

BRUSH PILES

NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT SPRING 2002

RED TAPE (and Brush) CUT!

After five long years, President John Stroger has finally lifted the restriction on cutting brush at Miami and Indian Road Woods. The President's wise decision was hastened by the Red Tape event instituted by John Thill, Mary Busch and Friends of Morton Grove Forest Preserves.

Frustrated by the unhealthy changes they saw at Miami, this determined group of neighbors organized an event to publicize the damage done by the



moratorium and to show public support for good management. They deliberately chose September 23rd to coincide with National

Public Lands Day, an annual event when the public is encouraged to do hands-on work taking care of public land all over the nation.

The Miami Woods sign was swathed with symbolic red ribbon to highlight the theme "Red Tape is Killing Miami Woods!"



while Friends members handed out information and talked with hikers and bikers along the bike trail. Over 700 people, including the Mayor and all the Trustees of

Morton Grove, signed petitions urging President Stroger to reinstate management.

During the five years of enforced neglect, buckthorn and other aggressive woody species have grown steadily in the prairie and woodlands, killing off the native sun-loving species. So it was with great

enthusiasm that we began the process of regaining lost ground.

More than 40 North Branch volunteers gathered on Saturday, December 22nd, to celebrate the return to work at the beautiful Miami Woods site. We were joined in the work by two special volunteers, County Commissioner Mike Quigley and candidate for County Commissioner Larry Suffredin. Mike has been a strong supporter of the land management program and the volunteer program during his first four years as Commissioner. He has worked hard and effectively to get the restoration program back on track.

Larry has made the Forest Preserves a core part of his campaign, and comments that "*As I learn more about the current condition of the Cook County Forest Preserve District I realize that volunteers are the only comprehensive land restoration unit that exists... I was especially impressed by the sense of dedication and knowledge the volunteers exhibited.*"

Both Mike and Larry have attended a number of workdays in order to learn more about restoration of the Cook County Forest Preserves and the part played by volunteers. It is truly exciting to see this new and well-deserved advocacy for our wonderful public lands.



Commissioner Mike Quigley (10th District) and County Board candidate Larry Suffredin (13th District) worked as volunteers like the rest of us at the first Miami Woods brush cutting workday in five years.

AWARDS, SILLINESS, AND MUSIC

NBRP ANNUAL POTLUCK - JANUARY 2002

The North Branch Potluck is an annual tradition. We enjoy old and new friends, celebrate our accomplishments, share good and creative food, and entertain each other. And so it was on January 26, with almost 100 people present.

M.C. Laurel Ross pointed out that we have much to celebrate, including a recent decision by the Cook County Board to develop a certification program for stewards to supervise workdays and the reinstatement of Miami Woods to restoration work after languishing five years under the County Moratorium.

The award presentations gave us a chance to be silly as well as serious. It was heartwarming to hear volunteers recognizing other volunteers for contributions that help all of us and the important work we do. The most exciting award was presented by Debra Shore to the Friends of Morton Grove Forest Preserves for their work on getting the Miami Woods site back to active management. Debra took the stage entwined in red ribbons to remind us of the "Red-Tape" action along the bike trail in which the Morton Grove Friends collected well over 700 names on a petition last summer. The reinstatement of Miami as a restoration site came soon after the excellent news coverage that followed the event.

Mary Busch and John Thill accepted the award certificates and the beautiful prints of a drawing of eastern prairie white fringed orchids done by Bobby Sutton.



Other awards went to:

- * Barbara Birmingham and Judy Pollock accepted for the Friends of the Forest Preserves for the Land Audit - an important study of the state of the Forest preserves (more on that in future issues, ed.).

- * John Balaban presented fire making tools to John McMartin for a lot of hard work, including his expertise in brushpile burning.

- * Larry Hodak thanked Linda Masters for some great new North Branch brochures and editing Brush Piles.

- * Jane Balaban recognized Terry Schilling for designing and managing our website, of our mailing list, and much of our communication.

- * Jane also recognized the Village of Glenview for preservation work at the Air Station Prairie; Robyn Flakne accepted.

- * Steve Packard thanked Larry Hodak for generously adopting other sites when his site was taken out of management by the moratorium.

As always, the entertainment showed that North Branchers have many talents in addition to sawing and brushpile construction. After our big meal, Rob Sulski and Steve Packard opened the evenings program with "The Buckthorn Blues" (actual guitar and harmonica for this one). The Bullfrogs (a growing group of singers led by Natalie Leki) performed several songs, including "Praise the Work," in which the audience participated. Joy Trukowski closed, accompanying herself on the guitar, by singing several songs, including "The Brush Pile of Love" (see later in Brush Piles), a hot number that was written for the occasion.



And thus we celebrated another annual potluck, with time to rejoice in the work of the past year, time to be serious and sentimental and silly: a midwinter celebration.

