Minnesota Plant Press

The Minnesota Native Plant Society Newsletter

www.mnnps.org

Volume 31 Number 2 **Spring 2012**

Monthly meetings

Thompson Park Center/Dakota Lodge
Thompson County Park
360 Butler Ave. E.,
West St. Paul, MN 55118

Programs

The Minnesota Native Plant Society meets the first Thursday in October, November, December, February, March, April, May, and June. Check at www.mnnps.org for more program information.

6 p.m. — Social period

7 – 9 p.m. — Program, Society business

May 3: "Wild Orchids of Minnesota," by Welby Smith, botanist, Minnesota DNR. **Plant-of-the-Month:** Least moonwort (*Botrychium tenebrosum*).

June 7: "Minnesota's State Prairie Plan: The Conservation of Minnesota's Most Threatened Major Habitat Type," by Steve Chaplin, The Nature Conservancy. **Plant-of-the-Month:** Whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*). **Spring Plant Sale: See article on page 2.**

Oct. 4: To be announced.

Asarum canadense* (wild ginger) *that Ken Arndt is potting for the June 7 native plant sale.

Carmen Converse receives lifetime membership award

Carmen Converse is the 2012 recipient of a lifetime membership in the Minnesota Native Plant Society. She received the award during the March Symposium. Following are the comments of award presenters Lee Pfannmuller, state planning coordinator, Audubon Minnesota; and Barbara Coffin, associate director of adult education programs, Bell Museum of Natural History.

Carmen's accomplishments in the field of natural history over the past few decades have been nothing short of astounding. Although her contributions precede her engagement and leadership with the Minnesota County Biological Survey, it is for the latter that she is best known. In 1987, this fledgling program started with a little over $100,000 and a couple of ecologists documenting native prairie communities in the Red River Valley.

But under her leadership, beginning in the early 1990s, the program has grown tremendously to include a staff of some of the best plant community ecologists, plant taxonomists and zoologists in the Upper Midwest. From a budget of just over $200,000 in the early 1990s, the annual budget is now nearly $1.5 million, supporting a diversity of field work, conservation efforts and educational products.

During her tenure:

- More than 19,000 records of rare species and native plant communities have been collected and entered in the Natural Heritage Information System;
- Map polygons for over 10,000 MCBS sites of Biodiversity Significance are publicly available;
- Species never previously known to occur in the state have been found;
- Maps depicting MCBS results are available to resource managers throughout the state;
- Numerous quality publications have and continue to be produced, including a *Guide to the Native Habitats of the St Croix River Valley and Anoka Sand Plain*, and the collection of three *Field Guides to the Native Communities of Minnesota.*

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In this issue

Welcome, new members

The Society gives a warm welcome to 39 new members who joined during the first quarter of 2012.

Listed alphabetically, they are:
Kathy Ahlers, Minneapolis;
Marilyn Andersen, Maplewood;
Barbara Coffin, Minneapolis;
Marcel Derosier, Arden Hills;
Stephanie Erlandson, Inver Grove Heights;
Don Farrar, Ames, Iowa;
Kelly Feyler, Hastings;
Tiffany Forner, Columbia Heights;
Ron Gamble, Dexter;
Bryan Harvey, Aitkin;
Rosanne Healy, St. Paul;
Margaret Hibberd, St. Paul;
Kirsten Howe, West St. Paul;
Melinda Kjarum, North Mankato;
Andy Kranz, Winona;
Lake Harriet Montessori, Minneapolis;
Gunda Luss, Minneapolis;
Meghan Manhatton, St. Paul;
Katie McCann, Plymouth;
Steven McKay, Burnsville;
Beverly McLaughlin, Isanti;
Sandra Nussbaum, Minneapolis;
Jon Peterson, North Mankato;
Tony Randazzo, Minneapolis;
Tony Reznicek, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Nancy M. Rose, Minneapolis;
Jessica and Eric Schultz, Plymouth;
Terry Serres, St. Paul;
Greg Silverman, Minneapolis;
Geri Sjoquist, Rosemount;
Katy Smith, Crookston;
Richard Stich, Remer;
Kim Thomas, Apple Valley;
Megan Ulrich, Renville;
Anita Volkenant, Montrose;
Barbara Walther, Hastings;
Tim Whitfield, St. Paul;
Robert Wolk, Minneapolis.

