



THE Chinquapin

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

SPRING 2005

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

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. A membership, entitles you to have our newsletter, *The Chinquapin*, mailed to you four times during the Nature Society season, beginning with the fall issue and ending with the summer 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.

To become or to continue being a Nature Society member, please fill out the membership form on page 5.

Donations are tax deductible.

Shagbark/Arkona Eagle Scout Trail Project

by Keegan Springfield

Becoming an Eagle Scout requires the completion of a service project. I chose this particular one because it was work done outdoors and it benefits Royal Oak.

I started my service project in October of 2003. My father, Mark Springfield, had referred me to Bob

Muller, a Royal Oak Nature Society board member. Mr. Muller told me that the Nature Society needed a totally new system of trails in the eastern half of Cummington Park and that seemed exactly the kind of project that I was looking for. Those trails would become to

be known as the Shagbark and Arkona trails (see map on page 2). Due to the autumn conditions that would be needed (there would be no green plants to deal with and downed wood would be visible) and the amount of time I would need to plan it, the project got scheduled for fall of 2004.

The first step was identifying the "sites" that we would want to run the trail by. Mr. Muller and I walked through the park the following spring, taking notes on those sites.

During the summer, I obtained the final approvals needed from my troop (#1707) and the Northridge Boy Scout District. Then I started formulating a plan of action as to how to go about actual construction. Accordingly, the next phase was to engineer the path of the trail: where it would run, around

which trees, over which brush, and away from which depressions. This was done in August along with marking the trail using blue tape. The next step would be the actual process of making the new trails.

On October 31st, I arrived an hour early to set everything up,

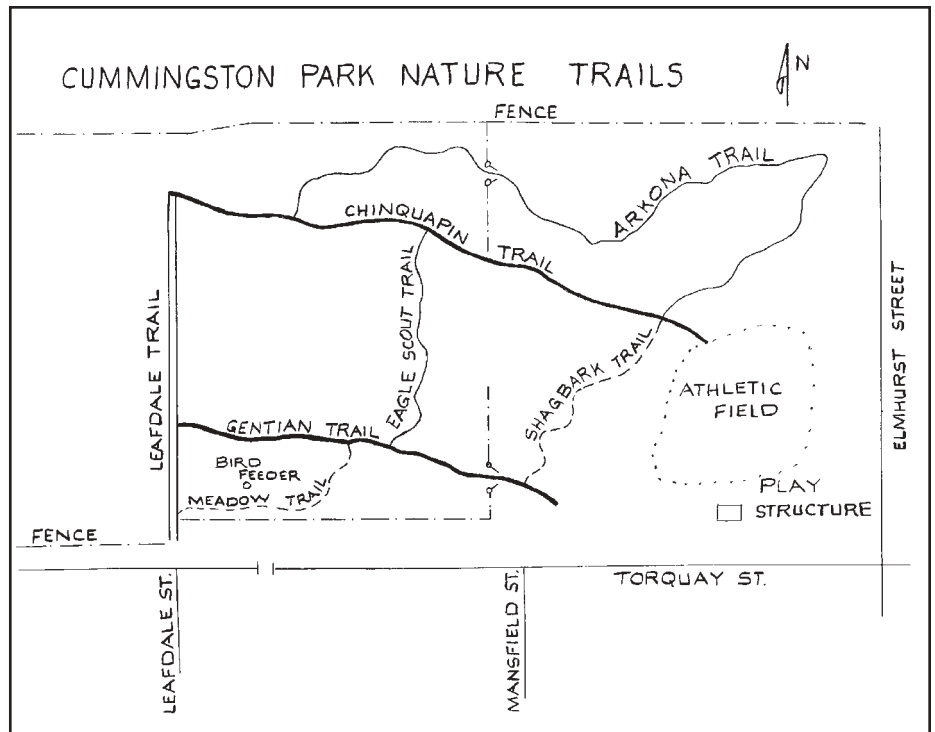
while Mr. Muller went out to add more tape in addition to what we had already put in place. A fellow scout and friend, Brian Sevald helped my father and me set up our home base. It was located at the south end of what was to be designated the Shagbark trail and would be where everyone signed in and ate lunch. At 11 o'clock the rest of my troop/volunteer force showed up and we started working our way towards the northeast end of the park.



