



The Chinquapin

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Winter 2012/13

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

FINAL NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

To continue receiving our newsletter "The Chinquapin" (beginning with the Spring 2013 edition), you need to be a paid-up Associate, Supporting or Patron 2012/13 Nature Society member.

There are four membership levels. General Membership is free and with it, you get Nature Society schedule updates e-mailed to you at least once a month. Associate Membership cost \$5 per year and gets you the above benefit along with four newsletters, "The Chinquapin", e-mailed to you quarterly. If you want, we can mail a hard copy to you instead. **With e-mail, the print quality of the newsletter is better and the photos are in color.** Supporting Membership is \$10 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus being listed a supporting member in our newsletter. Patron Membership is \$50 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus you are listed as a patron member in our newsletter, get an invitation to our pre-Dream Cruise picnic at Gunn Dyer Park and are entitled to one free ticket to our annual fundraiser.

If you want to be an

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What We Have Been Doing 2011/12

By Bob Muller & Ted Vickers

This year for the first time in Cummington Park, we lured screech owls in on an Owl Hoot. This had been tried several times before at Cummington with no success. Only a few minutes into our December Owl Hoot, an Eastern Screech Owl flew in silently and landed in a small tree only a few feet off the path. This gave a great view to those attending. Later, another one landed on a tree only ten feet from the trail and six feet off the ground. After a few minutes observing the owl, Bob Muller allowed the children attending to walk up to the tree to start taking photos. The owl simply looked down on them, allowing at least five minutes of very close observation before deciding to fly off into the darkness. We did not lure in any owls at any of our Tenhave Owl Hoots, but at one of them, there were very vocal raccoons mating in the top of a tree, not caring that twenty people were shining their flashlights on them.

With the coming of spring we got one of the largest surprises we have ever had in Tenhave Woods. Since the restoration of Dragonfly Pond seven years ago, the only amphibians in the park have been American Toads. Back in the 1970's, several other amphibian species lived in the park. Since then, those other amphibians have seemingly not been able to maintain a population there. On a March nature walk Bob Muller was asked what amphibian calls were coming from the pond. He immediately answered "American Toads", but then realized it was not their calls he was hearing. They were Spring Peepers. Thousands of them had found our pond and were busy preparing to add to their new population. What happened this summer will make us remember 2012 as the year of the frog invasion. Don Drife has photographed

both grey tree and leopard frogs near the pond. Hopefully, they too will also develop healthy populations in Tenhave Woods.

In our development of the Arboretum behind the Senior/Community Center, we have continued to add different species of deciduous trees native to Michigan. Between Tenhave and the Arboretum, we now have all of the oak species native to Michigan. This makes it quite fitting for a city named after an oak tree. The removal of invading honeysuckle and buckthorn is a continuing process needed to help vitalize our arboretum. A Wildflower Association of Michigan grant was used to plant spring ephemerals, woodland wildflowers, native grasses/sedges and shrubs to add important ground layer vegetation to the area where these invasive species have been removed. A Girl Scout troop established and is maintaining a butterfly garden in the arboretum. Our arboretum rain garden that was created in the spring of 2011 is doing very well.

Our Education Director, Chris Ethridge, lead a home school Tree & Seeds program in Tenhave for the Sunflower Christian Preschool in May. And, for the third year in a row, the entire 3rd grade class from Jane Addams Elementary school came to Tenhave on the last day of school for pond life studies and to participate in other nature activities. We will continue to offer educational programs to children with the hope of being able to reach more of them in the future.

