

The *Chinquapin* is published quarterly by the The Royal Oak Nature Society, a volunteer group working to protect and promote Royal Oak's nature preserves, while enjoying and sharing environmental education with the community.

The *Chinquapin* is a type of white oak also known as a yellow chestnut oak. We chose to name the newsletter after the *Chinquapin* oak we have located in Cummingston Park. Colleen Hilzinger, artist and member created the beautiful oak tree logo.

Board of Directors

President:
Heather J. Muller
248-546-4184

Treasurer: Bob Guymer
248-399-7042

Program: Bob Muller
248-398-0195

Communication: Ted Vickers
248-549-5366

Beautification: Jack Kerby
248-280-0186

Ways & Means: Helen Cost
248-549-9423

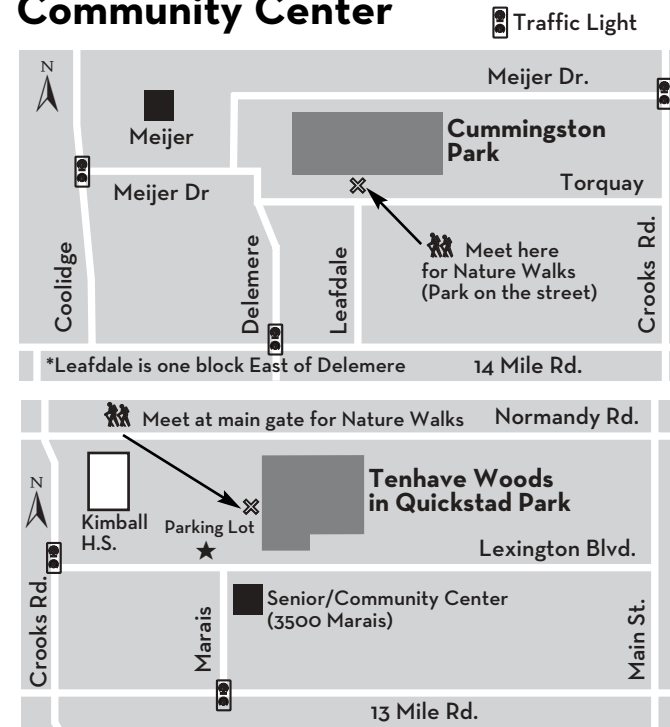
Education: Kristine Hammond
248-577-5171

Newsletter

Ted Vickers
TGV1121@aol.com

Ann Williams
fedwards11@earthlink.net

Our Nature Parks & Senior Community Center



WWW.CI.ROYAL-OAK.MI.US/NATURE/INDEX.HTML

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. CAMPBELL ROAD
ROYAL OAK MI 48067



THE
Chinquapin
/chi[nq]-ki-'pin/

SPRING 2004

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

Beginning with the 2004 Summer Edition of *The Chinquapin*, membership dues must be paid in order to have it 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 that we provide.

In order to become or to continue as a Nature Society member, please fill out the membership form that can be found on page 5.

Woodland Invaders

BY DENA SERRATO, MASTER WOODLAND MANAGER

As homeowners and gardeners, we often find ourselves engaged in an ongoing battle with the unwelcome weeds that pop up in our lawns, flowerbeds and vegetable gardens. A wise gardener develops an action plan that includes a variety of solutions, including prevention, hand pulling, and just learning to live with some of the less obnoxious ones. Even the best plan of attack still involves a lot of hard work and continuous vigilance to keep the weeds from totally taking over. Fortunately, most of us just have a small suburban lot to care for.

Now imagine the work involved in controlling the weeds in a 25-acre nature preserve that includes forest, wetland, nature trails and grassy areas! This is the task that the Beautification committee of the Royal Oak Nature Society has recently undertaken. Volunteers from the committee are in the process of conducting a survey of the weeds that are growing in our two Royal Oak nature parks. They are working on writing a report of their findings that will be presented to the board of the Nature Society with recommendations on control methods.

