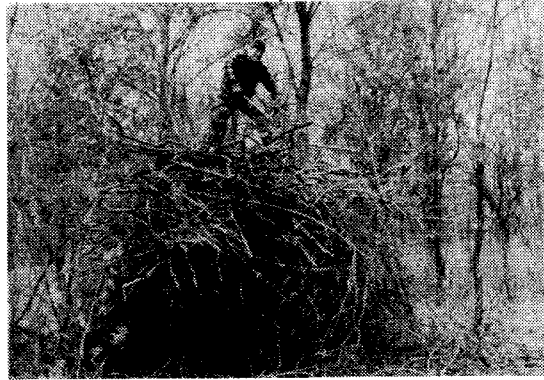


Brush Piles



NBPP's Refrigerator Door Companion

Winter 1994-95

NORTH BRANCHER JANE BALABAN ELECTED TO TNC BOARD

Jane Balaban has been elected to the board of trustees of The Nature Conservancy's Illinois Chapter. The conservation organization with over 30,000 members statewide is led by its volunteer board of community leaders and scientists. Her election came at the Chapter's annual meeting in September at Spears Woods in the Palos Forest Preserves of southwestern Cook County.

Balaban, a stalwart of the North Branch Prairie Project, is a Clinical Pharmacy Manager for Evanston Hospital and has been with the hospital since 1977.

"Jane's wealth of experience and her commitment to conservation are invaluable assets to our board of trustees," according to Bruce Boyd, Director of the Conservancy's Illinois Chapter. "We're grateful she is including The Nature Conservancy among her many endeavors."

Joining the board with Balaban are: Herman G. Bodewes of Springfield, Matteson resident William P. Braker, Thomas F. Crosby of downstate Marion, Wendy J. Paulson of Barrington, and Kyle Robeson of Champaign.

The Nature Conservancy is an international nonprofit conservation organization with nearly 800,000 members nationwide, dedicated to preserving rare plants and animals by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The NBPP is part of its Volunteer Stewardship Network.

MIGHTY ACORNS SPROUT ALONG THE NORTH BRANCH

by Justine Kusner

A year ago, in the *Sixteenth Year Report*, I wrote about the educational potential for using our sites as classrooms. When that article was written only a few school trips were scheduled for Somme Nature Preserve and Wayside Woods Prairie. Since then, grammar school children have taken trips to SNP, Somme Prairie Grove, and to Sauganash Prairie Grove. Robert Lonsdorf

has expressed his willingness to share Miami Woods Prairie with the Mighty Acorns.

How has this experiment worked out? I speculated that there would be challenges—and there have been. Moving large numbers of children through a site requires forethought, organization, and a lot of energy. Many of the parent volunteers were new to our sites, the restoration process, and to naturalizing with small groups of children. Buses are late, or the children have to leave early, and we seem to over-plan for the time available. But it's happening and everyone wants more!

This fall, all school groups collected seeds, QUITE A FEW seeds! With several schools we tried seed processing in both the field and the classroom. Its novelty as a group activity and the logical next step in stewardship was perfect for the Mighty Acorns.

After observing them work (actually, trying to keep up with them!) it is clear that we are just beginning to realize the potential for having school children be an integral part of restoration work. The challenge is to efficiently and effectively channel those energies and to teach as we have been taught by the North Branch. The goal of shaping this potential is big. It's a call to everyone who loves our work and believes in its future.

Another pleasant surprise has been the interest in the North Branch generated among the parents and teachers. If "seeing is believing" than we have a lot of new believers! One forgets that a parent is attached to every child. Even if the parent is not with the group, the message goes home. A new destination has been added to the family trip list!

Have the sites been affected by so many people? Yes. So far it has been minimal, but each steward needs to decide how much can be expected and tolerated. As more schools join in and more sites come on-line, rotating use according to season and stewardship might be one solution. In any case, using our sites as classrooms is off to a good start. With careful planning, patience, and coordinated effort, it can only get better.

(See ANNOUNCEMENTS for information on how to volunteer with the Mighty Acorns and with other programs.)

Deadline for the Spring 1995 issues is February 1.

Short features, anecdotes, essays, announcements, requests, poems, comments, photos, drawings, and letters are welcome. To discuss your ideas, call Barbara Rose, 312/248-4817 before February.

NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT WINTER WORKDAYS AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

The NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT is working to restore and manage the few remaining prairie and oak savanna remnants along the North Branch of the Chicago River in the Cook County Forest Preserves. These areas, once part of a vast grassland ecosystem, are under tremendous pressure from urban development and non-native species. We are working to restore conditions that will allow these natural wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

In the winter we cut brush. Always dress for the weather and bring some water. Sun protection is important. When it is cold we may go out for lunch. The workday hotline is 312/878-3877.

