



# BRUSH PILES

NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT

SPRING 2008

## PLANTS OF CONCERN RARE PLANT MONITORING by Eileen Sutter

Plants of Concern (POC) is a region-wide rare plant monitoring program coordinated by the Chicago Botanic Garden. This long term project is part of the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan to assess, research, protect, and recover the region's rare plants. Volunteers work in collaboration with land managers and scientists and the program is guided by an Advisory Group representing key landowners, agencies and volunteers. Jane Balaban, NBRP Administrator, has participated in the Advisory Group since the program's inception.

The program gathers standardized data on threatened and endangered species in the Chicago region, including information about the number of individuals at a site, the extent of the population, and the plant's reproductive health. Monitors also record observations about ongoing restoration activities (burning, brush cutting, invasive removal, etc.) in the immediate population area and any threats, including invasive species, to the population.

The program has been in existence since 2000. A key focus of the program is to analyze population trends in relation to management practices. At the same time, monitors provide an extra set of eyes for land managers, giving them early notification about potential issues at their sites.

Through 2006, 322 volunteers had monitored 176 species at 168 sites in six counties of NE Illinois, working with 71 public and private landowners. Monitors are volunteers who go through six hours of training before working in the field. They learn how to use GPS units to record plant locations, how to estimate the size of populations, and how to record data on the POC forms.

Typically new monitors work with experienced monitors or staff on their initial assignments. Monitors sign confidentiality forms, where they agree not to disclose the location of the plants they monitor. This protects these unique sites from threats of destruction and vandalism.

The North Branch Restoration Project sites have been part of POC monitoring since 2003. To date, 25 volunteer monitors have worked on 12 sites along the North Branch and two additional partner sites, monitoring 37 populations or sub-populations of 14 species.

Long term we hope to recruit volunteers to monitor all known populations of threatened and endangered plants along the North Branch. We believe that maintaining and increasing our rare plant populations is one of the measures of suc-



*Savanna blazing star blooming on the North Branch.*

cess for our restoration efforts.

For more information about the Plants of Concern program, see their website at [www.plantsofconcern.org](http://www.plantsofconcern.org). Plants of Concern is coordinated by Susanne Masi, Chicago Botanic Garden.

As a North Branch volunteer for many years, Susanne edited our newsletter and organized volunteer training. We are proud to see her now coordinating this regional program.

#### Species as of 10/07:

oval milkweed (*Asclepias ovalifolia*)  
American slough grass (*Beckmannia syzigachne*)  
golden sedge (*Carex aurea*)  
early fen sedge (*Carex crawei*)  
white lady's slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*)  
savanna blazing star (*Liatris scariosa* var. *nieuwlandii*)  
small sundrops (*Oenothera perennis*)  
downy Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum pubescence*)  
dwarf raspberry (*Rubus pubescens*)  
mountain blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium montanum*)  
eared false foxglove (*Tomanthera auriculata*)  
marsh speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*)  
dog violet (*Viola conspersa*)



*Small sundrops*

#### Sites as of October 2007:

Buffalo Grove Prairie  
Bunker Hill Prairie and Savanna  
Clayton F. Smith Woods  
Edgebrook Woods  
Glenview Naval Air Station Prairie  
Harms Flatwoods  
Harms Woods  
Miami Woods Prairie  
Sauganash Prairie Grove  
Somme Prairie Grove  
Somme Prairie Nature Preserve  
St. Paul Woods  
Watersmeet Prairie Grove  
Wayside Woods Prairie

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## LAKE COUNTY'S FIRST BIOBLITZ June 27

The Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake Forest Open Lands Association, and Lake Forest Park and Recreation District are looking for knowledgeable interested volunteers to help with Lake County's first ever BioBlitz. This 24-hour event will begin on Friday, June 27 and will end the next day. The two goals for this event are:

- to provide a valuable biotic inventory of 713-acre Middlefork Savanna Forest Preserve, often described as the best surviving tallgrass savanna in the United States and
- to raise public understanding of the amazing biodiversity found in our region.

