# BRUSH PILES

# NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT

**WINTER 2005** 

#### Where Did Our Seed Come From?

There's a lot more to the North Branch seed mixes than meets the eye. Yet, they are at the heart of what we do.

When we started, some of the North Branch sites had less than 25% of the full complement of plant species that would make up a natural plant community on that site. (Each site has somewhat different species, of course.)

So for fifteen years or so, a major part of North Branch work was autumn excursions to Des Plaines, Addison, Buffalo Grove, and other towns where scraps of unprotected prairie still survived. Our rule was that we would limit our seed collection to spontaneous populations no more than fifteen miles from the North Branch sites. Our goal was to have a local and natural plant gene pool as possible.

Most of those beautiful sites where we gathered all that rare seed are now gone. They are shopping centers, housing developments, warehouses and other progress. But the descendents of the plants that grew in those places are now thriving on the North Branch.

These days, most of the seeds we get are from our own North Branch preserves. Pretty much all the local native species are now there.

Of course there are some exceptions. A big exception is for seed that is hard to gather because it explodes as soon as it is ripe, or is very hard to find when it's ripe, or for some other reason is grown for us by volunteers in their home gardens. We manage to get small amounts of this seed and give it to the Chicago Botanic Garden – which keeps some of it for their own prairie and raises seedlings from the rest in little pots. These young plants are distributed every spring by Garden Coordinator Joan Meersman.

Another exception is savanna seed. Because many of the savanna plants are even rarer than prairie plants, we drew our boundary lines farther out. Savanna seed must come from spontaneous populations within 25 miles. Some of the hardest species to get – like pale Indian plantain and violet cress – seemed no longer to occur within 25 miles, so we had to go a little farther.

We were lucky that we got started as soon as we did (in 1977 to be exact) and that a number of "explorers" were willing to scout out all those rare seed patches. The North Branch prairies and savannas today are some of the most carefully and well restored anywhere. It's a great feeling to keep nurturing them, don't you agree?

#### NBRP ANNUAL POTLUCK

# Saturday, February 4, 6:00-10:30 pm

This potluck is renowned for the sumptuous food, warm greetings, friendly singing, and congratulatory awards. Please bring a dish to share (and a musical instrument if you play one) and partake of all these with your fellow NBRP volunteers at the Volunteer Resource Center, 6100 N. Central (located on Chicago's northwest side). To help with the potluck, call Nancy Freehafer at 773.342.6665.



# WINTER SOLSTICE BONFIRE

#### Sunday December 18, 2:00 - 4:30 pm

Celebrate the winter solstice with music, a bonfire, and friends at Somme Woods. On the darkest of days, when the sun sets early on one of the last days of fall, come gather round a warm fire with a few friends and reflect on things past and yet to be. We will have spiced cider, hot chocolate, and some treats to tempt your palate. This annual event — jointly sponsored by the North Branch, the Forest Preserve District, and Friends of Northbrook Forest Preserves — is a peaceful and sweet celebration. Neither snow nor cold ever stops this event (rain? maybe). Everyone is welcome. For more information call Linda Masters at 847.509.0431.

# NBRP Workday Schedule - Winter 2005

<u>DECEMBER</u>				
3	Saturday	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods	94
4	Sunday	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove	Dundee Rd
10	Saturday	9:00-noon	Linne Prairie	Somme Prairie
11	Sunday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods	mme Prairie Grove
17	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods	
18	Sunday	9–12, 1-4	Harms Woods	Somme Woods
18	Sunday	2:00-4:30pm	Solstice Bonfire at Somme Wood	ds
25	Sunday		Christmas Break	34 294
31	Saturday	9:00-2:00pm	Somme Prairie Nature Preserve	Willow Rd
JANUARY Winnetka Rd				
<u> </u>				Air Santin Santi
1	Sunday	9–12, 1-4	Harms Woods	Air Station Prairie
7	Saturday	9:00-noon	Linne Woods North	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
7	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods	
8	Sunday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove	Harms Woods
14	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove	1 Old Orchard Pd
15	Sunday	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods	Fidiwoods Tidiwoods
21	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods	Linne Woods & Railroad Prairie
21	Saturday	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove	Beckwith Rd
22 28	Sunday Saturday	9:00-noon 9:00-noon	Wayside Woods Prairie Watersmeet Prairie Grove	Wayside Woods Prairie
29	Sunday	9:00-2:00pm	Somme Prairie Nature Preserve	Miami Woods Prairie 58 1 Obempster St
	Ü	3.00-2.00pm	Somme Transe Nature Treserve	
FEBRUARY				1 Oakton St
4	Saturday	9:00-noon	Watersmeet Prairie Grove	
4	Saturday	6:00-10:30pm	NBRP Annual Potluck	Touhy Ave
5	Sunday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove	The same of the sa
11	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Woods	<b>3</b> (4) 16
11	Saturday	9:00-noon	Linne Woods North	Devon Ave
12	Sunday	9–12, 1-4	Harms Woods	t Mills
18	Saturday	9:00-noon	Linne Prairie	Bunker Hill Savanna
18	Saturday	9:00-2:00pm	Somme Prairie Nature Preserve	1
19	Sunday	9:00-noon	Miami Woods Prairie	Indian Road Woods
	Saturday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove	Sauganash Prairie Grove
26	Sunday	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods	<b>†</b> III
<u>MARCH</u>				
4	Saturday	9:00-noon	Harms Flatwoods	
	Sunday	9:00-noon	Somme Prairie Grove	