WINTER 1994/95

December 3	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods
December 4	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
December 4	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Crew Leader Training at Emily Oaks
December 10	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
December 11	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Sauganash
December 11	Sunday	12:30 p.m.	Harvest Feast at the Heartland
December 17	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie
December 18	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet/Skokie Sedge Meadow
December 25	Have a Joyous Holiday		
January 1	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
January 1	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Somme Woods
January 7	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods
January 8	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Bunker Hill
January 8	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Bunker Hill
January 12	Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Book Group
January 14	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
January 15	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Buffalo Grove
January 21	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside Prairie
January 22	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
January 28	Saturday	7:00 p.m.	Annual Potluck at Lapinsky's
January 29	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
January 29	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Harms Woods
February 4	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods
February 5	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
February 11	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie
February 12	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Bunker Hill
February 12	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Bunker Hill
February 12	Sunday	7:30 p.m.	Book Group
February 18	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
February 19	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove—Family Day
February 19	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
February 26	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
February 26	Sunday	1:00 p.m.	Harms Woods

"PLEAS" AND THANKS
by Joanne Softcheck

NORTH BRANCH WORKGROUPS

The North Branch workgroups listed below need volunteers. Contact the chairperson for more information or attend a workgroup meeting.

Ecological Management: Jane and John Balaban, 708/679-4289.

Education/Volunteer Development: Joanne Softcheck, 312/878-3877

Publications/Publicity: Karen Holland, 312/929-7658.

Science: Drew Ullberg, 708/304-6972

Directions

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE (Buffalo Grove)—Take Lake Cook Road to Hastings Road (one street west of railroad overpass and one mile west of Milwaukee Avenue). Turn north on Hastings to second lot on the right (one lot past new CDW). Park at east end of the lot nearest the prairie.

BUNKER HILL/OXBOW (Chicago)—Meet at the Bunker Hill Forest Preserve parking lot on the west side of Caldwell Ave. about 1/4 mile north of Devon Ave.

EMILY OAKS NATURE CENTER (Skokie)—From intersection of Skokie Blvd. and Howard St., go east on Howard to first residential street, Knox. Go north on Knox to Brummel. Turn left on Brummel and go one block to Nature Center parking lot.

GLENBROOK HIGH SCHOOL (Northbrook)—North of Willow Rd. on the west side of Shermer Road. Enter the parking lot at the north driveway and park by the tennis courts.

HARMS WOODS (Glenview)—Meet at Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Rd., just south of Glenview Rd.

MIAMI-INDIGO (Morton Grove-Niles)—Meet at Miami Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on the east side of Caldwell Ave., two blocks north of Oakton Ave.

PERKINS WOODS (Evanston)—From 194 exit at Old Orchard Rd., east to Crawford St., south on Crawford to Grant St., east on Grant to Ewing St., site is at the corner of Grant and Ewing.

SAUGANASH PRAIRIE (Chicago)—Meet at the edge of the Forest Preserve along the south side of Bryn Mawr Ave. at Kilbourn Ave. (south of Peterson Ave. and east of Cicero Ave.)

SOMME NATURE PRESERVE (Northbrook)—Meet in the Post Office parking lot, Dundee and Western Avenues.

SOMME PRAIRIE GROVE, WOODS, AND SEDGE MEADOW (Northbrook)—Take Dundee Rd. two miles west from the Edens Expressway to Waukegan Rd. Go north a few hundred feet on Waukegan and meet at the unpaved parking area on the west side of the road.

WATERSMEET/SKOKIE SEDGE MEADOWS (Northfield)—Exit the Edens Expressway at Lake Avenue West. Go west to Wagner Rd., turn north then take Wagner to Winnetka Rd. Go east on Winnetka 3/4 mile. Park on the south side of the street.

WAYSIDE/RR PRAIRIE (Morton Grove)—Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on Lehigh Ave. (a few blocks east of Waukegan Rd. and just north of Dempster Ave.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CREW LEADER TRAINING

Date: December 4 for classroom session

1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m., Emily Oaks Nature Center

Participants will have a practice session at 8:30 a.m. on the December 11 workday at Sauganash. Call Gladys Bryer 708/328-9531 for information and to register.

ANNUAL HARVEST FEAST

The North Branch Prairie Project's 1994 "Harvest Feast," an annual tradition to celebrate the end of another successful season of seed collecting, will be held in Chicago at the Heartland Cafe, 7000 N. Glenwood Avenue (intersection of Lunt and Glenwood in Rogers Park) immediately following the Sunday, December 11, workday.

Pleas

"Many hands make light work," my mother used to tell my nine siblings and me as we joined forces to whiz through our chores and dash out to play. In the North Branch, too, it takes the combined efforts of many individuals to accomplish our restoration goals.

