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# Kleinstuck Preserve Biologist's Project

## Miss Fuller, Dr. Bartoo Head Committee To Improve, Restore 'In-Town' Nature Area

By LOIS WELCH

Gazette Staff Writer

Two petite Western Michigan University biologists are at work on a dream; a dream that seems to be clouded time after time with thoughts of vandalism, lack of interest and lack of money.

The dream of Miss Ann V. Fuller and Dr. Harriet Bartoo is a 48 acre plot of tree and brush-filled land called Kleinstuck Preserve located in the southwest area of the city between Oakland Drive and Stearns Avenue.

Named after the late Mrs. Carolyn Hubbard Kleinstueck who in 1922 donated the spot for a botanical garden and wild life preserve, the area looks today much like it did when the deed was drawn up—perhaps it is a bit worse for the wear.

Of course in that 42 years some improvements have been attempted . . . trails have been cleared and leveled, only to be littered with trash, paper and beer cans and end up as roadways for motorcycles . . . markers have been erected twice this spring to inform strollers of their surroundings, only to be smashed twice by vandals . . . an area marked state gardens has been cleared and planting has begun, only to be stymied by lack of water necessary to keep seedlings alive.

Miss Fuller, tells an almost pathetic story of constant attempts to change what is beginning to be a community eye sore into a showplace for students, nature lovers and the public.

The job of administering Kleinstuck was inherited by Miss Fuller in 1949. In the original deed, Mrs. Kleinstueck gave the land to the state board of

education for use as "a botanical garden and for the study of biology." It is also in the minutes that Mrs. Kleinstueck requested that a board be formed consisting of a member from WMU (at that time a college), Kalamazoo College and Central High School. Through the years such a board has had sporadic existence but each committee, says Miss Fuller, has ultimately ceased to function through the futility of planning any program when there are no funds.

Some confusion seems to exist among the colleges and schools as to who 'owns' or has the responsibility for the upkeep of the area while some confusion exists among area residents concerning the spelling of the Preserve's name. According to reliable sources, either spelling, the original 'Kleinstueck' or the anglecized 'Kleinstuck', is correct.

In the beginning Kleinstuck Preserve, was over run with students and other local volunteers who planted trees and shrubs, groomed existing foliage, tagged and identified growths along the nature trails and laid out camping sites. But the beginning enthusiasm cooled during the war years and Kleinstuck suffered.

The biggest project for the beautification of Kleinstuck Preserve is one which must lie dormant for the winter. It entails a strip of land (number 19 on the illustrated diagram) about 600 feet long which will be planted with flowers and trees representing the 50 states. Each state is allotted approximately 20 feet of space in which the state flower and tree will be planted as well as other native foliage.

This past summer Dr. Bartoo, Miss Fuller, and various volunteers from girl and boy scout troops launched the big job. Logs were cut and laid to form path boundaries and sample plantings were made in the areas designated for Wisconsin and Alabama. Even though intentions are good and a few hands willing, there is the problem of plant survival from lack of water and lack of volunteers or caretakers to prevent destruction of the new seedlings by vandals.

