

# Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 10, Number 3

Autumn 2005

## Park Focus: Furstenberg Nature Area *by Amanda Sprader*

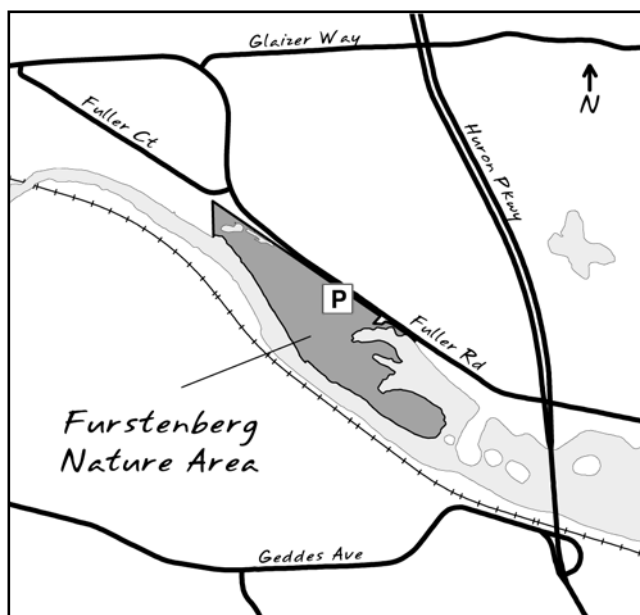
"Follow me," Dave Borneman, Burn Boss, directs through his walkie-talkie as a group of volunteers and NAP Crew follow him clad in bright yellow jumpsuits and fire helmets. Butterflies fill my stomach as Dave lights some dry grass in the burn unit and we all stand in awe as the small circular prairie in the parking lot at Furstenberg becomes engulfed in flames. It is the smallest controlled burn of the season, and I'm glad, as it also happens to be my first fire experience. I learn how to use the 50-pound water backpack that becomes my new best friend over the next four weeks of our burn season. Burning the larger restored prairie site at Furstenberg later that day introduces me to the drip torch that ignites the burn unit. As we pack up that afternoon, I look back at the areas that we burned. They are black and ashy, smelly and not appealing to my eye. Then I look again and see a field filled with the promise that our burn will help reduce the amount of shallow-rooted non-native species, like spotted knapweed. I know that when I come back to this park to work again I will be able to spot natives in the prairie that will have responded positively to the fire, such as the bright purple of coneflower and the orange of butterfly-weed.

Burning is a restoration practice that was first used at Furstenberg in 1996. Setting a controlled fire to an area is a management tool that reinstates the historic patterns of fire that were used to control landscapes

throughout the United States by Native Americans and natural fires ignited by lightning. Fire kills invasive plants and shrubs with shallow roots that would not be here if European settlers hadn't introduced them. In 1992 and 1995, native seeds were planted in these prairies. In these prairies one can see well-established natives such as prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*), Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), side-oats grama grass (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), smooth false foxglove (*Aureolaria flava*), stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*), and round-headed bush clover (*Lespedeza capitata*). My first burn experience is one that I will never forget. The only lasting evidence from that restoration practice is the native species that now occupy the prairies instead of invasive species and litter.

Furstenberg is a 38-acre natural area bordered by the Huron River and Fuller Road. Gallup Park is just to the southeast, with a boardwalk connecting the two. Due to the variety of different ecosystems found in this park, Furstenberg has the highest number of species of any park in Ann Arbor. The different ecosystems include prairies, wetlands, a lagoon, sedge meadow, oak-hickory forest, and an oak savanna. Furstenberg was purchased in 1971 and redesigned in 1991. The grand opening and dedication of the park took place in 1996. Restoration activities started in 1992 and have continued since, with volunteers playing a major roll in this work.

