near the park sign on Riverwood Drive, just west of Newport Road.
- Sunset Brooks - Meet at the park entrance on Sunset Road, at the end of Brooks Street.

