



## The Wildflower Garden's Web of Life

Winter is a wonderful time to reflect on the events of the passing year and to begin the creative process of envisioning the year to come. I also find that the quieter months lend themselves to deeper contemplation of the past season's lessons and insights. At times these thoughtful musings give birth to new appreciation and fresh understandings.

As I reflect on the past year at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, what keeps returning to mind is a beautiful sense of a Garden community, made up of volunteers, staff members and visitors. I often noticed that a certain kind of active yet effortless flow occurred as people went about their duties and delights. It was clear that each person was significant and needed, that they belonged. Each person filled their niche at the Garden, and the results were tangible. Remarkably, at the same time, each person was quite seamlessly a part of a larger, dynamic whole; a community of interdependent elements working toward a richer expression of the potential inherent within the Garden's 15 acres.

In contrast to the idea that our human lives are somehow separate from the "natural life" we seek to protect and nurture, I've been starting to understand that we humans,

singly and together, are just one more silky strand in the profoundly complex system we call life. Our daily activities are akin to the activities of the natural world around us. We are not separate from nature.

In systems of the natural world, specialization develops as ecosystems diversify and grow more complex. I see this playing out at the Garden in all its ecosystems, or communities, including the human one. Over time, as program offerings have expanded and new management needs have been identified, volunteer opportunities have grown and diversified as well. Several new volunteer programs have emerged and are thriving at the Wildflower Garden. In addition, staff positions have become more specialized as the Garden offerings and opportunities deepen and branch out. As needs and potential are identified, we have been able to respond and grow. That growth has been in response to real needs and genuine potential, not from the desire to grow solely for growth's sake. What all of this reveals to me is that the Garden is fundamentally healthy, from the ground up. I see that as we grow and continue to diversify and specialize, it is natural that we stay tuned in to each other and to the order of life in this little oasis of biological wonder, the Wildflower Garden. We are an intrinsic part of it. \*



## 2010 Volunteer Programs Report

2010 was a very successful year for volunteer programs at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. A record number of volunteer hours (2046.25) was logged, nearly the equivalent of a full-time staff member (2080 hours/year). All of the programs listed below saw a growth in the number of participants and volunteer hours donated. Staff members at the Garden and the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden continue to nurture existing programs and respond to community interest in volunteering at the Garden. In addition to promoting the health of the Garden's natural systems, the volunteer programs provide valuable services to visitors.

A volunteer recognition celebration was held on November 7, 2010 to thank the Shelter, Legacy and Friends Invasive Plants Action Group volunteers. This event was co-hosted by the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

### Volunteer Programs Managed by Friends of the Wild Flower Garden

#### Shelter Volunteer Program

The Shelter Volunteer Program is the oldest ongoing volunteer program at the Wildflower Garden. Shelter volunteers assist the public in the Martha Crone Visitors Shelter in a variety of capacities. In 2010, 39 Shelter volunteers contributed a combined total of 1029.5 hours.

#### Friends Invasive Plants Action Group

The Friends Invasive Plants Action Group involved 40 volunteers and contributed 169 hours to the park system this season, up from 110 hours in 2009. All of the volunteer hours were spent weeding out invasive plants, namely buckthorn and garlic mustard, from the woodland areas surrounding the Garden. New this year was an event with the Aveda Corporation.

### Volunteer Programs Managed by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Staff Members

#### Breck Students May 2010 Program Volunteer Work

Seven seniors from Breck School volunteered at the Garden in May to fulfill a school service learning project requirement. The students assisted with a variety of planting, weeding and trail maintenance projects. The students each volunteered 72 hours, resulting in a total of 504 volunteer hours contributed.

#### Legacy Volunteer Program

The 15 volunteers in the Legacy Volunteer Program contributed 133.75 hours toward invasive plant removal in and around the Garden. In 2010, most of the legacy volunteer efforts took place in areas surrounding the Garden. The program nearly doubled in number of participants from 2009 to 2010. Plans are underway to recruit additional legacy volunteers for 2011.

#### Special Group Invasive Plant Removal Events

Four special group invasive species removals were offered throughout 2010. The groups that participated in 2010 included Americorp, Small Planet Foods (a division of General Mills), Optum Health and Breck Service Learning Students. A total of 53 participants volunteered during the season, resulting in 120 hours of volunteer work contributed.

