



# 2020

NATURAL AREAS ASSOCIATION  
YEAR END REVIEW

natural  
areas  
  
ASSOCIATION

The Natural Areas Association (NAA) is the only national, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the support and advancement of natural areas professionals, who protect the world's natural resources through science-based conservation, stewardship, and advocacy. NAA is a community who identify challenges, develop solutions, share critical findings, and adopt best practices in the conservation, preservation, and restoration of nature through networking and collaboration.

#### WHAT WE DO:

- Support, nurture, and advance the community of natural areas professionals.
- Advance natural areas conservation through access to the latest research findings, as well as emerging management techniques and conservation practices.
- Promote an understanding and appreciation of natural areas and the people who work to steward them.
- Advocate for legislation that supports and funds initiatives important to natural areas.
- Reflect the consensus of natural areas professionals through statements of policy on protection and management.

#### HOW WE DO IT:

- Foster a community of professionals that come together to find solutions to our shared challenges.
- Gather natural areas professionals virtually and in person to advance conservation and restoration science.
- Publish the *Natural Areas Journal*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal that is the leading voice in natural areas management, preservation, and restoration.
- Share the Natural Areas News e-newsletter, a quarterly, digital communication vehicle that profiles people, projects, and achievements in the preservation of natural areas and biodiversity.
- Invest in the next generation of natural areas managers through scholarships, programming, awards, networking, and career guidance.
- Establish and strengthen strategic partnerships with federal and state land managers, private conservation organizations, and universities to address the looming challenges to our natural areas through collaboration.

“ We who work in the natural areas preservation movement have a noble cause. Almost nobody before us had seen the need or been able to set aside natural areas. And those that follow will no longer have the chance. They will only be able to care for what we leave them. ”

-George B. Fell, founding member of NAA



MESSAGE FROM  
LISA SMITH,  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

2020 was quite a year! The Natural Areas Association (NAA) began 2020 planning for growth. The Board of Directors and staff were fully engaged in activities related to advancing natural areas initiatives, expanding networking and education programs to include new audiences, diversifying funding sources, and increasing opportunities to share sound conservation science with natural areas professionals. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic swept into our lives and changed us all.

As the nation's businesses shut their doors, people in need of safe spaces and a sense of connection opened theirs to embrace the great outdoors. Suddenly our nation's natural areas, parks, hiking trails, and other natural lands and waters presented an opportunity for exercise, relaxation, and a temporary escape from the isolation of our homes. While wonderful, the increased volume of visitors to natural areas also introduced new challenges for natural areas professionals. Novice hikers needed rescuing, sensitive vegetation got trampled, and parking lots overflowed, adding an increased responsibility for public safety. The concept of "leave no trace" got left behind, requiring natural areas professionals to quickly develop and implement COVID-19 best practices that would allow the public to engage with nature in a safe and responsible manner.

When COVID hit, NAA responded. Operations became fully remote, and the NAA board of directors formed a COVID Task Force to address the challenges of this unprecedented time and the emerging needs of the NAA community. We adjusted our budget to ensure good financial stewardship, and our staff went to work to ensure

that NAA would continue to fulfill its mission, despite the unprecedented circumstances. Given NAA's mission to support the community of natural areas professionals through science-based stewardship, it was more important than ever to stay in contact with natural areas professionals and to get important science into the hands of those who need it.

While some programs, such as in-person workshops, were rescheduled into 2021, NAA turned to technology to maintain connections in our community and to continue to share sound science. Through a webinar series featuring a wide variety of disciplines and focus areas from around the country, to redesigning our 47th Natural Areas Conference, *Sierra to Sagebrush: Integrating Management and Stewardship Across Landscapes*, in October from an in-person event to a fully virtual conference that featured 4 plenary sessions, 7 live symposia, and over 50 recorded scientific presentations.

I am truly proud of the way NAA's leadership, staff, and professional community responded to these historic times. Every crisis introduces innovation and opportunity. There is no doubt we have learned a lot this year, and I hope we never stop! As we reflect upon 2020, and we plan for 2021, there is no doubt that we will continue to build upon the tools, skills, and program options discovered this year to expand our ability to serve those who protect, manage, and restore our nation's natural areas.

  
Lisa Smith  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





The *Natural Areas Journal*, the flagship publication of NAA, was redesigned, reflecting a fresh, modern, and clean layout. Published in January, April, July, and October, the *Natural Areas Journal* is a peer-reviewed, scientific journal focused on natural areas management, preservation, and restoration

featuring papers from around the globe. Visit [www.naturalareas.org](http://www.naturalareas.org) to learn how you can become a digital subscriber.