*Continued on page 7*



## In This Issue

|                                 |     |                    |   |
|---------------------------------|-----|--------------------|---|
| Park Focus.....                 | 1   | NAPpennings .....  | 5 |
| Coordinator's Corner.....       | 2   | Staff Updates..... | 6 |
| Herpetological Rescue.....      | 3   | Bev Walters.....   | 7 |
| Volunteer Calendar.....         | 4-5 | Adopt-A-Park.....  | 8 |
| Stewardship Network Events..... | 5   |                    |   |

# Coordinator's Corner

## Changing Seasons

As this issue of the NAP Newsletter is being pulled together, we're in the heat of summer. But by the time you read this, the nights should be cooling off and there may even be a hint of fall in the air. The seasons are changing, as they always do.

It's a new season at NAP as well, as you'll read in this newsletter. After 11 years as NAP's Botanist, Bev Walters is moving on to a new adventure, using her well-honed botanical skills with the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) and visiting natural areas across the state. Although we're thrilled for Bev, we will miss her greatly at NAP and I will especially miss her enthusiastic reports of new botanical finds in our parks, often in areas where we recently burned or took some other action to control invasives.

MNFI has also recently lured away another NAPper—Barb Barton, NAP's Entomologist for the past four years. Barb has been tremendously effective at coordinating volunteers in our annual butterfly survey. As a result, we've found new populations of rare species and modified our restoration practices to ensure that we're sensitive to the needs of these insects. We will miss Barb very much.

Although both of these women have graciously offered to continue assisting NAP as their time allows, I realize that it won't be long before they become as wrapped up in their responsibilities with MNFI as they were with those at NAP. Bev and Barb, we wish you both all the best at MNFI (but please let your new employers know that they owe us two great employees in the future!)

As we say goodbye to these staffers, we are very pleased to welcome Lara Treemore Spears to NAP. Lara started in July as our second NAP Technician, sharing responsibilities for that position with Jason Tallant. With a strong background in botany, entomology, and databases, Lara will help fill the void left by Bev and Barb. If you haven't yet met Lara, stop by to say "Hello," or come join her at a workday or prescribed burn. You may also run into her mother, Toni, who's a volunteer on our burn crew. I'm especially excited to have this permanent staff position filled because it should help bring some stability to NAP in the coming years.

Similarly, I'm thrilled to welcome another permanent staff position to NAP. For the past ten years, our Outreach Coordinators have been in charge of coordinating NAP's volunteer program, and are the ones responsible for the tremendous growth that program has enjoyed. Now we're able to make that position a permanent one. Along with the regular NAP duties, that person will also be responsible for developing the city's new Adopt-A-Park Program. As this goes to print, we don't yet have a name for this staff member, but look for an introduction in the next issue.

By that time, fall will be giving way to winter. A new season will be upon us. And we at NAP will be busy getting our new staff up and running so we can continue and expand our efforts to take care of Ann Arbor's natural areas.

- David Borneman, *NAP Manager*



### **Natural Area Preservation**

is a Division of the City of Ann Arbor  
Public Services Area

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

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Barb Barton, *Entomologist*

David Mifsud, *Herpetologist*

**Work Study**

Sabrina Hepburn

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

# NAP Herp Rescue a Success!!! *by David Mifsud*

It is estimated that over 1,000 acres of wetland are lost in Michigan every year. These habitats support a diverse community of reptiles and amphibians. In most cases, little attention is given to the animals that occur within these wetland habitats when they are being destroyed. Fortunately this is not always the case. In March of 2005 an intensive rescue effort was organized by NAP, working with Randy Trent of the Ann Arbor Public Schools, to save many amphibians and reptiles from the future location of the new high school-located at Maple Road and M-14. This effort resulted in over 50 people volunteering hundreds of hours. Their efforts saved over 1,500 frogs and toads, ~200 salamanders and newts, and ~300 snakes!!! In total 14 species (including a very unique hybrid salamander) were rescued from the site and have been relocated, either onsite, to adjacent city natural areas, or held at the Detroit Zoo until the relocation area is complete. This type of project is certainly rare, and was one of a kind in Michigan for the size of the project and number of species and individuals recovered. Monitoring efforts have already begun in places where amphibians and reptiles were relocated.

We at NAP are excited to report that in their new locations Chorus Frogs and Spring Peepers were visually observed and heard calling. Wood Frogs and tadpoles were also observed. In addition, Garter Snakes have been seen basking and some females appeared to be pregnant at the time of surveying.