Keegan Springfield stands on the new trail

continued on page 2

Our method was simple enough. Each person carried in a rake and a cutting implement (shears, a bow saw, or a hatchet). With a leaf blower up front, everyone raked until a fair amount of dirt had been uncovered. The workers then put down their rakes, headed back to the start of the newly uncovered path and then moved forward again, cutting and clipping all the little plants and roots that were embedded in the trail. Then leaving the tools at the front, they doubled back, lining the trail with downed logs or if appropriate, ones we had cut down. Once the section looked neat enough, we moved ahead and the whole process started over again. By the time lunch rolled around, we were almost at the point where the trail would turn westward. Lunch was pizza provided free of charge by Dolly's Pizza (14 mile and Campbell) and Pizza Hut (14 and Main). We also had bottles of Aquafina donated by Pepsi Co. After lunch, we had enough people to form two



separate groups. Mr. Muller took one group and started at the west end of what would be known as the Arkona Trail, working eastward while my group picked up where we stopped off for lunch and soon began working westward on the Arkona trail. Upon connecting, we smoothed out the rough areas, cleaned up

the scraps of brush on the new trails and got ready to go home.

All told, it took us five hours to finish, with a total of 28 volunteers all of who were a big help to me, and the community. Also, a special thanks goes out to Mr. Muller and the Nature Society for all of their assistance.

Fun Ways for Kids to Explore and Observe Trees

HOW TALL IS YOUR TREE?

To determine how tall your tree is, teach your children naturalist Edward Duensing's "thumb-jumping" trick. If you know your child's approximate height, you need only a straight stick. Have your child stand up against the tree. Step back so you can see the entire tree from top to bottom. Holding the stick vertically and at arm's length, line up the top of the stick with the top of your child's head. Place your thumb at the spot on the stick that lines up with your child's feet. This is your unit of measure. Now "jump" the stick up, so your thumb is lined up with the top of

your child's head. Make a mental note of where the top of the stick lines up against the tree, then jump the stick again, so your thumb lines up with that new spot. Continue jumping until you reach the top of the tree. Multiply the number of jumps by the height of your child, and you will have the height of the tree. When we measured my son Conor's tree, we had to "jump" his height 15 times. He is about 3 feet tall, so we figured his pine was 45 feet tall. Teaching this trick may slow down your walk as the kids measure everything in sight, but it gives them great applied practice in multiplication.

HEAR A TREE'S HEARTBEAT

For the early spring, when the sap runs, here is another revelation from Joseph Cornell, author of *Sharing Nature With Children*: If you listen carefully with a stethoscope, you can hear the "heartbeat" of a tree. Find a thin-barked tree more than 6 inches in diameter and place your stethoscope against its trunk. Be very quiet. Move the stethoscope around until you can hear the crackling, gurgling sound of sap flowing up to the branches. This is a great exercise to do in Tenhave or Cummington.

compiled by ann williams
from familyfun.com

Spring Speaker Programs

"Owl Hoot"

March 2nd 🦉 *Owls in Royal Oak!* Yes we have owls in our nature parks and neighborhoods and this is the time they are nesting. Come and join Bob Muller, Royal Oak Nature Society naturalist, and learn about these interesting stealth hunters of the night and become familiar with their calls. Maybe you have owls in your yard and don't know it. Now you can learn how to listen for them.

For those who are interested, Bob will lead that group into Tenhave Woods after the talk and try bringing the Screech and Great Horned owls in with tape recordings of their calls.

"Woodland Wildflowers"

April 6th 🦉 Don and Joyce Drife, Nature Society botanists, maintain our parks flora list, which now has well over 300 plants recorded on it. They will talk about Michigan wildflowers, especially those we have in our nature study areas. This is a perfect opportunity to become familiar with what you will be able to see within a few weeks. The spring wildflowers are an explosion. If you don't walk through the park every four days you will miss something.

"Backyard Habitat for Wildlife"

May 4th 🦉 Joe Derek, Farmington Hills Naturalist, was one of our three speakers the year we started and talked to

continued on page 4

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
March 2nd	"Owl Hoot"
April 6th	"Woodland Wildflowers"
May 4th	"Backyard Habitat for Wildlife"
June 1st	"The Fun and Science of Insect Study"

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location
March 12th	Saturday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
April 16th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhave Woods
April 23rd	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhave Woods
May 1st	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
May 7th	Saturday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
May 21st	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston Park

Nature Walk Descriptions

March 12th: *Patterns - (Botanical-geography)* - We will be looking at patterns of the plant communities to see what they can show us. We will be marking blue beech trees with surveyor tape. This will make it possible to look though the park and see the boundaries between the swamp forest and the upland forest.

April 16th: *Early Spring Wildflowers* - spring beauty, trout lily, bloodroot, spice-bush and more.