The image below illustrates a portion of the many topics covered in the *Natural Areas Journal* during 2020.

invasive species Northern Great Plains native seed  
 prairie Ozark Border sampling design native plant restoration  
 forest ecology natural succession compositional change rangeland management  
 bird conservation prescribed fire tallgrass prairie native plant decline  
 assessment carbon sequestration  
 survival red cedar restoration forest management  
 conservation weed management endemic plant  
 aquatics pollination wildflowers temperate forest  
 headwater stream germination cues chaparral urbanization cliff ecosystems  
 nonnative plants microhabitat sampling bias seed viability grazers  
 indicator species natural heritage inventory natural ignitions  
 urban ecology fire management restoration ecology flowering plants



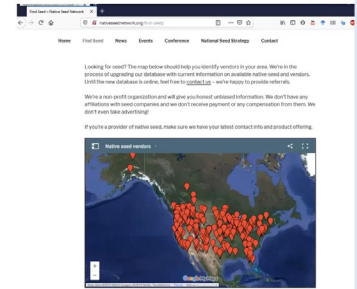
NAA planned to produce six webinars during 2020; however, we exceeded that goal, delivering a total of 11 opportunities to learn from our peers in connection to a variety of topics in natural areas conservation and restoration science.

Registration for NAA Webinars increased by 115% in 2020, with a 33% increase in live participation. Total viewership (live attendance plus YouTube views) totaled 6497.

New and on-line tools for seed selection – 5 examples

Native Seed Network (IAE)

- [nativeseednetwork.org](http://nativeseednetwork.org)
- Directory of native plant nurseries and producers
- Easy user interface
- Hosts National Native Seed Conference



- *Landscapes and Biodiversity of Penn’s Woods*
- *Natural Areas as Seeds for Restoration: The Arkansas Native Seed Program*
- *Woodland and Tallgrass Prairie Restoration Cases*
- *Assessing the Nation’s Native Seed Supply*
- *Invasive Species Control Using Goats*
- *Diversity is Magic: Emerging Issues in Selecting Appropriate Native Plants for Ecosystem Restoration*
- *Conserving the Jewels of the Night: What Natural Areas Professionals Can Do to Help Fireflies*
- *Unlocking Boundaries: Propagating Native Plants with Incarcerated Populations*
- *Buzzworthy: Conserving Bumble Bees in Our Natural Areas*
- *Aspen Ecology & Conservation: The Changing Landscape of a Keystone System*
- *Evaluating Native Seed Mixes for Post-Fire Seeding in the Great Basin*

## 2020 NATURAL AREAS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The 47th Natural Areas Conference, *Sierra to Sagebrush: Integrating Management and Stewardship Across Landscapes*, focused on the unique ecological and management dynamics that distinguish the Nevada-California borderlands. Originally planned to take place in Reno, NV, the COVID pandemic and an unprecedented national shutdown made gathering impossible. Thanks to the ingenuity of the NAA staff and the generosity of our supporters, the 2020 Natural Areas Conference was reinvented as a virtual experience, including plenary sessions and keynote speakers, 7 live symposia featuring more than 60 scientists and natural areas professionals, 11 poster presentations, networking and discussion opportunities, and more than 50 pre-recorded scientific presentations – with all content made available to conference registrants for a full-year! 383 participants registered from more than 35 states and Canada with an 84% participation rate, which is excellent compared to industry trends for remote conferences.

The conference was opened with a pre-recorded presentation by Vicki Christiansen, Chief, USDA, Forest Service on the vitally important topic of *Shared Stewardship: Meeting Shared Challenges Across Shared Landscapes*. Other featured sessions included, *Ecological Transformation & Ecological Novelty: Past,*

*Present, Future* by Stephen T. Jackson, Ph.D.; *The Fire Problem is a Cultural Problem* by Lenya Quinn-Davidson; and *Dam It: Partnering with Beavers to Achieve Restoration Goals* by Ben Goldfarb.

### SYMPOsia :

- Shared Stewardship: Working Together to Make Decisions and Take Actions on the Land
- Linking Research and Management to Improve Native Plan Restoration in the Great Basin
- The Quaking Aspen Challenge: Applied Conservation in Keystone Communities
- The Evolution of Forest Restoration Planning in the Central Sierra Nevada
- Managing Drought in California Ecosystems
- Modeling Social-Ecological Systems as part of the Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership
- Fire Restoration & Consequences for Ecosystem Management

*Did you miss the 2020 Natural Areas Virtual Conference? You can still register to access all content on the virtual platform. Email [info@naturalareas.org](mailto:info@naturalareas.org) for more information.*

Thank you to our conference supporters:



*Colcom Foundation*  
COMMITTED TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE





“

Collaboration  
allows us to  
know more  
than we are  
capable of  
knowing by  
ourselves.