NEW NORTH BRANCH SITE

A new site has been accepted by the North Branch Restoration Project. Adjacent to the Railroad Prairie and Linne Woods in Morton Grove where Gladys Bryer and Bob Bluestone are stewards, the site has been a part of the Deep Tunnel Project for about a decade.

This very disturbed area differs greatly from the remnant prairies and woodlands that are currently being managed by our group. However, the almost 30 acres of land is next to high integrity natural areas and bordered in the east by the North Branch of the Chicago River. This is why it has been important to NBRP to monitor and influence decisions made here over the last ten years.

Upon completion of the tunnel work and hauling away of the dolomite mountain that was stored on site, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for Greater Chicago (MWRDGC) transferred a restoration grant to Cook County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD). The proposed restoration plan was approved by the Village of Morton Grove. Wolff Clements, the contractor hired to take the restoration project to where it is today, has finished grading and seeded in a basic prairie mix. Now the responsibility to continue restoration is in the hands of CCFPD. That's where we come in!

Marian Thill and Mary Busch have volunteered to act as apprentice stewards for this new site, under the direction of six mentors; Diane Aoki, John Balaban, Gladys Bryer, Dennis Dreher, Larry Hodak, and Steve Packard.

Marian and Mary have been involved in Environmental Education over the past several years. They have involved elementary school level teachers and students in Morton Grove in woodland wildflower walks, prairie tours, garlic mustard pulls, and many other activities. Marian and Mary have been conducting these activities at Wayside Prairie and Linne Woods with the assistance of Gladys Bryer and many absolutely wonderful volunteers from the Friends of the Morton Grove Forest Preserves and NBRP.

Marian and Mary have made a connection with Niles North High School (NNHS) Environmental Science teachers to be involved in Ecological Restoration and have plans to involve Niles West High School as well. Sue Trzaskus of NNHS is very enthusiastic about engaging 10 seniors in GIS mapping of this site in Spring, 2002. Equipped to take on this project through Northwestern University's World Watch program, Sue and her team are part of an effort to involve the community members. They met with Bill Koenig, Volunteer Coordinator for the Forest Preserve District. Donna Cleson of the nearby Delaine Farm residential development and Cynthia Fox of the Friends of the Chicago River will also participate. Mary Walsh, curator of the Morton Grove Historical Museum, a branch of the Morton Grove Park District is also very interested in this project and has been working with Marian to organize bird walks for the community.

We enthusiastically welcome involvement and ideas regarding this site. Contact Mary Busch @ (847) 966-7585 or Marian Thill @ (847)966-0231.

Debra Shore – UNSUNG HEROINE

On Sunday, January 20, at a dinner sponsored by the Niles Township Democratic Organization, Commissioner Cal Sutker (13th District) honored President John Stroger, Commissioner John Daley and.....Debra Shore.

Debra received an award as an "unsung heroine" for her service on the President's Community Advisory Council on Land Management. Commissioner Sutker appointed Shore to the Council in early 1997 and she is now in her second term.

Debra quoted from Charles Jordan, director of the Portland, Oregon Parks Department in accepting her award: "We have a responsibility to ensure that our legacy is greater than our inheritance," she said, adding

that Commissioner Sutker has worked diligently to see that this is the case in Cook County's forest preserves.



NBRP Workday Schedule – SPRING 2002

March

| | | | |
|----|----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 3 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Harms Woods |
| 3 | Sunday | 1:00–4:00 | Harms Woods |
| 9 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Somme Prairie Grove |
| 10 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Harms Flatwoods |
| 17 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Somme Woods |
| 17 | Sunday | 1:00–4:00 | Somme Woods |
| 23 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Somme Prairie Grove |
| 24 | Sunday | 9:00–2:00 | Somme Nature Preserve |
| 31 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Somme Prairie Grove |

April

| | | | |
|----|----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 7 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Miami Woods |
| 13 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Somme Prairie Grove |
| 14 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Wayside/Linne |
| 20 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Somme Woods |
| 21 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Watersmeet |
| 27 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Sauganash Prairie Grove |
| 28 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Somme Woods |
| 28 | Sunday | 1:00–4:00 | Somme Woods |

May

| | | | |
|----|----------|-----------|---------------------|
| 4 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Harms Flatwoods |
| 5 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Somme Prairie Grove |
| 11 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Harms Woods |
| 11 | Saturday | 1:00–4:00 | Indian Road Woods |
| 12 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Harms Woods |
| 12 | Sunday | 1:00–4:00 | Harms Woods |
| 18 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Somme Prairie Grove |
| 18 | Saturday | 1:00–4:00 | Wayside/Linne |
| 19 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Harms Flatwoods |
| 19 | Sunday | 1:00–4:00 | Watersmeet |
| 25 | Saturday | 9:00–noon | Miami Woods |
| 26 | Sunday | 9:00–noon | Bunker Hill/Oxbow |



Directions:

Air Station Prairie, Glenview - From the Edens Expressway, go west on Willow Road past where the road goes up and over Lehigh. At the bottom of hill turn right and circle under Willow. Go south approximately 1/2 mile to the sign for the Prairie.