#### Field Work Assistant Volunteers

This season, 90 hours were logged by three volunteers who assisted the Garden curator with such tasks as splitting wood, burning diseased wood, trail work and removing invasive plants from the Garden.



Another wonderful spring has come and gone at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. Although the Garden is scheduled to open on April 1 each year, it isn't unusual for the gates to remain closed to the public for days or even weeks after that due to wintry conditions. This season, the Garden opened on April 11 because of cool temperatures and snow and ice on the trails. Thanks to the cooler temperatures, though, many spring wildflowers bloomed longer than usual, making it an especially delightful year for enjoying the enchantment of the spring woods.

The May 22 tornado that caused great destruction in portions of North Minneapolis swept through Theodore Wirth Park, just skirting the western edge of the Garden. Although several trees were blown down and the fence was damaged along that section, the Garden was protected from the tornado's full force. The loss of majestic, mature trees in Theodore Wirth Park is difficult to bear. Many of us at the Garden feel a deep sense of relief, though, because the Wildflower Garden, including our historic and priceless collection of trees, was, for the most part, spared.

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, we purchased more than 1,200 woodland wildflowers for the hillside adjacent to Violet Way trail. Some of the many different species included in the planting were wild columbine, early meadowrue, wild blue phlox, zig-zag goldenrod, wild geranium, wild ginger, large-leaved aster, white woodland aster, calico aster, blue cohosh and red baneberry. The Friends also are funding a September

planting project in the same area of the Garden. This planting will add more than 100 woodland shrubs and trees. Year by year, the diversity and richness of the Garden's plant collection grows, thanks to the vision and support of so many people.

Many hands have played a part in removing garlic mustard this season. Thanks to Jim, Ellen, Liz and all of the volunteers of the Friends Invasive Plants Action Group as well as many dedicated Legacy Volunteers and several organizations and corporations that have lent a hand, the areas surrounding the Garden are nearly free of mature garlic mustard. Each season we

In addition to our wonderful naturalist-led public tours and programs, several seasonal classes are being offered this year at the Garden by professionals in their respective fields, including nature journaling, gardening with wildflowers, introduction to rain gardens, gardening in the shade, wildflower photography, medicinal plants of the garden, nature-inspired poetry and more. We also have partnered with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts to offer Art in the Park events once a month at the Garden as part of our Wonder in the Wildflower Garden series. Information about all of these events can be found online at the Garden's website: [www.minneapolis.org/ebwg](http://www.minneapolis.org/ebwg).



*Invasive plants removal task force co-chair Ellen Lipschultz at garlic mustard removal event photo by Judy Remington*

are seeing less and less of it. In its place, native plants are popping up throughout the woodland garden areas, both inside and outside of the Garden. It's amazing to see the transformation that is slowly and steadily occurring each year. The work of these volunteers is truly inspiring.

Many other wonderful projects and programs are offered at the Garden this year, including the ongoing work of artists involved with the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden florilegium, the Museum Adventure Pass, the partnership that we are developing with Minneapolis Public Schools to get kids out of the classroom and into the urban fields and forests where they can discover nature directly and possibly for the first time.

As this rich and lovely season continues to blossom, many visitors will revel in the beauty of this very special Garden. One final thank-you to Friends members for the generous donation made for

the spring and autumn 2011 Violet Way planting projects. Each season the Garden truly grows more beautiful with the support and heartfelt efforts carried out by the Friends, all of the friends, of the Garden.



*A Note From Susan Wilkins*  
GARDEN CURATOR

*This summer, we had a wonderful array of programs at the Wildflower Garden, thanks to the dedicated efforts of staff members, the generosity of the Friends and the vision of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Lauren Borer, coordinator for special tours and programs at the Garden, has cultivated a dynamic and growing environmental education program, with an emphasis on programs for urban youth. Her summary below will fill you in on what she's been up to and the people who have benefitted. —Susan Wilkins*



*Summer program students*

## Summer in the Garden By Lauren Borer

June may be the end of the formal school year and the beginning of summer's more relaxed days, but it's also the time when the pace at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden begins to pick up.