*-Paul Solarz, Author & Educator.*

”

Scientific advances never occur in a vacuum. Scientists rely on communication, collaboration, and information sharing as much as they do scientific models and data analysis. In order to deal with the daunting challenges facing our natural areas, scientists and natural areas professionals need to work together now more than ever before. NAA's programs exist to foster local, state, regional, and national partnerships among federal and state government agencies, non-profit organizations, private industry, and academic institutions. COVID-19 meant that NAA needed to adapt, creating new opportunities for professionals to collaborate, foster information-sharing, and share important scientific findings.

The pandemic “stay-at-home” order halted in-person events, which impacted the programming planned for 2020. An organization that thrived on getting together and building community through shared stories, experiences, and interests was now unable to meet. In response, the NAA staff and board of directors went to work to figure out how we could continue to support the community of natural areas professionals in new ways. Given NAA's mission to support the community of natural areas professionals through science-based stewardship, it was more important than ever to get science into the hands of those who need it. As with any crisis, opportunities for innovation abounded, and the staff was able to acquire new skills in technology and develop new tools to reach natural areas professionals. Technology enabled NAA to reach new audiences, increase collaboration, and transcend physical distance, with the added benefit of reducing our carbon footprint.

While NAA looks forward to when we can meet in person once again, we are excited about our new models of service delivery, including our first virtual Natural Areas Conference; an expanded webinar series; and new opportunities for networking and information sharing, such as Stewards' Circles, recorded presentations, and virtual symposia that we will continue to use in the future. ►



**State Natural Areas Program (SNAP)** – An essential part of our DNA, NAA established the SNAP more than 40 years ago. State natural areas programs were among the first entities to protect natural areas in North America, and SNAP Roundtables create an opportunity to develop a cohesive community with a unified voice, where practitioners and academics could share information, techniques, methodologies, scientific approaches, and sometimes just good old moral support. SNAP Roundtables are open to everyone. 2021 SNAP events will be held in February, May, August, and November.

**Stewardship in Action (SIA) Workshops** - Stewardship in Action is a series of small-group field workshops designed to gather natural areas professionals to focus on a particular topic, region, species, or natural area to discuss efforts in ecological stewardship. SIA is a space where experts collaborate to consider effective strategies, persistent challenges, possible solutions, and sometimes an opportunity for moral support in the effort to conserve, restore, and protect places and species they love.

2020's SAC workshops have been rescheduled for 2021, when we will gather safely as conditions permit and then make a filmed version, utilizing a documentary style, available for those who are not able to attend due to travel restrictions, budget limitations or health concerns.

June 7 - 9, 2021 Virginia Workshop

July 13 – 15, 2021 Pennsylvania Workshop

August 10 – 12, 2021 Minnesota Workshop

Fall 2021 TBD

**Stewards' Circles** – First introduced as a part of the 2020 Natural Areas Virtual Conference during October 2020, Stewards' Circles are facilitated, yet informal opportunities for a deeper dive into subjects of mutual interest. A new program for 2021, participants are encouraged to share thoughts, challenges, and successes as they reflect on the presentations.






The board of directors' function is the sustainability and advancement of the vision, mission, and strategic direction of the Natural Areas Association. Even before COVID, the NAA Board of Directors had committed to a 2020 development initiative designed to prepare the organization for the future. Engaging an expert consultant in nonprofit governance, the board launched this effort with an in-person retreat, intended to advance each director's understanding of the role of a nonprofit board and to transition from a traditionally "working" board to a governing board. The goal is to evolve the roles and responsibilities of the board to focus on the vision and mission, strategic partnerships, and long-term financial viability of the organization. To that end, the directors engaged in a series of vital discussions to fortify NAA's foundation to better serve the organization over time. Through this process, the board identified missing areas of skills and expertise and the need to expand strategic partnerships. As a result, the board examined the roles and responsibilities of existing committees and developed some new committees and/or task forces based upon organizational needs.

One of the most pivotal committees established during this effort was the **NAA Science Advisory Committee** (SAC). As an organization that promotes science and informs practice, NAA must be on the cutting edge of science to remain relevant and valued. It is only by gathering the leading thinkers in land management and conservation that NAA can ensure programming that challenges the status quo, prepares for the future, and considers the overarching questions that guide natural areas research and programming. Protecting the land takes collaboration, and the NAA SAC is where leading natural areas experts work together.

