

Brush Piles

NBRP's Refrigerator Door Companion

Winter 98/99

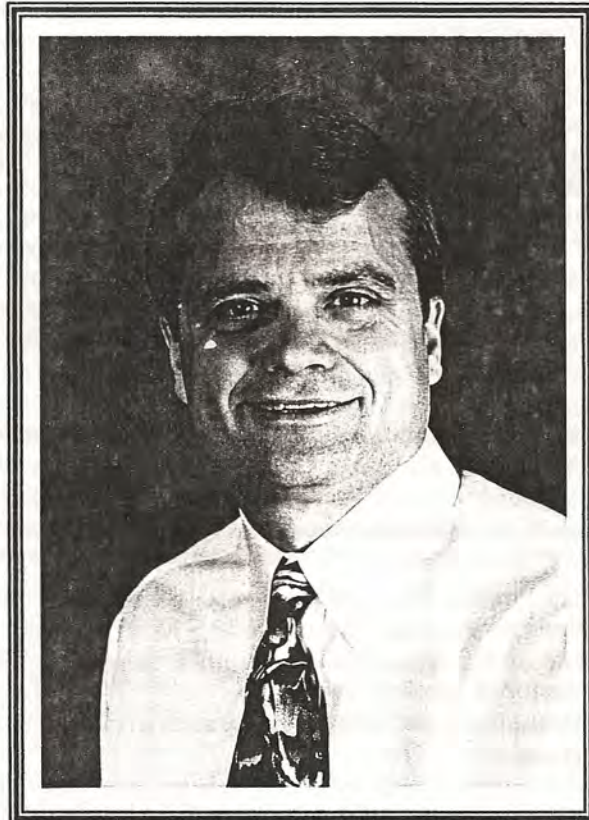
MIKE QUIGLEY, WELCOME!!

by Stephen Packard

What a great surprise! On November 1, 1998—for the first time in 22 years—a Forest Preserve Commissioner has shown up and cut brush with us. This is a symbol of a new day coming.

Mike Quigley was elected to the Cook County Board of Commissioners to represent the 10th district, one that goes all the way from parts of Niles Township through Chicago's lakefront. He replaces Maria Pappas, who was also a friend to restoration, but Mike will be a very, very different Commissioner. For one thing, he has long been an environmental advocate (which is, actually, how I've known him since the sixties).

For another, he is a hands-on kind of guy. That's in part why he was at Harms Woods helping build brush piles with us. He really



wants to understand the ecology and the practice of restoration, so that he can speak authoritatively when the Board deliberates and makes its decisions.

It will make all the difference in the world to have an effective, committed Democratic insider working for the preserves. Mike promises to be that guy, and we dearly need him. The Forest Preserve system now has a much better chance to once again become a first class national leader in conservation. In the words of Neil Peck, who helped with the campaign to get Mike elected, "Mike supports the efforts of the Volunteer Stewardship Program to protect, restore, and revitalize our county's woodlands, prairies, and wetlands."

SEEDS, SEEDS AND MORE SEEDS!

By Jane Balaban

Saturday, November 21, was the annual North Branch seed processing day. This event, marking the end of the seed harvest season, is the day when precious seeds of native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs are prepared for planting. Throughout the summer and fall, crew leaders Joan Meersman and Paul Dolinko guided volunteers to those plants that were ripe to be picked. By November, the seeds of over 100 local species had been carefully gathered and stored.

Over 75 energetic volunteers showed up at Emily Oaks Nature Center in Skokie to process the harvest. Among them were Professor Rich Kampwirth and his Truman College

students, a local Girl Scout troop and several members of the Winnetka Garden Club. Armed with screens, sieves, rolling pins and the human hand, some processors separated seeds from capsules, stems and heads, and from each other. Others measured and distributed each species into mixes based on their sunlight and moisture requirements. Eight community mixes, representing mesic prairie, open savanna, and woodland, were prepared for distribution to the volunteer stewards of North Branch sites as well as a half dozen other natural area sites under protection and management.

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SEEDS, SEEDS AND MORE SEEDS! continued

This fall and next spring, the mixes will be sown in the areas that have been cleared of weeds and brush, which will allow the wildflowers and grasses to flourish again. Sometimes, the seeds are lightly scratched into the ground to improve contact with the soil and reduce predation by animals. If a prescribed burn has been conducted, the seed may simply be broadcast onto the surface of the burned area. The following year, new seedlings will appear.

