



THE Chinquapin

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SUMMER 2005

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

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.

Looking Back at the Nature Society's Early Years

In June of this year, it will have been five years since the Royal Oak Nature Society began to take form. Back then, a group of citizens who wanted to keep Cummington Park and Tenhave Woods as natural areas, came together to form what would eventually become the Royal Oak Nature Society.

The actual impetus for its formation occurred during the writing of the 1999 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The consultants assembling the plan noted that both parks were under utilized and needed work. Based on this finding, the Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in February of 2000 made a recommendation to the Royal Oak City Commission that both parks become Conservancy Parks.

Later that month, the City Commission approved the recommendation. This park status has "protection and management of the natural/cultural environment as the primary focus with recreational use as a secondary objective". With this new position, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board would assign an ad hoc committee to figure out how to best utilize these natural areas.

The Advisory Board specifically recruited volunteers to represent certain areas within the city. Gretchen Greenwood was the liaison from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Greg Rassel, Superintendent of Public Works for the City of Royal Oak

worked as the City government liaison. Neighborhood representatives were Jack Kerby from the Cummington and Todd Vince from the Tenhave Woods. Phil Townsend, principal of Starr Elementary, represented the Royal Oak School Board, and Bob Muller represented the community as a naturalist. This group first met on June 22, 2000.

The group's charter as determined by the Advisory Board was "to work together to develop a program for the proper development of Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park".

The early activity of the committee began with a walk-thru of both parks. That was followed by discussions regarding the history of these parks and brainstorming sessions on ways to increase positive traffic for them. Building trails, speaker and nature walk programs topped the improvement list. From June 2000 to January 2001, the group met monthly to hammer out a master plan for both nature areas. Mission and objective statements were made to permit proper focus for future activities.

The two major objectives that were agreed on were to preserve & enhance the natural attributes of these two parks and develop a curriculum for a broad range of audiences, including formal (classroom) & non-formal (signage) training to promote environmental education.

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New Board Members and Elections

The latest Royal Oak Nature Society Board Member elections took place on February 2, 2005, during the General Meeting/Speaker Program. The current board member term covers the period from February '05 to February '06. You will find the current board members along with their phone numbers listed on the back page of this newsletter and if you want to e-mail any of them, please go to our web site and link on *Get Involved* or *Contacts*.

The Royal Oak Nature Society has had some changes with new people helping to fill board positions. Heather Muller, our President since our founding, has resigned and is being replaced by Tim Turner. John DeLisle has become our first Vice President.

Tim Turner has been involved in the Boy Scouts in Royal Oak since he was ten years old. He is an Eagle Scout and now sits on the board that reviews Eagle projects (something our parks has been enriched by). Tim has an extensive background in outdoor education, especially the training of others to provide this type of education. For many years he was the head of Scout leader training for the surrounding communities. Tim is also the committee chairman for Royal Oak Boy Scout troop 1627. He is on the board of directors for Safari Club Internationals Detroit Chapter and is the editor of their magazine.

John DeLisle has a BS degree in Horticulture from Michigan State University. He has studied such topics as ecological restoration, emerald ash borers, evolutionary biology of woodland and prairie plants, wetland plants and adoption of sedges. He was also a teaching assistant at MSU. John has worked at numerous nurseries before ending up at the Detroit Zoo, where he works with everything from the native plants to tropicals. John has a long background in volunteer work as a baseball coach working with children for both the Shrine Academy and various travel teams. All of the above will add a new dimension to the society's knowledge base.

EARLY YEARS continued from page 1

Then work began to develop ways to implement these objectives. High priority was placed on a formal kick-off for the organization and attracting new members. With these activities in mind, the committee decided to create a formal and on-going organization to provide structure to the future work. The committee recommended that its name become the Royal Oak Nature Society and that this organization would carry out the goals for the nature parks. The original ad hoc committee members became the steering committee of the Nature Society. The steering committee would provide leadership for five sub-committees that were needed to meet the Society's objectives. On January 17, 2001, the Royal Oak Nature Society was officially formed with a kick-off meeting at Starr Elementary. The response was overwhelming as over 70 people showed up! Several meetings took place after that at which committees were setup to handle communications,

education, programs, beautification plus ways and means. Volunteers were then selected to chair them.

On March 7th, 2001, the Nature Society had its first general membership meeting along with its' first speaker program, a slide show on wildflowers, presented by botanists Don and Joyce Drife.

In January 2002, the Nature Society presented its Master Plan for the two parks to the Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. After being approved, the Plan was presented at a public hearing in March. It then moved on to the Royal Oak City Commission who subsequently approved those plans in April 2002.

At a general meeting in February 2002, the Steering Committee was replaced by an elected board of directors.

With the Master Plan being approved by the City, the framework had officially been set in place to guide the Royal Oak Nature Society towards reaching its goals and objectives.

