



THE Chinquapin

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WINTER 2004

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

PAST DUE MEMBERSHIP

Beginning with the 2005 Spring Edition of the Royal Oak Nature Society's newsletter, "The *Chinquapin*", membership dues for the 2004/2005 season must be paid in order to have the newsletter mailed to you.

Those who choose not to continue as members are still welcome to come to our monthly speaker programs as well as our nature walks. Those programs and walks are, and always will be, free to anyone who enjoys learning about nature.

The Royal Oak Nature Society is asking for a minimum \$5 per year membership donation for an individual or family. A donation of \$10 or more will make you a supporting member. Membership coverage begins in September and ends the following year in August. Your contribution will help to cover the cost of printing and mailing *The Chinquapin*. In addition, it will also assist to fund educational programs.

In order to become or to continue being a Nature Society member, please fill out the membership form that can be found on pg. 5. Donations are tax deductible.

Invasive Weed Removal Program Begins

Volunteer stewards tackle weeds in Tenhave Woods BY DENA SERRATO

Members of the Nature Society Beautification group have made good progress in the past year in the war against the non-native weeds that are invading our nature parks. We gathered in Tenhave Woods in the autumn of 2003 and looked for weeds that are known to be especially invasive in woodland habitats in Michigan. Late autumn is a great time to look for many of these weeds because they hang on to their leaves long after the native plant leaves have dropped. Extensive areas of one of these weeds, garlic mustard, were found growing around the park perimeter, along some of the trails, and around the big oak tree that fell a few years back.

This past May we held our first invasive weed stewardship day in Tenhave Woods. Carol Jarvie and Jan Wheelock joined me to pull as much of the garlic mustard that we could around the fallen oak tree. We chose the area around the fallen oak because we don't want the garlic mustard to interfere with the natural plant succession that occurs in a forest after a large tree falls. We filled six large garbage bags with the plants. We also removed some patches that were just getting established in the interior of the park. It was a good start, but we really only put a small dent in the large population of garlic mustard. Studies have shown that if garlic mustard is left to grow in a woodland, it could wipe

out the spring wildflowers there within ten years. We will be having garlic mustard removal days for many years to come, and will need many volunteers stewards to help with the effort.



Garlic mustard

Our plans for the remainder of 2004 include conducting a weed survey of Cummington Park, and enlisting Boy Scouts to help us cut down buckthorn in Tenhave Woods. We invite you to join us in caring for our two beautiful nature parks by volunteering for one of our weed removal workdays. It's very rewarding to participate in the preservation and restoration of natural areas, especially ones that are right here in our own community. It's also a great way to learn more about the native plants and wildlife that make the parks their home. If you are interested in volunteering, you can call me at 248-542-2820.

Royal Oak Nature Parks Insect Survey

BY TED VICKERS

Bob Muller has known Robert Lawshe for many years, as they both use to be Royal Oak Boy Scout troop leaders. Robert has recently taken up collecting insects as a hobby. Bob has been spearheading surveys for the past several years, so, when he asked Robert if he would do an insect study in Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park, Robert agreed.

Four dates were originally set up for this past summer, two in each park. As it turned out, only three surveys were completed. They were all done on Fridays with the first one being conducted on June 18th in Tenhave Woods and the other two on July 2nd and September 3rd in Cummington Park.

Robert along with Hugh Campbell began their setup about a half hour before it got dark. Hugh, who lives in Livonia, has been an insect collector for well over 30 years and has been teaching Robert the ropes for the past year.

The setup included a white sheet hung over a rope tied between two trees and a generator that powered a mercury vapor lamp. When the lamp was turned on, it lit up the sheet, which in turn began attracting the bugs (see accompanying photo). A majority of the visitors during this survey were leafhoppers (small bugs), beetles and moths.

With the temperatures in the 70's & moderate humidity, there



Robert Lawshe attracts insects with a mercury vapor lamp and a white sheet hung over a rope tied between two trees.

was quite a bit of activity throughout the evening, but not nearly as much when Hugh does his collecting down in West Virginia.

Because the evenings are usually warmer and more humid down there, there would be evenings where the entire sheet would be totally covered with insects.

