

# Brush Piles

NBRP's Refrigerator Door Companion

Summer 1998



## TELL ME ABOUT HERBICIDES

By Jane Balaban

**Q** Why do we use herbicides?

**A** When we first started clearing brush, we vowed to use no chemicals. We believed that cutting and lopping the brush would be sufficient to give the wildflowers and grasses a chance to recover. However, we soon found that we were cutting the same re-sprouts over and over again. At that rate, we would be working in the same few acres forever! So we investigated the chemicals available to us, chose the least toxic among them that would also be effective and began to apply them in small amounts to the weedy invaders we sought to control. This has proven to be both effective and safe. We would still prefer not to use chemicals but fortunately, herbicides need only be applied once to a particular plant. And as sites grow healthier, less and less herbicide is needed.

**Q** What herbicides do we use?

**A** One of the most commonly used herbicides is Garlon 4, or triclopyr. It is a low toxicity herbicide, specific for broad-leaved plants. Compared to chemicals used widely in home lawn products, it is about as toxic as Scott's Plus-2. We also use Rodeo. The EPA and INPC approve rodeo for use in areas where there is standing water. Both chemicals are much less toxic than insecticides like Raid. In fact, of all pesticides, herbicides are much less toxic than insecticides.

**Q** How are they applied?

**A** Qualified persons (only those who have taken the Illinois Department of Agriculture test and are licensed) prepare a solution to swab on cut surfaces or paint small areas of bark. Great care is taken to keep from touching surrounding vegetation or allowing seepage into the ground. Compared to amounts used on lawns, roadsides and golf courses, we use very little chemical.

A typical golf course will use thousands of times more pesticides than are used for restoration. We are applying per acre only about 1% of the compound recommended in the label instructions (both Garlon and Roundup), because of the spot treatment nature of our applications (the labels anticipate full-scale spraying for turf or agricultural field applications.) And in accordance with FPDCC Land Management guidelines, we post signs 24 hours before applying and put flags around areas where herbicide has been used.

**Q** How long do they last?

**A** "Half-life" is a term used to describe how long it takes for half of a substance to break down. The half-life of Garlon in soil is from 30 to 90 days, depending on soil type and environmental conditions, with an average of about 46 days. This is significant because compounds with very long half lives (like DDT, for instance, with a half life of over 20 years) could cause significant damage to the environment. Garlon is rapidly broken down by sunlight and by soil microorganisms.

**Q** How do they affect people and animals?

**A** Garlon has low to no toxicity for humans or animals in the low concentrations used in restoration. Furthermore, there is little opportunity for contact or ingestion, since the chemical is quickly absorbed from cut surfaces and carried into the roots of the plant. When applying the herbicide, we're careful to protect ourselves from accidental exposure. However, the product literature indicates that in reality very little would be absorbed through the skin even with exposure to undiluted material.



## GET THAT GARLIC MUSTARD!

By K. Green and S. Packard

At the May 5 meeting of the Board of the Cook County Forest Preserve District, the commissioners unanimously voted to improve the efficiency of volunteer-led weed control. Their action reversed a counterproductive requirement, originally recommended by restoration opponents, that paid staff be present for all weed control even when the District's land management staff had confidence that trained volunteer leaders would provide good supervision.

Many thanks to the incipient "Friends of the Forest Preserves," who adopted this issue as a priority and whose press releases, letters,

and testimony before the board were very effective.

The District's Volunteer Coordinator Kelly Treese quickly sent notice to all stewards that they were authorized to supervise weed pulling, and to authorize in writing other trained leaders to do so as well. All weed-pulling still must be authorized by an approved management schedule.

Approved leaders and all volunteers need to be wearing district volunteer badges when they pull. This is important to help district police and the general public to understand the difference between weed control (which the district supports) and plant poaching (which the district punishes with a fine up to \$500.)

Stewards are responsible and need to track their work using the usual workday report form (as has historically been the case) and make sure all volunteers pulling weeds are trained and capable.



