



The *Chinquapin*

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The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

FACEBOOK

If you haven't already, please check us out on our Royal Oak Nature Society Facebook page. Photos related to Cummingston, Tenhave and the Arboretum can be found on it. If you want, you can post your own nature photos. All of the publicity about the coyotes in Tenhave during the spring of 2010 began from photos of them posted on our Facebook page. If you want to start a discussion, you can do that also.



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****PLEASE NOTE****

Our June speaker program **will be held** at the **Senior/Community Center** and not at the Middle School. See p.3 for details.

Teaching Children Environmental Education

By Chris Ethridge

Spring is here with summer lurking around the corner. Spring always brings signs of new life sprouting throughout Tenhave Woods and Cummingston Park. In early Spring, the robins and chickadees returned from their winter homes to start a new family. Chipmunks were awoken from their winter slumber and were busy finding food to fill their empty bellies. Trout lilies and skunk cabbage nudged up through the ground, the first bit of green to be found amongst a still grey forest.

There are also signs of new life in the Royal Oak Nature Society. The Society has long wanted to make inroads with the Royal Oak School District to offer outdoor education programming as an enhancement to the curriculum offered by the schools. The Society has been involved in some programming, most notably Nature Nights at several of the Royal Oak public elementary schools. However, the Society desires to offer more curriculum specific programming for the schools. Several schools throughout southeast Michigan have already integrated their local nature center as part of the school

curriculum and every student's education. With the proximity of Tenhave Woods to several of the Royal Oak schools and several willing Royal Oak Nature Society volunteers to assist in planning and presenting the programming, the necessary ingredients were in place to begin planting the seeds of the Royal Oak Nature Society's children's programming.

At the end of 2009, I joined the Nature



A student discovering what can be found inside a dead tree

(Continued on page 2)

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Society and became the new Education Director. I have past experience in presenting outdoor education programming to children while working for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as a naturalist at Holly Recreation Area and Seven Lakes State Park and also as a naturalist at Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve in Rochester Hills. With the assistance and guidance of the Nature Society, Bob Muller and I began working with a local homeschooler group to plan and present education programming tailored specifically to the 7-12 year old kids in the homeschooler group. The Society has also begun to form relationships with some of the Royal Oak schools. In the June of 2010, Bob Muller and Jimmy Kipps presented a pond life study program in Tenhave Woods for Adams Elementary on their last day of school. In October, 2010, Bob Muller and I did a "Trees and Seeds" program for homeschoolers in Tenhave. The main focus was on Michigan trees function in a Michigan ecosystem. The children were shown how to identify some Michigan trees, had an opportunity to explore the woods and participated in an activity where they acted out different parts of a tree. The program lasted about an hour.

In January, 2011, I did an Owl Hoot program for homeschoolers at Tenhave. I talked about Michigan Owls and their unique adaptations, examined owl pellets to determine what they had for lunch and then hiked into woods and attempted to call in owls with prerecorded owl calls.

At the end of February, I presented a program to around 400 kids at Addams Elementary. The program was about using the five senses as tools for observing wildlife. Program was part of a "Read-a-thon kick-off" and it lasted about 20 minutes

Word has gotten out and the Nature Society is receiving inquiries from several groups in the area from preschooler groups to the Boys and Girls Club. The education program continues to grow and evolve as programming is tweaked and improved based upon audience reaction. Outdoor education programming can include just about any aspect of the outdoors. From owl hoots to insect hunts, night hikes to predator-prey games, the programming is only limited by one's imagination. The Royal Oak Nature Society is excited to see this programming growing. If you are interested in finding out more about this or how your children or grandchildren could become involved, please contact us.

Fall 2010 Eagle Scout Project

On Saturday, November 13, Steve Claucherty from Troop 1601 First Methodist Church of Royal Oak launched his Eagle Scout project. The project's goals were to reline some of Tenhave Woods' trails and make improvements around Dragonfly Pond.