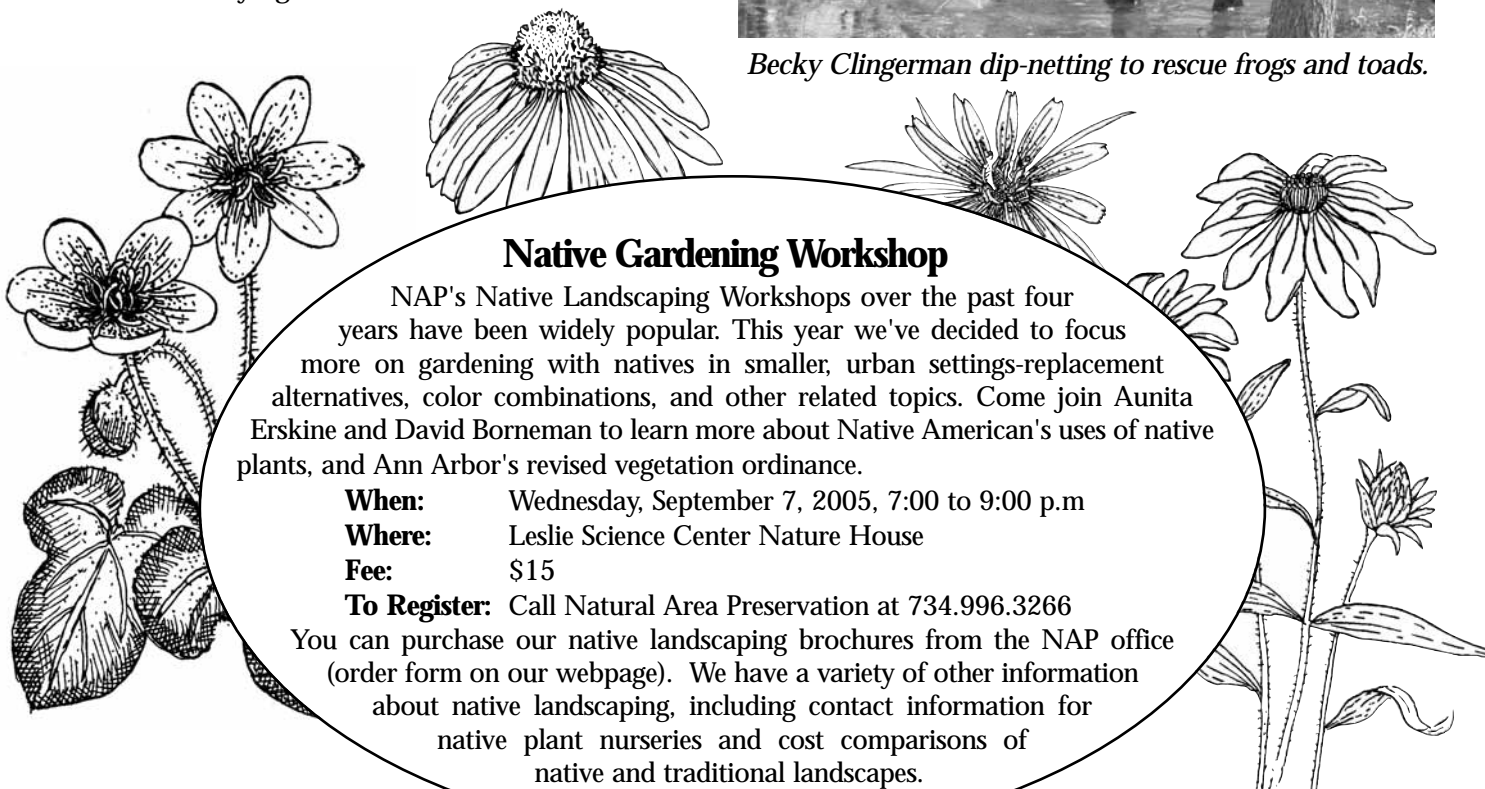
It is important to mention that no one involved in the rescue effort wanted to see the wetland and woodland habitats destroyed, nor did we want to see the animals destroyed. We always advocate habitat protection and preservation as the primary objective, but understand that this is not always possible. We are happy to have had the chance to do something positive and save animals which would otherwise have died.