We all know a weed when we see one growing in our lawn, but it's a little trickier to decide which plants to label as weeds in a natural area. There are many non-native plants that grow in our Royal Oak nature parks, and while most of them coexist happily with the native flora without causing any problems, there are a small number of



Garlic mustard

species that tend to grow very aggressively, to the point of causing the native plant populations to decline. These types of plants are often referred to as invasive exotic species. Invasive plants are a problem all across the United States. They have been introduced by humans into new areas, where free from natural competitors and predators, they are able to spread and dominate the native habitat. Most of us have heard of kudzu, which is often referred to as the vine that ate the South. Here in Michigan, the most

continued on page 3

A Working Weekend in Tenhave Woods BY TED VICKERS



Chris McFadden

During the second to last weekend in November, (22nd and 23rd), Tenhave Woods was bustling with activity. On Saturday, a community service group came in and performed maintenance work on some of the older trails. Temperatures were in the mid 50's, as the group of about 15 helped to reline those trails with heavier and longer logs. The project lasted throughout the morning and finished up early the following day. On Sunday, the weather was even balmy. Chris McFadden of Boy Scout Troop 1629, brought in a crew of over 25 fellow troop members,

family and friends to help construct new trails in Tenhave (see map). As an Eagle Scout project, Chris had to plan, organize and be the group leader of the endeavor from start to finish.

Clearing and lining of the trails began around nine o'clock. The project progressed smoothly, so that by eleven, a majority of the work had been completed. That left time to do some trail relining and maintenance work on the path that was built in the fall of 2002 by Andrew Mast, member of the same troop, and his team. By 12:30, everyone was done working, eating pizza and talking about



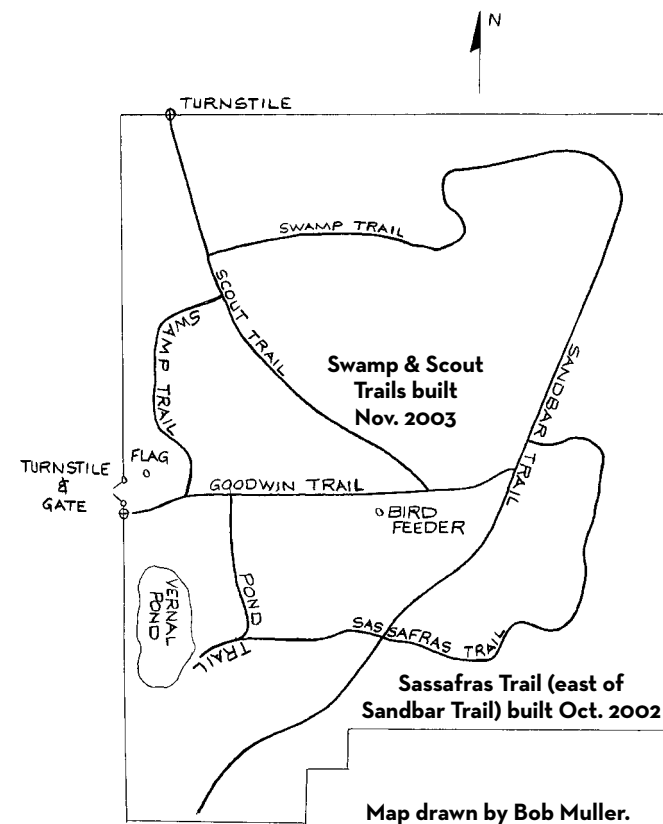
the days, success.

The main trail network in Tenhave Woods is now considered complete. If there are areas of the woods that become an interest to our naturalists, trail spurs may be built to encompass them.

The Royal Oak Nature Society extends its thanks

Above: A crew using rakes, shovels and cutters work hard to reline the trail.

to Troop 1629 and their co-workers for extending the trail system and making it easier to walk through the northwest section of Tenhave Woods.



Map drawn by Bob Muller.

well known invasive plant is purple loosestrife, which grows in wetlands. Invasive plants have certain characteristics such as rapid growth, prolific seed production, adaptability to a wide range of growing conditions and an ability to grow into large colonies. They can be annuals, perennials, grasses, vines, trees or shrubs.

