



# The Chinquapin

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Winter 2008/09

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

**Membership dues for the current season (September 2008-August 2009) must be paid up in order to have the 2009 Spring and Summer editions of our newsletter, "The Chinquapin", mailed to you.** Please check your address label to see if your membership dues still need to be paid. If they are still due, please fill out a membership form (page 5) and mail it to us along with your check. **If a family membership, please list all of your family members.**

A membership entitles you to have our newsletter, "The Chinquapin", mailed to you four times a year. The mailing begins with the Fall 2008 issue and ends with the Summer 2009 edition. Your membership will help to cover the cost of printing and mailing of our newsletter and will also assist in funding educational programs that we provide.

Non-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.

Donations are tax deductible.

## The Royal Oak Nature Society and What We Have Been Doing

by Bob Muller

Looking at our accomplishments at the end of our eighth season, it could be said that we have had a great year. Our two most popular programs have both been flourishing. The attendance of our nature walks is the highest it has ever been. This past year we added full moon walks to our schedule and they have proved to be very popular. The first one was on a cloudy, moonless, very dark, rainy night. Amazingly, a huge crowd showed up anyway. We will continue in 2008/09 season with at least three full moon walks. Our Owl Hoots also remained popular as I guess people like being in the woods at night.

The speaker's program continues to grow. This past season we had five talks that were attended by over 50 people. In the previous six years that we have kept records for, there were only seven talks that attracted 50 or more people. This persuaded us to change meeting places. The room we were using at the Senior/Community Center only holds about sixty people. So we have left the Center that has been a very good friend to us and now meet at the Gathering Place (holds more than 100 people) or auditorium inside Royal Oak Middle School (formerly Dondero High School). Our speakers program is now a joint program between the Royal Oak School System and the Royal Oak Nature Society. Hopefully, we will begin to attract children from the school system to our speaker programs

We had two Nature Nights last winter. They are always fun because they bring us together with small children,

along with all of the great questions they ask about our displays. This year, the Nature Night at Oakridge School was our highest attended one, ever! Again, we need to thank the outside people and groups that bring in displays and man them. Without these people, the Society could not put on these programs for the Royal Oak Schools.

For two years, Don Drife tested a tree identification workshop; it worked well and has attracted a good group. This year we further tested the workshop idea with winter tree, wildflower, nature photography, and pond life workshops. We had mixed attendance, but we consider them a success. We did learn that a classroom session followed by a walk in the woods was too much at one time. For the 2008/09 season, we will have a classroom session on a weeknight and the practical session in the woods on the following weekend. Look for our offerings this year; dates and times have not yet been determined.



Huge Nature Night turnout at Oakridge Elementary in 2008

(Continued on page 2)

## SMOKE FREE FUNCTIONS

The Nature Society Board of Directors has adopted a resolution that all of our programs are smoke free including all functions of the Royal Oak Nature Society (indoors or outdoors). We are committed to protect the health of everyone who attends any of our programs.



## DIRECTOR POSITION OPENINGS

The **Fundraiser Director** coordinates and organizes the Annual Spring Fundraiser and other fund-raiser programs approved by the board.

The **Education Director** provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

These are volunteer positions. If you are possibly interested in either of these positions, please contact Ted Vickers at either 248-549-5366 or [naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us](mailto:naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us)

## NATURE SOCIETY'S 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Our next annual fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, **April 24, 2009** at the Royal Oak Elk's Club. Please **SAVE THE DATE** and check our website in January, 2009 for more details.

*(What We Have Been Doing continued from page 1)*

Dena Serrato continues her work with invasive species control. We seem to be winning with garlic mustard and our battle with buckthorn is making slow, but positive progress.

The area behind the Community Center is being developed into an arboretum. Dena has been taking wildflowers from the middle of trails in Tenhave that we have been working on and planting them in the arboretum. We will use that area as a garden to create a collection of native plants that are not found within Tenhave Woods or Cummington Park. It will add to our ability to teach about our area's ecosystems. Last spring, we purchased some native plants with a grant that we received and they have been added to the arboretum. It will take a number of years to get this area developed, but keep an eye it. In a few years the arboretum should be a fantastic area to walk in and learn from.

We had a very successful Third Annual Silent Auction Fundraiser. This along with the Royal Oak Woman's Club making us the recipient for one of their fundraisers and our parking of cars at Gunn-Dyer Park for the Dream Cruise, has allowed us to reach our goal of having enough money to add another turnstile that will be installed on the Normandy side of Tenhave Woods. The turnstile should be installed before the snow flies.