The insect collection device used was a jar containing an ethyl acetate soaked (nail polish remover also works) cloth. With the cap removed, the jar opening was placed over the insect, trapping it up against the sheet. The cap was placed back on and after a couple of minutes, the container was

ready to be used again.

The net shown in the photo was used if the moths didn't get close enough to the sheet to be captured with the jar. The collection process would continue until about one o'clock in the morning, at which point they would call it a night.

The hard part begins after the collecting season is over. It takes most of the winter to identify all of the bugs and get them mounted.

When this project is completed, Robert will give the Nature Society a report of what was found and probably a presentation showing some of the insects that were captured.

GRANT STATUS

BY HELEN COST

Our proposal, "Quickstad and Worden Park Improvements" was re-submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in April of this year. It is one of 150 applications that will be considered in the year 2004. We were

asked for further clarification in August, with a subsequent deadline of September 30, 2004. We were able to meet the deadline with several more points to improve our position. Final DNR recommendations on grant awards will be made in late Fall 2004.

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Winter Speaker Programs

“Following the Armenian Vipers, Adventures with a Herpetologist”

Dec. 1st * Andy Snider, Curator of Reptiles at the Detroit Zoo, talked to us last in 2001 on what the Zoo was doing to save the reptiles of the world. Now he is back to tell us about one of those projects. In June of this year, he initiated a multi-year radiotelemetry study of Armenian vipers in the mountains of Armenia. His talk will focus on this research, introduce you to the plants and other herpetofauna of the region.

“What is the Clinton River Watershed and Why Should I Care?”

Jan. 5th * Have you ever wondered where all the rain and melting snow goes? Even though the ghost river of Royal Oak, Red Run, is long gone, we are part of the 760 square miles that are drained by the Clinton River. The watershed contains the 80-mile Clinton River with over 1,000-miles of streams feeding it as well as 1.4 million people living in it. Join Heather Van Den Berg, Education Director for the Clinton River Watershed Council, as she shares information on current Clinton River activities, its tributaries and Lake St. Clair. Learn about current and historic problems and ways for everyone to get involved in being part of our solution to water quality concerns. For more information visit

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

General Meeting with Speaker Programs

Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. – Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais)

Date	Program
Dec. 1st	<i>“Following the Armenian Vipers, Adventures with a Herpetologist”</i>
Jan. 5th	<i>“What is the Clinton River Watershed and Why Should I Care?”</i>
Feb. 2nd	<i>“The Rain Forest of Belize”</i>

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location
Nov. 13th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park
Dec. 4th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park
Jan. 15th	Saturday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhav Woods
Feb. 5th	Saturday	2:00 p.m.	Cummingston Park

Walk Descriptions

Nov. 13: Come and see the last of the fall color and check out our new trails that have just been added to the nature study area.

Dec. 4: Two years after the removal of the ground-covering grape vines, the meadow has rebounded. Come and explore the meadow and learn about the profusion of plants that have appeared as well as the birds they are attracting.

Jan. 15: Join us at a new time as the Nature Society will take a look at the trees of Tenhave Woods when they are not hidden by the leaves. For those interested, an hour tree identification classroom session will be offered at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center at 1:00 p.m. Then if you come on the walk, you can test out your new skills. **The workshop is limited to 15 people** so register early. Either call or e-mail our naturalist, **Bob Muller**, at **248-398-0195** or **michiganfish@wideopenwest.com**. This will also be a great time to look for our winter birds, while on our walk.

Feb. 5: On another Saturday afternoon nature walk, we will see if the pattern of plants can be used as a way of seeing the old Arcona glacial beach. Join in and help us mark the beech trees with surveyor tape to find the answer. Will this make a feature that is over 14,000 years old visible to us? We will also take a look at winter birds in the meadow.

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The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has also made available, a 50/50 cost-sharing assistance program for private landowners of forests and woodlots who are interested in developing a Forest Stewardship Plan. The main purpose of a Forest Stewardship Plan is to set long term objectives for the parks along with the opportunity to be eligible for state and federal cost-share programs. Nature Society member, Dena Serrato, wrote a recommendation that the Nature Society and the city of Royal Oak should consider participation in the Forest Stewardship Program.

