



THE Chinquapin

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SUMMER 2006

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

*Current Membership
Season: Sept '05-Aug '06*

If you would like to become a Royal Oak Nature Society member, please fill out a membership form (page 5) and mail it along with a check to the Nature Society or give the form and check/cash to a Nature Society board member.

A membership entitles you to have our newsletter, *The Chinquapin*, mailed to you four times a year. The mailing begins with the fall issue and ends with the summer one. 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.

SPRING STEWARDSHIP WORKDAYS IN TENHAVE WOODS

We will be meeting at the entrance to Tenhave Woods

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Forest Stewardship for Our Nature Parks

BY DENA SERRATO, *Master Woodland Steward*

Before I attended the first public meeting of the Royal Oak Nature Society back in January of 2001, I was totally unaware that Royal Oak is home to two of the last forested natural areas left in southeast Oakland County. I remember being really excited to realize that we citizens could play a part in the preservation and restoration of our botanical gems, Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park. The Society needed someone to fill the Ways and Means board position, so I signed up to help. I started to research the grants we could apply for to help us to reach our goals. I discovered that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) offers grants through their Forest Stewardship Program. The MDNR gives financial assistance to owners of forested land to hire a forestry expert to write a management plan. This sounded like something that could really help the Nature Society, but I wondered; just what is forest stewardship?

To answer my question I enrolled in a class offered by MSU Extension called the Master Woodland Stewards Program. It's similar to the Master Gardeners volunteer program. Participants take classes taught by MDNR staff and other forestry professionals. Then they volunteer for projects in their community to help teach other people about how to care for forested lands.

The classes began by teaching us about tree identification, measurement, planting, pests, and diseases. We also learned about

the different types of forest habitats in Michigan, forest mapping and measuring, and how to evaluate the health of a forest. All those topics fall under the important first step of forest stewardship: familiarizing yourself with the current conditions of your woodland. This step also includes such things as making lists of all the plants and wildlife in your woods, including rare and endangered species, a site history (past uses), and soil and water conditions.

The second step is to decide what your goals and desires are for the site. What I realized during the classes is that forest stewardship can mean different things to different people. Some of the participants were there to learn how to manage their woodlot for timber harvest. Others were interested in creating wildlife habitat for game. The Nature Society had decided in its Master Plan that its goal for the parks was to "Work with concerned citizens of Royal Oak... and the City to preserve and enhance the natural attributes of these areas." and to "Work with naturalists and educators to develop curriculum for a broad range of audiences."

The third step in the process is to create a management plan that enables you to reach your goals. These plans typically outline both short term and long-term actions. Short-term actions often involve addressing the obstacles that might prevent you from achieving your goals, such as invasive plants or pests, flooding and soil erosion. Those problems have to be solved before any real progress can be made. For forest owners

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(by the soccer fields) at 9

WORKDAYS continued from page 1

am for stewardship workdays on the following Saturdays: May 6th, 13th, 20th and June 3rd. We will be pulling garlic mustard and should be done by 11am. All you need to bring are gloves, shoes that can get muddy and bug spray. No special tools or skills are required. The garlic mustard is spreading and starting to overtake the native plants. Please consider helping out. It's a wonderful time of the year to be in the woods. A workday will be cancelled in the case of thunderstorms or high winds. Call Dena Serrato at 248-542-2820 for more info.

EDUCATION DIRECTOR POSITION OPENING

The Education committee focuses its efforts on education outreach programs that promote understanding and appreciation of the environment by involving children with our local parks and nature programs.

Programs include:

- Nature Nights (two a year held between January and March)
- Habitat (Kindergarten/1st Grade)
- 19th Century Farm Woodlot (4th Grade)
- Tree Characteristics (5th Grade)

If you are interested in becoming the Royal Oak Nature Society Education Director, please contact Ted Vickers at either 248-549-5366 or tgvt1121@sbcglobal.net.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP continued from page 1

who want to harvest timber, a short-term goal may be to do some selective thinning of undesirable trees to allow desirable trees to grow larger and straighter. Hunters might want to plant hedgerows or grasslands adjacent to their woods to create habitat for wildlife. Long-term goals may include trail and fence construction, and plant community and wetland restoration.

