

Natural Area Preservation News

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

Volume 9, Number 2

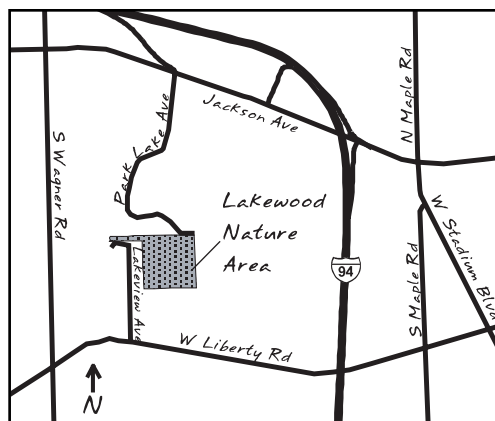
Summer 2004

Park Focus: Lakewood Nature Area *by Laurel Malvitz*

If you have ever walked through Lakewood Nature Area you know what a beautiful place it is. Trails wind through 13 acres of hilly woods: approximately 6 acres are school-owned and 7 acres are parkland—owned by the city (though all 13 acres are managed as Lakewood Nature Area). This high quality oak-hickory woodland has many large trees and a relatively open understory. Lakewood is distinctive in many ways, from its restoration to current day uses, and from unique plant and animal species to its land history.

One aspect that makes this land so unique is how it became school and park property. In 1966 Jean Kluge, now Park Steward, moved into the neighborhood near Lakewood Elementary School. Coming from a highly developed area in California, her move to this area of Ann Arbor was a breath of fresh air. The wooded area adjacent to Jean's neighborhood, then known as Wagner Woods, was a great place for children to explore nature. Jean organized a group called "Environmental Explorers" for the neighborhood children to do just that. Although the woods offered many learning opportunities, its fate was up in the air because the Wagner family, who owned the land at that time, was thinking of selling it to developers. Mrs. Wagner was not in good health and the family was focusing their attention on her, not selling the Wagner Woods. This gave Jean time to take action. On the advice of Bill Stapp, a professor at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources at the time, Jean wrote many letters to keep the woods from being developed. She wrote to the Wagner family encouraging them not to sell to developers. She wrote to the Ann Arbor School Board and City to convince them to buy

this property. They had expressed interest in purchasing this parcel for some time and took Jean's advice to come up with money to do so. The Wagner's could have gotten more money by selling to developers, but before she died Mrs. Wagner decided instead to sell it to the City and preserve this wonderful woods. Thanks to Bill's guidance, Jean's persistence, and Mrs. Wagner's final decision, the beautiful park known as Lakewood Nature Area became City & school property in 1968.



Jean now visits Lakewood forest every day. She can be seen walking her dogs on leash, picking up after them, picking up litter, leading walks through the woods for 5th grade students at Lakewood Elementary, and in general just enjoying a peaceful walk through a beautiful wooded area. Lakewood is a "great place for birding" according to Jean. Having little traffic around the park, she believes, encourages more birds. Earlier this year, Jean heard a Saw-whet owl call a few mornings in a

row. She has attracted 30 different bird species to the feeder in her yard, a testament to the number of species in the neighborhood and park. Volunteers and NAP's Ornithologist, Dea Armstrong, have observed 32 bird species in the breeding season at Lakewood. Cooper's hawk, a species of Special Concern, is one of these. Migrant birds add to the total number of species observed in the park.

Lakewood is also home to some unique and locally rare plant species. One such species, Kentucky coffee-tree (*Gynocladus dioicus*), is listed as a species of Special Concern here in Michigan, its northern distribution limit. The leaves on this tree are quite interesting and are typically between 12 and 36 inches long!

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Coordinator's Corner

The Ride of Your Life

Spring is like a roller coaster—not the classic roller coasters of yesterday with their alternating up and down ride, which is how the simile of “like a roller coaster” is usually used. No, spring for me is like the “Steel Phantom” in Pennsylvania, the tallest roller coaster in the world, with a 225-foot vertical drop and a design speed of 80 miles per hour. Spring is a “hold on for dear life” ride that starts in January with a long, slow, deliberate climb toward the top. Sites are visited and prioritized, management plans are written, burn prescriptions are developed, burn permits are obtained, letters are written to neighbors, staff positions are advertised and eventually filled. The work is tedious but important because it lays the foundation for the upcoming year.

