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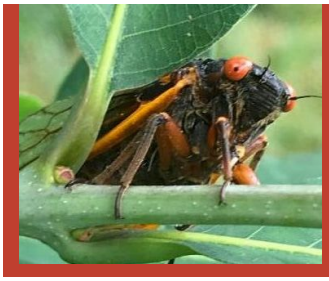
Natural Resource Quarterly | Summer 2021

Newsletter of Natural Resources in the National Capital Area



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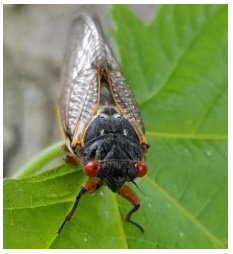
Forest Regeneration Update

It takes many years for small vulnerable seedlings to grow into large resilient saplings, and along the way they face many threats to their survival. In 2020, seedling numbers continued to show steady improvements at Catoctin Mountain Park, Monocacy National Battlefield, and Rock Creek Park. At Rock Creek, tree seedling numbers have almost tripled since deer management began, and at Catoctin Mountain Park, tree seedling numbers have increased 13-fold since the start of deer management.

Large deer populations also influence the species of trees that are able to persist. Deer will preferentially browse some species, like white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), while leaving behind those they find less palatable, like American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*, an understory tree species), or the invasive tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). This species selection preference can potentially change the structure of a forest and the habitat it provides for animals and other plants. [Read More]

[Photo: A young white ash (*Fraxinus americana*) seedling at Catoctin Mountain Park. Credit: NPS/Loncosky]

Brood X Cicadas are Here. What Can I Do?



- Enjoy watching the cicadas while they're here.
- Do not use insecticides since they will not control populations and may hurt other beneficial insects.
- Add cicada carcasses to your compost.
- Use the Cicada Safari app to help scientists track Brood X.

Learn more about Brood X periodical cicadas through this NPS Frequently Asked Questions article: [Read More]

[Photo: Brood X periodical cicada. Credit: NPS/Nortrup]

Ongoing Science in Parks Through the CESU

Science and research in parks takes many forms and involves many collaborators both inside and outside the NPS. Many are facilitated by agreements through the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CW CESU).

Here we describe ongoing projects in NCA parks, from studies of bees and bats to coyote scat and cyanobacteria. [Read More]

[Photo: A researcher at Prince William Forest Park holds an acoustic device being used to detect tricolored bats as part of the project, "Assessing Presence and Roosting Ecology of the White-nose Syndrome-Impacted Tricolored Bat at Prince William Forest Park". Credit: Sam Freeze]

NCR PRISM and Invasive Species

National Parks are engaged in a fight with invasive species across our area that threaten the very park resources we are obliged to protect. But because invaders don't recognize jurisdictional boundaries, even when a park succeeds in eradicating an invasive species, it can easily creep back over the park boundary from adjoining lands and re-invade. That's why parks need to work together with our partners, neighbors, and other federal and state entities to manage across boundaries. We can't do it alone.
That, in a nutshell, is why NCR PRISM (National Capital Region – Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) was created. To coordinate the cross-boundary fight against invasive species in D.C. and all surrounding counties. Still a relatively new effort, NCR-PRISM has already begun to operate. [Read More]

[**Photos. Above:** Invasive two-horned trapa plant (*Trapa bispinosa*). Not the same as the yummy water chestnut we like to eat. And different from *Trapa natans* by having reddish leaf undersides, reddish sepals, pink petals, and seeds with two horizontally opposed pseudo-horns. Common names are so confusing! Credit: USACE/Lynde Dodd]

ASL Video on Monarch Butterflies

A new video about monarch butterflies in American Sign Language (ASL) was recently created by Biological Science Technician Brittany Grouge and other staff at the National Mall and Memorial Parks. Grouge collaborated with Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Ron Popowski to describe these fascinating and beautiful creatures that are seen on the National Mall during their spring and fall migrations.

[Image: Screenshot from NPS monarch butterfly video. Credit: NPS.]

Nature News Round Up: ICYMI

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

They're heeeeeeeeerrrrreeee... Brood X cicadas have emerged in Rock Creek Park and are predicted to be visible (and heard) over the next four to six weeks in many eastern parks. (Green & Gray Report 5/17/2021)

National Park Service construction near Maryland Heights starts on May 17 (NPS News Release 5/14/2021)

Upcoming Webinar: Valuable Training Opportunity in Science and Community Engagement (InsideNPS: 5/10/2021)

DOI, USDA, the Department of Commerce, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality released a report outlining a locally led and voluntary nationwide conservation goal to conserve 30 percent of US lands and waters by 2030 as part of a vision for how the United States can work collaboratively to conserve and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife that support and sustain the nation. (Green & Gray Report 5/10/2021)

Virtual Training: Leveraging Partnerships for Resilient Coastal Infrastructure (InsideNPS: 5/5/2021)

National Parks in Maryland, Virginia and D.C. provide more than 44,000 meals of donated venison to neighbors (NPS News Release 5/5/2021)

New National Christmas Tree to be planted in President's Park this fall (NPS News Release 5/1/2021)

C2 spotlight: Wilderness in a Changing World (InsideNPS: 4/22/2021)

Preparing Parks for Change (InsideNPS: 4/22/2021)

C2 spotlight (4/22): Taking the Long View (InsideNPS: 4/22/2021)

C2 month spotlight (4/21): Sounds Know No Bounds (InsideNPS: 4/21/2021)

