

# The Chinquapin

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*The Official Publication of  
The Royal Oak Nature Society*

*[www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature/index.html](http://www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature/index.html)*



## 1 Year Anniversary of the Royal Oak Nature Society

January 18<sup>th</sup> marked the one-year anniversary of the Royal Oak Nature Society. We have wonderful enthusiasm for our effort and have accomplished a lot in the way of providing education and planning for the future. Below are the highlights of our first year.

Programs – Bob Muller did a fantastic job coordinating (and even presenting on occasion) our Free Speaker Programs. Held the first Wednesday of each month (from September to May), these nature-based talks included fossils, reptiles, and even a history of the Red Run. Check out our calendar and join us soon. Maybe bring a kid or two, the programs are a great way to spend family time!

Nature Walks – Again, Bob Muller, our resident Naturalist, organized these educational walks through both Cummingston Park and Tenhave Woods. Each month the walks adapt to the changes in the season; in January they demonstrated how to identify trees when there are no leaves, and in the spring we are all looking forward to a spectacular show of wildflowers. Don and Joyce Drife, our resident Botanists, have helped tremendously in this effort and we thank them for their great expertise in cataloging the flora and fauna in our parks. Check out our Web site for the complete list, the total close to 300 plants!

Master Plan – We completed documenting our grand plan for both Cummingston Park and Tenhave Woods (see related article, p3). It was quite an undertaking and involved researching the

parks, coordinating with the neighborhoods, and trying to envision what the Community wants, both short-term and long-term, for these parks. These plans are a work in-progress!

Non-Profit Status – Since we know that we will have to raise funds by soliciting grants and donations, getting incorporated and obtaining our 501(c)3 status was important.

Dena Serrato and Jack Kerby coordinated on getting all the legal mombojumbo filled out, only to find out that the City may be setting up a Trust for organizations like us! They will continue working with Royal Oak and we will keep you posted on their progress.

Awareness – All the work we have done has definitely started to create an "awareness" that the city has nature parks. The parks seem to be used, but now we have to ensure that people treat them properly so they are not damaging what we are trying to save! Unfortunately, it seems that the people who misuse the nature parks are "responsible" adults. Two incidents of vandalism occurred in Tenhave Woods; each incident was with adults and each adult responsible cleaned up the park in response to the Nature Society's request.

We look forward to another year of providing environmental education and stewardship to our community. We hope you join us as we move in to get our hands dirty building trails, adding signs, and restoring these natural areas for all to enjoy.

~Gretchen Greenwood



## **Election of Officers**

At our next meeting, held February 6th at 7:00 pm (Senior Center), we will be electing officers for the 2002 year and assigning chairpersons. Currently, leadership of the club is provided through the Steering Committee, which was set up by the City Commission to study how to utilize the nature parks. This Steering Committee will disassemble and the new "Board" will take over leadership. If you want to get involved, this is the meeting to attend! We have both board and chair positions that need to be filled! And with the Master Plan being completed we have a lot of work to complete. If we fill all the positions, then the work is spread out and everyone can enjoy their volunteer time more! Please feel free to nominate someone, or better yet, yourself! Call any Steering Committee member with questions.

### **Board Positions**

#### **President:**

Presides over all meetings, serve as ex-officio member of all committees, review by-laws, and writes agenda and conducts monthly board meetings.

#### **Vice President:**

Presides over all meetings in the absence of the president, and perform all duties of the president if the need should arise.

#### **Secretary:**

Keeps minutes of all meetings and must have a copy of the bylaws on hand at all times.

#### **Treasurer:**

Keeps a proper set of books that will be closed June 30th so they may be presented for an audit. The treasurer must collect and disburse all funds, sign receipts, pay all bills within 30 days of receipt and present the Treasurer's Report at each board meeting and at the annual meeting.

#### **Membership:**

Notifies members of all meetings and conducts necessary correspondence at the request of the board. Recruits and coordinates volunteers for services and special events.

### **Chair Positions**

#### **Ways and Means:**

Investigates means of fund raising and will follow through on these suggestions with the approval of the Board. They are responsible for collecting any monies raised and transferring it to the treasurer.

#### **Communication:**

Provides publicity to about organizational activities to the general membership and public. Documents activities of the Society through various mediums. Works with Membership board member accordingly.

#### **Beautification:**

Responsible for surveying the parks, defining and maintaining a trail system, signage, and enhancing the overall park experience and safety.

#### **Programs:**

Responsible for coordinating speaker programs and nature walks. Documents plants, trees, birds, and mammals.

#### **Education:**

Works with local schools and organizations to provide environmental education programs.