With plenty of volunteer help, parts of two trails were relined. One trail was a section of the Sandbar Trail beginning near the Lexington entrance and ending at the intersection where the Sassafras Trail first crosses the Sandbar Trail. A large pile of logs that were lying in the park near a neighbor's fence were used for the relining. The other relining project was on the Sassafras Trail. Months earlier, a large Cherry tree and a large Sassafras tree fell across the trail in nearly the same spot. Those trees were cut up and were used to line parts of that trail near where those trees had fallen.

The troop made and installed a sign next to the park "exit only" turnstile that is adjacent to the soccer fields. The sign indicates where the nearest Tenhave entrance (Lexington) is located. The City originally put up a sign showing where the entrances are, but awhile back the sign somehow disappeared.

The last part of the project focused around Dragonfly Pond. Members of the Eagle Scout project built a bench and placed it on the peninsula that juts into the pond. The bench was positioned so one can sit and watch birds feeding off of the feeder located across the pond.

Work was also done to remove phragmites, buckthorn, and cottonwood trees that were growing near the pond. Phragmites is an invasive plant that grows and spreads

very quickly and can reach heights of 20 feet. It needed to be eliminated so it doesn't take over the area surrounding the pond. Buckthorn's growth and prolific seed production makes this plant an aggressive invader that can form dense thickets and displace native understory flora. If the Cottonwood trees were allowed to continue growing, they would eventually create a canopy and block sunlight from reaching the pond.

On this particular day, Dragonfly Pond was dry, but muddy. This was the first time the pond has dried up since the Nature Society restored it six years ago. We were never sure before what the maximum depth of the pond was, but now through observation, we estimated it to be around five feet.

Steve chose the Nature Society to do his project because he wanted to help to improve something that the whole community could enjoy and because he has always been a big nature person. He knew he wanted to do some kind of outside work for his project, and working with the Nature Society gave him the opportunity to do this. The most difficult part of the project for him was planning it.

The project began around 9 am and finished up about 2 pm. There were 35 volunteers helping with the project. The total number of volunteer hours was a little over 150 on project day, plus 25 hours beforehand working on the entrance sign and constructing the bench. Steve said "In his opinion, things couldn't have gone any better on the actual day of the project."

**ALL SPEAKER PROGRAMS AND NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.
PRE-REGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED**

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

*June's general meeting/speaker programs will be held at the **Senior/Community Center** (3500 Marais- north of 13 Mile Rd between Crooks and Main). At our monthly **Wednesday** meetings from September to June, we present speaker programs that are usually slide shows focusing on various natural history topics. If you watch nature programs on PBS or the Discovery Channel, this is better because you can meet with the speakers afterwards and ask questions. The general meeting begins around **7:25 pm**, with the speaker program following several minutes later.*

"Nature Society Year in Review" is being held on **June 1st**. This year, our June program **will be held at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center** (3500 Marais) instead of at the Middle School. We will talk about what has been going on with the Nature Society, Cumming-

ston Park, Tenhave Woods and our future arboretum in Worden Park East. A photo show will depict some of those activities. We will finish off the evening by talking about some things we are planning to do in the future.

A THANK YOU TO OUR 2010/11 SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Emily Bachleda
Kimberly Belton
Brandon Cirillo
Laurine Cybulski
Nicki Dekruif
Don and Diane Diehl
Pat Dwyer
Ron and Ruth Frazier
Glantz Family
Laura Gogola
Kathleen Hawthorne

Nigel and Anita Heap
Mitzi Hoffman
Jeanne Hutko
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Ray and Vivienne Kell
Shelly, Scott and Charlie Kemp
Jack Kerby
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Alice Marotti
Gloria Mayer
Joanne and Elmer Morehouse
Abra Quintero
Nigel and Anita Heap
Janice Reichel
Bill and Pearl Richardson
Jim and Laura Rogers
Caryle Spence
Michelle Watson
Emily Welch

LAST OF OUR NATURE SOCIETY T-SHIRTS

We first started selling our Nature Society t-shirts way back in the spring of 2006. We purchased 100 shirts because that was the minimum buy. For a while, we were selling a lot of shirts for \$12 each. As the number of shirts sold annually began to decrease, we started lowering the selling price. After nearly five years of being in the t-shirt business, we have finally whittled our inventory down to five medium size t-shirts! At \$4 each, it would be hard to find a better bargain with the current price being only a few cents above our original purchase cost. These medium sized shirts would make a good gift, especially for a child.