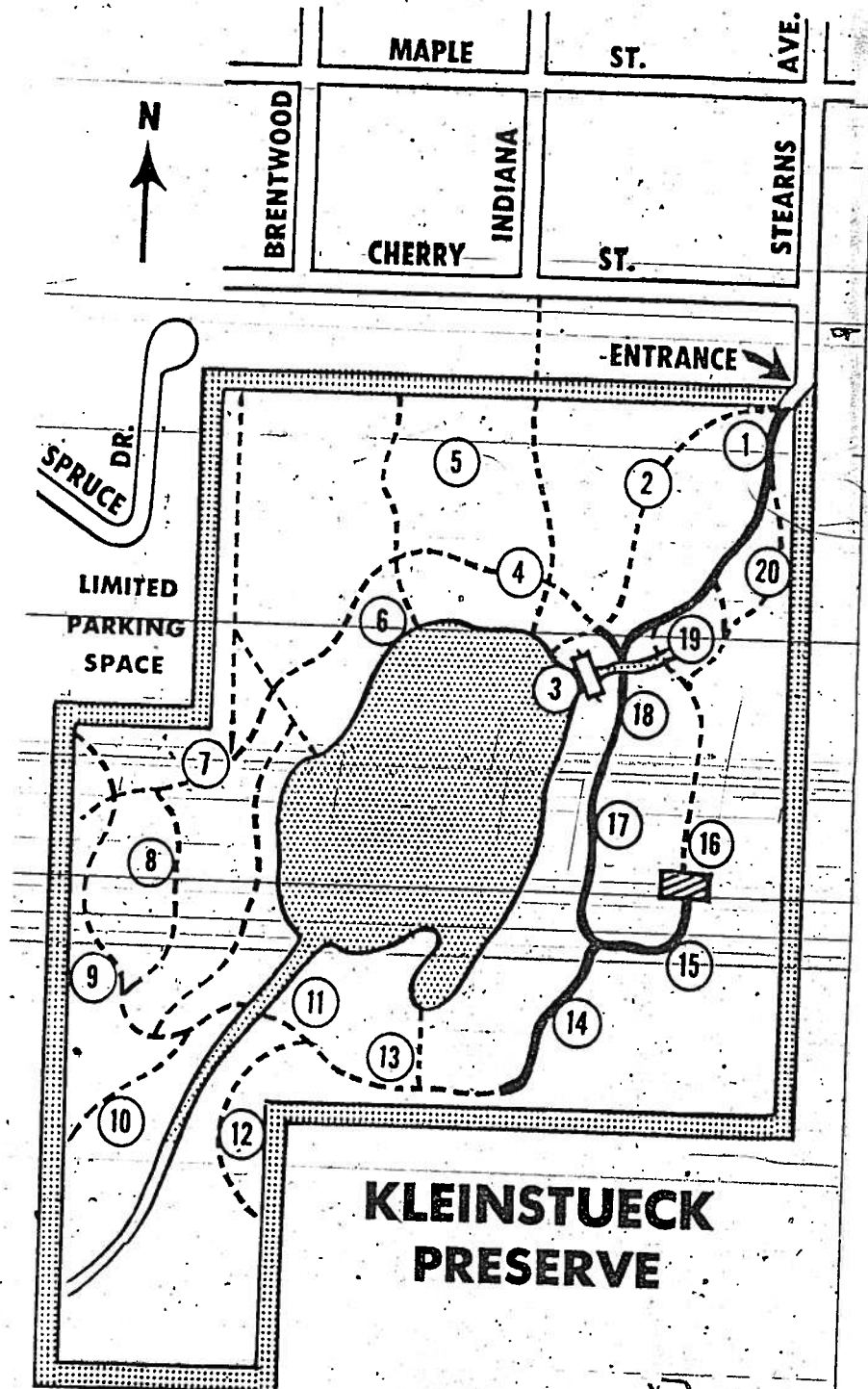
Fire is a constant threat to any constructive work in Kleinstuck. No smoking signs were placed throughout the preserve this past summer, but only after a fire destroyed a sizable chunk of trees and brush near the Stearns Avenue entrance. The fire, on May 30, was put out by the crew of one fire truck with the help of a number of area residents.

Fire hydrants are located around the outlying areas of the Preserve, said Lieutenant Richard Wright of the Kalamazoo Fire Department, and water is available. However, he said, the problem lies with man power. Some of the hydrants are a block or more from entrances (as is the hydrant located at Stearns Avenue and Cherry Street) and while hose will reach into the Preserve from the source of water supply, more men than are available would be needed to control the heavy hose and so other trucks would have to be called in.

In response to a letter from Dr. James W. Miller, President of WMU, who in 1962 expressed

an interest in a program for the "continued use and possible expanded use" of the Preserve, Miss Fuller and Dr. Bartoo interviewed interested persons in the city schools near Kleinstuck, the WMU training school and school of education, the soil conservation service and the Kalamazoo Nature Center. They came up with a three part program for the preserve which they submitted to Dr. Miller.

Among those interviewed was Dr. H. Lewis Batts Jr., president and executive director of the Nature Center. He said at that time; "The Kalamazoo Nature Center plans to participate in teacher-training programs of colleges and universities. Kleinstuck Preserve, situated so close to several public schools and to WMU's own Campus School, seems to be an ideal outdoor classroom for this planned program. The Preserve is an unusually good demonstration area for use in such a program and the KNC would be pleased to cooperate in any way that it can."



## KLEINSTUECK PRESERVE

TWENTY POINTS of interest as well as posed plantings are shown in the above diagram. In numerical order they are as follows:

(1) Stearns Avenue entrance where plans are being made for a suitable sign, attractive plantings, and better steps to the approach. (2) Evergreen woodlands planted on Arbor Day, 1927. (3) Marsh over-look to be filled in to make a natural amphitheater, an approach to the marsh meadow of ferns, poplars, willows and assorted plants. (4) Dry sandy slope where juniper trees are being planted. Also in evidence are thorny shrubs with berries, spider wort and scouring rush. (5) Hillside plantings to be maintained by students at Hillcrest Elementary School. Seeds grown in classroom will be planted along path from playground to main trail along marsh. (6) Marsh path to show open water (when pond is filled or fills naturally), cattails, sedges. (7) Bald Cypress, only one in the area of this size, located at Spruce Drive entrance. (8) Abandoned apple orchard. (9) Gully wash, result of serious erosion. Good place for conservation practice by planting rapid growing trees and vines to hold soil. (10) White pine plantation, another place marred by erosion. (11) Stream leading to marsh meadow which is now a bare road path. (12)-(13) Deciduous woodland, mostly oak trees. (14) Beech-Maple area, suggest enhancing area with spring plants. (15) Path to Girl Scout camp. (16) Girl Scout summer camp site. (17) Deciduous woodland, largely oak and cherry trees. (18) Wild ginger. (19) State gardens. (20) Fern and club moss hillside, plantings done by members of WMU botany classes.