Then slowly the days begin to lengthen. The snow melts and the first signs of spring begin appearing. The roller coaster is nearing the top of its long climb and the tension is building. About the first of March, the descent begins: burn training is quickly followed by the first burn, then another, and another, sometimes four-a-week, each one taking a solid 8-hour block of the day. Forty volunteers show up for the frog survey kickoff—more than twice as many as expected and we scramble to accommodate everyone. Weekend workdays also draw record crowds. Suddenly I find myself in the middle of the plunge. Spring is exploding faster than expected: birds are returning, wildflowers are popping up, and butterflies are reappearing. The window of opportunity for our spring burns is beginning to close, so we quicken the pace. Our work day starts earlier and stretches later into the evening. Lunch breaks are shortened or skipped. Even weekends don't provide enough time to catch up and the office work begins piling up on our desks. As the days fly by, I find myself screaming down the roller coaster and holding on for dear life!

And just like the thrill seekers who are drawn to the Steel Phantom, I love this ride! The burns, the frogs, the wildflowers, the butterflies, and the bird migration are what make my spring. Despite what the calendar or the weatherman says, it's just not spring until I have logged my own rites of spring into my journal.

If you haven't yet finished your rites of spring or early summer, there's still time and NAP can help you do it. Join our butterfly or breeding bird survey. Help out at a workday and give the native wildflowers a hand. You'll rediscover that this truly is the season of renewal for Nature. And, if you really immerse yourself in the roller coaster of spring and early summer, you'll find that you too are being renewed. Instead of “holding on for dear life,” you'll be “holding on to dear life.” Let Nature renew you this spring and summer.

- David Borneman, *NAP Manager*

Editor's note: An earlier version of this article first appeared in the Summer 1997 Natural Area Preservation News. Dave was busy riding the roller coaster this spring and decided to pull this out of the archives rather than start a new article from scratch.

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

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

Park Focus *Continued from Page 1*



Susan Jackson Karstrom 1955
Kentucky Coffee-Tree

Leaves are bipinnately compound with leaflets arranged along both sides of a common midrib, each branching from a main midrib (See illustration). Its fruit is a legume (pod) with large rounded seeds inside.

The wood violet (*Viola palmata*)—found in only a handful of parks around town—has lobed leaves and violet-blue flowers appearing from April to May. Other spring flowering plants to look for in Lakewood: blood-root (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), May-apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), and yellow trout-lily (*Erythronium americanum*).

If you're walking in Lakewood between July and September, look for yellow giant hyssop (*Agastache*

nepetoides) flowering. The yellow flowers are clustered above the leaves and give the appearance of a spike near the top of the plant. The tubular flower is distinctive with a hanging bib-like lower petal.

The number of common trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), wild leek (*Allium burdickii*), trout-lily, and May-apple significantly increased after a prescribed burn conducted in the spring of 2001. NAP conducts prescribed burns on both park and school property at Lakewood. The main objectives for doing so are to suppress non-native shrubby growth and to stimulate oaks, hickories, and herbaceous, native, fire-adapted species. As an added bonus, prescribed burning will benefit wildflower populations. This year's burn on April 9th was perfectly timed because school was not in session and the weather conditions matched the burn prescription. We expect to see similar results in wildflower populations from this year's burn in the next couple of years!

All-in-all Lakewood Nature Area is a beautiful and unique place. If you're in the neighborhood, stop and

Park Steward Erudition

Jim Rogers—Greenview Park

Jim grew up at the edge of suburbia in Charleston, West Virginia. His house was at the border between a subdivision and miles of hilly forestland. "It was a great place to play and learn about the natural world," Jim notes. After living elsewhere in Ann Arbor, he moved to a house bordering Greenview Park twelve years ago. Over the years, Jim engaged in informal stewardship (picking up trash, improving trails) until recently, when a group of park neighbors, the "Friends of Greenview Park," became more active. This past year, he led a group that removed invasive species from the park. Jim heard that NAP needed Park Stewards and volunteered for this role. The Friends of Greenview Park are working with the City and with volunteers on various preservation activities. "We hope to continue to restore the park's natural habitat while encouraging use of the park as a great neighborhood resource for walking and nature appreciation."

Doug Wood—Dicken Woods

Doug is a member of "Friends of Dicken Woods" (FoDW), a non-profit volunteer organization initially established to save Dicken Woods as City parkland. Additionally, Doug is Chair of the FoDW Trails Committee. FoDW is presently working to improve the woods as an ecological, educational, and recreational

community asset. Doug, who holds degrees in Nuclear Engineering from Penn State and the University of Michigan, is one of the owners of Advent Engineering, an Ann Arbor business with a national client base, primarily serving the electric power industry. Doug remarked, "Dicken Woods provides an opportunity for me to contribute my organizational skills to this community cause while personally enjoying the hands-on improvements we are making to our neighborhood green space." Doug thinks NAP, the local neighbors, and Dicken Elementary School staff have been a joy to work with in establishing priorities for trails and laying them out on the property. They expect to be enjoying the new trails and the sights along them before school ends, less than 4 months from the time the City acquired the property.