MNNPS has nine lifetime members

We thank our nine lifetime members for their support. In order, they are:
Jason Husveth, Scandia, 2008;
Pamela Marie Deerwood and John Arthur, Hopkins, 2009;
Daniel Jones, Northfield, 2011;
Stewart Corn, St. Paul, 2011;
Dean Doering and Lisa Scribner, 2011;
William E. Faber, Brainerd, 2012;
Anna Gerenday, Afton, 2012.

Annual plant sale is June 7

by Ken Arndt, plant sale chair.

The time to prepare for this year's MNNPS annual plant sale is now. The sale helps raise money for the Society and is a great opportunity to share native plants. The sale is held at the June meeting and follows the evening speaker's talk. It is held outside, on the patio area near the lodge entrance. We ask that all donated plants be dropped off by about 6 p.m. so our volunteers will have plenty of time for setup.

The sale is open to members and non-members. Those who either help with the sale or donate plants will get to have first pick. We ask that only native plants from Minnesota be included. Do not bring any cultivars (horticultural selection) of native plants (e.g. 'Goldstrum' Black-Eyed Susan). Plants should come from your own property, or private property with that owner's permission — not from public property. Bring your plants in typical nursery containers with adequate soil and water. Label them with both common and scientific names. Pricing will be done by the volunteers. We will have plant identification guides available prior to the sale to assist with labeling plants correctly.

Volunteers are needed to help with setting up and taking down the sales area and assisting folks with their plants. To volunteer, contact Ken Arndt at karndt@ccesinc.com.

MNNPS Board of Directors

President: Scott Milburn, scott.milburn@mnnps.org

Vice President: Shirley Mah Kooyman, shirley.mah.kooyman@mnnps.org

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Otto Gockman: board member, otto.gockman@mnnps.org

Elizabeth Heck: board member, webmaster, elizabeth.heck@mnnps.org

Daniel Jones: board member, daniel.jones@mnnps.org

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Mike Lynch: board member, mike.lynch@mnnps.org

Stephen G. Saupe: board member, stephen.saupe@mnnps.org

Field Trips: fieldtrips.mnnps@mnnps.org

Memberships: memberships.mnnps@mnnps.org

Historian-Archives: Roy Robison, historian-archives.mnnps@mnnps.org

Technical or membership inquiries: contact.mnnps@mnnps.org

***Minnesota Plant Press* editor: Gerry Drewry,** 651-463-8006; plantpress.mnnps@mnnps.org

Questions? Go to our website: www.mnnps.org

Carmen Converse

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And this is only the tip of the iceberg of Carmen's contributions. Statewide, there isn't a development initiative or conservation action that doesn't include some element of information from the County Biological Survey.

In the 1980s, integrating information on native plant communities or rare species in the everyday work of wildlife biologists, foresters, fisheries biologists or park resource managers was challenging at best. Today, it is a common practice because of the tireless efforts of Carmen.

Today, a field forester doesn't just classify a forest stand as aspen — he or she decides if it is a Central Dry-Mesic Oak Aspen Forest or a Central Dry Oak-Aspen Pine Woodland, and information on the species occurring in the subcanopy and herbaceous layer are used to help make that decision.

Today, a park resource manager decides if a trail that is planned through the park needs to be routed around a patch of rare native orchids.

Today, a wildlife manager designing a restoration effort on a shallow lake inquires about the native aquatic plants that occur in the lake. The County Biological Survey is at the heart of these changes.