Middlefork Savanna protects a diverse assemblage of native plant and animal communities, highlighted by a 25-acre globally threatened tallgrass savanna remnant. In addition to the centerpiece savanna, nearly 250 acres of oak/hickory woodland occur, interspersed by 400 acres of prairie and wetlands ranging from mesic prairie to sedge meadow and permanent ponds to the North Branch of the Chicago River. Remaining acreage includes *de-nova* restorations.

Extensive natural resource restoration activities have taken place since the mid-1980s, making



*downy Solomon's seal*



this an outstanding biological treasure.

There are huge gaps in the county's species inventory, especially invertebrates and mosses and lichens. Gaps also exist for better known taxa such as herps and birds, as exemplified by the recent discovery of Blanding's turtles and nesting Sandhill cranes.

If you are interested in participating as an expert or as a group leader for the public contact Ken Klick at [kklick@co.lake.il.us](mailto:kklick@co.lake.il.us). Or you might want to just show up and see the fun and take part in a tour led by Lake County staff on Saturday afternoon

from 1 to 4pm when the public portion of the BioBlitz event will occur.

Submitted by Laurel Ross



*Middlefork Savanna, Lake County Forest Preserve*

## ***NORTH BRANCH SURVEY RESULTS***

**by Karen Rodriguez**

Last year many North Branch volunteers received a survey designed to answer the following questions:

- Who are North Branch volunteers?
- How do we feel about ecological restoration tasks?
- How important is the work of the North Branch to volunteers?

The survey was sent to everyone on the North Branch mailing list and published on the website and in Brush Piles. Thirty-nine people responded. The hope was that the survey would form the basis for a book I am writing about the North Branch.

My perception is that most of the respondents are core North Branch volunteers, no matter the length of time as a volunteer. The results only tell us about the respondents; they do not tell us about all of the others who volunteer throughout the year.

Understanding task preferences, why people choose to volunteer, and how people found out about the North Branch, could be important in setting workday priorities and in recruiting new volunteers.

A summary of the results of the survey are available on the North Branch Restoration website.

Here are a few highlights for those who are interested:

- Of the 39 respondents most are middle aged, well educated and reasonably prosperous individuals who love to cut brush and collect seeds – no surprise there!
- The things we said we value in the NBRP experience are the physical work of restoration and the social network.
- On the giving side we said we feel a tremendous responsibility as volunteers and want to reduce our footprints on the earth.
- The biggest challenge we see is recruiting and training more diverse and younger volunteers for leadership positions.
- We named fire, wildlife, discovering new (to us) plant species, and social events as our most memorable North Branch experiences, and we think of our work together with great pride.
- We see this work as important not only personally but to the Chicago region and to the world.

If you are interested in more details (there are lots!) check it out at [www.northbranchrestoration.org](http://www.northbranchrestoration.org).

Please email Karen at [krod17@msn.com](mailto:krod17@msn.com) with any thoughts.

# Notes From the North Branch

## A VERY COLD WINTER SOLSTICE 2007

Photos by John McMartin



**Clockwise from top left:**

A cold, but intrepid bagpiper.

Mike and Chris Beefink light the bonfire.

More than eighty people came on this frigid day.

John McMartin and friends.

The bonfire just starting to go.



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 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](http://www.northbranchrestoration.org)

Paperless option - If you would like to download a pdf version of Brush Piles from our website, we will send you an email letting you know when it is posted. Sign up by sending an email to: [northbranch@comcast.net](mailto:northbranch@comcast.net).

To contribute notes and photos to Brush Piles:

*Email:* [masters2001@comcast.net](mailto:masters2001@comcast.net)

*Snail Mail:* P.O. Box 2154, Northbrook, IL 60062

*Deadlines:* November 1, February 1, May 1, August 1

Linda Masters, editor



# NBRP Workday Schedule - Spring 2008

## MARCH

Sat	1	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
Sun	2	9:00-noon	Sauganash Prairie Grove
Sat	8	9:00-noon	Linne Woods North
Sat	8	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
Sun	9	9:00-noon	Bunker Hill Savanna/Oxbow
Sat	15	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sat	15	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
Sun	16	9:00-noon	Harms Woods
Sun	16	1pm-4pm	Harms Woods
Sat	22	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods
Sat	22	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
Sun	23	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sat	29	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sun	30	9:00-noon	Miami Woods & Prairie

