

Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 8, Number 3

Autumn 2003

Park Focus: Miller Nature Area *by Dana Wright*

Miller is a swath of land running from Miller Road just west of Newport all the way south to Arborview. It is full of flowers, interesting terrain, and trails. Shortly after starting with NAP almost two years ago, I learned that NAP has not been able to work much at Miller in the past. I also found out that there are a great number of invasives, which makes restoration more difficult. I am very happy that in recent times Miller is getting well-deserved attention.

Miller Park's 22.5 acres and its surroundings were heavily logged in the 1800s and then farmed, probably with livestock. After 1950 the area was used as a gravel yard and has supplied many of the houses that were built around it with their foundations. While traversing the trails it is easy to see evidence of both farming and where gravel and large stones have been taken. On the east edge of the park there are awesome, knobby mature black cherry and box elder trees growing up through an old farm truck, the top of which is at the north end of the park. Although the area was designated parkland after it was mined for gravel, there has since been a problem with trash, yardwaste, and other dumping, which NAP is working to halt.

Miller Park's new Steward, Howard Krausse, has lived near the park for over 20 years and has continually been involved in taking care of it. He has now formalized his involvement and is working with NAP towards restoration

activities. When Howard first moved near the park in 1979 it had large open areas with many of the plants we

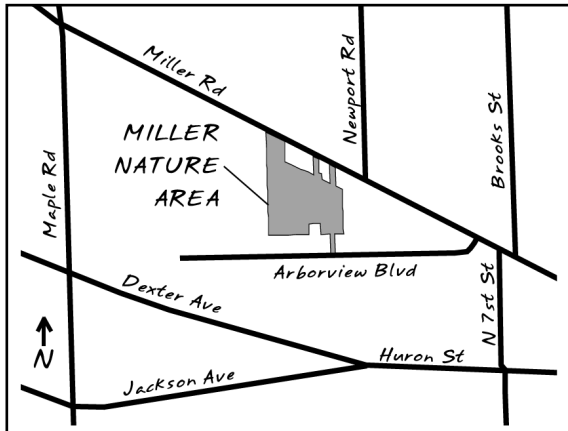
expect to see in grasslands: native asters and goldenrods, as well as European grasses. Since then the park has grown up having, among other species, mature oaks and hickory. Grassland species have been replaced by woodland species and, despite our aversion to invasives, the spring-time bloom of dame's rocket is beautiful. Howard has been working to get rid of the park's garbage and also control some of the invasive species that have come in. He has made great progress with the garlic mustard in areas that were once covered with that invasive. After intensive pulling in these spots, the native jewelweed has taken over.

In Miller Park we see an area with a great disturbance history, but recovery is occurring.

Thanks to park neighbors like

Howard we have kept the trails clear for years, we can access the solitude that Miller offers from our busy city life. Let's keep up the trend towards recovery. Help us out at future workdays to clear away debris, maintain trails, and remove invasive species.

Editor's note: there will be a Stewardship Workday at Miller on Sunday, October 5, from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm.



Helianthus sp., by Howard Krausse

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Coordinator's Corner

5 a Day for Good Health!

On a good morning, if my kids didn't wake me up too often during the previous night and if I don't have an early morning meeting, I like to walk to work. It's a relaxing way to start and end the workday and it beats the heck out of fighting rush hour traffic. It's also a beautiful stroll across the Huron River north of downtown, past residential areas and numerous parks. In fact, I got to wondering the other day just how many parks I walk past on my way to work. Now, I don't live in a particularly "parky" part of town, so I was amazed to count 14 different parks that I can see as I walk this 2-mile route! True, some of the parks are only seen from a distance, but that's part of the value of places like Bluffs or Bird Hills or Argo — they soften the harsh urban landscape and give us a therapeutic green view from our houses, offices, and streets.

