



The Chinquapin

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

Winter 2013/14

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

FINAL NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

To continue receiving our newsletter "The Chinquapin" (beginning with the Spring 2014 edition), you need to be a paid-up Associate, Supporting or Patron 2013/14 Nature Society member.

There are four membership levels. General Membership is free and with it, you get Nature Society schedule updates e-mailed to you at least once a month. Associate Membership cost \$5 per year and gets you the above benefit along with four newsletters, "The Chinquapin", e-mailed to you quarterly. If you want, we can mail a hard copy to you instead. **With e-mail, the print quality of the newsletter is better and the photos are in color.** Supporting Membership is \$10 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus being listed a supporting member in our newsletter. Patron Membership is \$50 & up per year and gets you all of the above benefits, listed as a patron member in our newsletter, an invitation to our pre-Dream Cruise picnic at Gunn Dyer Park and one free ticket to our annual fundraiser. If you want to be an Associate,

(Continued on page 2)

What We Have Been Doing 2012/13

by Bob Muller & Ted Vickers

This has been a difficult two years. Although we have had deer in Tenhave Woods for about eight years, the plants were able to cope with the deer's browsing. Tenhave seemed to have escaped this until 2012, when over 15 deer took up residence. That year, over 8,000 trillium plants were browsed within a month. By mid-summer, the forest floor looked as if it had been weed wacked. It only takes three seasons of browsing to permanently kill trillium. All of the other nature areas, including state parks and private natural areas in Southeast Michigan, have been browsed to the point where if you wanted to keep spring wildflowers, fenced enclosures to keep deer out would be necessary. This would be like going into the wild to look at animals that were in cages.

Tenhave Woods is so small that the ability to fence deer out of the entire park is possible. During the summer and fall of 2012, we spent \$14,000 and over 600 hours of volunteer help to secure Tenhave Woods by increasing the height of the six foot high fence that bordered the homes on Lexington and Custer and repairing most of the gaps in the fence around the perimeter of the park. All was not perfect because there were two does and their four fawns in Tenhave this past summer. Thankfully, they did not cause enough damage to be a problem. We are still working on figuring out how these two does got in and will be attempting to fix that problem this coming winter. The fence work was accomplished with an Eagle Scout project, Nature Society volunteers who worked on it for almost a full year, and the many people from the general public who answered our call for

help. We came close to losing the collection of plants that have survived here since before the first settlers came to Royal Oak. We seemed to have saved Tenhave! Thanks to all who helped and cared.

Aside from the deer, good and strange things have happened in Tenhave Woods in 2012/13.

The Good: Two of our Nature Society members, Laura Gogola and Laurine Cybulski, did an amphibian survey this past spring. See "Frog Watching at Dragonfly Pond" on the next page for more details. Back in the 1970's, we had many amphibians in Tenhave. But between then and 2005, the water in the park became toxic. It had almost no dissolved oxygen, thus making the water unsuitable for the amphibians to reproduce in. With the revival of Dragonfly Pond in the fall of 2005, the American Toads that had been able to hold out in the park all of those years, had a population explosion the following spring. We listened each spring to see if any other species had held out, but except for the toads the forest was silent. In 2011, Spring Peepers and Copes Tree Frog showed up, and this past spring the ladies heard Western Chorus Frogs calling. We did manage to capture one and get photographs. It is just amazing that these tiny animals are repopulating this tiny natural area within the city.

The Strange: Dragonfly pond is a vernal pond which means it dries out occasionally. The main thing about vernal ponds is they do not contain fish. This makes it an ideal place for amphibians and many invertebrates to reproduce without fish, a major predator, being present. So

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

as I was sampling pond life for one of our pond life program this past spring, my eye caught what looked like fish larva. When it was in the viewing pan, I determined that we definitely had fish in Dragonfly Pond. At first, I thought goldfish. I have seen at least one person dumping their fish bowl into the pond. Some of the fish found had an orange color and some were dark. After taking them home and letting them grow, I realized they were a color morph of Fathead Minnows, called Rosy Reds. They are sold as food for large aquarium fish. Someone dumped them in the pond and they spawned. We had thousands of young fish. This fall we also have seen a large number of Water Lettuce plants floating in Dragonfly Pond. These are a tropical plant used in backyard fish ponds, and incredibly invasive in the Gulf States. The bright side is neither the Rosy Reds or Water Lettuce will make it through the winter. What amazes me is who today is not

aware of the danger of releasing plants and animals into the wild.

This past 2012/13 season has also included the introduction of some first time programs. These included our "Young Poets Contest" (Fall 2013 newsletter), Owl program for students (Summer 2013 newsletter), several park programs put on for the South Oakland YMCA's summer program, Mary Fredrick's Friends of Fungi group startup in July and Don Drife's Photographic Guild Photo talk and workshop held in July and August.