During the 2011/12 season, there were four park fall projects that took place (see Spring 2012 newsletter). They included Cummington trail improvements, adding sand to the surface of Tenhave trails that

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were built up with clay soil, woodchips added to the Arboretum trails and enlarging Cummington's pond. Adding sand and woodchips made those trails more walkable this past spring when they were normally very wet. With the Cummington Pond project, it is still too early to determine if the area where the pond was expanded is deep enough to significantly decrease the Phragmites (do not like deep water) population. It may be necessary to go back in later and deepen the north end of the pond. We will probably never be able to keep Phragmites totally out of Cummington as acres of it surround the airport behind us. But, the project has now made it more difficult for the Phragmites to grow. The fight to keep it from taking over will be a continuous maintenance issue for the Nature Society, possibly forever. The last project of the season was done in July. Eagle Scout candidate, Nate Hayes, lead Troop 1085 (Berkley) in a project where plant growth on the Tenhave fence adjacent to the soccer fields was removed. Also, gaps in that fence were repaired as part of our continuing project to keep deer out of Tenhave.

All of the above are wonderful accomplishments, but this year we are facing the greatest challenge the Nature Society has faced since taking on the development and maintenance of Royal Oak's two nature parks 12 years ago. About seven years ago the first deer showed up in Tenhave Woods. Up to this year they were finding much of their food outside of the nature park. This year about a dozen deer have spent the summer in Tenhave. Deer in high numbers can be very destructive and with our fantastic wildflower collection, we were watching very closely the amount of deer browsing going on in the Tenhave. Even one deer in Tenhave equates to three times the number of deer that the park could support without permanently damaging the forest up to the six foot height that the deer can browse. We noticed browsing damage to Trillium in early spring. Trillium is a plant used as an indicator species by foresters to recognize "over browsing". Due to this, we surveyed the trillium in a portion of Tenhave. Among the 8,400 trillium that were counted, 1,100 only had their stems

remaining. Within a month, all were just stems along with many other species of wildflowers. Documentation around the country has found two to three years of this level of browsing will permanently kill the wildflower layer in the forest. Our major problem is with the six foot high fence where homes border the park. It takes an eight foot fence to keep deer out. We asked the city for a quote to raise the fence and it was \$60,000. That amount is considerably beyond our financial ability. Richard Stoll, a Nature Society board member, came up with a much cheaper method (see below photo) that we are now actively pursuing. One of the things we have noticed is that the deer only reside in Tenhave during the summer, arriving after the trees leaf out and leaving after the leaves fall. Tenhave may provide cover to hide in during the day but not in the winter. Hopefully, all of the deer prevention fencing will be in place before the leaves come back in the spring of 2013.

So like all years, great things happen in the nature parks and problems occur. This year the new amphibians have us filled with hope for Tenhave's future and the deer problem fears for its total loss. The main reason for the Royal Oak Nature Society is to protect our nature parks. Removing the deer will be our greatest challenge.



Strung wires to increase the height of the existing 6' high fences

(Membership continued from page 1)

Associate, Supporting or Patron member, please fill out a membership form (p.5) and mail it along with a check to the Nature Society. Please list other household members you want included as Nature Society members (no extra cost).

Through your donation, you will be helping to cover the costs to produce our newsletter and will also be assisting in funding educational programs that we provide. Donations are always tax deductible.

If you only want to be a General Member, please e-mail

us the information asked for on our membership form (p.5) & send that information to: naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us.

Your membership whether General, Associate, Supporting or Patron, will help to strengthen this organization.

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.

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

Our monthly general meeting/speaker programs (September to May) are now held at the **Royal Oak Middle School** (formerly Dondero High School) which is located at 709 N. Washington. We meet in the auditorium or "Gathering Place", both of which can be reached via the school's southeast entrance. Our June program is held at the Senior/Community Center located at 3500 Marais. At our monthly Wednesday meetings, we present speaker programs that are usually slide shows focusing on various natural history topics. **Please note that the January, 2012 program is being held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.** 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.

"Utah's Canyonlands" is being held on **December 5th**. The American southwest is one gigantic outdoor museum of geology. Nowhere are the beautiful sedimentary layers and rock formations more prominently displayed than in Utah. Join Gordon Lonie, retired Sterling Heights naturalist, on a brief tour of Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef and Zion national parks. In addition, you will also see Dinosaur National Monument and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Come and explore the natural wonders of Utah with us.