How about your daily commute to work? How many parks can you see from your car, bike, bus, or sneakers? You know the medical community recommends that we eat 5 fruits and vegetables every day to stay healthy. Maybe that's a good goal for your recommended daily "dose" of parks too: "5 a day" to keep you happy and healthy. For most Ann Arborites, and for anyone traveling a few miles through town, that shouldn't be hard to do. Of course, to reap the full health benefits from these parks, they should be "taken internally." In other words, you need to get out of your car and into the parks to truly appreciate all that these wonderful places have to offer.

NAP has always been involved in the process of acquiring new parkland. But with recent reorganizations within the department, we'll be playing an even greater role in the acquisition process. We want to do all we can to help you get your "5 a day."

- David Borneman,
Natural Area Preservation Manager

Haiku from the Crew

tiny red spider	nap crew, what to do?
larval mite has a strong bite	pull, burn, saw, defoliate
a chigger mama!	reward? native growth

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



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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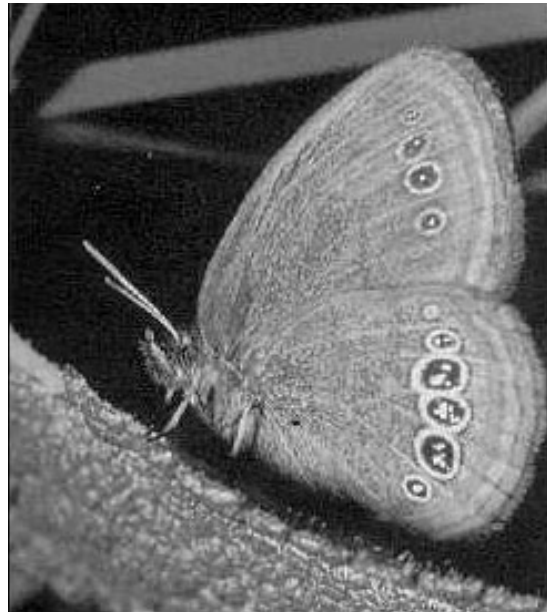
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For up-to-date information on
stewardship activities, call the
"hotline" at 734.996.3266.

Fourth of July Butterfly Count A Blast *by Barb Barton*

This year's North American Butterfly Count for the City of Ann Arbor was held on July 6th. NAP volunteers Jerry Paulissen, John Swales, Roger Wykes, and Roger Kuhlman led the count, while I was conducting my thesis research on the endangered Mitchell's satyr butterfly. A big thanks goes out to these troopers, who filled in for me. Jerry started out at Furstenberg and was joined by five new folks to the count, including butterfly volunteer Terri Williams. They ventured on to Gallup, Parker Mill and Barton parks. Terri met up with the rest of the crew at Marshall, where they counted butterflies and then traveled on to Matthaei Botanical Gardens to finish up the day. John, Roger and Roger surveyed Northeast Area, DhuVarren/Foxfire, Traver Creek, Greenview, Pioneer, and North Maple in the morning hours. There were 39 species of butterflies recorded for the day, which is down slightly from last year's effort. It



seems that the season is about a week behind, and less than desirable weather on the day of the count made some species absent from this year's Fourth of July roster.

Some of the more interesting butterflies seen included coral hairstreaks, Acadian hairstreaks, red-spotted purples, and 15 species of skippers! All five species of satyrs that occur in our area were also spotted.

This is the 29th year for the count nationally, which is sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association, an organization of butterfly enthusiasts that has grown tremendously in the past several years. These counts are an excellent way to learn butterflies and to see a variety of good butterfly habitat in the city. Next year's count will be held on

Sunday, July 11th, so mark your calendars! For information on the North American Butterfly Association, visit their web site at www.naba.org.

The Satellite Game of Geocaching *by Eric Ellis*

Recently our parks have become sites of one of the fastest growing outdoor sports in America, geocaching. Armed with a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver and access to the Internet, people are searching for hidden treasures in some of Ann Arbor's natural areas. People can place or search for caches and then post the coordinates online at www.geocaching.com. This site has a comprehensive history of geocaching and lists over 50,000 caches found in 177 countries. As of April 1, there were 31 caches within six miles of the 48104 zip code.