April 23rd: *Spring Wildflowers* - Trillium, blue & yellow violets, spring beauty, wild geranium, jack-in-the-pulpit, spice bush, wood anemone and more.

May 1st: *Spring Wildflowers* - Wild geranium, foamflower, jack-in-the -pulpit, trillium, wood poppy and more.

May 7th: *Late Spring Wildflowers* - Mayapple, wood poppy, wild geranium, hawthorn and more.

May 21st: *Pond study* - We will be sampling the vernal ponds for what lives in them. We will have aquariums for viewing what we find. If you want to help, bring waders or high rubber boots or just come and view what we catch.

Naturalist in the Park

This is a new program. On these evenings (listed below) at Tenhave Woods from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., there will be a Society Naturalist to answer any questions that you may have. This is the woodland wildflower season. Please come out and enjoy the display

April 15 (Friday)
April 19 (Tuesday)
April 28 (Thursday)
May 4 (Wednesday)



28558 Woodward Avenue
Royal Oak, MI 48067
Owners: LuAnn & Steve Linker
Phone: 248-548-2424
Fax: 248-548-0917
Email: wburoyaloak@aol.com

us again in 2002 on butterflies and hummingbirds. He is a National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat owner. Come and learn how to create a habitat in your yard no matter how big or small. From a balcony to a patio to a yard, you can make a place for some form of nature to call home.

“The Fun and Science of Insect Study”

June 1st 🦋 Insect collectors, Robert Lawshe and Hugh Campbell, will present their 2004 Royal Oak Nature Society Insect Survey results along with an introduction to observing and collecting insects. The presentation will include a display of their insect collections, equipment and resource literature. You will also learn how the Bumble Bee helped the British win the Boer War, how entomologists saved the orange groves of California and how the Americans saved the grape orchards of France.

natural world. In 1979, a large bird feeder was added to each park. These were built in the Kimball metal shop and paid for by the Royal Oak branch of the Women’s Farm and Garden Association and the Jaycees.

The feeder in Tenhave had a large amount of vandalism in the ensuing years and was repaired and strengthened by Richard Stoll (the vandalism continues). Two years ago we placed 50 pounds of seed in the Tenhave feeder and the squirrels took advantage, it was gone in three weeks. We are still researching how to make the Tenhave feeder squirrel proof. The other feeder in Cummington Park received no vandalism over the years but a tree had fallen on it, slightly bending its roof. This feeder was in a very poor location in the park and since our efforts to restore the meadow was attracting so many birds we asked the city move it

Royal Oak’s Wild Side by Bob Muller

The Royal Oak Nature Society is only five years old, but we have a tie back to a previous nature program in the parks. In the 1970’s and early 80’s, the city sponsored a nature program with Bob Gasiorowski, a Kimball Biology teacher as the naturalist. Bob was a bird bander, and anyone that remembers his programs, remembers the opportunity to view many of our songbirds up close during banding demonstrations. The bird list on our web site is so complete because of his banding activities in our nature parks.

Aside from this list, our speakers program is patterned after the one he ran. There are two very physical items left from his time, trying to protect our parks and imparting knowledge about the

for us. We filled it with 40 pounds of seed and made Cummington’s squirrels very happy. Ted Vickers, with advice from Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU) on Woodward, has found a way to squirrel proof the feeder. WBU also donated a device called the “Magic Halo” (installed by Richard Stoll) that helps to limit the number of House Sparrows that eat off of the feeder platform. They are so aggressive and large in numbers, that they make it difficult for other bird species to take their turn feeding. We are in business now and the feeder will have seed all the way through to the end of March. Wild Birds Unlimited is supplying us with the birdseed this winter, donating two bags and selling the balance of



Birds seen frequenting the Cummington meadow this winter: House Finches, Juncos, Cardinals, White Breasted Nut Hatches, Downy Woodpeckers, American Goldfinches, House Sparrows and Blue Jays

what we need at cost. We have trimmed some of the grapevines off the fence so you can carefully approach the feeder from outside the park (at the point where Torquay is blocked off). From that point in the road, you could also just stay in your car and with binoculars, get a good view of what is going on at the feeder. If you enter the park and take the short way along the west end of the Meadow trail to the feeder, you will drive off the birds (see page 2 for a trail map). A slightly longer walk down the Gentian trail to the east end of the Meadow trail will give you a much better vantage point to watch it. This is the best opportunity to see some of the animal life in Cummington Park. If you do spend time watching birds at the feeder, please contact the Nature Society, with what you have seen. We need to record what is in the park.