The fourth step is to make a schedule and timeline for management activities. This helps you to prioritize and budget for your goals.

The classes also provided information about forestry grants offered by the MDNR and lists of consulting foresters.

After taking the classes I was sure that a Forest Stewardship Plan would benefit the Nature Society. By then we had already adopted a Master Plan, but this plan would help us to further evaluate the health of the nature parks and to develop a more long-term activities schedule. I presented a recommendation to the Nature Society Board that we apply for a MDNR grant to have stewardship plans written for both parks.

The next step was to find a MDNR-certified plan writer. One of the grant requirements is that only foresters that meet the professional standards and go through special MDNR training can be hired by landowners to write the plans. I checked the list of certified plan writers and saw that one of them, Matthew Carmer, lived right here in Royal Oak. I contacted him and he was interested in helping the Nature Society. Matt attended our board meeting in March of 2004 and explained to the group that the best grant to apply for would be the MDNR 2005 Education and Outreach Grant. We were lucky to find Matt. He has a degree in Fish and Wildlife Biology, experience in Plant Systematics and Watershed Management, and work experience in environmental consulting and wetland delineation.

In August of 2004 we submitted a grant application to have Stewardship Plans

written for both parks. A thanks goes out to Helen Cost, who by then was the Ways and Means chairperson and did most of the work writing the grant. Greg Rassel was our support person from the city. We were awarded a matching grant for \$800.00 in January, of 2005. We would have to match the \$800 with volunteer hours. Each hour someone volunteered was worth \$10.

The board worked on the grant with Matt Carmer monthly from February through August of 2005. We decided to combine both parks into one plan to avoid repetition. Matt spent much time in the parks evaluating their health and delineating the wetlands. He also obtained soil surveys, maps and aerial photos to include in the plan. We presented a draft of the plan to the Royal Oak City Council in August, which they approved. We sent the plan, along with our volunteer hour reports, to the MDNR in September. they approved the plan and sent us the \$800 so we could pay Matt his fee.

The Nature Society will now use the plan as a reference and guide for many years to come. We will change and update it periodically as needed. The plan will also be very beneficial when we apply for grants that ask for professionally prepared documentation of the natural resources in the parks.

You too can become a woodland steward of our Royal Oak nature preserves. You can join the Beautification and Restoration team, or you can help update the many surveys (flora, bird, mammal, insect, etc) currently underway. Explore the woods with children and share the wonder of the natural world with them. Woodland stewards realize that it's everyone's responsibility to care for our natural areas so they will always exist as wildlife refuges and very special places for us to visit.

You can view the complete Stewardship Plan on the Nature Society website under Related Links. We will also have a copy available for viewing at our monthly speaker meetings.

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

Summer Speaker Programs

June 7th: Rodger Bajorek, retired naturalist from Stony Creek Metro Park, talked to our group several years ago about Whitetail deer. Now he is back with a talk on his trip to the Galapagos Islands. This is where Darwin began to formulate his views on the origin of species. The isolated islands of the Galapagos have fascinating wildlife that has radiated outward from the few land animals to reach its shores.

Sept. 6th: Learn about the trees that make up the forests of Cummington and Tenhave Woods from Bob Muller, a Royal Oak Nature Society naturalist. The diversity in our parks is great; we have 41 of the 52 species of deciduous trees that can be found in Oakland County. The forest, although it looks constant to us, is always changing. How did the trees get here after the ice age and where did they come from? What did the first settlers do to change the forest make up? Invasive fungus and insects have altered the forest in major ways three times in the 20th century. If this had happened in the 19th century would the impact been different? What can tree rings tell us about the trees life history? Trees are far more than what shades your yard and causes you to have to rake each fall. Come and learn about these major life forms that define the environment we live in.

General Meeting with Speaker Programs

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

| Date | Program |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| June 7th | A Trip to the Galapagos Islands |
| Sept. 6th | Trees, Trees, Trees |

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

| Date | Day | Time | Location |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| June 17th | Saturday | 10:00 a.m. | Cummington Park |
| July 19th | Wednesday | 7:00 p.m. | Tenhave Woods |
| August 23rd | Wednesday | 7:00 p.m. | Cummington Park |
| Sept. 24th | Sunday | 2:00 p.m. | Tenhave Woods |

Nature Walk Descriptions

June 17th: Come and see what is happening at the end of the woodland wild flower season.