Nearly 25 years after she began leadership of the County Biological Survey, Carmen's commitment to her staff and to the conservation of Minnesota's natural resources has been unwavering. It is a great honor to bestow this award on her today.

Friends School plant sale

The annual Friends School plant sale will be May 11 - 13 at the State Fair Grandstand. Online catalog: www.friendsschoolplantsale.com

New botanical nomenclature rules are now in effect

by Shirley Mah Kooyman, plant taxonomist and vice president of MNNPS.

When a new plant species is discovered and named, it is published with a scientific name in the binominal system of a genus and species along with a description of the plant written in Latin and a supporting "Type" specimen of the species described.

This practice began in 1753 with the publication of *Species Plantarum* by Carl Linnaeus. Plant name changes are not decided at random by botanists with little to do, as some people presume. Instead, there is an International Code for Botanical Nomenclature that outlines the rules for when a name is accepted or rejected.

Every six or seven years the International Botanical Congress meets to make decisions regarding plant names. The decisions are then published in a book for all to see. The earliest plant name, for a particular species that is validly published, is the accepted name unless other evidence indicates differently. Since 1908, descriptions had to be written in Latin as required by the International Code for Botanical Nomenclature. Now, all of that has been changed effective at the start of the year 2012.

In July 2011, members of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy and the International Botanical Congress met at the nomenclature conference in Melbourne, Australia. It was voted on and accepted that beginning January 1, 2012, plant descriptions no longer had to be written in Latin. Instead, the descriptions could be in English or Latin. It was also voted and approved that electronic publications would count as being "validly published." The scientific name concept (genus and species) would stay intact and not be changed by the new rule. The decision to make these changes came about as a method to facilitate a quicker way of getting new species described. Habitats are rapidly being destroyed, and species are becoming lost before they are officially acknowledged.

For additional information, the following references are cited.

Miller, James S. 2012. "Flora, Now in English," published in *The New York Times* – Jan. 22, 2012.

Palmer, Kim. 2012. "Botanical Bombshell," published in *StarTribune*, Home and Garden Section – March 7, 2012.

Walford, Charles. 2011. "Plants no longer to be given Latin-only name 'so they can be classified before they die out,'" published by *Mail Online* (http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2077542/Plants-longer-given-Latin-classified-die-out.html) – Dec. 22, 2011.

Wingate, Marty. 2011. "Why Plant Names Change," published by northwestgardennews.com – Feb. 11, 2011.

WaterFest 2012 is June 2 at Lake Phalen

Waterfest 2012 is a free Ramsey County family festival to celebrate clean lakes. Activies on land and on the water include hands-on learning about rain gardens, shorelines, watersheds and ecosystems. The event is sponsored by the watershed district, county, cities and other partners. For more the information, call event manager Debbie Meister (651-647-6816) or Louise Watson (651-792-7956), or visit the website at rwmwd.org.

Natural history of maple syrup

by Stephen G. Saupe, Biology Department, College of St. Benedict/ St. John's University, and a MNNPS board member. This is a summary of his March 1, 2012, presentation for the Society.

According to an Anishinabe legend, the Great Spirit made life easy by providing abundant game and crops, and even filling a maple tree with a thick sweet syrup which could be drunk by simply breaking off a branch and allowing it to drip into your mouth. Manabohzo was concerned that the people were spending too much time drinking syrup, so he collected some water from the river in a birch basket and poured it into the tops of the trees to thin out the syrup. He also decreed that the trees would only flow for a short time in the spring.

There are many truths in this tale. First, we learn that maple syrup is an ancient crop; in fact, it is one of the relatively few uniquely North American crops. The legend also rightfully attributes the discovery of syrup-making to the Native Americans and emphasizes that maple sap is dilute (about 2 percent sugar) and flows in the springtime when the day and night temperatures fluctuate above and below freezing, respectively.

