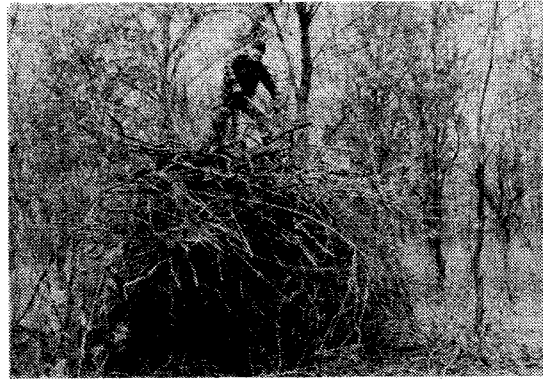


Brush Piles



NBPP's Refrigerator Door Companion

Fall 1994

NORTH BRANCHERS TRAVEL FOR HOOSIER ORCHIDS AND BUTTERFLIES

by Susanne Masi

The seduction of spring was particularly irresistible after a moist winter and early spring produced an abundance of woodland wildflowers. North Branchers were lured out to workdays and beyond. On May 28, Gibson Woods Nature Preserve enticed us to Northwest Indiana with a promise of seeing stunning yellow lady's slipper orchids, wild lupine, and the federally-endangered Karner blue butterfly whose larva is known to feed on lupine leaves. And we were not sorry.

Gibson Woods' 130 acres is a high quality, relatively undisturbed state-owned preserve hidden in an industrial area in northwest Indiana. It is the largest remnant of the dune and swale system characteristic of Lake Michigan's southern shore, with sandy black oak savanna on the parallel dune ridges and shaded wetlands in the depressions or swales between dunes. More than 250 native plant species persist there, several of them threatened or endangered.

Members of the relatively new Friends of Gibson Woods invited us for a tour and a workday, and Karen Holland arranged the event. North Branchers John and Jane Balaban, Gladys and Hy Bryer, Barbara Rose, Laurel Ross, Joanne Softcheck, Rinda West, and myself teamed up with Illinois Native Plant Society members led by old friend George Johnson.

Gibson Preserve Naturalist Anna Grabowski began the day with an introduction and slide show about the remarkable diversity and history of the site. There followed tours led by Anna and Gibson Woods enthusiasts Paul Labus, Joe Thomas, and Sandy O'Brien. Yes—we did see several populations of lady's slippers in the swales, with their unique twisting brown spiral petals framing a smooth yellow pouch or "slipper." And we were awed by at least one Karner blue flitting among the lupine in a nearby preserve. We also found the tiny and difficult-to-spot purple twayblade orchid, sand cress, hoary puccoon, robin's plantain, bracken fern, and numerous other species.

After lunch, we worked to pay for our pleasure, but it was a pleasure to work. We helped inventory and map lupine populations to document potential Karner blue habitat. When we left we all agreed that sharing experiences with like-minded

people—comparing notes on restoration work, seeing rare native plants in a high quality habitat—was one of the choicest things to do on a spring day.

NORTH BRANCH VOLUNTEERS BECOME SUMMER INTERNS

by Bob Porter

Three North Branch volunteers have acquired exciting jobs this summer. Rick Gabriel and Steve Thomas were hired as Restoration Technician Supervisors for a unique project in Swallow Cliff Woods in the Palos region.

Two other North Branch volunteers, Laurel Ross and Steve Packard, have been working to develop a major partnership with the County, the Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Illinois Department of Conservation. The exciting and important goal is for the forest preserves to become a national model for ecosystem restoration and management. The County has announced their intention to restore 50,000 acres of its 67,000 acre holdings. Swallow Cliff Woods is the pilot project for this major initiative.

Participating in this very special program, and benefitting from fine summer employment, is the County's Youth Opportunity Corps, a group of 16 to 21-year-old Chicagoans. They will gain hands-on restoration experience as well as career education opportunities in the fields of restoration ecology and conservation.

Bob Porter was hired as Technician Supervisor by The Nature Conservancy and the Cook County Forest Preserve District. His responsibilities include coordinating and supervising the restoration-related activities being carried out by 8 interns in the Poplar Creek, Palos, and the Salt Creek/Des Plaines regions of the Cook County Forest Preserve District.

In addition to his supervisory responsibilities, Bob worked with John Balaban and three interns, Diane Miller, Rob Drumm, and Brent Rupp, to complete vegetation transects in Wayside Prairie, Harms Flatwoods, and Clayton Smith Woods.

Thanks to strong support from Representative Sid Yates, the House of Representatives has passed a bill which would provide \$879,000 to the County for their restoration and planning effort. We await the decision of the Senate as we go to press.

NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT FALL 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

FALL 1994

September 4	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
September 10	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
September 11	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Buffalo Grove
September 18	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside Prairie
September 25	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
October 1	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods
October 2	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Sauganash
October 8	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
October 9	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods
October 9	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	<i>Seed Processing at Sauganash</i>
October 16	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet/Skokie Sedge Meadow
October 16	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
October 22	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside Prairie
October 23	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Bunker Hill
October 23	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Bunker Hill
October 30	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
October 30	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
November 6	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside Prairie
November 12	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
November 13	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
November 13	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods
November 19	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	<i>Seed Processing at Emily Oaks</i>
November 20	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
November 20	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Woods
November 26	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie
November 27	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods
November 27	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Woods

Directions

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE (Buffalo Grove)—Turn north on Johnson Drive, which is the first light west of Milwaukee on Lake-Cook Road. Meet in the Cryovac lot, the first driveway on the west side of Johnson Drive. The prairie is under the Commonwealth Edison power lines.