Come out on a winter day and see all the activity at the feeder. Take a walk around; the birds are all

continued on page 5

Webelos Forester Badge



For the last three years we have been offering a Webelos Forester badge program. Webelos are 9 and 10 year old Cub Scouts, just before they are old enough to join the Boy Scout program. Webelos is an acronym meaning we'll be loyal scouts. The boys must complete five of the requirements for the badge to receive it. The Nature Society has picked five of the requirements that we feel we can easily teach in the nature parks.

- Draw a picture to show the plant layers of a forest in your area. Label the different layers.
- Draw a picture showing how sunlight and water and minerals in the soil help a plant grow.
- Make a poster showing a tree's growth rings or examine the growth rings of a tree stump. Explain how the rings tell it's life history.

On the first two requirements, we ask the parents and leaders to pay close attention, as they will be who the boy identifies these plants to before leaving the park. Usually we teach the boys at least eight plants for each of these requirements. Requirements two and three are talked about with enough information for the boys

to easily make their drawings. For requirement five we have tree rounds with us that show different growth condition in the trees, such as healed wounds. The drawings that are then made at home are turned in to their leaders to complete the badge.

The programs we run with children are definitely the most fun. The energy and enthusiasm of these boys is fantastic. This is an increasingly popular program. In 2002 we had 35 attending, 2003, 42 and last fall, 95 from seven Cub Packs. Even though we ran two sessions we had to turn away many units.

- Identify six forest trees common to the area where you live. Tell how both wildlife and humans use them.
- Identify six forest plants (other than trees) that are useful to wildlife. Tell which animals use them and for what purposes.

WILD SIDE continued from page 4

through the park, not just at the feeder. If we have snow cover, there will also be lots of animal tracks; maybe you will see a rabbit. Sometimes the tracks in the snow tell a story. They may end with the imprint of wings around them, the end for a small mammal and a winter meal for a hawk or owl.

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.

GRANT UPDATE

In January, the Nature Society received word from the MDNR (Michigan Department of Natural Resources) that the society's grant application for a developing a forestry management plan has been approved. The next step will be to hire a plan writer. After the plans (one for each nature park) have been written and submitted to the DNR, a request for reimbursement from the DNR for 50% of the cost for the plans will be made.

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

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

Please contact us to become 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.

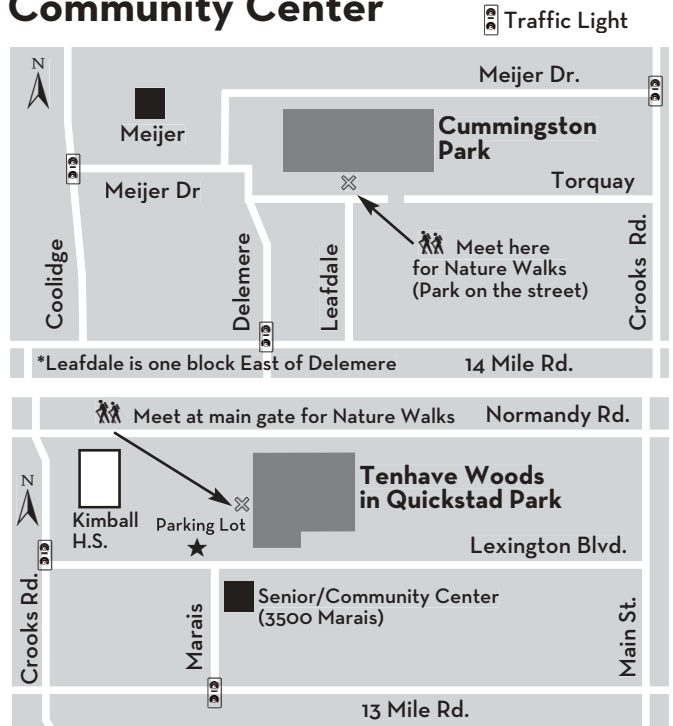
Board of Directors

President: *Heather J. Muller* 248-546-4184
 Vice President: *John DeLisle* 248-585-9002
 Treasurer: *Bob Guymer* 248-399-7042
 Beautification: *Jack Kerby* 248-879-8010
 Communications: *Ted Vickers* 248-549-5366
 Education: *Kristine Hammond* 248-577-5171
 Program: *Bob Muller* 248-398-0195
 Ways & Means: *Helen Cost* 248-549-9423

Newsletter

Ted Vickers TGV1121@aol.com
Ann Williams fedwards11@earthlink.net

Our Nature Parks & Senior Community Center



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummington Park trail maps, please go to our web site (bottom of p.5), link on to **Park Locations** and then **Map for park trail**

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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