All of the work that goes to maintain the parks could not be done without the help of local Boy Scout Troops. Eagle Scout Projects at Tenhave Woods have been unbelievable this year in their accomplishments. In February, Josh Eggart, from Berkley Troop 1085, was the leader in building a trail to the not yet installed Normandy Street turnstile. In the spring, benches at Dragonfly pond were installed, trails were lined, brush along the fence at the pond was cleared and the large park rules sign was moved to the new Lexington entrance. A large amount of buckthorn was removed from the developing arboretum, the Fern Trail was built and the Sassafras

trail was widened. Speaking of the Fern Trail, it was built because there were no ferns along any of our existing trails. Don Drife, being our expert on ferns, located an area with over eight species of fern. The new trail will give us a teaching area for this interesting group of plants.

Dragonfly Pond, in its third summer, continues to change as the wetland plant community around it matures. The pond life programs are still drawing large groups of young children; something our regular nature walks don't seem to do. It is always a joy to see that children don't care about muddy feet when they can catch something.

There is always the downside on things that happen at our two nature parks. We still have a small amount of vandalism taking place. The decision was made recently to mark the trails with Royal Oak street signs. We put one up as a test at the corner of Pond and Sassafras trails. The pole was cemented in with one hundred pound of concrete and in less than a week the sign, pole and cement were gone. We will try again with more weight being added to the pole.

Aside from this one incident, this past season has been a great success. The Society continues to move forward in developing both the parks and our programs. Please join us on one of our programs or on your own, take a walk in the woods. One of the main reasons for our existence is to get people into the parks.



A Buckthorn Tree Being Cut Down in the Arboretum

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

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE A CHANGE IN OUR GENERAL MEETING/ SPEAKER PROGRAM VENUE\*\***

*Our monthly general meeting/speaker programs are now held at the **Royal Oak Middle School** (formerly Dondro High School) and in partnership with the Royal Oak Public School system. The school is located at 709 N. Washington, between 11 Mile Road & Catalpa (11 ½ Mile). Enter the building via the school's south entrance next to Washington and follow the signs. Reference our Fall 2008 issue for a map showing the location of the school & entrance. 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.*

**"Floodplain and Mesic Forests in Dearborn: An Analysis of Species Composition and Age of Trees"** is being held on **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Floodplain forests in urban areas show variations in species composition with subtle changes in elevation. The composition of the forest habitats along the Rouge River in Dearborn has some interesting qualities due to natural and cultural history. Jens Jensen, the landscape architect hired by Henry Ford, had plans to develop a mesic forest (has moderate or well balanced supply of moisture). Come and find out from Orin G. Gelderloos, Professor of Biology/Environmental Studies and Director of the University of Michigan-Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center, if Jan Jensen's vision of an early ecological restoration project was fulfilled on the Henry and Clara Ford Estate.

**The Clinton River Watershed: Mother Nature Right In Our Own Backyards"** is being held on **January 7<sup>th</sup>**. Known 30 years ago as one of the most polluted river systems in Michigan, the Clinton River is a true comeback story for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. Dan Keifer, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Clinton River Watershed Council, will talk about the 760 square miles of the watershed's landscape across Oakland and Macomb counties, and how water connects it all. Come learn about the wonderful outdoor opportunities at your doorstep, the work that is restoring the watershed, and the challenges of taking care of waterways in Michigan's most populous watershed.

**"Amphibian Metamorphosis"** is being held on **February 4<sup>th</sup>**. Join Rebecca Johnson, Curator of Amphibians with the Detroit Zoological Society, for a presentation discussing the basics of amphibian metamorphosis, why and how it occurs and some of the less typical modes of transformation amphibians have developed through evolution. Every year we see this occurring in Dragonfly Pond with the American Toad. Join us and get a better understanding of this fantastic change from aquatic life to land animals that breathe air.

**"A Bewildered Naturalist Goes West"** is being held on **March 4<sup>th</sup>**. Don and Joyce Drife spent time this past summer exploring Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks. These two parks contain a flora very different from that of Michigan, as well as spectacular scenery and wildlife. When Don, Nature Society Botanist, goes west, he confesses that he does not know all of the birds and maybe only 20% of the plants. Sometimes he admits that he cannot place the plants even in the correct family. Don says, "In Michigan it is rare to find a flowering plant that I can't place at the least into the correct genus. Out west, I am bewildered by many of the things that I see. I spend more time with a plant key in a day than I will in a year in Michigan. It was great fun as I identified in 10 days, 350 species of plants that I had never seen before!" Come join Don as he leads an exploration of the natural history of these two spectacular National Parks.

**"From the Goodwin's of Royal Oak to Tenhave Woods, the History of a Piece of Land"**

A joint presentation by the Nature Society and the Royal Oak Historical Society will be held on **January 14<sup>th</sup>** (Wednesday) at the **Royal Oak Middle School** (709 N. Washington between 11 Mile Rd & Catalpa), beginning at **7:00 pm**. Bob Muller, Nature Society Naturalist and Royal Oak Historical Society board member, will be talking about a piece of land from its first purchaser from the United State Government in 1824 up to today. Please join Bob for this interesting story that takes place during the past 185 years. There is no cost or pre-registration.