The work is not done—many years of monitoring and management are ahead of us, but we hope this venture will be a template for other such rescue efforts in the future.

A special thank you to all the volunteers who spent countless hours, often in adverse weather conditions, catching these little guys. It is your dedication and passion for nature that will be the saving grace for these animals, and others in the future.



*Becky Clingerman dip-netting to rescue frogs and toads.*



## Native Gardening Workshop

NAP's Native Landscaping Workshops over the past four years have been widely popular. This year we've decided to focus more on gardening with natives in smaller, urban settings-replacement alternatives, color combinations, and other related topics. Come join Aunita Erskine and David Borneman to learn more about Native American's uses of native plants, and Ann Arbor's revised vegetation ordinance.

**When:** Wednesday, September 7, 2005, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m  
**Where:** Leslie Science Center Nature House  
**Fee:** \$15  
**To Register:** Call Natural Area Preservation at 734.996.3266

You can purchase our native landscaping brochures from the NAP office (order form on our webpage). We have a variety of other information about native landscaping, including contact information for native plant nurseries and cost comparisons of native and traditional landscapes.



# 2005 Autumn Natural Area Preservation Volunteer Stewardship Calendar

NAP is located at the Leslie Science Center, 1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor, 48105 734.996.3266 (phone). Contact the NAP office if a group you are involved with is interested in planning a volunteer stewardship event. Minors must either be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form.

## September

**September 7, Wednesday**  
**Native Gardening Workshop**  
7:00 to 9:00 pm

Leslie Science Center Nature House - 1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor. Interested in native plants? Would you like to learn how to establish them in your yard? Then this workshop is for you! Topics will include small, urban site assessment and preparation, seed and plant selection, installation, and maintenance. Program fee: \$15. Please pre-register by March 1, by calling NAP.

**September 17, Saturday**  
**Furstenberg Native Plant Garden**  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Park Steward and Master Gardener, Aunita Erskine, will lead a wonderful cleanup workday and ethnobotanical walk. Join her in putting the demonstration garden to rest for the fall. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School.

**September 17, Saturday**  
**Scarlett Mitchell Workday**  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Non-native understory trees and shrubs like buckthorn and honeysuckle are keeping native seedlings and plants from growing in our parks. Come out with friends and family and help NAP clear these problematic plants from Scarlett-Mitchell! Meet in the Scarlett Middle School parking lot off Lorraine Street.

**September 24, Saturday**  
**Swift Run Stewardship Workday**  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Enjoy a morning workday and help clear out some invasive shrubs from Swift Run. We'll meet you on Eddy Street, off of Verle Avenue. When we're done working we'll take a short nature walk. Orientation starts promptly at 9:00.

**September 24, Saturday**  
**Oakridge Stewardship Workday**  
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Do you know what to do with a handsaw? If not, you're sure to learn at this workday! Oakridge has some invasive shrubs that we hope to clear so that native wildflowers can grow. Meet us in the southeast corner of the University of Michigan parking lot (at the northwest corner of the intersection of Glazier Way and Huron Parkway). NAP staff will lead a short walk after the workday to look at the recovering native ecosystem at Oakridge.

## October

**October 1, Saturday**  
**Greenview Stewardship Workday**  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Help remove invasive shrubs and trim-trails. The work today will benefit both botanical diversity and the enjoyment of park users, come help! Meet at the Greenview Park sign, on Greenview Road, across from Barnard Road.

**October 1, Saturday**  
**Bird Hills Stewardship Workday**  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

We hope to improve this great park by removing invasive shrubs and restoring the native ecosystem-but we need your help! Meet at the park

entrance on Bird Road, west of Huron River Drive. Additional parking is available in the Barton Dam parking lot.

**October 1, Saturday**  
**Leslie Science Center Workday**  
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Leslie Science Center is home to NAP and serves the community through environmental education and community outreach programs. Join us, as we take care of invasive shrubbery in our own backyard! Meet us at the Leslie Science Center parking lot, 1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor. At the end of the workday we'll spend some time walking around the Center and the surrounding natural area. Orientation begins promptly at 1:00.