Erik Stalhandske—Dicken Woods

Erik came to Ann Arbor in 1985 for graduate school and never left. He has been involved with community activities in the form of coaching kids' sports and participating in different nonprofit groups. Erik is active in sports—road and mountain biking, cross-country skiing, volleyball, and others. He is currently President of Friends of Dicken Woods. Erik has lived in the Dicken neighborhood for 11 years. He is married with two kids at Pioneer and one at Dicken Elementary.

Summer 2004 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 orientations start promptly at listed times. 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.

June

June 5, Saturday

Gallup Park Bird Walk, 7:30 to 9:30 am
Join City Ornithologist, Dea Armstrong, as she leads a walk to look for birds in Gallup Park & Furstenberg Nature Area. Bring binoculars if you have them, but they are not absolutely necessary. A great walk for beginning birders! Meet at the paddleboat dock at Gallup.

June 5, Saturday

**National Trails and River Day!
Argo Nature Area Stewardship Workday, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm**
Help protect the Huron River by maintaining trails and removing invasive plants down by the river. Meet us in the parking lot north of the Argo Canoe Livery, off Longshore Drive.

June 6, Sunday

Furstenberg Native Plant Garden, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon
Help in the garden and learn a bit about native landscaping. Your assistance at this workday will be appreciated by hundreds of park users. Botanical tour will be provided, time permitting. Meet at the circle drive at Furstenberg Nature Area off Fuller Road across from Huron High School.

June 8, Tuesday

**Stewards' Circle, 7:30 to 8:30 am
Bruegger's Bagels, North University**
This month's topic: Dogs and Bikes. These two fabulous elements of many of our lives can have a detrimental impact on natural areas. What are the potential impacts? How have groups dealt with them? What are good avenues for communicating with dog owners and bikers?

June 12, Saturday

Ann Arbor Landfill Bird Walk, 7:30 am
This walk is for all levels of birders, but beginners are especially welcome. Binoculars are nice but not essential. Meet at the small parking area just inside the Platt Road entrance, south of the intersection of Platt and Ellsworth Roads. Leader: Dea Armstrong.

June 12, Saturday

Barton Nature Area Butterfly Walk, 9:30 am
Help find our local butterflies and learn more about them. Join NAP Entomologist Barb Barton in surveying this natural area. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

June 12, Saturday

Hollywood Park Stewardship Workday, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Help maintain this almost pristine woodland. Though small, it has a great diversity of native wildflowers that will benefit from your work. Meet us on Sequoia Parkway near the intersection of Center Drive.

June 12, Saturday

Hannah Nature Area Stewardship Workday, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Help neighbors of this little park near downtown with its upkeep. Meet at the end of Bath Street, west of 7th (between Miller and Huron).

June 19, Saturday

Brown Park Stewardship Workday, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Help us in our continuing efforts to improve the trails in this wonderful woodland. Meet at the end of Verle Avenue, two blocks west of Platt Road.

July

July 10, Saturday

Furstenberg Native Plant Garden, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon
Help in the garden and learn a bit about native plants. Botanical tour will be provided, time permitting. Meet at the circle drive at Furstenberg Nature Area off Fuller Road.

July 11, Sunday

North American Butterfly Association's 4th of July Butterfly Count, 8:30 am to 6:00 pm
Help survey numerous parks throughout Ann Arbor. This is a great way to learn butterfly identification, as you will be spending the day with Ann Arbor's finest butterflyers. Please call 734.576.8427 to register.

July 11, Sunday

**Huron River Day
Gallup Park, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm**
Bring friends and family for a celebration of the entire watershed! Activities for the day will include canoe and foot races in the morning, and entertainment and numerous environmental group displays in the afternoon. See page seven for more details.

July 13, Tuesday

**Stewards' Circle, 7:30 to 8:30 am
Bruegger's Bagels, North University**
This month's topic: New Invaders. What are the new invasive plants that we should be on the lookout for? What control methods are known? Where have they been found in our area? Are they not here yet, but creeping in from other places?

July 17, Saturday

Bluffs Nature Area Stewardship Workday, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Help us remove invasive shrubs and knapweed from a secluded prairie overlooking the Huron River. Meet us in the parking lot of the Elks Pratt Lodge on Sunset Road by Wildt Street.