**2008 Dream Cruise Wrap Up**

With great weather like we had last year, Dream Cruise parking added \$950 to our coffers. This year we added to our totals by opening up Gunn Dyer Park on Friday evening (Aug 15). Seventeen people decided that parking at Gunn Dyer would be safer & closer to the action instead of trying to park on the street. Because of the weather & hopefully from word of mouth, a lot more people parked at Gunn Dyer this year on Dream Cruise

Day. Between 1 & 3 pm, we actually had to turn people away because we ran out of parking spots. But luckily, not everyone who parked here wanted to stay all day. Spots did open up every five minutes of so and by 3 pm, there were plenty of parking spaces available. For a while, we were so busy that it took about five of us to collect money and find empty spaces for cars to be

*(Continued on page 4)*

**MEMBERSHIP  
RENEWALS & NEW  
MEMBERS**

The Royal Oak Nature Society would like to thank the following individuals/families for either recently becoming new members or renewing their membership.

Pam & Mike Brady  
Don & Diane Diehl  
Aaron Dorn,  
Bernadette Ethridge,  
Kathleen Gorzkiewicz  
Barbara Grinke  
Rita Harding  
Lois Iverson  
Rose Kudron  
Lance & Pamela Lindell  
Connie Manley  
Bonnie Michalak  
Margaret Miller  
Karen Pettke  
Joy & Tim Reade  
Joan Runcie  
Jean Simmons  
John Talbot  
Richard Taylor  
Emily Welch  
Ann Williams & Family  
Kenneth & Susan Wolak

*(2008 Dream Cruise Wrap Up  
continued from page 3)*

parked in.

The Nature Society wants to thank the following people for volunteering their time at this year's Dream Cruise: Bob Muller, Ann Bobiney, Al & Winnie Chrzanowski, Don & Diane Diehl, Ted Vickers, Bonnie Michalak, Ann Holcomb, Don & Joyce Drife, Helen & Connie Cost. Without their help, we would not have been able operate the parking lot. Also a big thanks Greg Russell & his crew for getting the park ready for us.

It was a long day for us, 7:30 am to 7:30 pm, but for the several hours put in by each of us, it was well worth it.

**NATURE WALKS**

**CUMMINGSTON PARK:** Park & meet at Leafdale & Torquay  
**TENHAVE WOODS:** Park in lot at Marais & Lexington Blvd.

Meet at Lexington Entrance (300 feet east of the parking lot).  
For the Owl Hoots & Moon Walks, park & meet at the Marais/Lexington Blvd lot

*Wearing boots while in the parks is recommended in the winter & spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer.*

**"Full Moon Walk"** is being held on **December 12<sup>th</sup> (Friday) 7:30 pm at Tenhave Woods.** Experience the woods at a time of day when the park is normally closed. You never know what you may hear and see when the light levels are low. Bring a small flashlight.

**"Late Fall Nature Walk"** is being held on **December 13<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 10:00 am at Tenhave Woods.** The leaves are gone. Come see what has been revealed in the forest and Dragonfly Pond.

**"Winter Nature Walk"** is being held on **January 10<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 2:00 pm at Tenhave Woods.** The winter forest is the easiest time to see signs of wildlife (tracks, bird and squirrel nest etc.). Bring binoculars for the birds and keep an eye out for mammals.

**"Full Moon Walk"** is being held on **January 11<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) 7:30 pm at Tenhave Woods**  
Experience the woods at a time of day that the park is normally closed. You never know what you may hear and see when the

light levels are low. Bring a small flashlight.

**"Winter Nature Walk"** is being held on **February 8<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) 2:00 pm at Cummingston Park.** The winter forest is the easiest time to see signs of wildlife (tracks, bird and squirrel nest etc.). Bring binoculars for the birds and keep an eye out for mammals.

**"Owl Hoot"** is being held on **March 5<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 8:00 pm at Tenhave Woods**  
During all of our scheduled Owl Hoots, we will walk into Tenhave Woods attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

**"Owl Hoot"** is being held on **March 10<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) 8:00 pm at Tenhave Woods**

**"Owl Hoot"** is being held on **March 18<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) 8:00 pm at Tenhave Woods**

**"Beginning of Spring Nature Walk"** is being held on **March 28<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 2:00 pm at Tenhave Woods .**  
Spring has just started what we can see of the coming changes in the next few weeks.

**Nesting Cooper's Hawks at Tenhave**

by Don Drife

An exciting event took place last spring when a pair of Cooper's Hawks attempted to nest in Tenhave Woods. The Cooper's Hawk is listed by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory as a "special concern" species meaning that the species is rare and worthy of further monitoring or that its status is unknown. The "special concern" status does not give the species any protection under Michigan's Endangered Species Act but it does point to the importance of monitoring it.