**October 22, Saturday**  
**Fritz Park Stewardship Workday**  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Bring your friends, family, energy, and enthusiasm to this Fritz workday, where we'll be clearing out some invasive shrubs! We'll bring the tools and the bagels! Park on Russett Street at the east entrance of Fritz. NAP staff will lead a brief nature walk at the end of the workday.

**October 22, Saturday**  
**Brown Park Stewardship Workday**  
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Timber! We need your help cutting down some invasive shrubs that are crowding out native plants at Brown! Help us restore this beautiful woodland. Meet at the end of Verle Road, two blocks west of Platt Road.

**October 29, Saturday  
Kuebler Langford Workday  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

Kuebler Langford has a mix of prairie and woodland habitat, as well as woodland edge habitat that is great for birds and wildlife! Today we will be working to restore the native woodland. Come out and clear invasive shrubs with us! Meet at the park entrance on Beechwood Drive.

**October 29, Saturday  
Huron Parkway Workday  
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Enjoy this afternoon workday with neighbors, friends, and family, as we head to Huron Parkway Nature Area to clear some invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle that has taken hold there. We'll meet at the Park Steward's house-3470 Woodland Road, off of East Huron River Drive. We'll spend a little time at the end of the workday exploring the natural area.

## November

**November 5, Saturday  
Argo Stewardship Workday  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon**

What do handsaws, neighbors, bagels, buckthorn, smiles, and work gloves have in common? They're all things that will be at the Argo workday! Will you be? Come clear some invasive shrubbery with us! Meet us at the intersection of Longshore Drive and Amherst Avenue. A brief orientation begins promptly at 9:00.

**November 5, Saturday  
Barton Park Stewardship Workday  
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Plants have amazing mechanisms for dispersing their seeds, but if we want to restore native habitat to our parks quickly, they're going to need a little help! We'll be collecting native plant seeds at Barton for dispersal later this fall. This will be a wonderful and relaxing activity for all ages and ability levels. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

# The Stewardship Network Events

## Ecological Restoration Webcasts

2nd Wednesday of each month from 11:45 to 1:00 pm

These webcasts cover different topics each month and allow you to ask questions and share information with experts and others who join us online. To receive email announcements about the webcasts send a note to Lisa Brush (at lbrush@umich.edu, with "webcast announcement list" in the subject line).

## Stewards' Circle Meetings

2nd Tuesday of the month

7:30 to 8:30 am at Bruegger's Bagels, North University

September 13 Topic: Seed Collection

October 11 Topic: Streambank Restoration

November 8 Topic: Tool Sharing

## Invasive Plant Control Techniques Workshop

Monday and Tuesday, September 12 and 13

Join us for this info-packed two-day course to learn proven techniques to control invasives and restore your natural area's native biodiversity. Call Lisa at 734.996.3190 to request a brochure or visit [www.stewardshipnetwork.org/training](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org/training). Cost \$250 Additional people from same org and site \$150.

*NAP invites all volunteers to participate in TSN-as each of us shares our knowledge and abilities, we all become better stewards.*



## NAPpennings

### Thank You...

- ~ Girl Scouts for their help at Kuebler Langford and Marshall
- ~ All the folks from Temple Beth Emeth for their work on Mitzvah Day
- ~ The students at Ann Arbor Academy who pulled garlic mustard at Bluffs
- ~ UM medical students for helping out at Huron Hills Golf Course
- ~ Delta Sigma Beta for coming to the Hannah workday
- ~ Summer Discovery volunteers
- ~ Many, many of the YMCA Youth Volunteer Corps this summer

**6th Annual Michigan Prescribed Fire Council Workshop** - The Role of Contemporary Prescribed Burning on the Michigan Landscape - Friday and Saturday, September 9 and 10, 2005. Friday's presentations will be on fire ecology, impacts of fire on natural community ecology, effects of fire application at the landscape level, and how to accomplish these goals in a safe and productive manner. On Saturday you will be able to discuss burn objectives, view burn sites, and, hopefully, witness an actual burn. Both days will be in the Kalamazoo area. Registration forms are available at [www.FireCouncil.org](http://www.FireCouncil.org).