When NAP staff first found a cache in a natural area we were concerned about the environmental impact. After doing some research we decided that geocaching would not pose a threat, if we implemented some basic guidelines and a permit system. The guidelines and a permit application can be found at the NAP website. The permits are free, and NAP staff members review all applications with the person applying, to make sure that the cache will not

be located in an ecologically sensitive area. With these rules in place we will protect Ann Arbor's natural features while allowing a diverse use of Ann Arbor's parkland.

Since implementing the guidelines and permit system, NAP has had excellent cooperation from local geocachers and the Michigan Geocaching Organization (MiGO, www.mi-geocaching.org). MiGO has posted our City geocaching guidelines and permit application online along with our newsletter. This statewide exposure has many geocachers coming to our volunteer workdays. MiGO also encourages geocachers to take a trash bag with them to collect garbage in the parks while they are looking for caches.

At the next volunteer workday ask if there are any geocachers in the crowd — you may find this new sport entertaining.

Fall 2003 Natural Area Preservation Volunteer Stewardship Calendar



NAP is located at the Leslie Science Center (1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor, 48105). Our phone number is 734.996.3266. Workday orientation starts promptly at 10:00 am. A short nature walk will be held at the end of each workday, time permitting. Please wear pants and closed-toe shoes. Minors must either be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form.

SEPTEMBER

September 7, Sunday

Newport Creek Nature Area

11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Remove invasives from under some grand oaks in this new neighborhood park. Join us on Timber Trail between Springwood Court and Newport Creek Drive.

September 9, Tuesday

Stewards' Circle, 7:30 to 8:30 am

Bruegger's Bagels, North University

This month's topic: Seed collecting. How do people collect seed? How can we increase the chance of seeds germinating once they're planted? What seed collecting policies do groups use?

September 9, Tuesday

Native Landscaping Workshop

**Leslie Science Center Nature House,
7:00 to 9:00 pm**

Learn how native plants can be used in your landscaping project; how to plan, install and maintain a native planting. Covers small or large project needs. Please register by calling NAP.

September 14, Sunday

Leslie Science Center Benefit Concert

Cobblestone Farm, 2:00 to 4:00 pm

Join local singer/songwriter (and NAPper) Barb Barton and her musical friends to raise money in support of the Leslie Science Center Critter house. In addition to music, there will be food and environmental activities.

September 20, Saturday

Hansen Nature Area,

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Help clean up this lovely park. Meet us in the Grace Bible Church parking lot (1300 South Maple Road, 1/3 mile south of West Liberty).

September 21, Sunday

Glacier Highlands Park,

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Free the oaks by removing invasives. Meet at the intersection of Larchmont Drive and Barrister Road.

September 28, Sunday

Furstenberg Native Plant Garden,

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Help Park Steward Aunita Erskine put the garden to bed for the fall at NAP's final 2003 garden workday. Meet at the circle drive at Furstenberg Nature Area off Fuller Road.

OCTOBER

October 5, Sunday

Miller Nature Area

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Join us in stabilizing trails and cleaning up this oasis in the middle of town. Meet us at the Arborview Boulevard entrance, just east of Wildwood Avenue.

October 11, Saturday

Brown Park, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

This is the second and final trail maintenance workday in Brown this year. Meet us at the parking lot off Packard Road, across from Easy Street.

October 12, Sunday

Sugarbush Park, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Come see the amazing stand of Paw Paw trees and help maintain this exquisite wood. Meet us between the two cul-de-sacs on Yellowstone Drive, just south of Bluett Road.

October 14, Tuesday

Stewards' Circle, 7:30 to 8:30 am

Bruegger's Bagels, North University

This month's topic: Biocontrol. How do we know these creatures won't get as out of control as the invasive plants some of them seek to tame? Are there any new biocontrols on the horizon?