## APRIL

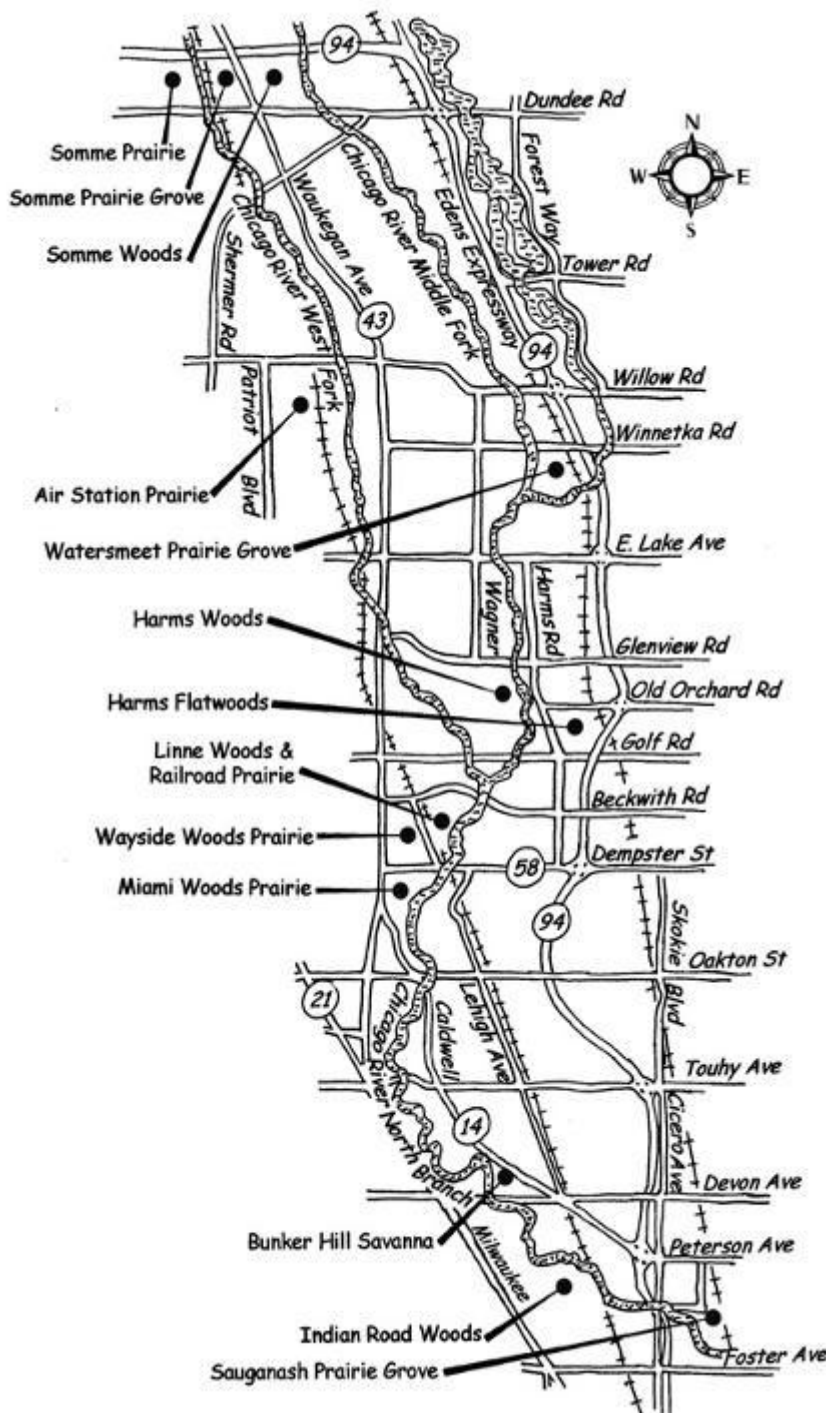
Sat	5	9:00-noon	Linne Woods North
Sat	5	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
Sat	5	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
Sun	6	9:00-noon	Sauganash Prairie Grove
Sat	12	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sat	12	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
Sun	13	9:00-noon	Wayside Woods Prairie
Sat	19	9:00-noon	Bunker Hill Savanna/Oxbow
Sun	20	9:00-2pm	Somme Nature Preserve
Sat	26	9:00-noon	Linne Prairie
Sat	26	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sun	27	9:00-noon	Harms Woods
Sun	27	1pm-4pm	Harms Woods