Many of the weedy plants that the volunteers have found so far in Tenhave Woods are popular ornamental shrubs that people often grow in home landscapes. Shrubs such as barberry, honeysuckle and buckthorn have



Common buckthorn

berries that birds eat and then spread to natural areas. Buckthorn especially creates stands so dense that nothing can grow underneath. Even the popular Norway maple tree has now become a pest in Tenhave Woods and is starting to shade out the native wildflowers and tree seedlings. An herb called garlic mustard has been filling in the area all around a big oak tree that fell about two years ago. If the weeds are left to grow, many native plants will die off, and the insects, birds and mammals that depend on those plants for food



Exotic bush honeysuckle

and shelter will also suffer.

Control methods typically include hand pulling leafy weeds and cutting down woody plants. It often takes years to get some weeds under control. The Beautification committee will be planning stewardship days for volunteers to help out with weed removal on an ongoing basis.

Homeowners can help in a number of ways. We can avoid planting invasive exotic plants in our landscapes, and choose plants that are native to our local region instead. We can encourage local nurseries and garden centers to stop selling plants that are known to be highly invasive and to carry more native plants. We can refrain from dumping yard waste in and around natural areas.

If you would like to find out more information on the problem of weeds in natural areas, you can check out the web site of the Michigan Invasive Plant Council. It has many links to other web sites that have a wealth of information on all sorts of weedy plants. The address is <http://www.forestry.msu.edu/mipc>.

Vice President

The Royal Oak Nature Society is looking for someone to preside over all meetings in the absence of the President, and perform all duties of the President if the need should arise. At other times, the Vice President will record the board meeting minutes and have a copy of the Nature Society's bylaws always on hand. The Vice President will write up the minutes, send them to all of the board members and make sure that the minutes are posted to the Nature Society's web site. If you are interested and would like further information, please contact Heather Muller at 248-442-6718.

Spring Speaker Programs

"Manmade Habitats for Wildlife"

Mar 3rd ♀ Wild Birds

Unlimited is a business dedicated to bringing people and nature together, in the wild and their own backyards.

LuAnn's presentation will focus on man made feeding areas and wildlife plantings for our backyards and parks. These are designed to help our wildlife cope with rapidly disappearing habitat and migratory stopovers. Join us in learning what we can do to create an oasis for wildlife.



continued on page 4



Staples®
1129 W. 14 Mile Road
Clawson, MI 48017

(248) 288-4163 Tel.
(248) 288-4370 Fax

Thank You to Our Sponsor

The Royal Oak Nature Society would like to thank Staples located in Clawson Center for their support. Staples supplies us with the paper for printing our newsletter.

“The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) 4,600 miles of Environmental Diversity”

March 31st 🦋 The NCNST holds the greatest diversity of environment of any hiking trail in North America. From the Adirondack Mountains to the Great Plains of North Dakota, America’s longest hiking trail takes in farms, villages, mountains, fields, forests and bogs as it winds across the Northern Tier of America. Historical sites and cultural diversity are also traversed in this truly American journey of northwestern expansion. Come and join us on this epic journey across America’s landscape.

“Swimming with Piranhas, Fish Collecting in Peru”

May 5th 🦋 Almost everyone has seen documentaries of the Amazon rainforest. One thing that is missing is the fish. More species of fish live in the Amazon basin (over 3000) than can be found in the entire Atlantic Ocean. Learn about the rain forest, it’s river people and it’s underwater wildlife. Find out how the trade in “wild caught” tropical fish helps to save the rain forest. Also, there will be a report on what has happened this past year in our nature parks.