July 31, Saturday

Black Pond Woods Stewardship Workday, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Come help us spruce up trails to ensure that their use does not become harmful to the flora in the park. Meet at the parking lot of the Leslie Science Center.

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



August

August 10, Tuesday

**Stewards' Circle, 7:30 to 8:30 am
Bruegger's Bagels, North University**

This month's topic: Borders/Edges. Are there different issues in managing the borders of our natural areas? How can we manage the creep of invasives, which often come from the edges? Are there creative strategies to create buffers around these special places? What types of education and acquisition strategies have worked?

August 14, Saturday

Barton Nature Area Stewardship Workday, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Help preserve the magnificent prairies in Barton with us. We'll be removing invasive knapweed and shrubs. Meet at the Barton Dam parking lot on Huron River Drive.

August 28, Saturday

Marshall Nature Area Butterfly Walk, 9:30 to 11:30 am

Help NAP Entomologist Barb Barton find local butterfly species, while learning more about them. Meet in the parking lot off Dixboro, north of Plymouth Road.

August 28, Saturday

Two workdays for the price of one! Both will improve trails and remove invasive shrubbery.

Brown Park, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon
Meet at the end of Verle Road, two blocks west of Platt Road.

Hansen Nature Area, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

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



Natural Areas Management

Invasive Plant Control Techniques Workshop

July 15 and 16, 2004

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 734/769-6981 to request a brochure or visit our website at www.snre.umich.edu/stewardshipnetwork/training

Cost \$250 Additional people from same org and site \$150.



**Southeast
Michigan
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Staff Updates

goodbye...



Eric Ellis
(Conservation Crew Leader)

The end of April will mark my last days at NAP, almost exactly two years after I first started working here. I will be continuing the tradition of using NAP crew experience

to jump to bigger and better things. Next fall I will start a Masters program at the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources. My fiancée and I will be moving there this spring. I have lots of good memories of my time at NAP; I'm lucky to have worked here. Happy Trails.



Jon Williams

Hey everyone. Thanks for making my experience at NAP such a wonderful thing. I've decided that it's better to burn out than to fade away, so I'm spending the last week of my employ-

ment doing a non-stop, 84-hour garlic mustard weed-athon. So have fun this summer! ♥, Jon

hello...



Reid Parker

Hi all, I'm Reid Parker, one of the newest NAP crewmembers, here for my first year in the Midwest. I've come here recently after working on a prescribed fire crew at Grand Canyon National Park.

Though I really like fire, I'm here to kill stuff and I'm getting really good at identifying all of your favorite exotics. Just waiting for the sky to clear and the temperature to rise...



Tracie Rexer
(Conservation Crew)

Originally from Bay City, Michigan, I've spent the past two years out of state in different AmeriCorps programs in the South and out

West. Most recently, I was stationed at Point Reyes National Seashore, California, where I monitored threatened coho salmon populations and did creek restoration projects. Although I'm an MSU girl at heart, I'm excited to be living here in Ann Arbor exploring the numerous natural areas.

other changes...



Jason Tallant

I've one word for the people out there wondering how I, Jason Tallant, became the newest Crew Leader at NAP and that word is **ATTRITION**. While others have fallen from grace or traveled down

a new and different path, I stayed the course. As my peers on the crew shudder at the possibility of gleaning direction from my cryptic verbosity, I believe I'm up to the challenge.



Jason Frenzel
(Outreach Coordinator)

In an attempt to diversify my life and income, I've decided to go down to part time at NAP. I realized that I've been here for two and a half years and had started to

stagnate a bit. In an attempt to reinvigorate myself I'm trying out two careers at once. I'm very glad that I get to continue working with all the wonderful volunteers and staff at NAP and am now enjoying utilizing my hands to build and fix things with the rest of my time.



Laurel Malvitz

I recently shifted into position as part-time Outreach Coordinator (OC) with Jason. I work 3 days of the week on OC activities and with the Conservation Crew the other 2 days. I am still

getting the hang of my new position, but have some experience working with volunteers and really enjoy it! I get the best of both worlds...working with different people and being able to get outside and enjoy Ann Arbor's great Natural Areas. Who could ask for more?

NAPpenings

Thank you...