With the City and Nature Society’s approval, the first step was to send in a Forest Stewardship Grant Application to the Michigan DNR. That was done in September. If approved, a Stewardship Assessment Form for both Tenhave Woods and Cummingston Park will need to be filled out along with the writing of management plans for each park by a DNR Certified Plan Writer. After the plan is written, the City and Nature Society can then apply for a grant to request reimbursement of 50% of the cost of the plan.

“The Rain Forest of Belize”

Feb. 2nd * Kathy Thomas, an Assistant Naturalist at Independence Oak’s Lewis Wint Nature Center and Bill Thomas, the Supervising interpreter at the Wolcott Mills Metro Park, have taken several trips to Belize. Their slide show on Belize will give you a look at the great Central America rain forest. Natural history of the rain forest will be the main feature, with a look at the animals and plants of the area. They will take a look at the culture of Belize along with a touch of what the Mayans have left behind. Last season, the Thomas’s gave us a beautiful show on their photo safari to Africa. We are sure this presentation will be equally informative.

Royal Oak’s Wild Side

BY BOB MULLER

Cummingston Park and Tenhave Woods

Cummingston Park has some interesting things going on. Back in the fall of 2002, Eagle Scouts while working on their trail building project, cut out a great deal of the grapevines that had filled the meadow.

What had been a meadow in the 1970’s became a massive carpet of grapevines three feet deep in places. There was almost nothing else visible there but the vines. As they were removed, a few plants were found to still be around; red osier dogwood being the biggest discovery. We wondered what seeds were still in the ground, only waiting for a little sunshine again to make them grow.

In the summer of 2003 many plants sprung up. Most were weeds of European origins and a tremendous amount of garlic mustard.

This past summer, the growth in the meadow has surprised everyone. Most

of the growth is still non-native plants, but it has changed significantly from last year. The bull thistle is over 7 feet high and attracting lots of birds.

Burdock is in profusion and along with the bull thistle, they are making it almost impossible to walk the trail.

We will have to regularly cut the trail next summer to keep the area open. One native is back in force. We have lots of goldenrod, and the asters can’t be too far behind. The bird feeder has been moved into the edge of the meadow. This will be a great place for birding this winter.

The down side is that the grape vines are also growing back. We will need a group of volunteers next spring to help push them back so we can watch the meadow re-develop.

Escape the developed world, take a breath, feel the stress fade away and take a walk in the woods. Check out Royal Oak’s wild side.

The Purr-fectly Packed Backpack

Get your child or grandchild excited about going on a winter nature walk in Cummingston or Tenhave. You may not want to mention the nature walk until a couple of days before you go. You can start looking through picture books that feature animals you might encounter on your walk. Don’t promise a sighting, however; you never know for sure what you’ll see or not see along the way.

Cummingston and Tenhave have the easiest trails for little legs: short, flat routes but it is always good to be prepared when on a nature walk with your child/grandchild.

It’s a good idea to have an

extra pair of shoes, socks and clothes to leave in the car – a wet nature walker can get grumpy on the ride home.

Dress warmly and here you’ll find a list of everything you’ll need in your backpack:

1. Plenty of water.
2. Snacks. Consider whole-wheat breadsticks, apples, pears, dried fruits, graham crackers, or bran muffins.
3. Trash bags to carry your trash out (no littering!)
4. First-aid kit
5. Cell phone, turned off
6. Rain gear
7. Camera, to capture the fun time you’ll have!

—COMPLIED BY ANN WILLIAMS

Dream Cruise Fundraiser

The Royal Oak Nature Society was in charge of working one of the city’s parking lots during the Woodward 2004 Dream Cruise. We had several volunteers that collected the parking fee and directed parking at the temporary parking lot set up at Gunn Dyer Park (Chester Rd & Hampton Blvd). It turned out to be a very nice fundraiser for us, netting about \$600!

Thank you very much to those members that came out and helped, we appreciate it very much. We will be repeating this fundraiser again, so keep it

in mind when Dream Cruise comes around next year.