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.

wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

In the fall we collect seeds. Always wear long pants and shirts with sleeves. Bring some water. Sun protection is important. We picnic after working so bring a lunch and something to share. The workday hotline is 312/878-3877.

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.

Next meetings: Thursdays, September 22 and November 10 at 5143 W. Morse, Skokie

Education/Volunteer Development:

Joanne Softcheck, 312/878-3877

Publications/Publicity:

Karen Holland, 312/929-7658.

Science:

Drew Ullberg, 708/304-6972.

You are cordially invited to an Open House to
celebrate the publication of

Plants of the Chicago Region, 4th Ed.
by Floyd Swink and Gerould Wilhelm

Friday, September 9, 1994, 5:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Book Signing by the Authors

Presentations at 6:30 p.m. by:

Gerard T. Donnelly, Director of the Morton Arboretum

Christopher Dunn, Director of Research,
The Morton Arboretum

Bill N. McKnight, Publications Chair,
Indiana Academy of Science

Jane Balaban, North Branch Prairie Project,
Volunteer Stewardship Network

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 I94 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.

READING GROUP

Join us in our lively discussions!

September 13: The *New York Times Book Review* says *Ismael* by Daniel Quinn is "a thoughtful, fearlessly low key novel about the role of our species on the planet." Gladys Bryer, leader. Call 708/328-9531 for directions and information.

October 11: *Sand Country Almanac* is a classic of environmental literature. Richard Kampwirth will lead the discussion of Aldo Leopold's great work. Call him at 312/878-1700 for more information.

November 15: Bring your favorite poetry to read aloud or pass around. Nancy Freehafer will distribute her selections in advance to all who call her at 312/342-6665.

Books available for purchase.

Light Refreshments.

The Morton Arboretum
Thornhill Education Center, Route 53, Lisle, Illinois 60532

RSVP 708/968-0074

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HELP PREPARE SEEDS

4:00 p.m. until we are done

Dates: August 28 and October 9

Other dates will be announced on the North Branch answering machine 312/878-3877. Call Laurel Ross 312/736-3208 for information and directions.

SEED PROCESSING DAY

9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

November 19, 1993

Emily Oaks Nature Center

Come when you can, stay as long as you want, bring a snack.

No pre-registration necessary.

BURN CREW TRAINING COURSE

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

October 2, 1994

Emily Oaks Nature Center

Ed Collins, leader

Call Neil Peck 312/248-4819 for information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT THE CHICAGO ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Teach hands-on science classes to school groups on the natural history and environment of Chicago. Training begins Tuesday, September 27.

Contact Jill at 312/549-0606 ext. 2026.

MITZVAH DAY

We welcome volunteers from Congregation Emanuel, a synagogue located at 5959 North Sheridan Road, to the October 9 afternoon workday at Sauganash. Helping North Branchers collect seed is one of several service opportunities offered as part of their fall Mitzvah (Good Deed) Day. Special thanks to congregation member Marlene Dodinval, who arranged for the North Branch to be included on the "good deed" list!

Brush Pile Crew

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

Layout: Kathy and Chuck Lapinsky

All three volunteers have promised that their hearts still remain on the North Branch. Recent rumors of a regional trade have been denied by the trio.

RESTORATION HEALS THE EARTH

by Sandi Stein

Restoration is healing, asserts the National Geographic Society. And to demonstrate, their educational film division is producing a movie for elementary schools called "Healing the Earth." The film will show the many ways people are working to heal the earth—recycling programs for example. Prairie restoration will illustrate one aspect of "healing."

Roger Brown of Trillium Productions wanted a workday in an easy-to-find beautiful place that would fit with his schedule. Somme Prairie Grove fit the bill!

Roger and his crew arrived at 7:00 a.m. on July 3rd and shot flowers and vistas until volunteers Preston Spinks, Hal Mead, Susan Kleiman, and Karen Holland arrived. They picked seeds, pulled white sweet clover, and talked before the camera about their involvement in restoration.

The participation of North Branchers on this project could reap fantastic benefits for restoration volunteers nationwide. The national Nature Conservancy communications staff will point to our efforts as an example of the potential to tap out there for future film projects for the National Geographic Society.

NACHUSA WOMEN'S WEEKEND

by Karen Holland

In the west the setting red sun outlined dark thunder clouds. In the east the moon rose full and orange. Thousands of fireflies lit up the tall grasses as far as one could see. It was July 23, Saturday night at Nachusa Grasslands. The women of the North Branch were the fortunate observers of the evening's spectacle.

Sixteen women joined preserve managers Bill and Susan Kleiman to collect seeds on Dot's and Doug's knobs and scatter them in the old cornfield that bridges the two. To get a feel for the range of ecosystems on the 1,000 acres, we hiked to the fen and savanna areas. And we talked about the role of women in restoration—our role.

No great philosophical conclusions were reached and no marvelous schemes were hatched. But we decided to get together again—over supper, at another campout—to keep the discussions going and to become closer as women in the restoration community called the North Branch.



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.*

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