In early June we hosted several field trips from such schools as the Minnesota Renaissance Montessori School in Anoka and Child Garden Montessori in Minneapolis. They were soon followed by an afterschool program from Bryn Mawr Elementary School.

By the middle of the month, summer school students were coming to the Garden. Highview Alternative High School teacher Dudley Dobitz has been bringing his summer program students to the Garden for many years to learn about the ecology of the Garden and the Quaking Bog. Also in June, we enjoyed a mix of elementary and high school students from nearby city neighborhoods and several outer-ring suburbs. Some had been to the Garden before; many were first-time visitors.

We were visited on one of the many 100+ degree heat index days in July by a group of 40 Norwegian tourists. Despite the heat and language barrier, they enjoyed our hour-long history and wildflower walk.

For the second year, we were kept very busy working with teachers and 4th graders from the Minneapolis public school district's summer school program, who came to the Garden for day-long field trips. The students spend the summer working with the Seeds of Science/Roots of Reading curriculum learning about adaptations, variations and characteristics of plants and animals. They come to the Garden to look for variations and adaptations in birds. In small groups, they have a chance to see how birds use their beaks as tools to get food and how we can tell what they eat based on their habitat and beak shape.

Then the students head out on the trails with binoculars to look for some of our resident birds at the Garden

and at the ponds by Wirth Beach. The students saw a number of new birds and also learned to identify birds by their calls. Some of the birds seen and heard on our bird walks were American goldfinches, American robins, northern cardinals, downy woodpeckers, catbirds, bluejays, indigo buntings, ruby-throated hummingbirds, black-capped chickadees, common yellowthroats, eastern phoebes, eastern wood-peewees, olive-sided flycatchers, great egrets, bald eagles, green herons, great blue herons, red-winged blackbirds, tree swallows, wild turkeys and broad-winged hawks.

The students' treks to the Quaking Bog taught them more about plant adaptations and the characteristics of our bog. They got close-up views of the insectivorous sundews and the plant that makes the bog a bog—sphagnum moss. They also got a look at the northern pitcher plant, another insectivorous plant growing in the Quaking Bog. They learned how bogs form, what makes them unique habitats and how fragile that

# Summer in the Garden continued from page 2

habitat is. For many, a highlight was making the bog “quake” and walking across the floating bridge.

In all, more than 400 students from 10 schools participated in the all-day field trips from July 6 to August 4. Despite stormy weather and days with a higher than 105 degree heat index, all of the summer school classes were able to visit the Garden (Some re-scheduling did have to be done). We look forward to doing it all again next July!

For the past few years the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden has provided programs for the Nordic Adventure Camp. The campers visited the Garden one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August. This year the campers came in small groups to participate in a Game Trail. This activity takes the campers on a “choose your own adventure” experience throughout the Garden visiting the woodlands, wetlands and prairie. The kids had a great time testing their knowledge, using a map to find their way, exploring the Garden on their own and finding out who had the most points at the end of the game.



*Summer program students*

The Garden had other visitors from all over the Twin Cities as well. Members of a Boy Scout troop participated in our Birding Badge program on a Saturday morning. Jewish Community Center summer campers came on one very hot and buggy day to learn about trees. The Quaking Bog was a popular program choice in July, with three groups choosing to explore it. We had an Indian Education group of students from the Bloomington School District, a group of children from North Minneapolis participating in the Family Partnership program and summer campers from the Linwood Recreation Center in St. Paul who came to hunt for insects and explore the Quaking Bog.

August is the perfect month to see and learn about insects because nearly every plant in the wetland and prairie hosts an insect of some sort. The fall series of home school programs began in August with an insect theme. The younger students compared their physical abilities with those of insects (the insects won every time!), and the older students learned about the different insect families found in the Garden. Mac-

Donald Montessori School from St. Paul also made an August visit with summer school students in Kindergarten through third grade. They spent a morning exploring the prairie for insects and the Quaking Bog for insect-eating plants.

All in all, July and August are two months that keep Garden staff members very busy. We hope to keep up these great partnerships with the Minneapolis School District, the visiting Montessori schools, the Nordic Adventure Camp and all the other groups that visited our Garden this season.