Remembering Ray Safranoff

I am sorry to announce the passing of Ray Safranoff. Mr. Safranoff is given credit for discovering Cummington Park in the city's map of the park, published as a handout in the 1960's. In a phone interview with Mr. Safranoff several years ago, he corrected that statement and stated that he, Ed Beimel and Joe Fisher, all wild flower collectors, found the Cummington area while exploring all the wooded areas around Royal Oak in the early 50's. Mr. Safranoff gave a talk to the Royal Oak Chapter of the Woman's Farm and Garden Club on the Cummington area. The ladies thought it would be a good project and started the cleaning and trail building in what would become Cummington Park in 1959. The next time you are in Cummington, take a moment to think about Ray Safranoff and thank him for bringing Cummington's existence to the attention of others. Those of us that use Cummington Park have had our lives enriched by this gentleman.

— Bob Muller

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

Summer Speaker Programs

"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.

NATURE WALK DESCRIPTIONS

June 11th: Late spring. Come see what is happening at the end of the woodland wildflower season.

July 20th: Summer Woods

August 24th: Late summer. Woodland and meadow wildflowers.

PARK PROBLEMS

If you are near or in one of our two nature parks and see or hear suspicious or unlawful behavior, please call the Royal Oak Police Department's non-emergency number, 248-246-3500 and inform them of the problem.

General Meeting with Speaker Programs

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

Date	Program
June 1st	"The Fun and Science of Insect Study"
Sept. 7th	To Be Announced

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location
June 11th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Cummingston
July 20th	Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
August 24th	Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Cummingston

Grants Update

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources recently notified the Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Department that it was not one of the recipients of the 2004 Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant. The city, with much help from the Nature Society, had applied for a matching grant that would have paid for an improved trail system, signage, turnstiles and benches for Tenhave Woods. This was the second time the city was turned down for this grant, so the Nature Society Ways and Means committee has decided to look for different funding sources for the project instead of reapplying in 2005.

As reported in the Spring 2005 issue of *The Chinquapin*, the DNR did award the city an

Education and Outreach Grant through the Forest Stewardship Program. It is a matching grant for \$800 that will enable the city to hire a forestry expert to write long term management plans for both Tenhave Woods and Cummingston Park. Nature Society Board members will be working closely with the forester to insure that the plans will support the goals set forth in the Master Plan that was adopted for the parks in 2002. The project has to be completed by September 15, 2005. If you would like to learn more about the program, go to the DNR website www.michigan.gov/dnr and type "forest stewardship" in the search box.

Woodward Dream Cruise

At last year's Woodward Dream Cruise, the Nature Society took in \$600 running the Gunn Dyer Park (Chester & Hampton) parking concession. It is a quick way to add some money to our coffers and also puts our name in front of the public. The Board has decided that we want to do it again and according to the City, we will be getting the opportunity to do it again this year. This year's Dream Cruise will be on Saturday, August 20th. If you think that you might be interested in helping out, please contact Ted Vickers at 248-549-5366.

Bibliofile

Bob Muller mentioned the following titles in his "Owl Hoot" program March 2:

Michigan Trees, by Barnes and Wagner revised 2004. In print since 1913, this revision is a tremendous improvement. The single best resource for trees of Michigan.

Fishes of the Great Lakes Region, by Hubbs and Lagler revised by Gerald Smith. Smith's revision has made the book far more user friendly and has added a significant amount of new material.



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

Naming the Cummington Trails

BY BOB MULLER

For the last four years we have been actively rebuilding old trails and creating new ones in both Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park. In Cummington, we have completed the trails east of Leafdale and will start this spring researching where trails west of Leafdale should be built. As we add new trails to both parks, we have been trying to put them in areas that take us by the unique features of the parks.

Many people use these trails simply to take walks, but the parks are also nature study areas. Therefore, we want our trail system to pass by the maximum number of plant communities, individual plant species, different animal habitat and geological features.

At the very least, it has taken over a year to plot and map where we want to put a new trail. Trail maps can be found on our web site www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature/locations.html.

I have been asked why some of the trails have the names that they do and what they mean. The following is an explanation of the names used for the Cummington park trails.

Several of Cummington's trails have existed since the park was created back in the 1950's. There was a handout folder that the City of Royal Oak had back then that had a map with trail names and the flowers you could find along them. Most of the trails from that time have grown over during the last twenty years when programs were not being offered in the park. If a trail still exists or we build one in an area that used to have a trail, we try to use the name shown in the old folder. Leafdale,



The new Shagbark Trail built last fall.

the boulevard trail at the main entrance, has remained since the park opened. I have been told that Leafdale is not just a woodsy name, but also the name of the farm owner that sold his land to Cummington, a land speculator and developer.

The Gentian trail is in the approximate location of a trail of that name off the old park folder. Gentians are a group of beautiful wildflowers, but as of yet we have not rediscovered them in the park. The other trails in the park are basically new. As we have re-established the meadow by removing grapevines, we felt the new trail running through it and past the bird feeder should be called the Meadow Trail.