October 26, Sunday

Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Upkeep of trails is vital to the long-term health of woodland ecosystems. This is a great chance for you to try your hand at it! Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot off Lorraine Street.

NOVEMBER

November 2, Sunday

Barton Nature Area, 2:00 to 5:00 pm

While collecting native seed from this prairie, you will have a chance to walk through grasses taller than yourself. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

November 8, Saturday

Gallup Park, 2:00 to 5:00 pm

Help collect seeds from this beautiful prairie! Meet us at the end of Riverview Drive off Geddes Avenue.

November 16th, Sunday

Walkin' Jim Concert, 4pm.

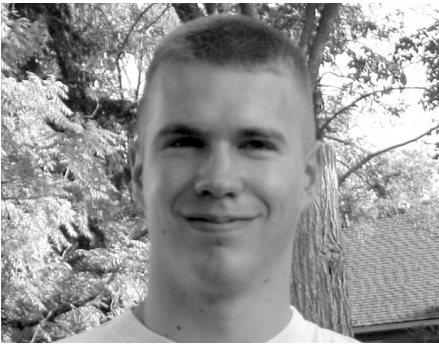
Location to be announced. A kids/family concert to benefit the Buhr Park Children's Wet Meadow projects. For location and other information call Joan at 973-9161.

Many groups participate in NAP workdays, or arrange special workdays for their organization. Contact the NAP office if a group you are involved with is interested in planning a volunteer stewardship event.

Staff Updates

hello...

Matt Haack -



I am a senior at the University of Michigan, enrolled in the School of Natural Resources and Environment, working towards a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy. I am from

Colon, Michigan and attended Colon High School. My hobbies include basketball, hiking, snowboarding, running, fishing, and hanging out with friends. After graduation I plan to pursue a career as a Conservation Officer or a Park Ranger.

Max Barahona -



I was born in the South of Chile on a pleasant evening of a rainy day in 1971. What happened after that? Well, since I remember I have traveled around. First, I followed my

Dad (a politician at the time) from town to town 'till I reached the borders of my home country. Then, I decided it was time to see the world... And that's how I got here! While I was in college (it took me 8 years to finish my undergrad), I traveled to Canada, the U.S., Mexico, Central and South America, and Europe, then I joined the Army for a change. One day I fell in love with a Michigan native, so I moved here and I "enlisted" in Grad School. Now I just needed a job, right? That's when I got to know the Natural Area Preservation...

It's great to be here, everyone!

**Both Matt and Max are temporary staff working with NAP for the summer months.*

farewell...

Dana Wright -



After almost two years with NAP, sadly it is time for me to say good-bye...for now at least. Happily though, I am expecting an addition to my family in October and

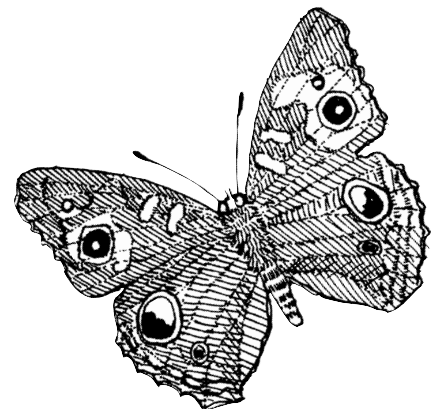
afterwards plan to go back to school to get a master's degree in midwifery. This fall will be a busy one for me, but you can expect to see me out at future burns. NAP has been the perfect launching pad for me, and I will miss very much, all the people I have been blessed to work with and meet through NAP.

Kristie Brablec -



We must say good-bye to our beloved Twistie. After more than four years of bringing inspiration, creativity, and enthusiasm to the Crew and volunteers lucky enough to work with her,

she has moved on. You might catch a glimpse of her fiery pigtails rowing up and down the Huron on a hot summer day. I hope there aren't any chiggers out there Kristie!