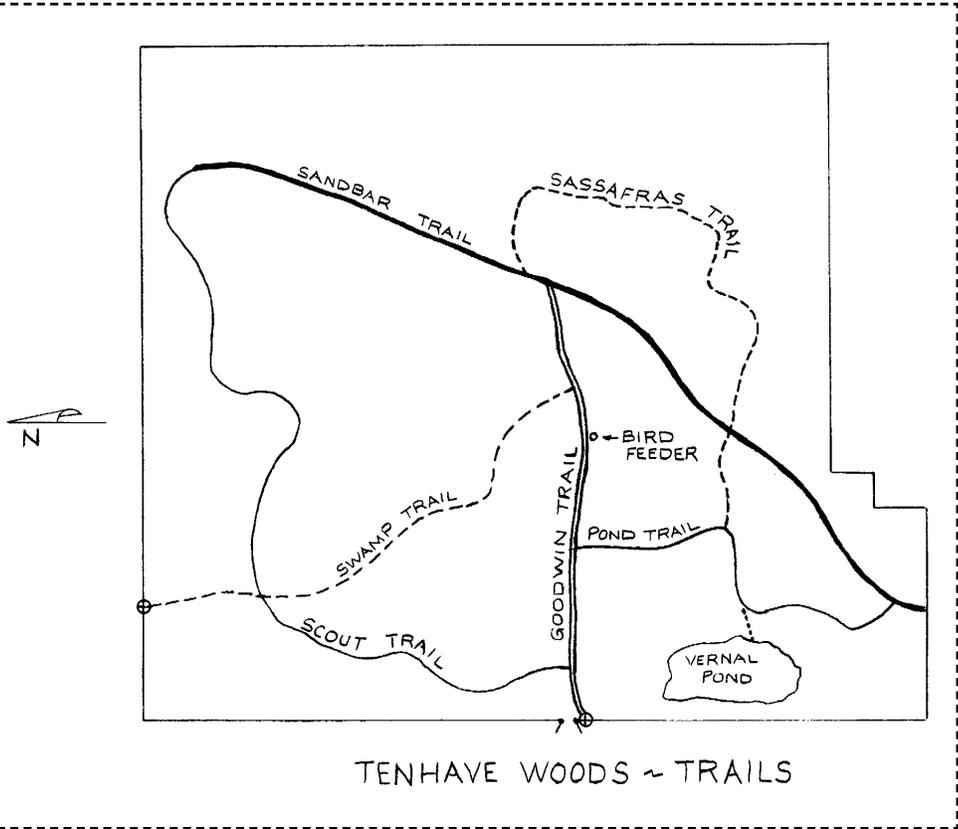


A heron sighted in the Woodward & Normandy area at the end of Sept. was checking out a small pond in a backyard for fish. It stayed on the roof for about 10 to 15 minutes before moving on.

Tenhave Trail Improvements BY BOB MULLER

On Saturday, October 2, Boy Scout Troop 1627 spent several hours correcting a part of the old trail system where for several hundred feet, the Swamp and Scout trails shared the same path. The two trails now cross each other.

They also built a new section of the pond trail, from the vernal pond, south to where it meets the Sandbar Trail. The names of the Scout and Swamp trail have been switched because after they were built, it was realized the originally named "Swamp Trail" was rather dry and that "Scout Trail" was very wet. Except for a few small trail corrections to avoid tree roots, the trail system in Tenhave Woods is considered complete.



Nature Society Teams

Please contact us if you are interested in becoming actively involved in one or more of our Teams.

BEAUTIFICATION:
Tackles tasks as surveying the parks, defining & maintaining a trail system, park clean up & removing invasive species.

COMMUNICATIONS:
Provides publicity about organizational activities to the general membership & the public. It is also responsible for publishing this newsletter.

EDUCATION: Focuses its efforts on education outreach programs that promote understanding

and appreciation of the environment by involving children in our local parks and nature programs.

PROGRAM: Coordinates and schedules nature walks & nature oriented speaker programs, develop programs for outside organizations and catalog plants, trees & birds.

WAYS & MEANS:
Investigates means of fund raising and grant solicitation & then follows through accordingly.

Phone numbers of our team leaders are listed on p. 6 of this newsletter along with our other board members. Call them to get involved!



Want to Join The Royal Oak Nature Society?

Please make checks out to:

**CITY OF ROYAL OAK
MEMO: ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY**

Mail completed form and donation check to:

**Royal Oak Nature Society
1708 Northwood Blvd.
Royal Oak, MI 48073**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

1-year membership rates: (Sept-Aug)

Individual/Family: \$5.00

Supporting: \$10 and up

Donations are tax deductible