July 19th: Come and see our summer woods.

August 23rd: Come and see late summer woodland and meadow wild flowers.

September 24th: *Mushrooms* - lead by Dianne Pruden. We will survey the park and attempt to identify the mushrooms and fungus we encounter.

Childhood Recollection of Tenhave Woods

The following e-mail was received a short time back & helps tell the importance of being able to explore natural areas when we are young:

My family moved into a new house across from the northeast corner of the park in the fall of 1967 when I was 7 years old. Shortly after that, a little boy was murdered and the woods were fenced in. I grew up walking in those woods with my dog. I ran across your organization's plan online for preservation and increased accessibility for Tenhave Woods at Quickstad Park and I was pleased to see that your organization is working to maintain and restore this valuable wilderness area. I moved out of the area after

college in the 1980's, but I believe that the time that I spent in that quiet wilderness has stayed with me throughout my life. I believe that an understanding of the value of wild areas can be experienced better on a quiet walk in the woods than it can being taught solely in a classroom. My lifelong fondness for natural places has taken me on many trips to incredible wilderness areas throughout North America, but it all began in that little woods. Although I am a great nature lover, I have lived in the city of Chicago for over 20 years and wish there was an area like that near my house now. Keep up the good work; a future nature lover may be living nearby.

— Joan Levergood of Chicago, Illinois



Leo Long & native American fish.



Kristine Hammond & bird coloring books

Calling All Kids: Nature Nights are Back!

After taking a year off, Nature Nights are back! This year as in the past, Nature Nights were extremely successful. The first one was held on Friday, January 27th, at Shrine Elementary followed by the other one on Friday, March 10th, at Upton Elementary. Nearly 400 children and parents total showed up at these two Royal Oak schools, observing, participating and asking the exhibitors a lot of questions. As in the past, free raffle drawings were a hit with the children.

The Nature Society thanks Chris Baumhardt (Shrine) & Michelle Weiss-Glaza (Upton) for all of their hard work in helping to set up their respective Nature Nights. They both did a great job!

Thanks to the following Exhibitors:

| NAME | FROM | EXHIBIT | NATURE NIGHT |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Boy Scout Troop #1627 | Whittier Elementary | <i>Tree Rings</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| Bob Muller | Royal Oak Nature Society | <i>Skulls</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| Tim Turner | Royal Oak Nature Society | <i>Skulls & Skins</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| John Topor | Royal Oak Nature Society | <i>Fossils</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| Leo Long | North American Native Fish Assoc. | <i>Native Fishes</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| Nancy Vickers | Royal Oak Nature Society | <i>Crafts (Birdfeeder)</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| Dena Serrato | Royal Oak Nature Society | <i>Compost & Soils</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| Kristine Hammond | Royal Oak Nature Society | <i>Birds</i> | Shrine & Upton |
| Edythe Sonntag | Detroit Zoo Senior Zookeeper | <i>Reptiles</i> | Shrine |
| Boy Scout Troop # 1634 | Shrine Elementary | <i>Skulls</i> | Shrine |
| P.J. Garner | A Squirrel's Tale Wildlife Rehab | <i>Animal Rehabilitation</i> | Shrine |
| Jerry & Steve Kunnath | John Vincent's Flymart Fly Shop | <i>Fly tying</i> | Shrine |
| Jimmy Kipps | Boy Scout Troop #1627 | <i>Insect Display</i> | Upton |
| Laura Morden | Royal Oak Nature Society | <i>Plant Seeding</i> | Upton |

Thanks also go out to the following assistants: Mrs. Sybil Derderian (Shrine) & Patti Oppenheim (Upton) helped Nancy Vickers Carol Jarvie (Shrine) plus Janice Wheelock & Ann Marie Monette. (Upton) helped Dena Serrato