The newsletter you are reading is called *The Chinquapin*, named after a type of white oak growing just inside Cummington's main entrance. We had thought that there was only one Chinquapin tree in Cummington, but since then we have found several more in the park. The Chinquapin Trail is a combination of an old trail off the folder and a trail of

convenience made by those walking through the park. It got its name because the trail goes through the area where we have found the new Chinquapins.

The only people other than us to volunteer their time have been local groups of Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. The Eagle Scout trail was given its name to honor the boys that have built these trails as part of their Eagle Scout project (the Scout trail at Tenhave is named for the same reason).

Our newest trails, the Shagbark and the Arkona trail were just built this past October. The Shagbark got its name for the more than thirty Shagbark Hickory trees along its short length. The Shagbark Hickory is a tree that isn't particularly fond of growing in wet soil, so it is surprising the number we have in Cummington. The Arkona Trail is named after the fact that a portion on the beach ridge from postglacial Lake Arkona runs through the park. Lake Arkona was one of the predecessors of Lake Erie. The lake edge entered

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Royal Oak's Wild Side

BY BOB MULLER

By the time you read this, most of the spring wildflowers will have finished blooming. The leaves will have returned to the woods and it will be green again. This is the time of year that just a few steps into the woods will magically remove you from the city. Although it will be green until October, this is still a time of change. There isn't the sudden explosion of spring nor autumn's brilliant display as the leaves lose their green and reveal their hidden colors. Summer becomes a time of careful observation and exploration.

Scan the woods carefully and see what is hiding right in front of you. A single bird or flower can add a flash of color to the cool green background. Scarlet Tanagers are often seen in Cummingston in the

spring; so red they make cardinals look brown. Michigan lilies can be found in both parks. Their large orange flowers are so tall you don't have to bend over to examine them. See if you can find the Blue Lobelia in Cummingston; we discovered it two summers ago and it is spreading. True Solomon's seal and a Hackberry tree have been found along Tenhave Wood's swamp trail. Tenhave also has a great horned owl; listen, maybe you will hear it call.

Even things like the loss of our ash trees can have an up side; the sun that has been let onto the forest floor is changing things. Plants that haven't been seen in decades are showing up, as well as

some we didn't know we had. Water Plantain on the edge of Tenhave's pond has been holding on in the shade since the pond was sunny in the 1970's. It flowered last summer; how many other aquatic plants may show up?



Michigan Holly was covered with red berries last fall along the Scout trail, we had never seen this plant before and it is a large shrub. More than likely, the lack of sun kept it from setting fruit before. Explore

these areas and see what you can find and make sure to tell us what you have discovered

I believe any time you walk through Royal Oaks forests; there will always be something new to discover. You simply have to look. 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.

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NAMING TRAILS from page 4

Royal Oak where Coolidge crosses Woodward and continued paralleling Coolidge just to the east and then ran through Cummingston to the northeast corner of the park. This was approximately 13,000 years ago. If you were around then, you could have sat on the Arkona beach and looked south out onto a Great Lake and turned around to the north and seen mammoths and mastodons. It was a very different natural world than what we have here today. We probably need

to change this trail's name to the Arkona Beach Trail.

Names are important. Hopefully, we have named these trails well enough to help tell the story of the land that is Cummingston Park. I have no idea what the names will be for the trails to the west of Leafdale. I am sure, though, that as we explore that area and decide where trails should be, their names will become obvious to us.

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.

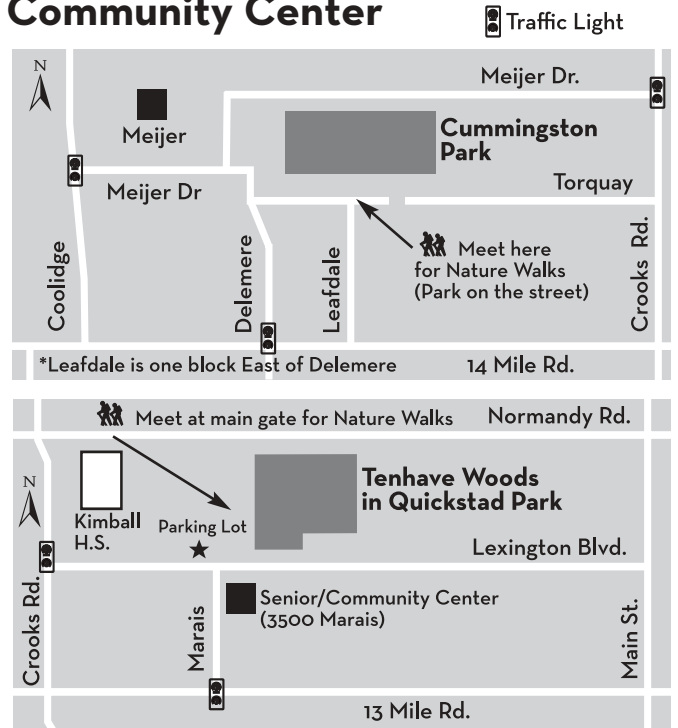
Board of Directors

President: *Tim Turner* 248-320-4819
 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 & Cummingston 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