All we are looking for now is to basically get back what we paid for them. So if you are interested, they can be purchased at our speaker programs, by phoning us at 248-246-3380 and leaving a message or sending an e-mail to naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us to make purchase arrangements.



NATURE WALKS

There is at least one walk per month with more per month added during the spring wildflower and fall color seasons. An emphasis is put on understanding the different forest types found in our parks. Further information is given on individual plant and animal species, also the geology and human history of the area. Wearing boots while in the parks is recommended in the winter and spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer.

CUMMINGSTON PARK: Park and meet at Leafdale and Torquay

TENHAVE WOODS: Park in lot at Marais and Lexington Blvd. and meet at the Lexington entrance (300 feet east of parking lot).

“Late Spring Nature Walk” is being held on Saturday, **June 11th, 10:00 am at Tenhave Woods**. Join us and see what is happening in the woods. during the late spring and beginning of summer.

“Hummingbirds and Butterflies” is being held at the Royal Oak Nature Society **Arboretum** on Wednesday, **July 13th**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. Meet at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais) parking lot. Walk through the arboretum with its director, John DeLisle, on an interpretive tour featuring butterflies and hummingbirds and their host and nectar plants in the Oak Openings, Backyard Habitat, and Rain Garden. Some host relationship we may see are Ruby-throated Hummingbirds on three Lobelia species, Orioles getting nectar

from Turtlehead blossoms, Giant Swallowtail butterflies on Prickly Ash, Fritillaries on Black-eyed Susans and Violets, and Monarchs on Swamp Milkweed and Culvers Root.

“Late-Summer Prairie Wildflowers” is being held at the Royal Oak Nature Society **Arboretum** on Wednesday, **August 10th**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. Meet at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais) parking lot. Join arboretum director John DeLisle to observe the meadow areas of the Oak Openings Plant Community Garden in full bloom. We will see Asters, Blazing Stars, Cup Plant, Ironweed, Joe-Pyes, Coreopsis, Obedient Plant, Vervain, four Sunflower species, and more.

Looking For Dream Cruise Volunteers

The Woodward Dream Cruise is only a few months away. It is time answer our call and sign up to volunteer to help us with parking at Gunn Dyer Park on Saturday, August 20, 2011. We start our parking duties around 8 am and finish up around 7 pm. Shifts are only 2 1/2 to 3 hours long.

Our main responsibility is to collect parking fees and direct people to open parking spots. It can get extremely busy in the early afternoon, so, we could use all of the help that we can get. When your shift is over, you can keep your car parked at Gunn Dyer Park and walk on over to the Dream Cruise. It is only a block away.

If you volunteer for us at Dream Cruise, you are invited to our annual pre-Dream Cruise picnic. It will

take place on the evening before the actual Dream Cruise between 6 to and 8:30 pm. Everyone brings a dish to share and whatever they want to drink. The Nature Society supplies the burgers. This is a pleasant way to sit back and enjoy the pre-Dream Cruise atmosphere.

While we are there, we collect money from people who park their cars at Gunn Dyer.

If you have some free time on the 20th and would like to give us a helping hand, please give Ted Vickers a call at 248-549-5366 or e-mail him at naturesciety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us.



Nature Nights for 2011

After only doing one nature night last year, we went back to our norm by doing two of them again this year. The first one was held at Keller Elementary (January 28) and the second one was at Addams Elementary (February 25). Addams was the last of the Royal Oak's public elementary schools to play host to a nature night. The total number of children attending both nature nights was 135.

The Nature Society wants to thank Jami Savino from Keller and Rose Merten from Addams for coordinating their nature night's with us. Without their help, we would not have been able to put these programs together.

A special thanks goes out to all of our 2011 exhibitors: Nancy Vickers-Crafts; Bob Muller-Tree Rings and Skulls/Skins; Dena Serrato-Seed Planting; Jimmy Kipps-Insects; Kristine Hill-Birds; Leo Long and Philip Kukulski -North American Native Fish; Edi Sonntag-Reptiles, Amanda Felk-Bats; Don Drife-Owl Pellets, John Topor-Fossils and all of their helpers.

