

USDA Forest Service Botany in the News

Overview, Nursery Program, and Sand Point Restoration: Achieving a Shared Vision

Karen Anderson at the 13th annual North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) International Conference highlighted native plant and pollinator work by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) Natural Resource Department and the Zaagkii Wings and Seeds Partnership on October 22-24, 2013. Karen, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Natural Resources Department Plant and Greenhouse Technician, presented an ***Overview, Nursery Program, and Sand Point Restoration: Achieving a Shared Vision*** at the NAPPC event in Washington D.C. In addition to Karen, KBIC Natural Resource Department Wildlife Biologist Pamela Nankervis and Hatchery/Nursery Manager Evelyn Ravindran are involved in this innovative program. The KBIC is located in Baraga County in Michigan's western Upper Peninsula.

Karen initiated the discussion with an overview, highlighted the nursery program, and described Sand Point restoration and how KBIC has achieved a shared vision. She briefly discussed the area, species and habitats, and Ojibwa stewardship to the land and water. Early legislation enacted for our tribe maintained property rights and the right to hunt fish and gather on the ceded territory. Karen gave a timeline of authority assumption regarding policy supporting self-governance and the beginning of KBIC as a governing body managing its own affairs. The KBIC Natural Resources Department began in 1988 with only a fisheries biologist and technician. It has continued to grow with programs in wildlife, mining, environmental, water, botany, and most recently, air quality.

The Sand Point Restoration Project

The Sand Point restoration project (brownfield site) has been a huge success, but not without obstacles. KBIC formed partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Cedar Tree Institute and others who assisted with species selections for restoration, obtaining a greenhouse, greenhouse structural design, technical assistance, and much more. Together with partnerships, the identified need for work in restoration, native plants, and native pollinators continues at Sand Point.



Karen Anderson speaking at the 13th Annual NAPPC conference.



Baraga County, Michigan.



The KBIC Natural Resource Department secured Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds to restore a 33.6-acre brownfield site, Sand Point, which protects coastal wetlands near Baraga, Michigan. Sand Point is culturally important for KBIC as pow-wow grounds, a traditional healing clinic, wild rice beds, and campgrounds. Historically, the native people, as indicated by ancient burial grounds close by have long used Sand Point. Sand Point today has great potential for additional recreational activities, yet its resources suffer from vast tonnages of industrial copper mining sands derived from an early 20th century stamp mill. From 1901 to 1919, the Mass Mill disposed of roughly six billion pounds of stamp sands into Lake Superior four miles north of Sand Point. In 2006, with funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Environmental Protection Agency, KBIC began remediation by installing a 6 to 10 inch soil cap across the 33.6 acres of lakeshore and seeding to protect against erosion.



Restoration at Sand Point KBIC.

Project goals now progressing include the introduction of a diverse mix of native plants to the capped sands, thus increasing habitat for birds and other wildlife, and creating relief (soil mounds) in the topography of the landscape to lessen erosion potential and protect valuable coastal wetlands. An interpreted garden has also been installed with native plants grown at the KBIC Natural Resource Department greenhouse. This one-acre site garden has been designed as a plot for community education and to provide improved habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies. Fifteen tree species and shrubs were planted (320 per acre) in spring 2012 and approximately 150 large boulders were placed (5 per acre). Restoration initiatives on Sand point will ensure the soil cap is protected from wind and water erosion and that the area will continue to provide the next seven generations with a place of beauty and bounty.



Lake Superior shoreline restoration at Sand Point KBIC.

Wings and Seeds, The Zaagkii Project

The Tribal green house was built (2010) as part of the Zaagkii Project, a cooperative native plant and pollinator project with the U.S. Forest Service and the Cedar Tree Institute. Plants grown in the KBIC green house are used for planting at the Sand Point Restoration Site and myriad other locations throughout the Reservation. By 2011, approximately 30 species were grown and additional seed was collected in summer and fall for 2012 propagation. Twenty-five species were grown in the green house in winter/spring 2012 for planting at Sand Point. Additional information about these efforts can be seen on the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Natural Resource Department's web page about Sand Point (<http://nrd.kbic-nsn.gov/native-plants-sand-point.html>).

The partner project Zaagkii Wings and Seed has also enabled tribal youth to become involved with native plants and their pollinators by building butterfly houses and bee houses, and through the production and out planting of thousands of pollinator friendly native plants. “It’s the people that have all helped in achieving our shared vision! Youth crews, community service, courts, interns, and volunteers!”

Future plans for KBIC include a seasonal high tunnel to expand the plants program, seed orchard, and community gardens. For more information about these programs, visit the following websites:

- KBIC Natural Resources Department (<http://nrd.kbic-nsn.gov/>)
- KBIC Native Plants (<http://nrd.kbic-nsn.gov/native-plants.html>)
- Wings and Seeds, The Zaagkii Project (<http://wingsandseeds.org/>)

The North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC)

The American Farm Bureau Federation generously hosted the annual North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) Conference. NAPPC's mission is to encourage the health of resident and migratory pollinating animals in North America. NAPPC partners are from all over North American continent and beyond. NAPPC's goals are:



- Raise public awareness, education, and promote constructive dialog about pollinator importance to agriculture, ecosystem health, and food supplies.
- Encourage collaborative, working partnerships among participants and with federal and local entities thus strengthening the network of associated organizations working on behalf of pollinators.
- Promote conservation, protection, and restoration of pollinator habitat.
- Document and support scientific and economic research.
- Raise public awareness and promote constructive dialog about pollinators important to agriculture, ecosystem health and food supplies.

A key participant within NAPPC, the Pollinator Partnership (<http://www.pollinator.org/>) works to protect the health of managed and native pollinating animals vital to our North American ecosystems and agriculture. As one of its many projects, the Pollinator Partnership manages the NAPPC, a collaborative group of over 130 organizations and individuals that promote and implement a continent-wide Action Plan to encourage activities to protect the numbers and health of all pollinating animals. The NAPPC partners are thus are many and varied (see <http://pollinator.org/nappc/partners.htm>).