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

General Meeting with Speaker Programs

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. – Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais)

Date	Speaker(s)	Program
Mar 3rd	LuAnn Linker, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited on Woodward Avenue in Royal Oak	“Manmade Habitats for Wildlife”
Mar 31st	Derek Blount, past president of the North Country Trail Association	“The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) - 4,600 miles of Environmental Diversity”
May 5th	Bob Muller, Naturalist for the Royal Oak Nature Society	“Swimming with Piranhas, Fish Collecting in Peru”

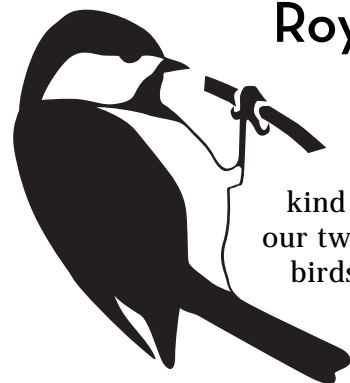
Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location	Theme
Mar 6th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park	Woody Plants
April 3rd	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park	Spring Explosion
April 24th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhav Woods	Spring Explosion
May 8th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhav Woods	Wildflowers
May 12th	Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Tenhav Woods	Wildflowers
May 22nd	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park	Wildflowers
June 5th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhav Woods	Late Spring

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grant Update

We were recently informed that the Nature Society’s application for a Recreation Grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund was turned down. We were told that it was a numbers problem (numerous applications) and that it is not unusual to be turned down the first time when applying for a specific grant. The Grant was going to be used to make improvements within Tenhave Woods, including new entrances, signs, fence repairs and trail improvements. The grant will be re-written and resubmitted to the DNR when the process opens up again.

Royal Oak Nature Society Bird Expert Needed



Some of the grants that the Nature Society have and will be applying for require knowing what kind of birds in recent years have been seen and reside in our two nature parks. If you have experience in identifying birds, both visually and by sound, and are interested in being in charge of maintaining and updating our bird list, please contact Kristine Hammond at 248-577-5171.

Royal Oaks Wild Side BY BOB MULLER

What’s Happening in Cummingston Park and Tenhave Woods

Don Drife, who along with his wife, Joyce, maintains our plant list, has stated that it should be easy to go into the park and discover new plants. With over 300 plants on our list he has been asked when he feels that this might change, when we might stop making new discoveries? His answer was “when we stop finding plants taller than ourselves.” In the last year we have found a large black walnut and a sycamore in Cummingston. Since December we have found at least two Chinquapins in Cummingston and one in Tenhave. Our newsletter was named the Chinquapin because we only had one in Cummingston and in thirty years we hadn’t found another. The trees we found are large full-grown oaks not small saplings we had missed. We also

have found Witch Hazel in Cummingston. In the last Chinquapin I talked about winter being the time of year that more things are visible with the leaves gone, it works. In looking at some old maps of the glacial lakes that covered Royal Oak we noticed that a piece of Lake Arkona’s beach seem to pass through Cummingston Park. Don Drife and myself just walked through the park (January 2) trying to see if we could determine where. We are talking about a very obscure feature as Cummingston’s topography varies only by about six feet. We did find a low ridge running through the park. The interesting thing about this ridge is that all the beech trees in the park are found along it. Cummingston

is a wet area and beech like rich, damp but not to wet, soil. A beach ridge would be sand and gravel and drain fast; maybe we found Arkona’s beach.

The next Chinquapin will not be out until May, by then many of the wild flowers will have past. Watch in March for the look of the woods to turn red as the tree flowers open. About Easter, thousands of Bloodroot should be in bloom in Tenhave. By early May we should have Spring Beauty, Trout Lilly, Spring Cress, Violets, Wood Anemone, Wild Geranium, Jack in the Pulpit and Trillium. Come on a nature walk or explore on your own, the woods are beautiful now and the change by the next Chinquapin will be tremendous.

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.

Nature Society Teams

If you are interested in becoming actively involved with the Nature Society, one or more of our teams may appeal to you:

The Beautification Team tackles tasks such as surveying the parks, defining and maintaining a trail system, park clean up and removing invasive species.

The Communications Team provides publicity about organizational activities to the general membership and the public. It also recruits and coordinates volunteers for service and special events. The team is also responsible for publishing a quarterly newsletter.

The Education Team 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.

The Program Team coordinates and schedules nature walks and nature oriented speaker programs, develop programs for outside organizations and catalog plants, trees & birds.

The Ways & Means Team investigates means of fund raising and grant solicitation and then follows through accordingly.

Phone numbers of our team leaders are listed on page 6 of this publication 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