

News in Brief

Data Management

In August, staff collected GPS and land-cover information at HOCU and in a 10 km buffer area around park holdings. The data will be used to create a land-use/land-cover GIS layer and to measure its accuracy.

Vegetation

In August staff attended a grassland monitoring meeting in Fort Collins, Colorado to discuss sampling methods to be used at three other networks. In addition we visited PERI, ARPO and HOSP as part of a reconnaissance trip to help establish reference frames for future vegetation monitoring. Sampling at PIPE, HOME and WICR is scheduled for September.

Invasive Plants

Dan Tenaglia, a network contractor, is currently conducting invasive plant monitoring in seven network parks: ARPO, GWCA, HOME, LIBO, PERI, TAPR, and WICR.

Rare Plants

PIPE staff discovered a single western prairie fringed orchid in a new location within the park this July.

White-tail Deer Monitoring

Staff continue work on a revised monitoring protocol including a narrative and SOP's.

Grassland Birds

Staff continue data entry and a database upgrade, both should be completed soon. We submitted an abstract outlining our analysis procedures for bird data to be presented at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in December.

Fish Community Monitoring

Heartland staff have completed fish sampling this summer at HOME, PIPE and TAPR, and will begin fall fish monitoring at OZAR. Staff continue to revise the fish protocol for OZAR and BUFF which should be completed by winter.

Aquatic Invertebrates

Staff have entered pilot invertebrate data for OZAR and BUFF into the database and began analyses. Protocol development continues.

"Tselik" — What a Lovely Sound!

Henslow's sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*), a small non-descript bird with a short, soft song has found homes in the HTLN parks. The species, an obligate to grasslands, inhabits both tallgrass prairies and eastern coastal salt marshes, but habitat loss has put it on the watch list of most bird conservation organizations. Both habitat types have declined significantly during the last century, and as a result, seven states and Canada have listed the species as endangered.

HTLN bird monitoring at both HOCU and TAPR have documented the species during breeding season. We recorded the species at HOCU in old field habitat within two separate units, Hopewell Mound Group and Seip Earthworks.

At TAPR we found individuals in an area that had not burned for two years prior to finding the birds there.

Management practices at HOCU and TAPR should improve conditions for Henslow's sparrow in the future. In the five management units at HOCU, managers allow natural succession of agricultural fields that will increase the old field habitat and the units' ability to attract breeding Henslow's sparrows. The recently implemented patch-burn-grazing regime at TAPR will improve Henslow's sparrow habitat on the preserve as well by creating a diverse mosaic of landscape, including standing litter with a duff layer, shrubs, and recently burned areas.

The spring breeding season is the best time to look for Henslow's sparrows although males may sing well into the

summer months. Look or listen for the birds in open grassland where some short shrubs grow. Small clumps of shrubs less than two meters in height provide perch sites on which males sing their characteristic soft, double syllable "tselik" or triple syllable "tsetselik". The Henslow's sparrow needs grass litter and duff for nesting, so look at sites that have not been burned in a few years. With some persistence you may find this species on your park as well. — D. Peitz

Got Monarchs?



Have you been noticing Monarch butterflies lately? Monarchs east of the Rocky Mountains migrate to the Sierra Madre mountains in central Mexico annually. Millions of butterflies from central and eastern North America funnel south and pass over the state of Texas. The migration continues until butterfly clouds sweep up into mountain top oyamel fir forests. Over-wintering sites are about 3000 meters above sea level on steep, southwest-facing slopes. Conditions usually remain cool and moist enough to lower metabolism and prevent desiccation of the butterflies.

Scientists tracked down the Monarch wintering sites in 1975. Until then, only local villagers knew the locations of the winter grounds in the Sierra Madre. Through tagging and monitoring by MonarchWatch volunteers and staff, population trends are assessed through the years. After over-wintering, the same migrating individuals head north with successive generations leap-frogging to the northern-most parts of their range.

The Weather Vane is published by the Heartland Network Inventory and Monitoring Program of the National Park Service. Visit www.nps.gov.

... protecting the habitat of our heritage



Cooperative Weed Management

Weeds, or exotic and invasive plants, have become a major problem in our parks, but they threaten outside the parks as well. Weed management has moved beyond the traditional interests of an agricultural or homeowner perspective to include public and private landscape restoration interests.

