

BRUSH PILES

NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT

FALL 2004

MIAMI WOODS PRAIRIE UPDATE

by Kent & Jerry Fuller

A BREAKTHROUGH

On June 10th a group of 31 volunteers from the Goldman Sachs Company led by eight intrepid North Branch volunteers broke through the buckthorn barrier into the Miami prairie. The riparian woodland from the Caldwell Avenue parking lot north to the prairie has been the target of four major special event workdays:

- Public Lands Day 2002 (80 volunteers/376 hours)
- Public Lands Day 2003 (42 volunteers /287 hours)
- Commissioner Suffredin May 2004 (89 volunteers /242 hours)
- Goldman Sachs (38 volunteers /227 hours)

In total, 249 volunteers worked 1132 hours to clear buckthorn from a 1,750 foot strip of river bluff northward from the parking lot between the river and the bike path. Big old oaks, hickories, white ash and other native trees – once obscured by brush – now have some welcome breathing space. Rare wildflowers such as Rue Anemone grace the bluff, growing with renewed vigor in the increased sunlight. Thus begins the renewal to a healthy oak woodland. Awesome; sends shivers down our spines.

CHICAGO CITY DAY SCHOOL SCORES A VICTORY

Students from the Chicago City Day School are making great progress in clearing buckthorn and other invasive species from the river banks and nearby woods between the river and bike path. Starting at the Miami Woods Prairie in the spring of 2003 students from the 4th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades have visited three times and cleared brush from more than 900 feet to the north. The 371 volunteer visits have resulted in more than 500 working hours during the 12 work events.

The sense of value associated with the physical work accomplished is just part of the story, since the kids are also spending additional time

monitoring water conditions and observing nature. Hopefully these experiences will influence the kids and their families for years to come.



NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Saturday, September 18
Harms Woods Forest Preserve
9am - Noon and 1pm - 4pm

Would you like to join a multitude of folks and have some fun doing something powerful? National Public Lands Day is an annual event where volunteers gather to care for our public lands. This year the North Branch Restoration Project will observe the day at Harms Woods. We'll be cutting brush and collecting some priority seeds to use in restoring native plants.

This event is co-sponsored by Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin, who will join the crews in helping take care of this beautiful woodland.

Lots of North Branch help will be needed in planning and carrying off this great event. Can you help with refreshments, lead interpretative tours, be small-group work-crew leaders, or contribute great ideas to make this day special? To sign up to help, contact Jane & John Balaban at (847) 679-4289 or send an email to balx2@comcast.net.



REPORT ON BOOK DISCUSSIONS

by Nancy Freehafer

The discussion of **SUNFLOWER FOREST** that Jean Sellar and I organized in July was attended by six North Branchers. We had a good discussion and talked about getting together again with other folks to discuss more books in the future. Our next book discussion will focus on Aldo Leopold's **A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC**, to be held at the North Park Village Nature Center in November.

Possibly you read **A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC** several years ago, or perhaps you have never read it. Now is your chance to read, or reread, this classic of the contemporary environmental movement. We will have time for everyone to share favorite passages, but we will also focus on 'The Land Ethic' in Part IV, to which we will bring ideas of current writers like Bill Jordan, whose **SUNFLOWER FOREST** refers frequently to Leopold, especially to his notion of community.

Please register in advance. Listeners are welcome, but if you wish to speak, be sure to have read the book first! I especially hope that North Branchers will come!

The discussion is scheduled for Thursday, November 4, at 7:00 p.m. at North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 North Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60646.



DUPAGE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT WINS NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has recently been recognized with two national certificates of excellence, one for its ecological monitoring program and another for its management of the Tri-County State Park and Visitor Center.

The National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials announced that the DuPage District's long-term program studying multiple one-acre plots has won the 2004 Park and Recreation Environmental Certificate of Excellence.

Every year, NACPRO recognizes a park and recreation agency that achieves excellence in its endeavors to reclaim, restore, preserve or develop a natural area at the county level.

Between 1979 and 1985, the Dupage District staff established a number of one-acre plots in county woodlands to provide a "snapshot" of woodland plants' composition. The 25 years of data gathered demonstrate that unmanaged woodlands are deteriorating and that native species are being lost. Quantitative data confirm that non-native species and aggressive, native woody trees and bushes eventually dominate woodlands if left unchecked, leading to dark, thick woods that stifle oak trees' regeneration. The data have provided additional scientific support for ecosystem management, helping the District to formulate plans to manage woodland vegetation and replenish health in these communities.



SKOKIE LAGOONS WORKDAYS

Saturdays – Sep 11, Oct 9, Nov 13, Dec 11
10:00 am – 1:00 pm.

Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (east of the lagoon bridge – not the boat launch). For late arrivals, there will be a sign with directions to the work site in the picnic field adjacent to the parking lot. Come dressed for the weather. We will provide waders, gloves and tools when appropriate. For more information contact Jerry Garden at 773-545-4632 or jerrygarden@sprynet.com.

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE WORKDAYS

Sundays – Sep 12, Oct 10, Nov 7, Dec 5
9:00 am – Noon.

Work on Sundays at this piece of virgin prairie located on Hastings Road. It is off Lake-Cook about a mile west of Milwaukee (watch for Hastings on the north after going under the railroad overpass). Turn north on Hastings, then right into the second parking lot. The prairie is under the Com Ed power lines. Call Bev Hansen at 847-272-6211 for more information.

GLENBROOK PRAIRIE

Thursdays – Sept 9, Oct 7
6:00 pm until dark.

Remarkable changes have occurred at the preserve. It is located at the now wide open northwest corner of the Glenbrook North HS, west of Shermer and north of Willow Roads. Park in the north parking lot by the tennis courts and walk along the north side of the football field until you see us. Call Rob on his cell phone (847-337-0471) if you're running late or get lost finding the place.

NBRP Workday Schedule – Fall 2004

September

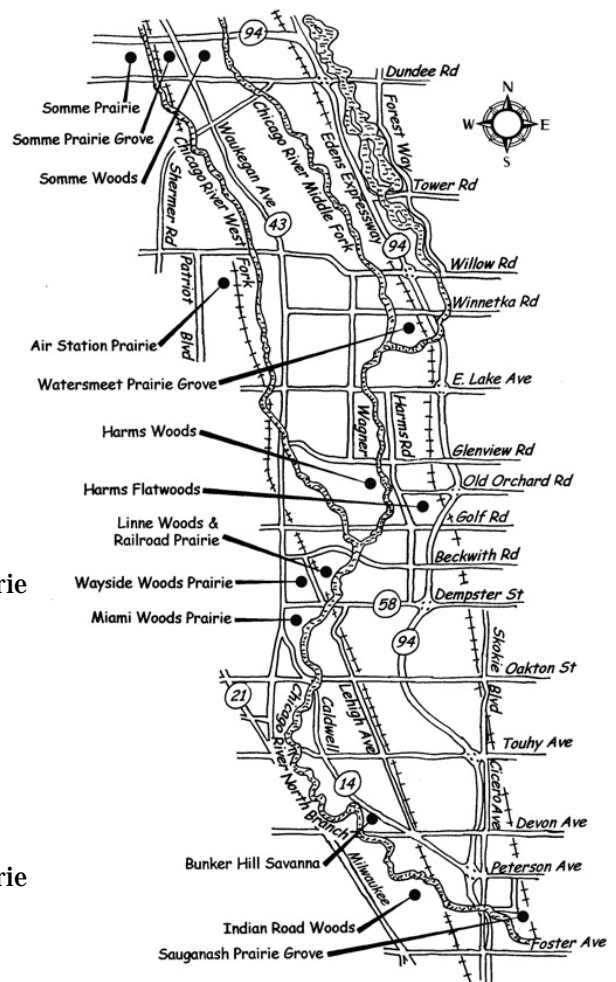
11	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
12	Sunday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
18	Saturday	9:00-noon	NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY
		1:00-4:00	at Harms Woods
25	Saturday	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
26	Sunday	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods

October

2	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
3	Sunday	9:00-noon	Bunker Hill Savanna/Oxbow
9	Saturday	9:00-noon	Linne North
10	Sunday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
17	Sunday	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
23	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
24	Sunday	9:00-noon	Air Station Prairie
30	Saturday	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
31	Sunday	9:00-noon	Wayside Woods Prairie/Linne RR Prairie

November

6	Saturday	9:00-noon	Linne North
7	Sunday	9:00-noon	Miami Woods Prairie
13	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
14	Sunday	9:00-4:00	Somme Nature Preserve
20	Saturday	9:00-3ish	SEED PROCESSING DAY
21	Sunday	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods
26	Saturday	9:00-noon	Wayside Woods Prairie/Linne RR Prairie
27	Sunday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove



DIRECTIONS:

Air Station Prairie, Glenview – From the Edens expressway; go west on Willow Road, past Waukegan Road and over the RR overpass. Turn south at the new traffic signals for Patriot Blvd. (The new main road through the redeveloped Naval Air Station). Turn east on Compass to the gate at the south end of the prairie. Patriot Blvd. is also accessible from the south via Lake Ave.