To that end, the **NAA Science Advisory Committee** (SAC) includes some of North America's leading authorities on the conservation of biological diversity. Members of SAC advise the organization's Board of Directors and staff regarding emerging issues in connection to the identification, protection, restoration, study, public uses, and stewardship of natural areas. Their goal? To support natural areas professionals by keeping them informed regarding critical issues and new approaches to land-management problems that are making headway

faster than they can be address by any single entity. Beginning in 2021, the NAA community should expect to see position statements and whitepapers from this esteemed group that will increase access to information you need to stay ahead of the curve and to continue to inform the future of conservation, restoration, and preservation.



One of the most pivotal committees established during this effort was the NAA Science Advisory Committee.

## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Thomas Almendinger	Sonya Daw	Nicole Knudson	Susan Regier
Craig Anderson	Carol Dawson	Diane Larson	Julie Richburg
Roger Anderson	Charlene Duncan	Mike Leahy	Victor Riemenschneider
Barbara Andreas	Peter Dunwiddie	Peter Lewis	Kevin Robertson
Steven Apfelbaum	Don Faber-Langendoen	Mary Long	Larry Rosche
Matt Bahm	Jerry Franklin	Lydia Macauley	Donald Ruch
Joyce Bender	Stacey Frederick	Rebecca Marty	Hugh Safford
Charles Bier	Cecil Frost	Terrence McCloskey	Karen Shelly
Jonathan Binhammer	Cliff Germain	Jean McCollom	Elizabeth Sidamon-Eristoff
James Bissell	William Glass	Roger McCoy	Lisa Smith
Renee Boronka	Clyde Gosnell	Marc McCurry	Larry Smith
Darrell Bowman	Fran Harty	Don McFall	Paul Somers
Gwen Brewer	Cloyce Hedge	Eric Menges	Jack Stout
Rick Bryan	Randy Heidorn	Jeffrey Mengler	Jack Stout
Susan Buchler	Alice Heikens	Ccolleen Murray	Katie Surma
Gwen Burzycki	Joel Heinen	Rose Marie Muzika	Robert Tatina
Faith Campbell	Kelly Heintz	Jim Neal	John Taylor
Margaret Carreiro	Kim Herman	Gordon Nelson	Rick Thom
William Carromero	Terri Hogan	Charles Nilon	Steve Thomas
Peter Carson	Bill Holimon	John Noel	James Thorne
Lee Casebere	Bill Holimon	Dennis Nyberg	Ellery Troyer
Cliff Chapman	Evelyn Howell	Randy Nyboer	Mandy Tu
Constance Chapman	Jim Johannsen	Daniel Nydick	Kathryn and William Tuscano
Polly Cheney	Glenn Juday	Jennifer Ogle	Joe Walko
Clarence Coffey	Timothy Kelley	Ron Panzer	Jeffrey Ward
Patsy Cotterill	Jessica Kirby	George Phillips	Lee Webb
Robert Dana	Renee Kivikko	Barbara Plampin	Bruce Wenning
	Bill Kleiman	Raymond Poshkus	Ephraim Zimmerman
	Ryan Klopf		



## NAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Roger McCoy  
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation  
President, NAA Board of Directors

Darrell Bowman  
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission  
Vice President, NAA Board of Directors

Renee Boronka  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Secretary

Jim Johannsen  
Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, Illinois  
Treasurer

Alice Heikens  
Franklin College, Indiana  
Director

Bill Holimon  
Arkansas Natural Heritage  
Director

Ephraim Zimmerman  
Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program  
Director

Peter Dunwiddie  
University of Washington  
Director

Ryan Klopf  
Virginia Natural Heritage Program  
Director

Dr. Matt Bahm  
Institute for Applied Technology, Oregon  
Director

Jim Neal  
Caddo Lake Institute, Texas  
Director

Kelly Heintz  
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Washington  
Director

Stacey Frederick  
California Fire Science Consortium  
Director

## LIST BOARD LIAISON

William Carromero  
USDA Forest Service Liaison

Terri Hogan  
National Park Service Liaison

Peggy Olwell  
Bureau of Land Management Liaison

Dr. Michelle Reilly  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## NAA STAFF

Lisa Smith  
Executive Director

Amy Wills  
Operations and Membership Manager

Moira McGinty Klos  
Outreach & Communications Manager

Macey Bates  
Operations and Administrative Assistant



## CONTACT US

Gifts to NAA will support those who are on the front lines of protecting our natural areas, preserving biodiversity, and ensuring that all species survive for generations to come. Please add your voice, because nature cannot speak for itself.

### **Join/Renew**

Becoming a member is the easiest way to support our mission – and to benefit from all we offer.

### **Invest**

Your gift to NAA supports programming like workshops, webinars, and the *Natural Areas Journal*.

### **For more information on how to support NAA:**

naturalareas.org  
info@naturalareas.org  
724-995-8466  
PO Box 594, Ligonier, PA 15658