# Staff Updates

## hello...



**Max Barahona** is back with NAP for the summer—he was on the crew in 2003—between trips to Chile!



### **Jess Peirson**

I spent most of the last few years going to school and traversing the foothills of the Appalachians in southeastern Ohio. Currently, I am in the midst of my doctoral work in Ecology and Evolutionary

Biology at UM. When NAP asked me to help with botanical inventories for the summer, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to explore the many natural areas in Ann Arbor and to help contribute to our knowledge of the local flora.



### **Lara Treemore Spears**

I'm really excited to join NAP as its second Technician, helping to protect and restore Ann Arbor's amazing natural areas! Although I've been using my knowledge of restoration ecology as an

environmental consultant since getting my Master's from the UM School of Natural Resources and Environment, NAP will allow me to use my ecology background in new ways. I'm looking forward to getting to know the volunteers and working closely with staff to inventory and manage our parks.

## other changes...



### **Barb Barton**

They say it's never too late to learn... so at 46 I finally obtained my Master's Degree from EMU! I have been studying the federally endangered Mitchell's satyr butterfly for the past two

years, coordinating the NAP butterfly surveys, doing some private consulting work with NAP Herpetologist David Mifsud, and generally staying way too busy. I was just hired as an Associate Program Leader in Zoology for Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MSU Extension) in Lansing and will continue my work with the satyr. I'll also be conducting a statewide survey for whippoorwills and nighthawks. While my new job with MNFI will take most of my time, I plan to continue in an advisory capacity with NAP and help to conserve Ann Arbor's butterfly communities. I'm also looking for more musical endeavors as my life settles from grad student into a normal routine (yeah, right).

**Terry Rynard** (Field Operations Manager) has recently taken a job in Fort Lauderdale, Florida as Assistant Parks and Recreation Director. Over the past two years Terry helped NAP, Park Operations, and Forestry transition into the new Field Operations Unit of Public Services. Now it's someone else's turn to oversee these diverse operations! **Karla Henderson** just moved from the Parks and Recreation Services Manager position to fill Terry's vacancy. Karla has had an illustrious career in the City over the past four years after working for the City of Highland Park. NAP is excited to work with Karla as we all settle into our new locations in the city structure.

*"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."  
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt*

# Bev Walters, Botanist



NAP's longest-termed Botanist (and second longest-termed employee) has left after 11 years with us. We wanted to make sure that you knew some of the many accomplishments she has brought to NAP, the city, and our natural areas.

Bev Walters has gotten to know Ann Arbor's natural areas better than anyone else in town. She's helped train NAP volunteers to inventory the parks, led numerous botanical walks (for city staff, for NAP volunteers, and for the general public), and inventoried all of our natural areas, including non-city owned parcels that were potential development sites or potential acquisitions. Bev also knows more of the NAP community than anyone but our boss—Dave Borneman. She's collaborated with other inventory staff, helped lead workdays, and generally stuck it out longer than anyone else. Bev worked with others in the city on numerous projects—developing the city's invasive species list, updating the vegetation ordinance, revising the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan, and reviewing many development plans. And, of course, she has spent innumerable hours documenting

what plants occur where in the city, and making sure all of that information is carefully tracked in our databases.

Bev has been involved in many other botanical activities that have made use of her knowledge and advanced her skills. She served on the Michigan DNR's Plant Technical Advisory Committee that met to review the status of Michigan's rare plant species and has been very active in the Michigan Botanical Club. At the MBC, Bev has been the Vice President and Treasurer; has led field trips, and has helped conduct inventories at Walpole Island and YMCA Storer Camps.

As Bev leaves us, she starts work with Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI), doing projects similar to some here at NAP, but on a much broader scale. She'll be monitoring Michigan's rare plants, inventorying plants in southern lower Michigan, assisting in prioritizing which natural areas would most benefit from ecological restoration, and developing data management techniques.

Please join us in thanking Bev for her immense contributions to NAP, and wishing her the best at MNFI.