The mechanism by which sap flows from a maple is not fully understood, but is related to temperature. During the cool night, gases contract in the stem. This reduces the pressure, sucking water from the roots. The water freezes inside hollow fiber cells, trapping gases in ice bubbles. The following day, as the temperature warms, the ice melts and the gases expand, which along with the gravitational pull of water in the stem, provides the pressure that pushes sap out of the taphole.

One flaw with this physical explanation for sap flow is that sucrose in the vessel sap shouldn't be required for sap flow — but it is! Recent research suggests that fibers, which surround the vessels, act like a membrane to allow for osmotic uptake of water and the concomitant development of pressure that further contributes to the stem pressures forcing sap out of the tree. Stay tuned for more advances in our understanding of sap flow physiology.

To make syrup, a hole (7/16th-inch or preferably 5/16th-inch) is drilled about two inches into the sap wood. Maples (*Acer*), including *A. saccharum, A. nigrum, A. negundo, A. saccharinum*, and *A. ginnala*, are among the few trees that produce sap in the spring. Apparently this is due to their perfect combination of air-filled fibers and fluid-filled vessels. Once tapped, a spile is inserted in the hole and a bucket, bag, or vacuum tube is attached to collect the sap. The dilute sap must then be concentrated into syrup.

The Native Americans originally dropped hot rocks into hollowed logs containing sap. Allowing sap to freeze and then removing the ice was likely also used, since when the water freezes it leaves behind a more concentrated sugar solution. These techniques gave way to boiling sap in batches in metal kettles or flat-bottom pans, and ultimately to the continuous-flow evaporators now in use by larger operations. Because cooking sap is so energy-intensive, various improvements, including blowers in the fire chamber, sap pre-heaters, and reverse osmosis, have evolved to conserve fuel and save time.

To determine when the syrup is ready to bottle, producers measure its density with a hydrometer, or sugar concentration with a refractometer. The temperature of the boiling syrup can also be used, since finished syrup boils at 7 degrees F above the boiling point of water. If the syrup is cooked too long, it tends to crystallize, but if it's not cooked long enough, then it may develop mold in storage. The syrup must be filtered before it is bottled, because during cooking a precipitate called sugar sand, or nitre, forms. This material is the result of the interaction of various trace components of the sap and is largely comprised of calcium salts, including calcium malate.

As the Native Americans have long known, maple sap is relatively dilute, approximately 2 percent sugar, whereas finished syrup is 66 percent. The Rule of 86 expresses the relationship of sugar concentration between maple syrup and sap. To determine how much sap is required to make a gallon of syrup, divide 86 by the sugar concentration of the sap.

Thus, it will take 43 gallons of sap with 2 percent sugar (= 86 / 2) to make a gallon of syrup. Or in other words, a producer must boil off 42 gallons of water to produce one gallon of syrup. This is the source of the commonly cited statistic that it takes approximately 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.

Although most maple sap is now used to make syrup, the Native

Americans and early settlers continued cooking the syrup to produce maple sugar because it was easier to transport and store.

The syrup grading system is currently in flux but will soon include four main grades available for sale to consumers: Golden, Amber, Dark, and Very Dark. They differ in color and flavor; a consumer should taste the various grades to see which he/she prefers. The quality of the syrup is a function of any microbial contamination of the sap before it was cooked, the biochemical constituents of the sap, and the length of time the sap was cooked.

No matter which grade of syrup you prefer, Robert Boyle was certainly correct when he wrote in 1663, the "juice that weeps out its incision, if it be permitted slowly to exhale away the excess moisture, doth congeal into a sweet and saccharine substance."

Prairie field trips

Joel Dunnette, a past MNNPS president, will lead three prairie field trips in May. The trips are listed below. For more information, contact him at jdunnette@gmail.com or call 507-269-7064.

Weaver Dunes: Saturday, May 12, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., northeast of Weaver, Wabasha County. See sand prairie flowers on rolling terrain.

Iron Horse Prairie: Wednesday, May 30, 6 p.m. until dusk, southeast of Hayfield, Dodge County. See spring flowers, including small white lady's slippers. Rough terrain.