Growth is key to all activities as we expand the number of sites, and there is a growing need for new recruits.

Right now, volunteers are needed to help in a small or a big way with any of these activities. All foster volunteer growth.

GREET new volunteers at workdays. Friendly individuals are needed to be workday greeters when they can. Make newcomers feel welcome and be available for their questions and comments. This important activity also needs a **coordinator**—to keep in touch with the greeters and to schedule them for workdays; to collect the sign-in sheets periodically; and to see who should be contacted.

CALL new volunteers after they have attended their first workday to see how their experience was, answer any questions they may have, invite them to attend future workdays, and make sure we add them to our mailing lists, if desired.

HELP PLAN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND TOURS. Many volunteers are eager to learn the plants and understand the ecology of North Branch sites. The NBPP is fortunate to have knowledgeable volunteers who give generously of their time and expertise to teach. Volunteers are needed to **schedule educational offerings and tours** and to coordinate registration and publicity for them.

Even if you can be a greeter a few times a year, or at just one site; if you can help coordinate just one course, perhaps one you'd like to take yourself; or organize just one tour at your favorite site, you can make a difference. Call Joanne at 312/878-3877 if you would like to learn more about these and other opportunities to help the North Branch "keep on growing."

Thank you

THANKS to Justine and Bill Kusner for setting up and staffing a North Branch information table at the North American Savannas and Barrens Conference on October 15 and 16 at Illinois State University in Normal. Justine reports that business was so brisk that all of the literature was gone by lunch time!

THANKS to Bob Bluestone and Kathy Lapinsky, who collaborated to produce an eye-catching, one-page flyer designed to attract new volunteers to North Branch workdays. A beautiful drawing of Illinois' native plants and animals accompanies a short explanation of our restoration work, as well as the workday schedule and directions to each site. The flyer can be used as a handout at conferences exhibits; or posted in libraries, schools, and wherever potential volunteers may be found. Bob has a fresh supply for Winter 1994-95 workdays.

THANKS to Donna Hriljac, who over the last several years had made thousands of additions, deletions, and changes to keep the North Branch mailing list (now over 600 names long!) up-to-date. If you know someone who should be added to the mailing list, or if you are moving and need to get your address changed, send the information to The North Branch Prairie Project at P.O. Box 74, Northbrook, IL 60065. Or call Joanne 312/878-3877 who compiles the additions and changes from many different sources and forwards them to Donna before each quarterly mailing.

A special **THANK YOU** to everyone who worked long and hard to create the North Branch Prairie Project's spectacular *Sixteenth Year Report*, which everyone should have received (if not, call 312/878-3877 and we'll get one out to you). Profiles, maps, and status reports on each site, and a collection of articles about events of the last four years, make this a fascinating compilation to read and save.

Brush Pile Crew

Editing: Leslie Borns, Karen Holland, Barbara Rose, Joanne Softcheck, Chris Urban

Layout: Kathy and Chuck Lapinsky

Everyone is welcome at this "Dutch-treat" lunch. If you can't make the Sauganash workday that morning, plan to arrive around 12:30 at the Heartland.

ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER

The North Branch Prairie Project will hold its 1995 Annual Potluck party on Saturday, January 28, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at the home of Kathy and Chuck Lapinsky, 2432 Illinois Road, Northbrook, IL 60062. Everyone is welcome. RSVP to Kathy and Chuck at 708/272-4329 and let us know you are coming.

Bring a dish to share, and your beverage of choice. To celebrate our accomplishments, bring your North Branch slides and pictures from the past year. Musical instruments are welcome!

READING GROUP

The North Branch Reading Group is still cooking. You do not have to be a regular to attend, so come and join us when you can. We're open to suggestions for spring selections. Here is the schedule for the winter months:

December: Off for the holidays.

January 12: *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, by William Cronon.
Part 1. Discussion leader: Neil Peck.

February 19: Part 2 of *Nature's Metropolis*

March 9: *Animal Minds* by Donald R. Griffin. Discussion leader: Barbara Rose

We meet at 7:30 p.m. Call Nancy Freehafer at 312/342-6665 or Neil or Barbara at 312/248-4817 to RSVP and learn the meeting place.

CIRCULATION MANAGER WANTED

PRAIRIE PROJECTIONS is expanding to include other Great Lakes Basin restoration groups. A coordinator who will manage its distribution by communicating with each group and with the printer twice each year is wanted. This person will be welcomed as a valued member of the Publication Committee. This is a way to participate in restoration work even if you cannot get to workdays. Contact Barbara Rose at 312/248-4817 if you are interested.