Bunker Hill Savanna/Oxbow, Chicago – Off Caldwell between Devon and Touhy; entrance located just opposite Tonty Street. For Bunker Hill Meet in first section of parking lot; for Oxbow, follow road until it turns north, then park along the west side.

Harms Flatwoods, Glenview – Meet at the Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, directly west of Old Orchard Road.

Harms Woods, Glenview – Meet at the Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, just south of Glenview Road.

Indian Road Woods, Chicago – Enter at the Indian Road Forest Preserve drive, on the east side of Central Ave, just north of Indian Road (approximately ½ mile south of Caldwell). Meet in the parking area at the far east end of the drive.

Linne North – Meet at the Wayside Woods Prairie parking lot. (See below for direction.)

Miami Woods Prairie, Niles/Morton Grove – Located on the east side of Caldwell, two blocks north of Oakton. Meet in the parking lot for Miami Woods.

Sauganash Prairie Grove, Chicago – Meet at the edge of the Forest Preserve along the south side of Bryn Mawr at Kilbourn, which is south of Peterson and east of Cicero.

Somme Prairie Grove, Northbrook – From the Edens Expressway, take Dundee Road two miles west to Waukegan Road. Go north a few hundred feet on Waukegan and turn left into the unpaved parking area by the sign “Somme Woods Prairie.”

Somme Prairie Nature Preserve, Northbrook – From the Edens Expressway, take Dundee Road 2½ miles west (past Waukegan) to Western. Turn north and park in the post office parking lot.

Somme Woods, Northbrook – From the Edens Expressway, take Dundee Road two miles west and turn right into Somme Woods parking lot (just before the light at Waukegan Road).

Watersmeet Prairie Grove, Northfield – From the Edens Expressway, take Lake Avenue west to Wagner Road. Turn north on Wagner to Winnetka Road. Turn east on Winnetka for ¾ mile. Park on the north side of the street or a side street.

Wayside Woods Prairie/Linne RR Prairie, Morton Grove – Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie parking lot on Lehigh Ave, a few blocks east of Waukegan Road and just north of Dempster.

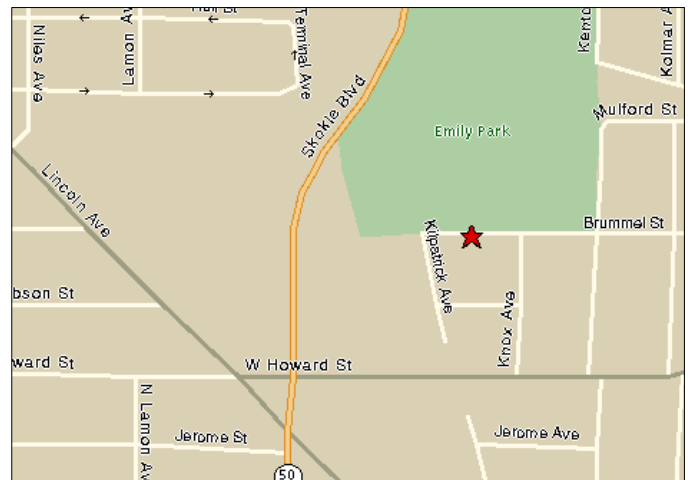
ANNUAL NORTH BRANCH SEED PROCESSING DAY

Saturday, November 20
Emily Oaks Nature Center
4650 Brummel St., Skokie, Illinois, 60076
9:00 am until mid-afternoon

Join us as we process the vital seeds that have been collected over the summer and fall. Carefully gathered and stored by knowledgeable volunteers, the seed of over a hundred native species will be readied for return to the Forest Preserves, where populations of native grasses, sedges and wildflowers will be reestablished.

Drinks are provided, but many of us also bring a dish to share during breaks from the work. The activities start at 9:00am and continue until the seed has been processed, usually by mid-afternoon.

Directions to Emily Oaks Nature Center: from Skokie Boulevard/Cicero, go east on Howard St. to Knox Ave. Turn north on Knox, go two blocks to Brummel St. Turn west and go one block to the parking area at the Nature Center, on the north side of Brummel. Follow the signs to the processing area.



North Branch Restoration Project
P.O. Box 2154
Northbrook, IL 60062-3707

The North Branch Restoration Project is a cooperative effort involving the Nature Conservancy, the Chicago Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club. We manage the sites as volunteers for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and other local agencies. The project works to restore and manage the few remaining woodlands and prairies along the North Branch of the Chicago River. Our goal is to restore conditions that will allow these natural wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

www.northbranchrestoration.org

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