Chester Woods, Tuesday, May 22, 7 p.m., an Olmsted County park west of Eyota**.** The trip is co-sponsored by Zumbro Valley Audubon Society. See restoration of bluff prairie, oak savanna.

President's column

by Scott Milburn

I decided to take a different approach in delivering my president's column. I have always enjoyed the mainstay sports columnist and Minnesota legend Sid Hartman. I often find he lacks cohesion in his ramblings, so I figured I would follow suit.

New board members

We will have two new additions to the board this June, Steve Eggers and John Arthur. Steve is returning to the board after last serving in the late 1980s. John Arthur is a longtime member and is ready to contribute. The board terms for both Elizabeth Heck and Michael Bourdaghs end in June. We thank them for their many contributions and look forward to their continued involvement as members of our Society.

New honorary member

I would also like to bring up our honorary lifetime membership award. Only 10 people have been awarded this in the 30-year history of the Society. The board was very pleased to bestow this honor on Carmen Converse. Her contributions have been many, and the Society has much to appreciate in regards to her efforts. It was great that Barb Coffin was able to present this award to Carmen at the Symposium this year.

Successful Symposium

The Symposium was well attended. We had a great line-up, and I thank each speaker. I would also like to thank everyone involved on the logistical side, including Shirley Mah Kooyman, Daniel Jones, Otto Gockman, Jeanne Schacht, Michael Bourdaghs, Erika Rowe, Mike Lynch, Cathy and Ron Huber, Mary Nolte, and Dorothy Paddock. In all, we had 157 registered, including 10 students.

Visit a SNA

This is a great year to document the early phenology. Maybe you have a gardening log at home, or you collect specimens for your herbarium repository of choice. I urge everyone to take the time to just observe. On that note, I would like to encourage everyone to visit a Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) this summer and report back to us and share your experience or photos.

Fiscally solvent

Our treasurer's report indicates that we are fiscally solvent. We are in a great position, and that extra money allows us more flexibility when it comes to symposium planning and other opportunities. We have had a number of requests in regards to taping presentations. That is something we would like to explore in the future.

May meeting

I would also like to promote the upcoming monthly meeting in May. Welby Smith, our state botanist, will be speaking about his newly revised *Orchids of Minnesota*. We have pre-ordered 160 copies to sell at the meeting, as well as having the opportunity to have the book signed by the author himself.

Lady Slipper Days

The two-day 2012 Lady Slipper Celebration features the arts, culture, nature and history of the lady's slipper orchid and the Lady Slipper Scenic Byway, Hwy. 39 from east of Cass Lake north to Blackduck, where the orchids grow in abundance.

Saturday, June 23, events will be headquartered in Blackduck, at the north end of the byway. They will include photo/viewing bus tours to see orchids and/or the old CCC Camp Rabideau. Sunday, June 24, the celebration moves south to the Norway Beach Visitors Center near Cass Lake. For additional information, contact Deborah Davis Hudak, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Plant Protection Division at 218-243-2058 or deborah.davis.hudak@state.mn.us

2012 field trips planned

by Ken Arndt

2012 will be another good year for a MNNPS field trip. Attending one of the field trips is a great way to see some of Minnesota's many different native plant communities, as well as meeting others who share a similar interest in native plants.

We have confirmed several trips for 2012, and they are open for registration. Additional trips will be added in the coming weeks. You can register for any of the field trips by visiting our website (www.mnnps.org) and going to the field trip page, or by attending one of our monthly meetings where sign-up sheets are available. Information for all of the field trips is posted on the website regularly as each trip is finalized.

Field trips are just one of the benefits of being a Society member. If you haven't already joined, now is the time, before the field trip you want to attend fills up. Most trips have a limited number of registrants due to the site-sensitive areas that are encountered, so registering early is encouraged. Following are MNNPS field trips planned so far for 2012.

Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area: Friday evening, May 18, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Join Mark Davis (professor of biology) and Mike Anderson (associate director for the Ordway Field Station) and two professional ecologists/botanists for an evening of hiking and plant identification. This unique field station is located on the bluffs of the Mississippi River in Inver Grove Heights. Participants will learn about the different plant communities found here, observe the many native plants of the area, and enjoy the great views of the Mississippi River.

Small White Lady's Slipper Orchid: Saturday, June 2, at Regal Meadows, near Regal, Minn. Join Steven Saupe (professor of biology at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University and a MNNPS board member) and a regional DNR plant ecologist to see the orchids in bloom. An alternate date of **May 19** is scheduled if the Small White Lady's Slipper Orchid is blooming early. This trip is full, but you may sign up for the waiting list.

Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve: Friday evening July 27, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Join field trip leader Barb Delaney (professional botanist and MNNPS member) for an evening hike to see Ten Sedges in Ten Meters. You will see more than just ten sedges as we hike through xeric dune crests, a sand prairie, wet meadow swales, a peaty wetland, oak savanna, and dry oak forest. Microhabitat diversity will be highlighted. There will even be Cedar Creek *Carex* Checklists for you. A highlight will be the opportunity to see a state endangered species in the sedge family, tall nut-rush (*Scleria triglomerata*), along with other rarities.

Ken Arndt took this photo of a small white lady's slipper (Cypripedium candidum) while on a field trip.

Iron Horse Prairie SNA: Saturday Aug. 25, Steve Eggers (senior ecologist for the St. Paul District Corps of Engineers) will lead participants on a hike into Southeast Minnesota's largest remaining contiguous mesic prairie. See this fantastic prairie in full color, and see rare plants like Sullivant's milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*), Indian plantain (*Arnoglossum atriplicifolium*), wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*), rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), and edible valerian (*Valeriana edulis* var. *ciliata*). This SNA is known as one of the finest mesic prairie remaining in this part of Minnesota.

Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area: Mid-June. Malcolm and Rosemary MacFarlane will lead this trip, which will be a *Botrychium* (Moonwort/Grape Fern) hunt. Watch the website for details.

Grand Rapids region: Late summer. Go with the DNR's John Almendinger and Midwest Natural Resources' Scott Milburn. Spend part of a day exploring different native plant communities in the region. Watch for more information.

If you or anyone you know is interested in leading a field trip or has suggestions as to where they would like to see a Society trip, e-mail me at karndt@ccesinc.com. We are always looking for additional field trip leaders and co-leaders to take us into the many fantastic parts of Minnesota and the region.

Treasurers' report

On March 31, 2012, the Society had $27,483.04 in assets. This included $18,462.09 in the checking account, $8,965.95 in CDs, and $55 cash. From Jan. 1 through March 31, income totaled $9,066.34; expenses were $6,002.73, for a net gain of $3,063.61. Dues totaled $2,964.20. Symposium income was $5,892; its expenses were $5,109.18.

Plant Lore

by Thor Kommedahl

What is wild geranium?

Wild geranium is *Geranium maculatum* in the geranium family—along with the introduced garden and houseplant geranium (*Pelargonium* sp.).

What do its names mean?

Geranium means crane (Greek *geranos)* and, according to Dioscorides, the fruit resembles the head of a crane after the petals fall off. This led to its other name, cranesbill. *Maculatum* means spotted and refers to the light blotches seen on older leaves.

What does the plant look like?

It is a perennial and overwinters as stout rhizomes covered with scars. Leaves are deeply five-parted and hairy; flowers are rose-purple to pale or violet purple with five petals and 10 stamens; flowers last until about June. The fruit is a capsule of five sections, each with one seed. On ripening, the capsules explode to shoot seeds several feet.

Where does the plant grow?

It is native in dry to moist woods in eastern counties of Minnesota. Plants often grow in clumps and go dormant in early summer.

Is it medicinal or poisonous?