## Dogs in the Parks



We need the cooperation of all dog owners to please have their dogs on leash and to take their refuse with them while in the nature parks. We have had incidents where dogs have charged people walking in the woods; in some cases the dogs are friendly but in other cases the owners have warned the people not to move. Friendly or not, no one should have to worry about domestic dogs approaching them in the park. The animals that make their home in the woods don't appreciate it much either. The current park ordinance does not allow any dogs in the nature area at all. Let's not have to enforce the law because the privilege is being abused. If you want your dog to run off leash then use the appropriate areas: at Tenhave Woods the Dog Run is located *outside* the fence on the Normandy side and at Cummington Park the Dog Run is located *outside* the woods along Torquy.

We will be adding signs to both parks and the Royal Oak Police Department has agreed to enforce these areas once the new signs are up. Thanks for you cooperation!

## Get Ready to Dig In!

On January 3rd the Nature Society presented its Master Plan for Cummington Park and Tenhave Woods to the Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. With much excitement about the park improvements, the Parks and Recreation Board set March 7th at 7:30 pm at the Senior Citizens Center for a community-wide public hearing. The Master Plan can be viewed on our Web site or picked up at our February 6th meeting for review. We encourage all interested parties to review the Master Plan and provide feedback before or during the public hearing.



Once the public hearing takes place, the Parks and Recreation Board will vote on whether to approve the Plan. If all goes well, we will be able to work on some of our immediate tasks such as drainage, signage, new trails, and adding turnstiles. Get ready all you Beautification volunteers, your hands will be getting dirty!

## What is a Chinquapin?

A Chinquapin is a type of white oak. The Royal Oak Nature Society chose to name the newsletter "The Chinquapin" because of a Chinquapin Oak we have located in Cummington Park. A special thanks to member Colleen Hilzinger who created our beautiful Royal Oak Nature Society oak tree logo.

The following description of Chinquapin Oaks was found on the internet at [http://www.fl-dof.com/Pubs/trees\\_of\\_florida/chinquapinoak.html](http://www.fl-dof.com/Pubs/trees_of_florida/chinquapinoak.html).



The Chinquapin, which is also known as "yellow chestnut oak" is an excellent timber tree. It grows on various classes of soils, and is a tenacious tree on shallow, dry soil. The bark is light gray, and breaks up into short narrow flakes on the main trunk and old limbs.

It reaches a height of 50 to 80 feet. The straight, shapely

trunk bears a round-topped head composed of small branches, which makes it an attractive shade tree.

The leaves are oblong, two to six inches in length, one and one-half to four inches wide, and equally toothed or notched on the edges, resembling the



leaves of the Chestnut Oak. The fruit, which ripens in the fall of the first season, is light to dark brown when ripe, and edible if roasted. This acorn is from one-half to nearly an inch long, usually less than one inch in diameter and is set in a shallow cup attached without a stalk or by a very short stalk.

The wood is heavy, very hard, tough, strong, durable, and takes an excellent polish. It has been used in manufacturing lumber and timbers, cross-ties, fence-posts, and for fuel. A portion of the lumber no doubt goes to furniture.

## Winter/Spring Season Schedule – Everyone Welcome!

### General Meeting with Speaker Programs

7:00 pm – Royal Oak Senior Center

#### February 6 – **Butterflies and Moths of the World:**

The Colemans have traveled around the United States and the world photographing butterflies and moths. Come learn about these beautiful insects.

Speakers: Ray and Pat Coleman

#### March 6 – **Freshwater Mussels of South East Michigan:**

Learn about the diversity of these hidden animals. Find out what the Zebra mussels have done and what is being done to save our native mussels.

Speaker: Doug Sweet - Curator of Fishes, Belle Isle Aquarium

#### April 3 – **Michigan's Rare, Threatened and Endangered Plants:**

What is being done to help and save these plants.

Speaker: Elaine Chittenden - Collections Manager, Beal Botanical Gardens,  
Michigan State University

#### May 1 – **Cummingston and Quickstad, Royal Oak's Nature Parks:**

Some history, what is being planned for the parks and what is going on in them right now.

Speaker: Bob Muller

### Nature Walk Programs

9:00 am – Meet at the park

February 2 – Tenhave Woods at Quickstad Park

March 2 – Tenhave Woods at Quickstad Park

April 6 – Tenhave Woods at Quickstad Park

April 20 – Cummingston Park

May 4 – Tenhave Woods at Quickstad Park

May 11 – Cummingston Park

### Other Events

February 6 – Royal Oak Nature Society Elections (General Meeting) –  
7:00 pm @ Royal Oak Senior Center

March 7 – Public Hearing for the Royal Oak Nature Society's Master Plan  
7:00 pm @ Royal Oak Senior Center

April 19/20 – Whittier Elementary Nature Education Program



#### Steering Committee Members:

Program – Bob Muller (398.0195)

Communication – Gretchen Greenwood (288.2002)

Beautification – Jack Kerby (280.0186)

Ways & Means – Phil Townsend (549.0540)

Education – Todd Vince (288.4512)

#### Committee Chairmen:

Program – Mary Bogush

Communication – Heather Muller

Beautification – Derek Blount

Ways & Means – Dena Serrato

Education – Sue Harbert

#### Newsletter Staff:

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