Royal Oak's Wild Side

BY BOB MULLER

Even though we have been looking very closely at our nature parks for six years now, we are always surprised by discovering new things. They have always been here, we just haven't noticed them. Some may have been missing from view because the environment was just not right for them. Plants often survive for years as seeds in the ground waiting for the right conditions. Even animals may do this. In our first invertebrate survey of the restored pond, we have found large numbers of fairy shrimp, a graceful half inch long shrimp like animal that glides through the water. In the past five years of surveys we have never seen them. In the spring you would generally see a pair of mallards, but the open pond has attracted up to a dozen. We will be watching the pond bottom as it dries to see what plants appear, after being hidden for the past ten years. We did



several owl hoot programs in March to see what our owl population is. Tenhave Woods seems to have a healthy population of screech owls. Last summer we found Catalpa trees growing in the new sunny spots created by the dead ash trees. Brush piles, built from cut down invasive buckthorn trees, have helped the rabbits by providing places to hide. We see occasional bunnies near the protection of a brush pile, watching us instead of running away. Every year we find at least one wild flower to add to our flora survey.

I believe any time you walk through our Royal Oak forests; there will always be something new to discover. Become an explorer; find something you have never seen before. 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.

Gear Up for Woodward Dream Cruise!

It is about that time of year to start thinking Dream Cruise. This year, it will take place on Saturday, August 19th. Last year, we had a great group of volunteers, helping to collect money, answering questions and directing traffic. If there are enough volunteers this year, we might extend our stay beyond 5 p.m. Every vehicle admission helps to boost our coffers, with very little work required on our part. The City does most of the work turning Gunn Dyer Park, located

just a couple blocks north of Memorial Park, into a parking lot.

Anyone who works a shift, may leave their car at the park afterwards, walk about a block and be in the middle of all of the Dream Cruise action.

So come join us for a fun day of classic cars, talking with other Nature Society members and helping the Society raise some money.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Ted Vickers at 248-549-5366 or at tgv1121@sbcglobal.net.

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.

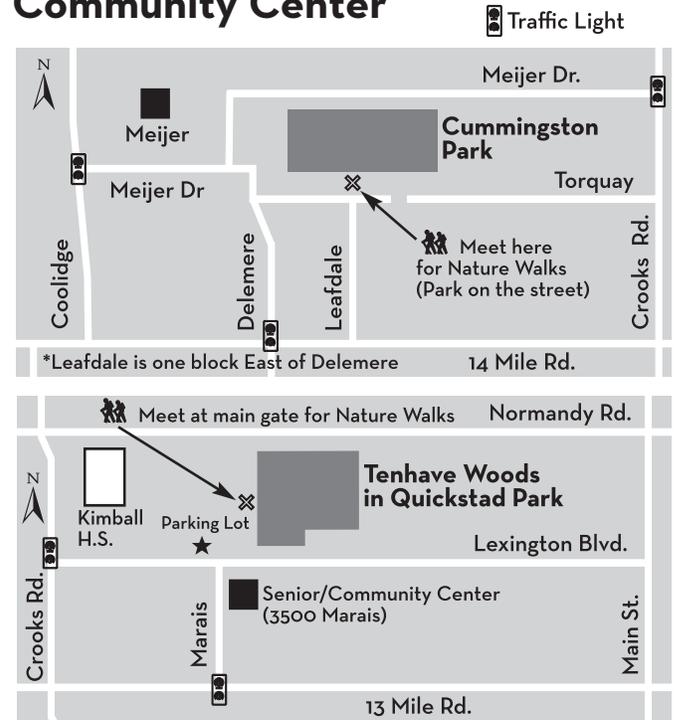
Program: Coordinates and schedules nature walks & nature oriented speaker programs, develop programs for outside organizations and catalog plants, trees & birds.

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 & Restoration:
Jack Kerby [Cunningston] 248-879-8010
Dena Serrato [Tenhave Woods] 248-542-2820
 Communications: **Ted Vickers** 248-549-5366
 Program: **Bob Muller** 248-398-0195
 Ways & Means: **Helen Cost** 248-549-9423
 Newsletter: **Ted Vickers** tgvl121@sbcglobal.net
Ann Williams ann.m.williams@comcast.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