Just in time for National Park Week, the new NPS App is available for visitors to national parks across the country. Created by park rangers with visitors in mind, the NPS App gives the public up-to-date information about all 423 national parks in one easy-to-use app. (Green & Gray Report 4/19/2021)

Celebrate National Park Week and Connected Conservation! (InsideNPS: 4/16/2021)

Wildfire Resource Advisor Training Provided for Over 600 Interagency Participants (InsideNPS: 4/15/2021)

C2 month spotlight (4/14): Caltrans & NPS (SAMO) Retrofit Project Helps Wildlife Cross Highway 118 (InsideNPS: 4/14/2021)

C2 month spotlight (4/13): Dam Removal on White Clay Creek (InsideNPS: 4/13/2021)

Wildland firefighters protect nature and history in National Capital Area parks (InsideNPS: 4/13/2021)

EPA Announces Sustainability Symposium (May 2021) (Inside NPS: 4/13/2021)

Register for the Watershed Academy Webinar "Addressing & Managing Plastics Pollution" (InsideNPS: 4/13/2021)

C2 month spotlight (4/12): Critical Connections (InsideNPS: 4/12/2021)

C2 month spotlight (4/7): We're all connected - World Health Day (InsideNPS: 4/7/2021)

C2 month spotlight (4/6): Watchable Wildlife (InsideNPS: 4/6/2021)

C2 month spotlight (4/5): Measuring light pollution across a landscape (InsideNPS: 4/5/2021)

Seeking NPS Representatives for National Wildfire Coordinating Group Subcommittees (InsideNPS: 4/2/2021)

Construction to Begin on Rock Creek Trail Rehabilitation and Pedestrian Bridge Project (NPS News Release 3/30/2021)

National Park Service Releases $4.6 Million in Post-Wildfire Funding (InsideNPS: 3/29/2021)

New Report Available on Managed Relocation as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (InsideNPS 3/29/2021)

Chad Fisher Named National Park Service Chief of Wildland Fire (InsideNPS 3/27/2021)

National Park Service plans prescribed fire at Antietam National Battlefield (NPS News Release 3/22/2021)

Prescribed Fire Planned for Manassas National Battlefield Park (NPS News Release 3/5/2021)

National Park Service plans third prescribed fire at Monocacy National Battlefield (NPS News Release 3/5/2021)

National Park Service predicts cherry blossom peak bloom, invites visitors to experience virtually (NPS News Release 3/4/2021)

NRS Field Work in Your Park

During summer (June-August), programs from the office of Natural Resources and Science (NRS) begin field work and monitoring in parks.
For details of specific I&M locations to be visited, consult the I&M weekly field updates emailed out every Friday to your park's Chief of Resources.

Invasive Plant Management Team (IPMT) continues to control non-native invasive plants in NCA parks. In June, the team will focus on managing invasive annual and perennial grasses including *Microstegium vimineum* and *Oplismenus undalatifolius*.
The team will also do field assessments as part of the Site Prioritization Project on a bi-weekly basis, delineating management zones, assessing abundance of invasive plants, and capturing other data to inform management actions at NCA parks. If parks are interested in hosting a Weed Warrior training, please contact Alex Voznitza by NPS email.

I&M Amphibian Monitoring by USGS collaborators runs through late July, conditional on availability of habitat, at wetland and stream sites at Catoctin, C&O Canal, GW Parkway, Manassas, Monocacy, National Capital Parks - East, Prince William, and Rock Creek.

I&M Forest Bird Monitoring by the University of Delaware runs from May to July at 400+ forest sites in all NCRN I&M parks.

I&M Grassland Bird Monitoring by the University of Delaware runs from May to July at Antietam, Harpers Ferry, Manassas, and Monocacy.

I&M Fish Monitoring - runs through August at Prince William Forest Park. This year is the second of four years that will revisit a portion of the ~37 sites across the NCR where monitoring occurred 2007-2014 and where stream water quality is currently monitored. (Related macroinvertebrate monitoring occurs in early spring.)

I&M Forest Vegetation Monitoring runs through September at all I&M parks in NCA.

I&M Stream Water Monitoring continues on a bi-monthly basis at all NCRN I&M parks except C&O Canal.

[Photo: Water monitoring at Henson Creek. Credit: NPS]

Calendar

2021
JUNE
4-5. English ivy pull events at Melvin Hazen in Rock Creek Park, hosted by the Invasive Plant Management Team (IPMT) and Rock Creek Conservancy. Help celebrate IPMT's 20th Anniversary! Sign up on for June 4's 1st event: Noon to 3 PM or 2nd event: 3 PM - 5 PM OR June 5's 1st event: 10 AM to Noon or 2nd event: 1PM to 3 PM.

14-21. IRMA Site Outage. IRMA-hosted sites including Data Store, PUPS (Pesticide Use Proposal System), and RPRS (Research Permit and Reporting System) will be unavailable as the IRMA portal is migrated to the Reston Data Center. *PEPC should remain unaffected.*

JULY
TBD. Natural Resource Advisory Team (NAT) Meeting. Microsoft Teams. Contact Joe Calzarette by NPS email.

OCTOBER
13. Chesapeake Watershed CESU Annual Meeting. 10am - 12pm. See CW CESU website for details.

Submit your ideas for the next Natural Resource Quarterly newsletter.

The Natural Resource Quarterly provides updates on the status of natural resources and science in the parks of Region 1 - National Capital Area.

NCA Natural Resources | Previous Issues | NCR Inventory & Monitoring