Not all of the seed goes into the mixes. Some will be taken to the Chicago Botanic Garden, where they will be germinated and cared for until they are big enough to transplant. These plants will be given to home gardeners, who care for the plants, and then collect the seed and return it to the North Branch for restoration. Gardeners enjoy watching their plants in all stages, from early leaf out to flowering to seed setting.

By the end of the day, several hundred gallons of seed mixes were ready to do the work of repopulating our prairies, savannas and woodlands with species that have flourished here since the glaciers left Illinois, 8 or 10 thousand years ago. Some of the seed will be shared with Emily Oaks Nature Center, which will use it to maintain their wonderful swamp white oak savanna. Some will go to seed sharing partners. Most will go back to the beautiful natural lands along the North Branch, and the ancient cycle of renewal will continue.

Thanks to everyone who came to lend a hand, share in good company, good food, and the satisfaction of good work well done. See you next year!

AND EVEN MORE SEEDS

Betsy Visser submitted this recipe from Billy Jo Tatum's *Wild Foods Field Guide and Cookbook*. (Workman Publishing Co., 1976 (ISBN 0-911104-77-1). We know where we can find the main ingredient.

PREPARED GARLIC MUSTARD

1 cup dried mustard seed
2 Tbsp. honey
2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
¼ cup water
Optional: 1 Tbsp. mayonnaise (creamy—but doesn't last as long.)

Blend all ingredients in electric blender or food processor. Pour into sterilized jar and seal, or into a container and refrigerate.

Dried mustard seed:

Harvest when seed pods begin to turn yellow (or collect when still green and let dry). Hang upside down in cloth bag when fully dry and beat the bag. Crush coarsely with rolling pin or mortar and coffee grinder

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

By Debra Shore

What follows are excerpts from a talk given by Debra Shore at the closing ceremony of a special seed-gathering workday at Harms Woods. The event drew various congregations to the One Creation Project. Her words are worth repeating this joyous holiday season.

While thinking about what to say today, I found a story by Ellen Bernstein, one of the founders of a group called *Shomrei Adamah*, meaning Keepers of the Earth. One day, she wrote, she was working on her computer and searching for another word for "home." She clicked on her word-finder and the first synonym that came up for "home" was "earth," then came "world," "globe," "planet," "country," "land," "homeland," and "soil."

The root of ecology—*ecos*—means "house" in Greek. So ecology, the study of the web of relationships that constitute life on earth, ecology understands the earth as our home.

The ancient Israelites depended on nature for their daily livelihood. Rain and crops determined their fate, and nature was an integral part of their lives. Over the centuries, we have become increasingly divorced from nature. We no longer remember the names and customs of the birds and butterflies and plants and animals with which we share a common home.

Today we have spent a few hours together tending to and caring for our communal home, the nearby nature that sustains us in many ways. By gathering seeds, we have participated in the cycle of life. We have been given a precious opportunity to get to know in a more intimate and direct way, some of our neighbors, plants with strange names like rattlesnake master and sneezeweed and funny shapes like Indian grass and little bluestem. And perhaps we've met some new human neighbors.

Collecting seeds compels us to pay attention to the diversity of life. We discover how different plants are, how each has a strategy for sending its offspring forth into the world, sticking to our clothes, floating through the air, spiraling into the ground.

About 50 years ago, a Swiss scientist and mountaineer named George de Mestral went for an autumn walk with his dog. When he returned, his coat and his dog's coat were covered with burs. How many thousands of us have had burs stuck to our clothes after a walk in the woods in the fall? But Mestral grew curious. He plucked the burs off his dog's coat and looked at them under a microscope. There he saw the tiny hook-like features that make burs so successful at sticking to us. He began to experiment with synthetic fabrics and, lo and behold, George de Mestral invented Velcro. Seeds are packages of possibility, little local miracles waiting for us to make new discoveries.