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE Sundays, 9:00 am – Noon Dec 11, Jan 16, Feb 13 Bey Hansen, 847-272-6211

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 going under the railroad overpass). Turn north on Hastings, then right into the second parking lot. The prairie is under the Com Ed power lines.

SKOKIE LAGOONS
Saturdays, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Dec 10, Jan 8, Feb 12
Jerry Garden, 773-545-4632, jerrygarden@sprynet.com

Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (east of the lagoon bridge – not the boat launch). 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.

# NBRP Site Directions and Stewards

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

#### Air Station Prairie, Glenview

Kent & Jerry Fuller – From the Edens Expressway; go west on Willow Road, past Waukegan Road and over the RR overpass. Turn south at the new traffic signals for Patriot Blvd. (The new main road through the redeveloped Naval Air Station). Turn east on Compass to the gate at the south end of the prairie. Patriot Blvd. is also accessible from the south via Lake Ave.

# Bunker Hill Savanna/Oxbow, Chicago

Jane & John Balaban – 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

**Neil Peck & Terry Schilling** – Meet at the Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, directly west of Old Orchard Road.

#### Harms Woods, Glenview

Jane & John Balaban – Meet at the Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Road, just south of Glenview Road and north of Old Orchard Road.

#### Linne Prairie, Morton Grove

Mary Busch & John Thill (847-966-0231) – Meet at the Wayside Woods Prairie parking lot on Lehigh Ave, a few blocks east of Waukegan Road and just north of Dempster.

## Linne Woods North, Morton Grove John & Marian Thill (847-966-0231,

mjthill@icsp.net) - From Edens go west on Dempster street about 1.5 miles. The forest preserve entrance will be on the north side of the street directly across from McDonalds. Follow the winding road all the way back until it dead-ends at the turn-around circle.

Miami Woods Prairie, Niles/Morton Grove
Kent & Jerry Fuller – Located on the east side of
Caldwell, two blocks north of Oakton. Meet in the
parking lot for Miami Woods.

#### Prairie View Nature Preserve, Morton Grove

**Kent Fuller** – From Dempster, 2 blocks east of Waukegan, turn north on Oak Park Ave. Turn left on Churchill and drive to the end. Park in the parking lot on the north side.

# Sauganash Prairie Grove, Chicago Larry Hodak & Pete Leki

(watersschool@yahoo.com) — Meet at the edge of the Forest Preserve along the south side of Bryn Mawr at Kilbourn, which is south of Peterson and east of Cicero.

## Somme Prairie Grove, Northbrook Stephen Packard (847-509-0431,

**spackard@audubon.org)** – 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 Prairie Nature Preserve, Northbrook Laurel Ross (312-665-7432,

**lross@fieldmuseum.org) & Christiane Rey (773-478-2019)** – 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 Woods, Northbrook Linda Masters (847-509-0431,

masters2001@comcast.net) – 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

**John Berg (Kerg111@aol.com)** – From Lake Avenue and 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 Woods Prairie/Linne RR Prairie, Morton Grove

**Gladys Bryer & Bob Bluestone** – Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie parking lot on Lehigh Ave, a few blocks east of Waukegan Road and just north of Dempster.

# NORTH BRANCH SEED PROCESSING 2005

Photos by Karen Rodriguez

Many thanks to all the folks that helped to make this another successful seed processing day!













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

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

#### www.northbranchrestoration.org

Brushpiles is available electronically. If you would like to receive it via email send a message to **publications@northbranchrestoration.org**. We will email you a ".pdf" file that can be read and printed by Adobe Acrobat Reader (download from http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep 2.html).