The photo on the right shows children dissecting owl pellets at our Keller Nature Night this year. These pellets contain undigested material which shows what these particular owls had for dinner. We have only been dissecting owl pellets since 2009 and it has already become a popular activity with the children..

If you know of someone who has a nature collection or display and might be interested participating in an upcoming nature night, please have them contact us.



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Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

Please make check out to: **Royal Oak Nature Society**
 MEMO: Membership

Mail completed form & check to:
Royal Oak Nature Society
 1600 N. Campbell Rd.
 Royal Oak, MI 48067

Names (individual/household members): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

1 Year Membership (September-August)

- General (free)
- Associate (\$5)
- Supporting (\$10 & up)
- Patron (\$50 & up)

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

Please contact us if you would like to become actively involved with one or more of our teams:

Stewardship: Organizes maintenance, protection and improvements at Cummington Nature Area, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum in Worden Park East which will in turn enhance the overall park experience in those areas.

Communications: Publicizes organizational activities to the general membership and public through various mediums and performs any other forms of communications required by the board.

Education: Provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

Fundraising: Is responsible for the fund-raising efforts of the Nature Society, including the coordinating and organizing of the Annual Spring Fundraiser.

Programming: Is responsible for setting up the speaker programs, workshops and all of the nature programs within Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum.

Ways and Means: Investigates means of grant solicitation and then follows through accordingly.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Don Drife (248-528-0479)

Vice President and Arboretum Stewardship:
John DeLisle (248-672-7611)

Treasurer and Ways and Means: Helen Cost (248-549-9423)

Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers (248-549-5366)

Tenhave Woods Stewardship: Dena Serrato (248-542-2820)

Communication: Ted Vickers (248-549-5366)

Education: Chris Ethridge (248 229-9335)

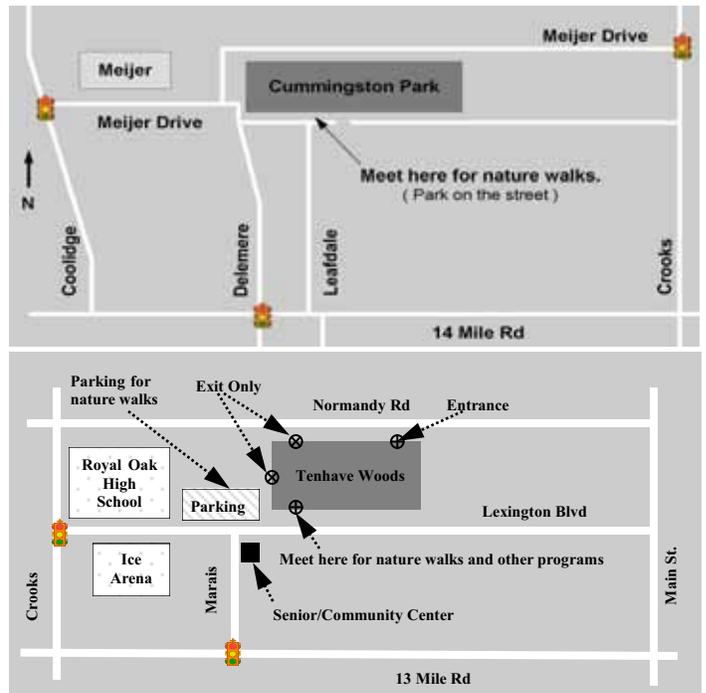
Program: Bob Muller (248-398-0195)

Newsletter: Ted Vickers

Engineer: Richard Stoll

Our Nature Parks and Senior/Community Center

Traffic Light



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park trail maps, please go to our web site (listed below under our tree logo), link on to "Park Locations" and then "Map for park trail locations"

The Royal Oak Nature Society is a nonprofit education and stewardship group working within the city of Royal Oak's two nature parks, Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park. We are also in the process of creating an arboretum in Worden Park East. Our mission is to foster awareness and usage of these three areas. We accomplish this by providing stewardship for the continuing improvement and maintenance of them plus we offer a wide range of natural history educational programs to the community.

The Royal Oak Nature Society
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www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature



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