Other volunteers will process the seeds you've gathered today and prepare them to be re-distributed in the prairies and woods nearby, thus continuing the cycle of life. There is important work to do in the woods—it changes with the seasons and is always ripe with discovery and meaning. Judaism holds that Creation—this earth and all the beings that inhabit it—is sacred and humanity has the awesome and wonderful responsibility to guard and preserve it. We come here today as people of different faiths to learn about, explore and care for our common home together.

See back page

Web of Life

by Terry Schilling

We have made a slight change of format. Rather than printing the web addresses for the sites reviewed, you can find them all as featured links on the "Links" page of the North Branch web site. So just visit

www.Geocities.com/RainForest/6089/ (or just search any of the major search engines for "North Branch Restoration Project") and you're on your way.

Continuing our theme of Wet 'n Wild Web sites, I've been looking around at those that deal with what's in the water. What about fish? It turns out that there are lots of sites about fishing and keeping fish as pets, but only a few that deal with fish as part of our local fauna. The first stop is (naturally) the Illinois Natural History Survey's "Fish Collection" homepage. There we find that this collection has a few catalogued specimens, about 743,000, and is the 15th largest in the world. From there we can go to the "Fishes in Illinois" page, which lists all the species known to occur. I was surprised to find that we have 200 species of fish in Illinois (although definitely not all in the North Branch). The largest group, the family *Cyprinidae* (Minnows and Carps) has 59 species. Unfortunately, introduced species information, while mentioned in the key to the species codes, is not present on this page. If you're interested in finding out which species has been found where, the maps are great. The map for the American eel doesn't show any collections since 1983 from the North Branch, or anywhere else in northeastern Illinois. The bigeye chubb has only been found in one river in the east central part of the state, and the Slough Darter is found all over the southern third of the state. The bluegill has been collected from the North Branch, and almost everywhere else in the state, and it's apparently a native species.

There's also a link to the "Illinois Endangered and Threatened Fish" page. We've got 21 endangered species, including one federally endangered - the pallid sturgeon, and 9 threatened. That's 15% of our total species, which seems pretty high, especially when you consider that some of the game fish in the state are not indigenous. These include a few species of trout, all the salmon, and white catfish and white perch, along with all the carp species. I found that fact at the next site—the "Nonindigenous Fish" pages at the USGS. Fifty-six species were listed as introduced in Illinois, including 5 hybrids—and an unidentified piranha! While I didn't cross-reference both these lists completely, some of the species mentioned here did not show up on the INHS list. The oriental weatherfish is one example, as is the piranha. What I found curious was the inclusion of the lake trout, which we know from Lake Michigan. However, the site does say, "included are species native to this state that have been introduced outside of their natural range." It turns out that even the decimated lake trout can be an aggressive alien, displacing other native species of trout in lakes elsewhere, like Lake Tahoe.

While the Web can be a great source of information, sometimes the waters can be a little murky. Take these two sites, the INHS's "Fishes of Illinois" and "Nonindigenous Fish" at the USGS site. According to the INHS, the Cisco is a threatened species in Illinois, which would make it a native. According to the USGS, however, it's listed as a

nonindigenous species that's been introduced to Illinois. But wait - does this really mean that it's been stocked here because it is threatened? Or was it stocked here as "forage for larger predatory sport fish" in waters where it was not native? This can get a bit confusing. I think maybe all four species of carp have been swimming around the sites, stirring up the mud, the same way they do in many of our local rivers.

A footnote: In response to his inquiry, Terry received the following information from Pam Fuller of the USGS. "Even though a species may be native to a portion of Illinois, if it is introduced outside of the native range it is included."

Buying Wood "Smartly"

As consumers our power to influence a market and the origin and development of its products can not be overstated. An excellent example is the rapid growth in the consumption of Shade Grown Coffee. As Americans learn that their buying decisions can help save tropical rainforests, they will drink Shade Grown Coffee and use Smart Wood.

Smart Wood is another small but important step all of us can take in protecting diminishing forests. It was developed through an independent certification process. In 1989 the Rainforest Alliance put together a collaboration of "certificated" organizations as a market driven way to promote responsible forestry practices. Wood products originating from well managed forests, and labeled accordingly, give the consumer the opportunity to support sustainable forest management by purchasing products made from certified wood. Smart Wood is the most extensive forestry certification program in existence.

Consider the many opportunities all of us have to purchase forestry products.

