



National Park Service

Fall 2022 Natural Resource Quarterly

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Natural Resource Quarterly | Fall 2022

Newsletter of Natural Resources in the National Capital Region



In This Issue:

- Re-Growing Southeastern Grasslands
- "Ribbeting" Amphibian Research
- Beech Leaf Disease Spreading
- Geologic Landmarks in NCR
- Monarch Butterfly Status
- November Resilient Forest Workshop
- Landscape Conservation Connections
- Food for Thought: Nature and Language
- Nature News, ICYMI

Re-Growing Southeastern Grasslands



By Dorothy Borowy, Ecologist and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinator

The eastern U.S. is best known for its forests. However, native grasslands once covered large swaths of land stretching from Pennsylvania down to Florida and west through Kentucky, Arkansas, and part of Texas. Prior to European settlement, these southeastern grasslands covered approximately 1.2 million acres of land, making them a prominent feature on the landscape. Some of these grasslands were small and transitory in nature, while others were vast—sometimes spanning thousands of acres—and persisted over long periods of time. Today, very few of these grasslands still exist, but those that remain support an inordinate number of plants and animals, including many rare and endemic species. That's why national parks across the National Capital Region (NCR) are working on a variety of grassland projects focused on conserving, rehabilitating, and restoring native southeastern grassland communities. This article describes the importance of grasslands and how to protect and restore them and provides summaries of notable NCR grassland projects ongoing as of fall 2022. [Read More.](#)

Photo L to R: A grasshopper sparrow at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, a bumblebee on monarda at Antietam National Battlefield, and the Otto farm grassland at Antietam National Battlefield. Credit L to R: NPS, USGS/Diane Larson, and NPS/Calzarette.

"Ribbeting" Amphibian Research



Park-specific updates on amphibian populations are now available in the article series, [Amphibian Monitoring in the National Capital Region!](#) The series looks at the status of frog, toad, and salamander species in wetlands and salamander species in streams, as well as amphibian population stressors, and management strategies for helping our froggy friends. The series is based on the [recent report on 15 years of amphibian data from the NCR Inventory & Monitoring Network](#).

Photo: American toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*). Credit NPS/C. Shafer

Beech Leaf Disease Spreading

American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), the most common tree species in National Capital Region parks, is currently facing the emerging threat of Beech Leaf Disease (BLD). And throughout the east coast this year, beech leaf disease is suddenly very common. In the NCR, it has spread within Prince William, out from where it was originally identified in 2021. Read more about this challenge: [Beech Trees in the National Capital Area \(U.S. National Park Service\)](https://www.nps.gov/ncr/learn/management/beechnutrition.htm), (nps.gov).