GARLIC MUSTARD



## WEB OF LIFE

By Terry Schilling

We'll be spinning a few new threads for the summer season. The newest addition to the NBRP web site (at <http://www.geocities.com/rainforest/6089/>) is the "Sun-Times Watch" section. Here are responses to egregiously ignorant anti-restoration columns as they appear. We'll respond point by point to the misinformation, disinformation, and mistakes published by the *Sun-Times* or any other newspaper, if that becomes a problem. If anyone asks about the ill-informed *Sun-Times* columns, direct them here for answers. You can also get there directly via this URL: <http://www.geocities.com/rainforest/6089/SUNTIMES.HTM>.

We've also been looking into how best to cooperate among the various Volunteer Service Network (VSN) web sites to bring you the most information possible with limited resources. Two of these sites are:

- Save the Prairie Society at <http://www.applicom.com/sps/>
- DuPage Volunteer Stewards at <http://members.aol.com/dvsg/index.htm>

You'll be seeing some changes within the next few months, including the introduction of plant and animal information with related illustrations. One by one, the "under construction" signs on the site pages will disappear. Honest!

Speaking of illustrations, if you have any photos of plants or animals taken at the North Branch sites and you'd like to share them, please let us know. E-mail them to [northbranch@geocities.com](mailto:northbranch@geocities.com), or call me at 773-275-8827 (evenings and weekends). All photos will be returned.

The Field Museum, Bird Conservation Network, and Chicago Audubon Society recently received a Chicago Wilderness grant to set up a new bird population and distribution database for the Chicago Wilderness region. The computer, which will also function as a web server, will be housed at the Field Museum. Access for viewing and entering data will be via the Web. The site is under development now but, of course, we need to collect the data. New protocols have been developed that should be more attractive and interesting to participants than those used in the past. These protocols will give us the kind of scientific, statistically sound data we need for this ongoing study. Thanks go to Jerry Sullivan of FPDCC and Douglas Stotz of the Field Museum, who were the primary authors. The web site should be up and running by the time the autumn issue of *Brush Piles* comes out, so look for more information then.

There are additional opportunities for monitoring via the Illinois Natural History Survey's Critical Trends Assessment Project II (CTAP II), with which the BCN is cooperating. This project will supplant the Cook County "Nesting Season Bird Census," run by the Chicago Audubon Society for many years. Anyone interested in bird monitoring, or helping out with the CTAP II monitoring project, can contact Elizabeth Sanders at The Nature Conservancy at (312) 346-8166 or at [esanders@mcs.com](mailto:esanders@mcs.com).

Before we hop off, there's one more thread to traverse. We are constantly expanding the "Links" page on the web site as we discover more on-line resources for restoration. Some recent additions are:

- Native Plant Conservation Initiative at <http://www.aqd.nps.gov/npci/>
- USDA PLANTS Project at <http://plants.usda.gov/>
- Biological Control of Non-Indigenous Plant Species Program Home Page at <http://www.dnr.cornell.edu/bcontrol/weeds.htm>
- National Biological Information Infrastructure at <http://www.nbii.gov/>  
The latter site is a gateway for "information on and access to biological databases, information products, directories, and guides maintained by Federal, State, and local government agencies, and private organizations." A great research tool.
- Illinois Natural History Survey HTTP Server Index at <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu:70/>  
Lots of interesting info here, but you'll need to do a bit of searching.
- INHS CTAP info at <http://dnr.state.il.us/ctap/ctaphome.htm>
- Illinois Natural Resources Information Network at <http://dnr.state.il.us/inringif.htm>  
another good State of Illinois information resource
- Proposed Grand Kankakee Marsh National Wildlife Refuge Draft Environmental Assessment at [http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/ext\\_affr/news\\_rel/kankakee.html](http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/ext_affr/news_rel/kankakee.html)

If you have any favorites that aren't on the web site, please send an e-mail and let us know!



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NORTH BRANCH WORKGROUPS

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

Ecological Management: Jane and John Balaban, (847/679-4289)

Publications/Publicity: Barbara Rose, (773) 248-4817

Education/Volunteer Development: Debra Shore, (847) 869-3545. Joanne Softcheck, (773) 878-3877

Science: (Linda Masters, 847) 509-0431

### SEED SEASON IS HERE!

**Wednesday mornings, 9:00 a.m. to Noon**

**Locations vary [call hotline (773) 878-3877]**

If your Wednesday mornings are free, consider joining volunteers Joan Meersman and Paul Dolinko, seed collectors extraordinaire, as they collect precious native seed to use in restoring the North Branch Forest Preserves. It is a great way to learn to recognize the wildflowers even when they are not flowering while helping our prairies and woodlands stay healthy. The location varies from week to week depending on which species are ripe, so it's also a great way to get to know the different North Branch sites.