- Building a new house or business building
- Remodeling
- Buying wood furniture

We all understand the speed at which tropical rainforests are declining. Not including the recently devastating fires to rainforests worldwide, an area the size of Pennsylvania is destroyed every year, either through burning, conversion to agriculture, or by timber logging. Scientists tell us that losses of species still undiscovered are in the millions every year. But people need wood from forests for a multitude of reasons: for homes, furniture, and paper to name a few. Buying Smart Wood is a way to help manage our forestlands by taking what we need today yet maintaining our forests' long term health, productivity and its biodiversity.

If we all seek and buy products that are Smart Wood certified we would be encouraging:

- The best managed forests on earth, using cutting-edge forestry techniques
 - Assurance that ancient forests have not been cut, pesticide use has been minimized, and soil and water quality has been maintained.
 - The preservation of forests and wildlife worldwide
- Next time you are "in the market" ask for Smart Wood and wood product manufacturers and retailers will respond!

Submitted by Donald R. Dann. From *CONSERVATION ALERT*, Volume 2 Number 6. November 1998

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, *continued from page 1*

"We pray in different languages and we express our commitments in different religious terms. But we share a special place on this planet—the area at the southern-most tip of Lake Michigan, around the great human settlement called Chicago." That's the credo of the Interreligious Sustainability Project, an ambitious, affirming and enlivening initiative to bring people of different faiths together, recognizing that we share a common home. My own hope is that this is the start of a rich dialogue and lively exchange, that we begin to explore together what each of our faith traditions says about our relationship with Creation and our role as stewards of this earth. We have much to learn from and share with each other, just as we have much to learn from the plants and animals around us. Let us give thanks for this wonderful opportunity. Let us continue the journey of discovery we've begun today, in joy and celebration

Seeding the Snow

A journal of women's writing and artwork that celebrates the Midwest landscape. The editors are eager to reach out to people (not just women, although the writers and artists are women) all over the Midwest, and to receive creative writing and artwork. A yearly subscription for two issues is \$10.00. The fall issue is available now. Please send subscriptions and inquiries to Seeding the Snow, 2534 N. St. Louis, Chicago, IL 60647-1206.

A project of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and The Nature Conservancy

Forest Preserve District of Cook County

John H. Stroger, Jr., President

Joseph N. Nevius, General Superintendent

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in District programs or services. Persons believing they have been discriminated against on the basis of color, race, national origin, sex, or disability, may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Forest Preserve District of Cook County or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

North Branch Restoration Project
P.O. Box 74
Northbrook, IL 60065

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

*The North Branch
Restoration 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 and the
Volunteer
Stewardship Network.*

NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT

WINTER WORKDAYS AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

The NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT is working to restore and manage the few remaining savannas, woodlands, forests and prairies along the North Branch of the Chicago River in the Cook County Forest Preserves. These areas, once part of a vast wilderness, are now 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 and--weather permitting--plant seed. Always wear long pants and shirts with sleeves. Bring some water. Sun protection is important. The workday hotline is 773/878-3877.

WORKDAYS: Meet for lunch on Sunday workdays at 12:30 at parking lot picnic area.

December 6	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
December 13	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
December 20	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
		1:30 p.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
December 27	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
January 3	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
January 10	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Wayside/Linne Prairie
January 17	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
January 24	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
		1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods
January 30	Sat	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
January 31	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
February 6	Sat	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
February 7	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
		1:30 p.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
February 14	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
February 20	Sat	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
February 21	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
		1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods
February 28	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet

Directions

HARMS FLATWOODS (Glenview)--Meet at Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, directly west of Old Orchard Road.

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

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

SOMME PRAIRIE GROVE (Northbrook)--Take Dundee Rd. two miles west from the Edens Expressway to Waukegan Rd. Go north a few hundred feet on Waukegan and turn left into the unpaved parking area by the sign "Somme Woods Prairie."

SOMME WOODS (Northbrook)--Take Dundee Road two miles west from the Edens and turn right into Somme Woods just before the traffic light at Waukegan Road.

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.)

ACTIVITIES: See "Announcements"

The Friends of Northbrook Forest Preserves are a local group that works cooperatively with the NBRP on restoring Somme Woods. Everyone is welcome.