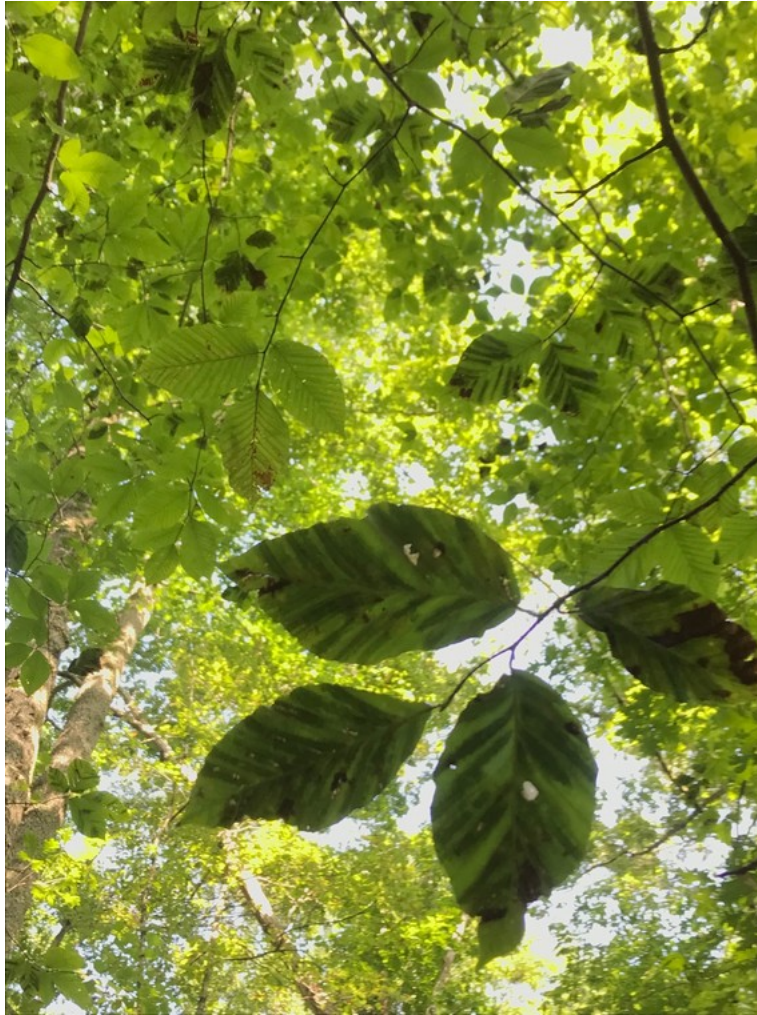


Photo: Beech leaves showing characteristic striping of beech leaf disease. Credit: NPS/Brolis

Geologic Landmarks in NCR

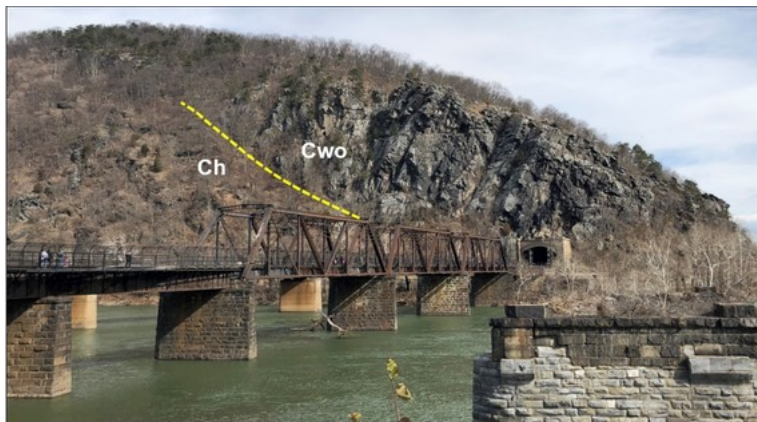


Figure 32. Type locality exposures of the Harpers Formation along the Potomac River at Maryland Heights, HAFE. Cwo = Owens Creek Member of the Weverton Formation; Ch = Harpers Formation (NPS/TIM HENDERSON).

Do you know the best places to see specific parts of NCR geology? Where could you see the Conococheague Formation or the Cambrian Araby Formation for example?

In geology lingo, these best places are called geologic stratotypes or type sections. They are equivalent to biological type specimens (the actual individual of a species that is used to formally describe it and classify it).

Stratotypes occur where rocks are exposed naturally (cliff face, river bluff, canyon wall, etc.) or artificially (quarry wall, road/rail/trail/canal cut, tunnel). They are places with:

- **Visibility:** described rock layers remain visible and not totally or partially obscured
- **Accessibility:** the exposures at the stratotype remain reasonably accessible via road, trail, or other method
- **Unaltered Integrity:** the rock exposures are not altered significantly following description

24 Geologic Stratotypes in the NCR

A new NPS report details this geologic heritage and the 24 geologic stratotypes found in the National Capital Region (NCR) parks: Antietam 0; Catoctin 0; Chesapeake & Ohio Canal 14; George Washington Memorial Parkway 1; Harpers Ferry 3; Manassas 2; Monocacy 1; Prince William 2; Rock Creek 0; and Wolf Trap 0.

Authors of the report hope it enhances opportunities for public education, scientific research, and ensures the protection and consideration of geologic resources during park planning for infrastructure and construction projects.

Explore the full report, "National Park Service geologic type section inventory: National Capital Region Inventory & Monitoring Network" at <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2293865>.

Monarch Butterfly Status





Photo: Monarch butterflies feed on milkweed in Rock Creek Park's Military meadow.
Credit: John Burwell

Populations of monarch butterflies have dropped dramatically over the past two decades. And we should all be working together to support monarch populations and protect their habitat and food sources. That much, everyone can agree on.