The Cooper's Hawk is similar to a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Both are part of the genus

*Accipiter* that can be identified by their long tail and rounded wings. The Cooper's Hawk has a rounded tail and the head is more squared off. The Sharp-shinned has a square or slightly notched tail and a rounded head. The Cooper's Hawk is also a larger bird than the Sharp-shinned Hawk but the difference is not enough to be a useful field mark. The female Cooper's Hawk is much larger than the male and ours was also much browner on the back so we could tell which bird we were watching when they were apart. Observations showed that the male

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Nesting Cooper's Hawks at Tenhave continued from page 4)*  
 bird was missing a central tail feather making the tail look notched at times.

The first time I saw the hawk in the woods was on April 12, 2008, when I observed a single bird in the park. It was in flight and giving a crackling "krek, krek" call that the hawk often does when it is on a nesting territory. Then, on April 19<sup>th</sup>, I saw a pair of Cooper's Hawks and also found their nest. It was a large mass of sticks, in the fork of an American Beech, about thirty feet above the ground. I also met a group of birdwatchers in Tenhave who told me that they had been seeing the pair of hawks for about two weeks and that they had found the nest the week before. The hawks were heard and seen on every trip I made into the woods through May 1<sup>st</sup>. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, I watched the birds for several hours with a 20x spotting scope. The female sat on the nest only once during that time which leads me to believe that she had not laid any eggs yet. The female only hunted in the woods but the male would leave the park for short periods. The birds were not seen at the Open House on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and I know of no sightings after May 1<sup>st</sup>

Many people observed the birds including a troop of Brownies who came for a pond study session. We had a spotting scope trained on the birds and the girls took turns looking at the hawks. The female even caught a mouse and let us watch her eat it. One of the great values of our nature centers is giving these kids the chance

to learn about wildlife right in the city of Royal Oak.

We do not know why the pair failed to raise young this year. Perhaps next year....



Copper's Hawk on a limb near it's nest  
 in Tenhave Woods

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## Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

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

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

Names (individual/family members): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1 year membership rates (September-August)

Individual: \$5     Family/Supporting: \$10 & up

Donations are tax deductible

### NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

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

**Beautification & Restoration:** Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods & Cummingston Park.

**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, which includes the coordinating and organizing of the Annual Spring Fundraiser & other fund-raiser programs approved by the board.

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

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

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Tim Turner (248-320-4819)

Vice President: John DeLisle (248-585-9002)

Treasurer: Jeanne Sarnacki (248-246-3380)

Beautification & Restoration: Cummingston: Don Drife (248-528-0479) & Tenhave Woods: Dena Serrato (248-542-2820)

Communication: Ted Vickers (248-549-5366)

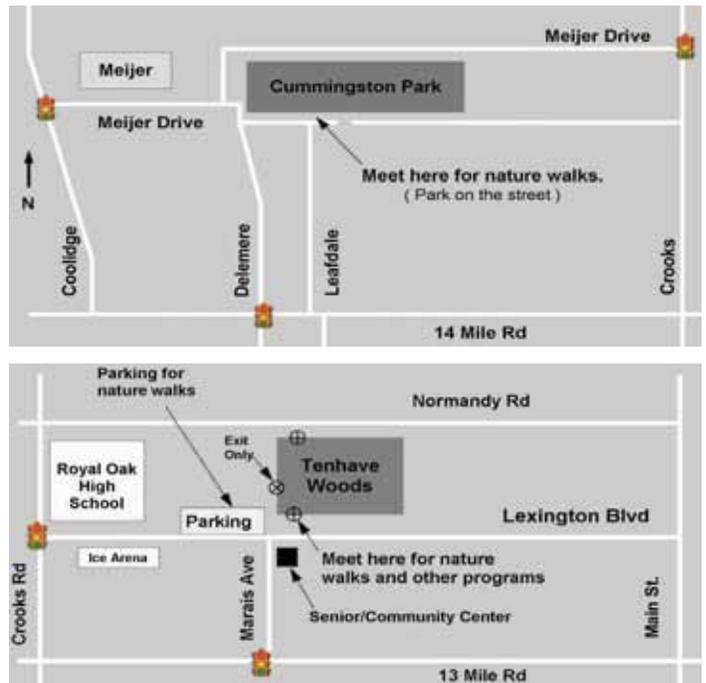
Education: Ted Vickers (acting)

Fundraiser: Open

Ways & Means: Helen Cost (248-549-9423)

Newsletter: Ted Vickers                      Engineer: Richard Stoll

## Our Nature Parks & Senior/Community Center



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummingston 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 Cummingston Park. Our mission is to foster awareness and usage of these two natural 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.*

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