Plants are rich in tannins. Rhizomes are astringent and can stop bleeding. Powdered roots were once applied to canker sores. Entire plants were boiled to make tea for diarrhea. Indians used it to treat venereal and other diseases. It was once listed in the *U.S. Pharmacopeia* and the *National Formulary* as a folk remedy. It is neither poisonous nor edible.

Has it any other values?

It is a good, woodsy-garden plant for spring flowers. Bees visit flowers; doves, quail, and deer feed on seeds.

Conservation Corner

by Beth Markhart (Nixon)

Long-term conservation requires passionate advocates. Typically, older, accomplished scientists and citizens who best articulate the argument for conservation will tell you about their childhood source of passion for conservation. If this is to continue to be the source of inspiration later in life, then opportunities for children to deeply connect their feelings with natural world experiences is an imperative now.

One the most prescient strategies for this is the through the Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) movement. Minnesota offers exciting news about NDD initiatives. The web news summarized here can inform you and hopefully inspire action.

The Will Steger Foundation has received the annual Environmental Initiative finalist award in environmental education for Minnesota's Changing Climate: Engaging Students in Environmental Stewardship. This program was developed with the belief that environmental stewardship and action begins with a local connection and sense of appreciation, or environmental sensitivity, towards the natural environment.

Don Shelby, an advocate for building environmental awareness, is speaking on NDD to church communities. NDD continues to break into the mainstream education infrastructure, and NDD curriculum is being taught to teachers through the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children. An AARP blogger offers avenues for readers to build bridges in nature between older and young persons. University of Minnesota initiatives include a webinar on natural places and youth development by Rebecca Meyer, an Extension educator.

Focusing on NDD is a long-term development strategy for the MNNPS. The Society has a role to play, perhaps by initiating field trips that bring our own young children, as well as other children, into the field.

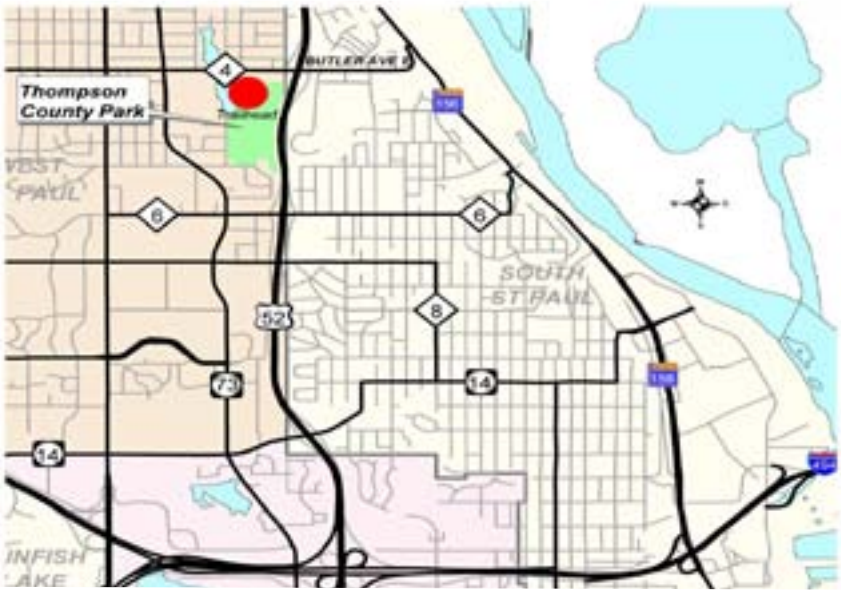
Wild geranium* (Geranium maculatum*) photo by Peter Dziuk.

Minnesota Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 20401
Bloomington, MN 55420

Spring 2012

Thompson County Park

360 Butler Ave. East, West St. Paul, MN 55118



Directions:
Take Highway 52 to the Butler Ave. E. exit in West St. Paul.
Go west on Butler 0.2 mile to Stassen Lane.
Go south on Stassen Lane to Thompson County Park.