However, while the monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) recently landed on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) "Red List of Threatened Species" as endangered, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that enforces the Endangered Species Act (ESA), has designated it as a [candidate](#) species that is not yet listed or proposed for listing. FWS encourages cooperative conservation efforts for candidate species but does not offer protection under the ESA.

Read more about monarchs at:

<https://www.fws.gov/initiative/pollinators/monarchs> or <https://www.fws.gov/species/monarch-danaus-plexippus>

November Resilient Forest Workshop

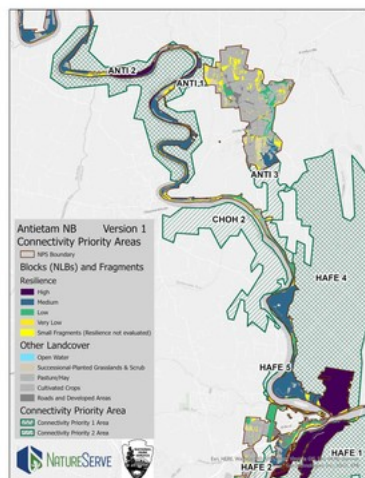
Join natural resource managers, ecologists from Inventory & Monitoring networks, and regional natural resource staff from the former Northeast and National Capital Regions (NER and NCR) for a training on resilient forest management. The **Resilient Forest Management Workshop**, hosted by NCR and NER regional natural resource and I&M staff, **will take place November 1-3** at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. Contact [Liz Matthews](#) for details.

Why Support Resilient Forests Now

In response to concerning long-term trends in tree regeneration throughout the tens of thousands of acres of forests in eastern national parks, the NCR and NER I&M networks are convening this workshop to encourage and advance management actions that promote forest health and to foster new or expanded collaborations among managers and regional staff across the regions.

The ecological challenges that inspired this workshop are explained in the NPS article series: [Long-Term Monitoring Reveals Northeastern Park Forests in Peril](#). Both the workshop and article series are part of the larger [Managing Resilient Forests Initiative](#).

Landscape Conservation Connections



In the National Capital Region (NCR), the National Park Service (NPS) protects functioning ecosystems that operate at scales larger than individual parks. Conservation corridors are important paths across public and nongovernmental lands that improve habitat and allow animals and plants to move in response to climate change and other stressors. To preserve and improve this important ecosystem function, parks need to coordinate and connect with neighbors and other agencies across boundaries.

Image: Map of priority connectivity areas for Antietam National Battlefield showing Natural Landscape Blocks (NLBs) and fragments. Credit: NPS/Nature Serve

The NCR Landscape Conservation Connections project aims to identify shared conservation priorities amongst national parks in the National Capital Region and the agencies, non-governmental organizations, and municipalities who manage park-

adjacent land in ecologically significant corridors. The project builds on outcomes from the Natural Resource Condition Assessment project known as RAMS, and the ongoing Natural Landscape Block identification project. [Read More](#)

Food for Thought: Nature and Language

In this 2017 Orion article, Robin Wall Kimmerer writes about how language can foster or blind us to our connection with the living world of animals and plants. Kimmerer is the author of the book "Braiding Sweetgrass" and Professor at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and

Forestry. <https://orionmagazine.org/article/speaking-of-nature/>

"[A] fundamental tenet of Western thinking—that humans alone are possessed of rights and all the rest of the living world exists for human use. Those whom my ancestors called relatives were renamed natural resources. In contrast to verb-based Potawatomi, the English language is made up primarily of nouns, somehow appropriate for a culture so obsessed with things."

Nature News, ICYMI

In Case You Missed It (ICYMI), here's a roundup of nature news and resources from the last quarter that may be of interest to those working with natural resources in the National Capital Region. This includes NPS press releases, new NPS web and social media content, and articles from InsideNPS (available to NPS only).