The Midwest Invasive Plant Network (MIPN), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to reducing the impact of invasive plants in the Midwest, conducts free workshops on “How to Start a Cooperative Weed Management Area” or CWMA. The workshops provide managers with an opportunity to think outside of the NPS box and to work with potential non-NPS partners in the control of exotic and invasive plants. The work-

shops are based on the draft “CWMA Cookbook: A Recipe for Success”, available online at the MIPN website (www.mipn.org).

Park units can benefit from involvement in a CWMA. Parks may gain access to non-federal matching funds through agency and not-for-profit partners with similar goals. Strong local partnerships contribute to community awareness and can garner legislative support for exotic species programs. The CWMA also improve management practices with partners discussing experiences using locally effective treatments. In some cases, a CWMA may result in adjacent land managers coordinating control and prevention efforts.

The CWMAAs organize under formal co-

operating agreements. The formality gains participant commitment, allows agencies to influence and work outside of their jurisdictional boundaries, and most importantly, allows efforts to be targeted and coordinated on a local level. The formal agreements also provide mechanisms for resource-sharing that are not generally available to NPS units.

MIPN plans to conduct more free workshops in the near future, check their website for dates and details. — *Gia Wagner*



Photo: Garlic Mustard, USDA Invasive Species, Jody Shimp, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Just Horse Sense

The state of Missouri listed portions of the Jacks Fork River, Ozark National Scenic Riverways (OZAR) as impaired under the Clean Water Act, because of high concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria.

NPS policy stipulates that parks with impaired waters will cooperate with the regulatory agency, in this case the state of Missouri, to improve water quality. The HTLN and OZAR have worked with the US Geological Survey (USGS) to identify the sources of high bacteria levels in Jacks Fork. The most recent USGS study identified large cross-country horseback trail riding events, popular in OZAR and the surrounding area, as the primary contributors to high fecal bacteria levels. Watercraft recreation activities did not correlate with high fecal

bacteria levels, but sewage and cattle were recognized as additional sources of bacteria.

The many horses participating in large cross-country trail events can deposit manure in the water directly as they traverse stream crossings and defecate, carry fecal



material on hooves, and/or disturb sediments and resuspend bacteria that has settled out of the water column. Manure can also enter streams indirectly when storm runoff picks up contaminants from animal manure and transports them to the nearest water body. Roads and trails with heavy horse traffic can contribute contaminants to the surface water in this way.

Identifying fecal bacteria sources provides OZAR and the state with information needed to craft procedures that could result in the reduction of fecal bacteria levels and eventually remove Jacks Fork from the impaired waters list.

Thanks to Victoria Grant and Mike Gossett for their assistance with this Focus on the Parks.

NPS photo, Jack E. Boucher, 1961

Another successful Annual Meeting

The HTLN staff, Technical Committee and Board of Directors attended HTLN Annual Meeting 2006 on the Missouri State campus in Springfield, MO. The well organized format consisted of reports and updates on monitoring projects and protocol development, workshops and a board meeting. With inventories complete and monitoring implemented, the roles of the Technical Committee and Annual Meeting will change. Therefore, the Technical Committee will recommend newly defined committee roles and responsibilities, and a format for regular meetings to the Board of Directors.



Congratulations Mike!

Mike DeBacker received the Regional Director's Award for his successes as coordinator of the HTLN. Congratulations to Mike for being nominated by the Technical Committee and selected by the Regional Director. (left to right: Mike DeBacker, David Mott, Meg Plona, Gary Sullivan, Victoria Grant, Sherry Middlemis-Brown, Dena Matteson, Rod Rovang)

More on the Web

Each park can submit research needs using their park profile on the Research Permit and Reporting System. Entering needs may draw the interest of researchers to your park. <https://science1.nature.nps.gov/research/ac/ResearchIndex>

More on Cooperative Weed Management Areas: http://www.weedcenter.org/weed_mgmt_areas/wma_overview.html; <http://www.mipn.org/calendar.html>

Monarch butterfly information at <http://www.monarchwatch.org>