"Red Run" is being held on **January 9th**. Learn about the river that used to flow through Royal Oak and what lived in it from Bob Muller, Royal Oak Nature Society naturalist. Between the late 1920's and the mid 1960's, the river was buried underground. Royal Oak still had one creek with fish in it during the 1960's. The Red Run is now a ghost river, but if you know what to look for you can still see signs of it throughout Royal Oak. Along

with Red Run, ghost's of old farm woodlots and ridges left by the glaciers will be touched on. After this talk, your eyes will become a time machine as you will be able to see into the past almost wherever you look in Royal Oak.

"Insects in Your Backyard" is being held on **February 6th**. Join Joyce and Don Drife, Royal Oak Nature Society botanists, as they explore a suburban backyard looking for insects and spiders. You might be amazed at the variety of creatures you can discover.

"Tenhave Woods Through a Camera Lens" is being held on Wednesday, **March 6th**. Mary Fredricks, a Nature Society member, grew up just blocks away from what is now Tenhave Woods. She still spends time in it, but instead of playing, she takes pictures, lots of them. Enjoy an evening exploring this wonderful woods from her unique perspective as she shares some of her favorite moments and discoveries.

Sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 1627 & Cub Scout Pack 1627

Richard Stoll, the Nature Society's engineer, came to the board last winter and asked us if we would be interested in becoming the sponsor of Boy Scout Troop 1627 and Cub Scout Pack 1627. The board said yes. In May of this year, we officially became their sponsor. Boy Scouts of America requires all Boy Scout & Cub Scout organizations to have a sponsor. As the scout's sponsor, there are no special requirements for us to follow. For their part in the sponsorship, the scouts will be doing service projects for the Nature Society including work in Tenhave Woods, Cummingston Park & the Nature Society arboretum.

Boy Scout Troop 1627 meetings are held at Royal Oak's Helen Keller Elementary School. A majority of the boys (11 to 18 years old) come from Royal Oak, with a few coming from nearby communities. The scout meetings are held on every Tuesday throughout the year. The scouts do numerous campouts throughout the year and in the past, have participated in Nature Society Eagle Scout projects. Current membership is around 20.

Scoutmaster is Aaron Dorn. Troop 1627 has been in existence since 1942.

Cub Scout Pack 1627 meets monthly at Keller Elementary School. Cub Scouts come from the Keller and Oakland school districts. The pack consists of around 50 boys (6 to 11 years old).

Since we are now a sponsor of these two groups, we felt that is important to have them be represented on our board of directors. The board chose Richard Stoll to be our Troop/Pack 1627 director. Richard has been associated with Troop 1627 and Pack 1627 since the late 1970's

The Nature Society is looking forward to having these two scout groups assist us in maintaining and improving our two nature parks and the arboretum.



NATURE WALKS

CUMMINGSTON PARK: Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay

TENHAVE WOODS: Park in Marais/Lexington lot and meet at the Lexington entrance (300 feet east of parking lot). For the Owl Hoots & Full Moon walks, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

ARBORETUM: Park and meet on the north side of the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais)

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.

"Mammals of Tenhave" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Sunday, **December 2nd**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Come and learn about the mammals that live in Tenhave Woods. We will look for signs of these mammals and have skulls and skins with us to help describe them and how they live.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Friday, **December 14th**, Friday, **January 25th**, and Tuesday, **March 26th**, all beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into the park and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Winter Nature Walk" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Saturday, **January 12th** and on Saturday, **February 9th**. Both begin at **2:00 pm**.