[See local national parks through the lens of youth](#) (NPS News Release: 8/12/22)

[NPS awards \\$820,612 to protect Civil War battlefields in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia](#) (Green & Gray Report: 8/8/2022)

[Rising Tides and Temperatures: I&M Documents Climate Change Effects](#) (InsideNPS: 8/5/2022)

[Greenbelt Park to remain closed following July 12 windstorm](#) (NPS News Release: 8/5/2022)

[Anacostia River park: D.C.'s first elevated park will link neighborhoods - The Washington Post](#) (Washington Post: 8/4/2022)

[NPS seeks comment on Environmental Assessment for the Peace Corps Commemorative Park](#) (NPS News Release: 8/1/2022)

[DOI Announces Start of Historic Rehabilitation of George Washington Memorial Parkway](#) (DOI News Release: 7/18/2022)

[New USGS report on how rapid sea-level rise will drive landward migration of coastal wetlands](#) (RESS Resource Roundup: 8/1/2022)

[NPS held public meeting on proposed rehabilitation of Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park seawalls](#) (NPS News Release: 7/12/2022)

[New BMP Mapping Resources Available for Chesapeake Bay Watershed Stormwater](#) (NCR Sharepoint: 7/11/2022)

[National Park Trust Adds The Last Missing Piece to Fort Washington Park in Maryland](#) (Park Trust: 7/11/2022)

[NPS finalizes plan for future of Harmony Hall](#) (NPS News Release: 7/8/2022)

[NPS C2 Announces New Webinar Series on Conservation Actions!](#) (InsideNPS: 7/7/2022)

[Antietam National Battlefield sought input on Environmental Assessment to improve park landscape management strategies](#) (NPS News Release: 7/7/2022)

[National Mall and Memorial Parks begins process to repair Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park seawalls](#) (NPS News Release: 6/29/2022)

[Invasive Plant Management Team FY 2021 Annual Report has been released](#) (InsideNPS: 6/29/2022)

[The Summer 2022 issue of Park Science magazine is now live!](#) (InsideNPS: 6/22/2022)

[2021 NPS Wilderness Report is out now](#) (InsideNPS: 6/29/2022)

[NPS invited public review to repair the sewer system at C&O Canal](#) (NPS News Release: 6/17/2022)

[Highly pathogenic avian influenza virus detected in ducklings at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool - National Mall and Memorial Parks](#) (NPS News Release: 6/8/2022)

[Peregrine falcon chicks successfully fledge at Harpers Ferry](#) (NPS News Release: 6/3/2022)

[Geospatial Newsletter May/June 2022](#) (InsideNPS)

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

16. Non-native Invasive Plant Removal at Kingman and Heritage Island. [Get details and register.](#) 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. An NPLD (National Public Lands Day) Event.

17. Non-native Invasive Plant Removal at Anacostia Park. [Get details and register.](#) 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. An NPLD Event.

21. Innovative Volunteer Weed Warrior Program. A connected conservation webinar. 3:00 pm ET.

24. National Public Lands Day (NPLD)

24. Weed Wrangle Event at Anacostia Park. [Get details and register.](#) 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. An NPLD Event.

24. Shoreline Clean Up & Invasive Pull at Piscataway Park. [Get details and register.](#) 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. An NPLD Event.

25. National Public Lands Day at Piscataway Park: Invasive Species Pull. [Get details and register.](#) 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.

OCTOBER

12. Doug Tallamy & Gary Tabor on "Think Globally, Act Locally". A connected conservation webinar. 3:00 pm ET.

NOVEMBER

1-3. Resilient Forest Management Workshop. Workshop for all Region 1 natural resource managers, regional staff, and I&M employees, focused on management strategies for promoting resilient forests. Hosted by NCR and NER regional natural resource and I&M staff. To be held at the National Conservation Training Center. Contact [Liz Matthews](#) for details.

DECEMBER

6-7. Human - Wildlife Interaction Workshop. Webinar from 12:00-3:00 pm both days. Human-wildlife interactions are a growing management challenge that requires strategic approaches influencing human and wildlife behavior. This workshop brings together NPS practitioners, researchers, managers, and responders to share strategies, lessons learned, and technical resources. [Registration link.](#)

The Natural Resource Quarterly provides updates on the status of natural resources and science in National Capital Region parks.

[NCR Natural Resources](#) | [Previous Issues](#) | [NCR Inventory & Monitoring](#)

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