December 9	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Ecological Management Workgroup
December 12	Saturday	9 to 12 p.m.	Friends of Northbrook Forest Preserves work party
December 20	Sunday	9 a.m.	All day family workday at Somme
January 16	Saturday	6:30 p.m.	Annual Potluck Dinner
January 16	Saturday	9 to 12 p.m.	Friends of Northbrook Forest Preserves work party
January 30	Saturday	9 a.m.	Stewardship Forum
February 20	Saturday	9 to 12 p.m.	Friends of Northbrook Forest Preserves work party

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NORTH BRANCH WORKGROUPS

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

Ecological Management: Plans management of our sites and leads workdays; coordinates seed collection and dispersal and home gardens. Jane and John Balaban, 847/679-4289

Publications/Publicity: Produces the newsletter and other publications and brochures as needed; coordinates graphic artists, writers and photographers. Barbara Rose 773/248-4817

Education/Volunteer Development: Plans and organizes education events for volunteers and the public; builds and nurtures a volunteer base; organizes activities such as the Annual Potluck; responds to requests for information. Debra Shore, 847/869-3545 Joanne Softcheck, 773/878-3877

Science: Coordinates the projects and studies that keep our work rigorous, disciplined, and sound. Linda Masters, 847/509-0431

AN ALL-DAY FAMILY WORKDAY AT SOMME NATURE PRESERVE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We will be burning brush piles and older kids will be cutting brush. Hot cider will be provided for the noon lunch. Bring food to share and join us for all or part of the day.

For information, call the Christiane Rey at (773) 478-2019.

ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16

6:30 p.m.

EDGEBROOD COMMUNITY CENTER

6100 NORTH CENTRAL

We will dine on North Branch cuisine and celebrate our accomplishments of the past year. Feel free to bring poems, songs, and musical instruments for spontaneous entertainment. We'll acknowledge special volunteers for their outstanding contributions. Everyone is welcome. Come and bring a dish and beverage to share. Call Nancy Freehafer for information and directions, and to volunteer to help at (773) 342-6665.

STEWARDSHIP FORUM: WHAT DOES A HISTORY OF CHANGING LANDSCAPES MEAN FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION MANAGEMENT?

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CUDAHY AUDITORIUM, MORTON ARBORETUM

The very term restoration implies that the past is relevant to our management of today's natural landscapes. But, how do we know about the past, and what does our knowledge of the past tell us about the goals and methods of restoration? This one-day seminar will bring together five experts on the subject to explore these questions. Call (630) 719-2468 to register.

NATURALIST CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

MORTON ARBORETUM AND THE FIELD MUSEUM

Field classes in ecology, botany, zoology, geology, and interpretation take the beginning or more experienced naturalist through an integrated program of nature study. For information and an enrollment form, call the arboretum at (630) 719-2468 or the museum at (312) 322-8854.

AN INVITATION TO BIRDERS

BCN Net has a new chat line, a service of the Bird Conservation Network, an alliance of organizations with an interest in the conservation of birds in northeastern Illinois, southern Wisconsin, and northwestern Indiana. The purpose of BCN Net is to provide a discussion forum focused primarily on local and state conservation of birds. To subscribe, send email to majordomo@ece.iit.edu with the message "subscribe bennet" in the body.

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE WINTER WORKDAY SCHEDULE

The Buffalo Grove Prairie Guardians are volunteers working to restore the native Illinois prairie near Lake-Cook Road on the Commonwealth Edison easement. We invite you to join us as we continue in our efforts to eliminate weeds, collect and sow seeds, cut brush, and handle general site maintenance. Be sure to dress for the outdoors and for the weather. Wear long slacks, sturdy shoes and socks, sun protection, insect repellent in warm seasons, and work gloves if you have them. Tools, camaraderie, homemade goodies and beverages will be provided.

All workdays are on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

December 13 * January 10 * February 7

LOCATION: Take Lake-Cook Road to Hastings Road (first street west of the railroad overpass and about one mile west of the Milwaukee Road overpass). Turn north on Hastings into the second parking lot on the right. Park at the east end of the lot near the prairie.

CONTACT: Call Bev Hansen at (847) 272-6211 with questions.

So That the Prairie May Live Long and Prosper
(Motto of the Buffalo Grove Prairie Guardians)