- Sally & Bob Neill for their donation to NAP, on behalf of the Coscia family
- The Giordanis for their donations
- Allie Kaeding and Anna Hodges for researching and writing the new Barton and Argo/Bandemer Park brochures
- Circle K for all their help at the Dolph workday
- Temple Beth Emeth for their work at Marshall
- Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program for all their cleanup help in Hollywood Park

The 5th annual **Southern Michigan Prescribed Fire Council workshop** will be held Friday and Saturday, September 10-11, 2004 in Lansing. Friday's presentations will be at the Hannah Community Center in East Lansing, and will feature a variety of speakers addressing topics such as *Impacts of Rx Fire to Insects, Smoke Management, and Cost-share Programs for Private Landowners Interested in Rx Burning*. Saturday's format will be very different—we'll be outside all day, discussing burn plans at various sites in the morning, then observing an actual prescribed burn in the afternoon. Participants are welcome to attend either or both days. For more information contact the NAP office or surf over to www.firecouncil.org.

The 31st annual **Natural Areas Conference** will be held October 13-16, 2004 in Chicago with the theme, *Emerging Issues, Possibilities, and Perils*. Taking advantage of the downtown Chicago location, NAP will be helping to put together an "Urban Natural Areas Symposium." For more information contact the NAP office or visit NAA's website at www.naturalarea.org.

Spring 2004 Burn Season

Another spring burn season has come and gone, with the usual disappointments in the weather. March was especially cool, which helped slow the new green growth, but it was also cloudy and humid most days, which kept us from burning on all but four days that month. Things warmed up and dried out in April, but by then many of our woodland sites were too green with spring wildflowers to let us burn there. We only burned on four days that month too.

But while Mother Nature was uncooperative, our volunteers were much more helpful. Twenty-one of you came out to help us burn, contributing 165 hours of labor to the effort. Those individuals, along with a contractor who did three burns for us while we were busy burning at other sites, helped us take maximum advantage of our few good burn days this spring. The final numbers look like this: 74 acres burned in 8 days between March 10th and April 15th in 13 natural areas. A big, smoky "Thank You" to all who helped make this happen.

24th Annual HURON RIVER DAY Sunday, July 11th 2004



Come join us in celebrating our beautiful Huron River! There will be many fun, free events to help you explore and learn about the river.

This year's Huron River Day will be celebrated on Sunday, July 11, 2004 starting at Gallup Park (3000 Fuller Road in Ann Arbor) with the Gallup Gallop Race and Walk at 8:30 am followed by

the Huron River Mile Fun Run at 10:15 am. From 10:30 am till 12:00 pm at the canoe livery there will be a fishing derby just for the kids.

From noon to 4:00 pm a range of activities will happen in and around Gallup Park: Howell Nature Center presenting live mammals and birds, a children's activity tent sponsored by Metro Parent, educational exhibits, an outdoor climbing wall, refreshments, music, bubbles and much more. The Gallup Park Canoe Livery will offer free canoe and kayak rentals all day.

Also from noon to 4:00, located at Parker Mill County Park (4650 Geddes Road), Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission will have tours of the Grist Mill and a Rubber Duck Race on Fleming Creek.

All Huron River Day events are free and open to the public due to a generous contribution from DTE. For more information, please call the Gallup Park Livery at 734.662.9319.

New Urban Retreats *by Bev Walters*

There have been several natural areas recently added to the Ann Arbor Parks system. Take a moment to appreciate these oases of green in the midst of our busy urban landscape:

Sunset Brooks

Tucked away on the north side of town, this slightly smaller parcel extends from Sunset Road, just north of the intersection of Brooks, all the way to M-14. The terrain slopes down significantly as you walk toward the north. The woody vegetation is a mix of trees and shrubs, the central area opens up into a small wetland. Here a large population of the locally rare flat-top white aster (*Aster umbellatus*) can be found.

Although the names of these new additions haven't been formalized, at least their future as natural areas has been secured, thanks to the high priority the citizens of Ann Arbor put on saving places where nature can flourish.

Traverwood


The most ecologically significant of these parcels, this 8-acre oak-hickory woods is just east of Leslie Park Golf Course and Tuebingen Park. This delightful forest boasts a small pond in the northeast corner and rolling hills. The herbaceous flora isn't particularly abundant...yet. We expect to see that improve after the invasive shrubs are cleared and some prescribed ecological burns occur! (*Editor's note: NAP conducted its first prescribed burn in Traverwood on April 5, 2004.*)

Dicken Woods

A 10-acre acquisition; located at the southeast corner of the Pauline and South Maple intersection. This area is currently very shrubby but has some interesting wetlands that are home to many frogs and salamanders. Located adjacent to Dicken Elementary School, the site will be a valuable resource to help teach children about the environment. Enthusiastic neighbors have already begun cleaning up trash and installing trails.

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