"Full Moon Walk" is being held on Monday, **February 25th**, beginning **7:30 pm** at **Tenhave Woods**. Experi-

ence 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.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Cummingston Park** on Friday, **March 1st**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into the park and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Almost Spring Walk" is being held on Sunday, **March 17th**, beginning at **2:00 pm** at **Tenhave Woods**. Park at the Lexington/Marais lot & meet at the Lexington entrance. Join us on the first day of spring. We will be looking for the first signs of the reawakening of the Tenhave plant community

Royal Oak Nature Society's Arboretum Shed a Year after Installation

Our arboretum shed, located just north of the Senior/Community Center, was installed about a year ago (November, 2011). A year later, it (see adjacent photo) is filled with almost everything needed to help keep our arboretum flourishing. Gardening items stored in the shed include water hoses, wheelbarrows, rakes, shovels, hoes, hand weeding tools, watering cans, and a leaf blower.

We are still looking for a functional string trimmer or brush-cutter and shelving. If you have one of these items that you would like to donate, please contact John DeLisle (see Board of Directors on p. 6).



Arboretum Shed

2012 Dream Cruise Wrap Up

Once again, the Nature Society had the Gunn Dyer Park parking concession for the Dream Cruise. We collected parking fees during our Dream Cruise 2012 volunteer picnic from 6 to 8:30 pm on Friday (August 17) and again from 8 am to 8 pm on Saturday (August 18).

This year, we had our best profit ever. We made \$1,100! It was so busy in the early afternoon that we had to occasionally close the lot and wait for someone to leave before we could let someone else in.

Again this year, we offered to anyone who asked for it, a one time \$15 entry fee per car that allowed people to drive their cars in and out of the park as many times as they wanted to.

The Nature Society wants to thank the following people for volunteering their time at this year's Dream Cruise: **Bob Muller, Ted Vickers, Ann Holcomb, Don & Joyce Drife, Bonnie Michalak, Mitzi Hoffman, Ann Holcomb, Jack Kerby, Mary, Dennis & Regis Kleiss, Helen Cost, John Semchena, and Nathan Bahn,** Also a big thanks goes out to **Greg Rassel** and his crew for getting the park ready for us.

Once a year, this becomes an easy way for the Nature Society to make some money. The City of Royal Oak

sets everything up and all we have to do is collect the entry fee and direct people to available parking spots.

Because it was so busy this year, we could have used more help. Hopefully, when Dream Cruise rolls along next year, you might consider joining our volunteer crew for a few hours to help the Nature Society collect a few bucks that will help pay for future expenses/projects.



One of many cars being parked at Gunn Dyer Park

NATURE SOCIETY'S 8th ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Our next annual fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, **April 19th, 2013** at the Royal Oak Elk's Club. Please **SAVE THE DATE** and get more details in our next newsletter

(Spring 2013) and also from our website beginning in early 2013.

Please check out our Facebook page & become a fan of the Royal Oak Nature Society.

Page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society/228095233882566>



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Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

Please make check payable 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 (household members): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

1 year Household Membership
(September-August)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General (free) | Receive newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (\$5) | by: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (\$10 & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular mail OR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$50 & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail |

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

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

Stewardship: Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods, Cummington Park and the Arboretum.

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 Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Don Drife (248-528-0479)

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

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

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

Communication & Newsletter: Ted Vickers (248-549-5366)

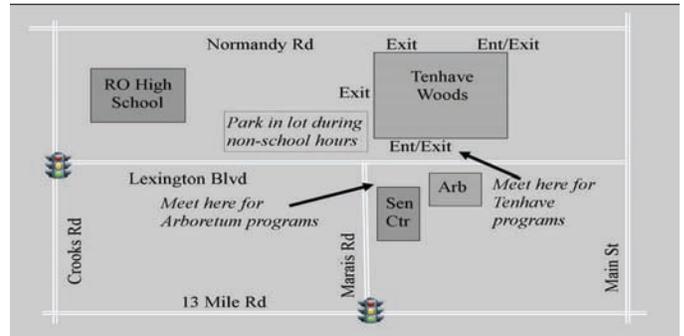
Education: Chris Ethridge (248 229-9335)

Program: Bob Muller (248-398-0195)

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

Troop/Pack 1627 Representative & Engineer: Richard Stoll (248-398-2437)

Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & 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. 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. In addition, we are in the process of creating an arboretum in Worden Park East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs.

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