Hoodeds and Creepers *by Dea Armstrong*



This strikingly beautiful warbler is named for the black hood and throat, set off by bright yellow eyes, cheeks and underparts.

and back lessen the odds of an individual's return. Interestingly though, data on banded males show that 90% of those who have successful migrations will return to their previous year's nesting territory. In Michigan, Hooded Warblers prefer a large mixed hardwood forest (Marshall is 85 acres) with enough shrub understory to safely conceal their low nests. We hope to see more of these strikingly beautiful birds in Ann Arbor parks in the future.

Most notable about the Hooded Warblers in Marshall Nature Area is that they are back for a second year in a row. Additionally, NAP volunteer breeding bird surveyors Roger Wykes and Susan Falcone can boast of not one but two pairs of "Hoodeds" in the park.

Southern Michigan is along the northern border of this species' breeding range, so the rare designation for this species in Birds of Washtenaw County is not surprising. Certainly, the long migration to Central America or Cuba

This just in from one of our new NAP BBS volunteers: Alex Dopp has found a **Brown Creeper** in Bird Hills Nature Area. There are very few summer records of Brown Creeper, a bird that normally nests farther north in the lower peninsula. Keep your eyes and ears open in all large forested habitats, and way to go Alex!



Brown Creeper
by Larry McQueen



2003 Frog and Toad Survey *by David Mifsud*

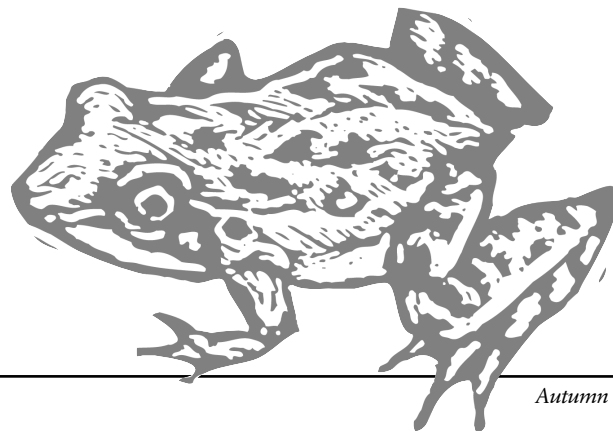
Although some frogs are still calling, the wetlands are now relatively quiet as I write this in July. This is a sure sign that another field season is quickly passing. We had a great response from the community this year. With the help of our outstanding volunteers, we have completed our 9th frog and toad calling survey season.

Surveys continue to be turned in daily. We are now in the process of entering the data into our database and will soon be conducting analysis. This information will aid in future management decisions to help preserve the frogs and toads of Ann Arbor and their habitat. This will help protect against future population declines.

Despite the relatively cool, dry spring, we have collected some great information. The calling activity was pushed

back, but the frogs and toads were still able to get out there. Fortunately, the harsh winter did not seem to have a major effect on the frog and toad populations.

I would like to send a special thank-you to all the volunteers for their outstanding efforts this season. I hope to see all of you again next season (and bring a friend).



NAPpenings

Thank You For Your Help At Our Workdays...

- ♥ U of M students from Project Serve - Hands on the Planet
- ♥ Women in Science and Engineering - Undergraduate Resource Opportunity Program
- ♥ Temple Beth Emeth - Mitzvah Day
- ♥ YMCA - Youth Volunteer Corps
- ♥ Master Gardeners - at all the Furstenberg and NAP garden workdays
- ♥ U of M medical students
- ♥ Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Sorry...

At this spring's Garlic Mustard weed-out workday at Cedar Bend, NAP mixed up the meeting location. We apologize to everyone who was caught up in the confusion.

Burn Notification???

Another burn season approaches... If you would like to be notified in the event of a particular burn, just call NAP, and we'll add you to the prescription.

NAP Technician

Many of you may fondly remember Kee Condict, past NAP Technician, who left us in July of 2002. We will soon be filling her vacancy. This will significantly help NAP with our day-to-day operations. If you're interested in this position, keep an eye on the City's Human Resource website.