Bunker Hill/Oxbow, Chicago - 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 - Meet at the Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, directly west of Old Orchard Road.

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

Indian Road Woods, Chicago - On Central, just north of Indian Road. (Enter off Central Av about 1/2 mile north of Elston Ave.) Proceed to last parking lot that parallels Indian Road.

Miami Woods, Niles/Morton Grove - Located on the east side of Caldwell, two blocks north of Oakton. Meet in the parking lot for Miami Woods.

Sauganash Prairie Grove, Chicago - Meet at the edge of the Forest Preserve along the south side of Bryn Mawr at Kilborn, which is south of Peterson and east of Cicero.

Somme Nature Preserve, Northbrook - 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 Prairie Grove, Northbrook - From the Edens Expressway, take Dundee Road two miles west to Waukegan Road. 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 - 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 - From the Edens Expressway, take Lake Avenue west to 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/RR Prairie, Morton Grove - Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie parking lot on Lehigh Ave, a few blocks east of Waukegan Road and just north of Dempster.

Announcements & What Not

SKOKIE LAGOONS

10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (east of the lagoon bridge - not the boat launch). For late arrivals, 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 when appropriate. For more information should contact Jerry Garden at 773. 545.4632 or jerrygarden@sprynet.com

| | |
|----------|----------|
| Saturday | March 9 |
| Saturday | April 16 |
| Saturday | May 11 |

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE

9:00 am – noon. 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 passing under railroad over pass). Turn north on Hastings, then right into the second parking lot. The prairie is under the Com Ed power lines. Call Bev Hansen at 847.272.6211 for more information.

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Sunday | March 3 |
| Sunday | April 4 |
| Sunday | May 5 |

SAVE A TREE ... ?

... and some postage too! We'd like to know how many people would be willing to receive Brushpiles, our quarterly newsletter, electronically. We can send it in an easily readable and printer-ready format.

If this is something you would be interested in doing, please let us know via email. Send a brief message to publications@northbranchrestoration.org and if enough people would like to participate, we will begin sending Brushpiles electronically with the next issue, mid-May. We will still have printed copies made for those who want it. Thanks for letting us know!

The Brushpiles Crew

BRUSH PILES CONTRIBUTORS AND EDITORIAL CREW

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Jane Balaban | Laurel Ross |
| Mary Busch | Photos by T.T. Chen, |
| Nancy Freehafer | Carl Meyer, and |
| Linda Masters | Larry Hodak |
| Stephen Packard | |

THE BRUSH PILE OF LOVE

by Joy Trukowski – dedicated to Bob Bluestone

The brush pile of love was just beginning
When my heart first skipped a beat for you
Through the tall stand of buckthorn you were grinning
And you handed me a saw meant for two.

On your knees you showed me
How to saw gracefully
And when I fell my first tree
It was so cute how you jumped out of the way
And from the stump on which I stood
The way you lopped looked so good
When we laid the first wood on.

Chorus: The brush pile of love
The brush pile of love.

In the grand symphony of restoration
You repeat in my mind just like a chorus
And I would fight a vicious war with every nation
Just to hear you say "Penstemon grandiflorus."

Some say I'm just obsessed
Or my head's such a mess
But I love the way you dress
With your tube socks pulled up over your pants
And my herbicide bucket's filled
And in the snow I'm not chilled
When together we build..

Chorus

Now when you share my saw I get a sensation
And I cut that brush with all the strength I can muster
Because my love for you has exploded like the deer population
It spreads faster than a strain of garlic mustard.

We've grown so attached
We built a cozy home to match
Our nearby prairie patch
And when you work in it I just have to gaze at your..
Asters that you've grown
And I'm a little less alone
Whoever would have known it had started from.

Chorus

And if it's burning should transpire
We've already built our own fire
And the flames can only grow higher!

BARRY LOPEZ

Author, essayist and short story writer; his writings are brilliant jewels of observation and reveal a deep and abiding affection for the environment.

April 16th, 7:00 pm
Student Center, DePaul University
2250 N. Sheffield, Chicago
For more information call the Environmental Sciences Department at (773) 325-7310.



Photo by Nancy Freehafer

Miami Woods— Winter 2002

North Branch Restoration Project
P.O. Box 2154
Northbrook , IL 60062-3707

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

The North Branch Restoration Project is a cooperative effort involving The Nature Conservancy, the Chicago Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club. The project works to restore and manage the few remaining woodlands and prairies along the North Branch of the Chicago River. We manage the sites as volunteers for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and local agencies. We are working to restore conditions that will allow these natural wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

www.northbranchrestoration.org

Hotline: 312-409-5831