## Park Focus: Furstenberg Nature Area *Continued from Page 1*

The first volunteer workday experience I had at Furstenberg was with the fourth graders of the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor. They were invited to a mitzvah birthday party workday. The kids came ready to pull dame's rocket from an area in the oak-hickory woods. Despite the heat and lots of raspberry pricks, the fourth graders and their siblings rallied together to help restore a part of Furstenberg and gained a greater appreciation for nature. I am confident that in future years there will be more than one student from the Hebrew Day School who will walk the paths at Furstenberg and feel connected to the plants that grow there. Working with volunteers who are excited about making an improvement in their city parks is one of the most rewarding parts of my job at NAP. I feel that passing on conservation values to people in Ann Arbor through workdays is a unique opportunity that advances the city and our parks in a positive direction.

Lastly, a couple of weeks ago I experienced my first bird walk with City Ornithologist Dea Armstrong at Furstenberg. We met at seven in the morning and wandered around the parking lot and down the boardwalk sighting Indigo Buntings, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and an Eastern Kingbird on the

river, along with many others. We discussed bird habitats and noticed the open canopy areas and birds atop snags, while also learning about ground-nesting birds, such as the Common Yellowthroat. Having Dea there to help me distinguish one bird from another through sight and sound better allowed me to open my understanding of managing an area for plants and animals alike. As a Conservation Worker, my job often deals with controlling invasive species subsequently I feel that I am focused heartily on the plant aspect of NAP, so beginning to grasp the animal side of Furstenberg was much appreciated. To hear Dea talk with enthusiasm of birds was inspiring and makes me want to visit parks more regularly to spy where birds dwell.

I hope that these brief glances into my first experiences at Furstenberg will draw you out to the park for your own first experiences. The diversity of flora and fauna at this park along with its location and connection to other parks along the river make it a very enjoyable spot. Sitting on a quiet bench, watching fish jump, throwing out a line from the dock, jogging or walking the trails, and birding are all pleasurable activities that Furstenberg has to offer. So, go visit Furstenberg, explore and enjoy!

# Adopt-A-Park *by Jason Frenzel*

NAP's outreach efforts will soon expand to include work on the city's new Adopt-A-Park program—bringing volunteers into the mowed and groomed parks to start enhancing all of our parks. Late in 2004, the Mayor and City Council asked Park staff to identify ways to further involve residents in the parks. Over the winter and spring months we researched other communities' adopt-a-park type programs, most of which are quite like Michigan's Adopt-A-Highway program.

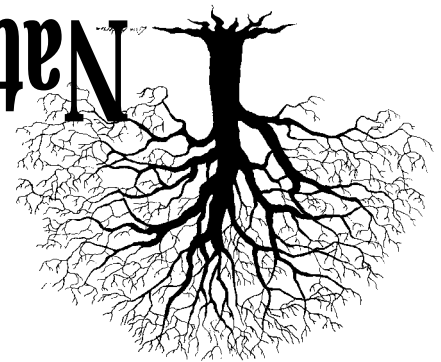
After a few internal discussions, it was decided that NAP has the most volunteer related expertise in the City and that we would model Ann Arbor's Adopt-A-Park program after our Park Steward program. We have started building relationships with groups around town and within the city for the past few months. We've been answering some of the many questions that arise when a new project is started, such as: what types of work will be focused on, who will administer the program, how will it be funded, and what can we learn from other municipalities? The list of questions goes on, but after initial planning we're ready to try it out.

So, we've started working with the neighbors of some parks to pilot the program and recruit its first volunteers. These concerned folks are interested in improving their neighborhood greenspace—people just like you! So if you, someone you know, or an organization you're involved with is interested in adopting a park near you, call our office – fall cleanup is right around the corner!



NAP would like to extend a huge thank you and congratulations to **Allen Eyler** who earned his Eagle Scout rank building a much-needed boardwalk at Brown Park. With Allen's leadership, volunteers from Troop 7 put in over 400 hours planning, fundraising, and building the 36-foot boardwalk that spans a drainage channel. Thanks to their work, park users will be able to navigate this area of the park with ease.

# Natural Area Preservation News



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