Gardening vs. Invasives Control

NAP staff were very pleased to see that the Autumn 2002 issue of *PublicGarden*, the Journal of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, was all about invasive plants. It's the dawn of a brand new day; many landscapers, gardeners, consumers, and arboretums are realizing the negative impacts that non-native invasives have upon local ecosystems. It's also wonderful that more and more folks are gaining an appreciation for how wonderful native alternatives are.

Stewards' Training Offered

The Stewardship Network is offering three courses (Restoration Techniques, Management Planning, and Ecosystems and Comprehensive Site Assessment) that will allow land managers (be they professional or volunteer) to explore, better understand, and put to use the skills of adaptive land management. The courses will be offered beginning in October. If you would like information please contact Lisa Brush (lbrush@umich.edu or 769-6981).

S.E. MI Prescribed Fire Council 4th Annual Workshop

This meeting will be September 12-13, 2003 in the Lansing area. Two former NAPpers will be on Friday's agenda: David Warners (former NAP Botanist and current professor at Calvin College) and David Mindell (former NAP Stewardship Coordinator and current owner of PlantWise Native Landscapes). There will also be talks on prescribed (Rx) fire and oak regeneration, Rx fire and sedge meadows, Rx fire and insects, and Rx fire weather forecasting. Saturday's agenda will include a demonstration prescribed burn. For more details on the workshop or the Fire Council in general, check out its website: www.firecouncil.org or talk to Dave Borneman, SMPFC Chair.

Natural Areas Association (NAA) annual conference

Held at the end of September, land managers will be gathering in Madison, Wisconsin. This year's theme will be "Defining a Natural Areas Land Ethic." Expect lots of talks on invasive species control, prescribed fire, rare plant conservation, volunteer programs, and other issues related to managing natural areas. NAP is also on the program, with Dave Borneman (NAA Board Member) speaking on Ann Arbor's Invasive Species List. For more information on NAA or this conference, check out www.naturalarea.org.

Check Us Out!

NAP's web page has been updated; check us out at www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/Parks/NAP/nap.html. We've got fact sheets and order forms online. We'll be updating more over the fall too.



Intertwining Vines *by Bev Walters*



Celastrus orbiculatus

Vines are an especially important part of tropical ecosystems. They're also a significant component of our temperate flora. None the less, it instinctively rubs me the wrong way when I see a spineless vine scrambling over other

plants or reaching up to smother tall trees. Although grapes, Virginia creeper, and poison ivy aren't my favorite plants, I recognize these native species have a place in the floral scheme. In addition, the death of a tree may eventually open space for other species, both plant and animal. But there are some non-native vines that are aggressively snuffing out the local flora and fully deserve my disdain - here are a few of the worst offenders:

- Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is popping up all over in Ann Arbor's natural areas, and it has potential to be the kudzu of the north. It has orange-red fruit like the native American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), but the two can be distinguished if you look at the position of the fruit. The non-native

plant has fruit attached in clusters at the base of the leaves, while in the native species it is borne just at the tip of the vine. Look for both species growing on the fence along the Gallup Park bike path.

- Fortunately Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) is fairly uncommon locally, although the first Michigan collection was from Washtenaw County in 1892. NAP volunteers and staff have worked to eradicate it in the few spots it's appeared in the parks, but it can be found growing unchecked in woodlots NAP doesn't manage. It's easy to distinguish from native red honeysuckle (*Lonicera dioica*) because the young stems of the invasive are quite hairy, whereas stems of the native are not.
- Black swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*) has not yet been located in the immediate Ann Arbor area, but it is nearby, and I expect it will turn up soon. This very aggressive vine is in the milkweed family, so if you see a vine with a slender milkweed pod and opposite leaves, it's likely going to be this guy. Let NAP know if you spot it!

To get a good look at these invaders you can search the images page at google.com.

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