ATTENTION NORTH BRANCH WOMEN

Have you done some creative writing in response to your restoration experiences? Would you consider submitting some pieces of writing for possible publication? A group of us have met to begin the process of editing a collection of women's writings. Our purpose is to enrich the restoration process by featuring the female voice. We are looking for writings of all kinds: lyrical, anecdotal, biographical, humorous, philosophical, in prose and poetry.

For more information, please contact Karen Holland at 312/929-7658 or Nancy Freehafer at 312/342-6665.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR MIGHTY ACORN TRIPS

Help lead small groups of children or with stewardship activities at our sites. Winter stewardship will be brush removal. Skilled volunteers needed to teach/monitor brush-cutting techniques. Especially needed is help with brush pile building. Children are not allowed on brush piles but need instruction in proper construction, and help in getting the brush up on the pile a la Brushmeister Brian! Call Justine Kusner, 708/825-3835, or Diane Reckless at The Nature Conservancy, 312/346-8166 for time and dates.

NACHUSA VALENTINE WEEKEND WORKING/CAMP-IN

Interested North Branch volunteers are invited to help cut brush at Nachusa Grasslands the weekend of February 11 and 12, 1995. Those of us who participated in previous weekend working camp-outs at Nachusa (a beautiful Nature Conservancy Preserve in Franklin Grove, near Dixon, IL) enjoyed it so much that we have decided to continue these outings on a regular basis. However, for the coed winter outing, most of us plan to forego camping and instead spend Saturday night indoors at a location yet to be determined. If you can't get away both days, but would like to make a one-day trip to work on either Saturday or Sunday, that's fine, too. If you are interested in joining us for the "Nachusa Valentine's Day Weekend Working/Camp-In," or if you have any questions about it, call Joanne at 312/879-3877.

APPRENTICES GRADUATE THREE NEW STEWARDS

by *Barbara Rose*

The lengthy apprenticeship was worth it! Neil Peck, Laurel Ross, and Drew Ullberg were accepted as stewards by the Ecological Management Workgroup on September 22.

Neil will continue to direct management at Oxbow Prairie and will take on the new Harms Flatwoods site as well. Laurel and Drew will remain at their current sites as Stewards, Laurel at Somme Nature Preserve and Drew at Somme Woods.

FAMILY DAYS ON THE PRAIRIE

by *Mary D. Joyce*

Combine fun, education, and a sense of shared community through restoration at the first North Branch Prairie Project Family Day. Beginning Sunday, February 19 (at Somme Nature Preserve) and continuing on the *third* Sunday of each month, families are invited to join the North Branch Prairie volunteers.

Please meet promptly at 9:00 a.m. at the regularly scheduled work day site for the orientation and welcome. Participating families will form their own work crews with supervision given by a crew leader.

We look forward to this special opportunity to share the **stewardship experience with our children and other family members. Please leave tiny ones at home to allow for "free" hands. Snacks, water, and tools will be provided. Please dress children appropriately (don't forget boots!).**

For more information, please contact Mary D. Joyce at 708/835-5477 or Chris Grundler at 708/835-4537.

A GOOD GOOD DEED DAY

by *Marlene Dodinval, Emanuel Congregation*

Sauganash Prairie was visited by members of Emanuel Congregation (5959 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago) who joined the North Branch Prairie Project to collect seed. Our efforts were part of a congregation-wide "Mitzvah Day" (or Good Deed Day) in which synagogue members participated in social action projects around our community. Other projects included painting and repair work at homeless shelters, singing at nursing homes, a blood drive, and making over 600 sandwiches to be distributed through a neighborhood shelter.

Those of us who did seed collecting truly had a remarkable afternoon. It was a beautiful autumn day and the reserve was displaying its fall splendor including a family of deer that were unfortunately scared away by this city girl's excitement upon seeing them! We were all amazed to find this jewel of nature nestled in a metropolitan neighborhood. Luckily we had an enthusiastic eight-year-old who voraciously asked questions we ALL had on our minds about our community's natural history and this fascinating prairie ecosystem.

There's little more spiritual and moving than the beauty and complexity of nature itself. But what made the day so important was that we spent our time doing more than just appreciating nature with our eyes; we helped to restore nature with our hands. Judaism teaches that we all share in the responsibility for repairing our world (in Hebrew, Tikkun Olam) in order to prepare it for the coming of the messiah.

On October 9, we really took a "hands-on" approach by *helping to repair the prairie for generations to come.*

Permit Holder:

The Nature Conservancy

79 W. Monroe
Chicago, IL 60603

North Branch Prairie Project

P.O. Box 74
Northbrook, IL 60065

**ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED**

*The North Branch
Prairie Project is
a cooperative effort
involving The Nature
Conservancy, the
Chicago Audubon
Society, and the Sierra
Club, Chicago Group.*

*We manage these sites
as volunteers for the
Forest Preserve District
of Cook County.*

Non-Profit
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