## MAY

Sat	3	9:00-noon	Miami Woods & Prairie
Sun	4	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods
Sat	10	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sun	11	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
Sat	17	9:00-noon	Linne Woods North
Sat	17	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
Sun	18	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sat	24	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods
Sat	24	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove
Sun	25	9:00-noon	Somme Woods
Mon	26	9:00-noon	Harms Woods
Sat	31	9:00-noon	Somme Nature Preserve

## JUNE

Sun	1	9:00-noon	Miami Woods & Prairie
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### ***BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE***

**Sundays, 9:00 am - Noon**

**Mar 9, Apr 6, May 4**

**Bev Hansen, 847-272-6211**

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 ComEd power lines.

### ***SKOKIE LAGOONS***

**Saturdays, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm**

**Mar 8, Apr 12, May 10**

**Jerry Garden, 773-545-4632, jerrygarden@sprynet.com**

Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (east of the lagoon bridge - not the boat launch). 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.

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# NBRP Site Directions and Stewards

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## *Air Station Prairie, Glenview* **Kent & Jerry Fuller**

From the Edens Expressway; go west on Willow Road, past Waukegan Road and over the RR overpass. Turn left (south) at the traffic signals for Patriot Blvd. Turn left on Compass Road (second light from Willow). At the end of Compass, park along Lehigh Avenue or in the METRA lot. Meet at the Tyner Interpretive Center on the south end of the prairie. Patriot Blvd. is also accessible from Lake Avenue.

## *Bunker Hill Savanna/Oxbow, Chicago* **Jane & John Balaban**

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* **Neil Peck & Jette Thomassen**

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

## *Harms Woods, Glenview* **Jane & John Balaban**

Meet at the Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, just south of Glenview Road and north of Old Orchard Road.

## *Linne Prairie, Morton Grove* **Mary Busch & John Thill (847-966-0231)**

Meet at the Wayside Woods Prairie parking lot on Lehigh Ave, a few blocks east of Waukegan Road and just north of Dempster.

## *Linne Woods North, Morton Grove* **John & Marian Thill (847-966-0231, mjthill@icsp.net)**

From Edens go west on Dempster street about 1.5 miles. The forest preserve entrance will be on the north side of the street directly across from McDonalds. Follow the winding road all the way back until it dead-ends at the turn-around circle.

## *Miami Woods & Prairie, Morton Grove* **Kent & Jerry Fuller**

East of Caldwell between Oakton and Dempster. Meet in the parking lot two blocks north of Oakton.

## *Morton Grove Prairie Nature Preserve, Morton Grove* **Kent Fuller**

From Dempster, 2 blocks east of Waukegan, turn north on Oak Park Ave. Turn left on Churchill and drive to the end.

## *Sauganash Prairie Grove, Chicago* **Larry Hodak & Pete Leki (watersschool@yahoo.com)**

Meet at the Forest Preserve parking lot at the Irene Hernandez Picnic Area off Foster Avenue across from Kilbourne Avenue. We will walk north along the railroad tracks and cross the river on the bridge.

## *Somme Prairie Grove, Northbrook* **Stephen Packard (spackard@audubon.org )**

**WE NOW PARK AT SOMME WOODS.** Park on the left, near the entrance and follow the new trail. 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).

## *Somme Prairie Nature Preserve, Northbrook* **Laurel Ross (312-665-7432, lross@fieldmuseum.org) & Christiane Rey (773-478-2019)**

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* **Linda Masters (847-509-0431, masters2001@comcast.net)**

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* **John Berg (815-919-4916, Kerg111@aol.com)**

From Lake Avenue and 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* **Gladys Bryer & Larry Hodak**

Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie parking lot on Lehigh Ave, a few blocks east of Waukegan Road and just north of Dempster.

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