### FOURTEEN LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES-- A SYMPOSIUM

**Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7, all day**

**Fermi National Laboratory, Batavia**

A celebration of twenty years of natural area preservation and management in Illinois. All volunteers are invited to the Illinois Native Plant Society event. Gerould Wilhelm will be the banquet speaker. Field trips will be held on Sunday. For costs, directions, program brochure and registration, contact George Johnson at (815) 943-5256 or email geomarjohn@aol.com.

### NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

**Thursday-Friday, June 11-12**

**Carroll College, Waukesha, WI**

For more information, contact Dr. Susan E. Lewis, (414) 524-7279 or email NAMPC@carroll1.cc.edu or see the web site at <http://www.cc.edu/~NAMPC>.

### NATURE CONSERVANCY FESTIVAL AND BENEFIT DINNER

**Saturday, June 13, noon to 9:00 p.m.**

**Wildlife Prairie Park, near Peoria**

For more information, contact Robin at (312) 346-8166, x16.

### SEDGE IDENTIFICATION CLASS

**Saturday, June 20, all day**

An all day class led by John and Jane Balaban, studying the genus *Carex* at two North Branch sites. Cost is \$12 including field key, \$5 if you provide your own reference. For more information and to register, contact Jane Balaban at (847) 679-4289.

### THE RIVER RUNS THROUGH US: A DES PLAINES RIVER WATERSHED CONFERENCE

**Saturday, June 20, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Dominican University, River Forest**

This conference is designed for participants to learn about the river's history, to investigate alternative watershed management techniques, and to begin building an alliance for the watershed. The cost is \$20 per person with lunch. To register by June 12, call Carol Summers at (708) 524-6983 or email [csummers@email.dom.edu](mailto:csummers@email.dom.edu).

### SKETCHING NATURE--AN OUTING

**Saturday, July 11, 10:00 a.m.**

North Branch Restoration Project's first drawing outing will be held at the workday site. Meet in the Watersmeet parking lot. Christiane Rey and Bobby Sutton will help with your efforts. Bring your own art supplies and a chair, if you wish.

### ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT WORKGROUP MEETING

**July 15, 7:30 p.m.**

Call Jane Balaban at (847) 679-4289 for information and directions.

### BCN BIRDS AND HABITAT WALKS SERIES

Observe the effects of restoration projects on birds and discuss issues of habitat management.

DATE & TIME	PLACE
Saturday, June 6, 8:30 a.m.	Glacial
Park, McHenry County	Brad
Woodson, Dave Miller	
Sunday, June 7, 7:00 a.m.	
	Springbr
	Joe
ook Prairie, DuPage County	
Sucheki, Dan Ludwig	
Saturday, June 13, 9:00 a.m.	Midewin
National Tallgrass Prairie	Larry
Stritch	
Saturday, June 20, 7:30 a.m.	North
Palos	Jerry
Sullivan, Conrad Fialkowski	
Sunday, July 12, 8:00 a.m.	
	Wadsworth
	Scott
th Demo Area, Lake County	
Hickman, Donald Hey	

To register and for more information, call the (312) 346-8166, x61.

### SKOKIE LAGOONS WORKDAY SCHEDULE

**June 14 - July 11 - August 8**

**Times vary--See ACTIVITIES**

The Chicago Audubon Society, in conjunction with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, is sponsoring wetland restoration workdays at the Skokie Lagoons. The initial focus is to control erosion and provide bird habitat by planting and maintaining vegetation at the water's edge. Workdays are on every second Saturday of the month (except this June), from March through November. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (just east of the bridge) at 8:30 a.m. for a bird walk (bring binoculars), and at 10:30 a.m. for the workday.

Call the CAS office at 773-539-6793 for more details.

### COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Second and fourth Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m.**

**County Board Room, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, County Building, 118 N. Clark, Chicago**

Attend meetings and support restoration in the forest preserves. If you attend meetings, share the information you learn with others.

*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

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### **Wildlife Prairie Park, near Peoria**

For more information, contact Robin at (312) 346-8166, x16.

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### **WOMEN OF THE NORTH BRANCH POTLUCK**

**Wednesday, June 24, 7:00 p.m.**

As women in the restoration movement, we plan to discuss topics of interest to all of us. Call Linda Masters at (847) 509-0431 for directions. Are you a woman and a NBRP volunteer? You are invited!

Workdays are on every second Saturday of the month (except this June), from March through November. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (just east of the bridge) at 8:30 a.m. for a bird walk (bring binoculars), and at 10:30 a.m. for the workday.

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#### **Brush Piles Crew**

Barbara Rose, Jane Balaban, Theresa Drda, Steve Packard



# NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT

## SUMMER WORKDAYS AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

The NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT is working to restore and manage the few remaining savanna, woodland, forest 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 under tremendous pressure from urban development and invasion of 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 summer we cut brush and sow seeds. Always dress for the weather and bring some water. Sun protection is important. We picnic after working so bring a lunch and something to share. The workday hotline is (773) 878-3877. We also collect seeds on Wednesday mornings. Call the hotline for locations and times.

### SUMMER 1998 WORKDAYS: Meet for lunch on Sundays at 12:30 at picnic area.

June 6	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
June 7	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
June 14	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside
June 16	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	Glenbrook H.S. Nature Preserve
June 20	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside
June 21	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
June 25	Thursday	6:00 p.m.	Watersmeet
June 28	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
July 5	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
July 11	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
		10:00am	Outing--"Sketching Nature"
July 12	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside
July 16	Thursday	6:00 p.m.	Watersmeet
July 19	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
July 25	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Glenbrook H.S. Nature Preserve
July 26	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
August 1	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
August 2	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside
August 9	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
August 15	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet
August 16	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
August 22	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Glenbrook H.S. Nature Preserve
August 23	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
August 30	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve

### Directions

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

HARMS FLATWOODS (Glenview)--Meet at Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, just south 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 meet at the unpaved parking area on the west side of the road.

SOMME WOODS (Northbrook)--Entrance on the north side of Dundee Road, just east of Waukegan Road.

WATERSMEET/SKOKIE SEDGE MEADOWS (Northfield)--Exit the Edens Expressway at Lake Avenue West. Go west to Wagner Road., turn north and take Wagner to Winnetka Rd. Go east on Winnetka 3/4 mile. Park on the north side of the street or in one of the nearby streets.

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"

June 6	Saturday	8:00 a.m.	Fourteen Legendary Landscapes
June 7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.	Fourteen Legendary Landscapes
June 11 &	Thursday		Natural Areas Management Planning
June 12	Friday		Conference
June 13	Saturday	12:00 p.m.	Nature Conservancy Festival, Peoria
June 14	Sunday	12:00 p.m.	Skokie Lagoons Kickoff Picnic
June 20	Saturday	8:00 a.m.	The River Runs Through Us: A Des Plaines River Watershed Conference
June 20	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Carex Identification Class
June 24	Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Women's potluck
July 11	Saturday	8:30 a.m.	Skokie Lagoons Workday
July 15	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Ecological Management Workgroup
August 8	Saturday	8:30 a.m.	Skokie Lagoons Workday

SKOKIE LAGOONS WORKDAYS (Wilmette)--Exit the Edens Expressway at Willow Road East. Go 1/3 mile to Forest Way Drive. Go north on Forest Way Dr. to Tower Road. Drive west on Tower Rd for 1 block to the parking lot. 8:30 a.m. bird walk, 10:30 a.m. workday. For information, contact Jerry Garden at 773-545-4632 or [jerrygarden@sprynet.com](mailto:jerrygarden@sprynet.com).

## BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE SUMMER 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.

June 7 \* July 5\* August 3

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 Hanson at (847) 272-6211 with questions.

**So That the Prairie May Live Long and Prosper**

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**NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT**

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*NBRP's Refrigerator Door Companion*