The above are the Nature Society highlights of this year (2012/13). But the best part of our work is that the general public is visiting Tenhave Woods every day. Our nature walks and programs are well attended, with an increased presence of young children. Hopefully, next year will be a little less intense and stressful for the Nature Society.

Frog Watching At Dragonfly Pond

by Laura Gogola & Laurine Cybulski



Frog Watch USA is program sponsored by The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) which monitors the diversity and distribution of frogs and toads in the U.S. It utilizes local volunteers interested in the environmental health of their communities. These volunteers become trained Citizen Scientists who do the actual field work.

We are volunteer docents at The Detroit Zoo and learned of the Frog Watch program through the zoo. The Associate Curator of Amphibians offered a half day training program where the volunteers were taught to identify the calls of local Michigan frogs and how to record the data using a specific protocol. Use of a protocol allows researchers across the U.S. to collate the data collected by thousands of Citizen Scientists. This protocol includes not just the identified frogs, but the frequency of the calls within a three minute period, the weather conditions, and the time after sundown and date of the observation. This information is then forwarded to the AZA coordinator.

Being members of the Royal Oak Nature Society for several years and discovering the uniqueness of Tenhave Woods, we felt the study of the frogs and toads in Dragonfly Pond would be of interest to the Society. Bob

Muller, the Nature Society naturalist, said no such study had been done and gave permission for us to proceed.

On March 26, 2013, armed with protocol sheet, thermometer, pencil, stopwatch, flashlight, cell phone, and BUG SPRAY, we entered Tenhave Woods at 8:15 pm. By 8:17 pm we were at the pond observing the prescribed five minutes of silence before beginning monitoring. The temperature was 42 degrees Fahrenheit, wind speed was 3 on the Beaufort wind scale, and there was no precipitation. With hands cupped behind our ears, we began monitoring at 8:23, and ended at 8:26. WE HEARD NO FROG CALLS.

We made weekly visits from March through June 24 and heard our first frogs, Spring Peepers, on April 4. American toads and a species of Gray Tree frog had previously been seen in the park. We confirmed the presence of the American toad and identified the Copes Gray tree frog as the species that was sighted. An unexpected discovery was the Western Chorus frog. Each weekly completed protocol sheet was then forwarded to the AZA coordinator with a copy going to Bob Muller. Unexpected problems were the noise and

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 1)

Supporting or Patron member, please fill out a membership form (page 5) and mail it along with a check to the Nature Society. Please list other household members you want included as Nature Society members (no extra cost).

Through your donation (tax deductible), you will be helping to cover the costs to produce our newsletter and will also be assisting in funding educational programs that we provide.

If you only want to be a General Member, please e-mail us the information asked for on our membership form (page 5) & send that information to:
naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us.

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.

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

*Our monthly general meeting/speaker programs (September to May) is held at the **Royal Oak Middle School** (formerly **Dondero High School**) which is located at 709 N. Washington. We meet in the auditorium or the "Gathering Place", both of which can be reached via the school's southeast entrance. Our June program is held at the Senior/Community Center located at 3500 Marais. At our monthly Wednesday meetings, we present speaker programs that are usually slide shows focusing on various natural history topics. If you watch nature programs on PBS or the Discovery Channel, this is better because you can meet with the speakers afterwards and ask questions. The general meeting begins around **7:25 pm**, with the speaker program following several minutes later. All speaker programs are free and reservations are not required.*

"The Kirtland's Warbler: Michigan's Special Bird" is being held on **December 4th**. At a time when the world is seeing its species rapidly go extinct, the Kirtland's warbler is not just a survivor, it's a rock star. People from all over the world come to northern Michigan every year to view this endangered species in its jack pine habitat. They come to see because it is rare, yes, but the Kirtland's warbler has a continuing storyline unlike any other animal. When its total population fell below 400 birds only 25 years ago, a small group of dedicated biologists, researchers and volunteers vowed to save the Kirtland's warbler from extinction, despite long odds. William Rapai is president of Grosse Pointe Audubon Society and has traveled across North America and to Cuba, Iceland, and Thailand to view and research birds. He is also an award winning reporter and editor for the Grand Forks Herald, the Detroit Free Press, and the Boston Globe. Join William who begins with an account of the warbler's discovery in the mid-nineteenth century and tells us about ornithologists' desperate hunt for information about this elusive new species. His presentation goes on to examine the dramatic events that led to its precarious status, its emergence as a lightning rod for controversy, and how strong leadership, vision, commitment, sustained effort, and cooperation came together to conserve a beautiful and unusual bird.

"A Seasonal Guide to Michigan Mushrooms" is being held on **January 8th**. Phil Tedeschi is the President of the Michigan Mushroom Hunters Club. His hobby for nearly 40 years has been mushroom hunting. Come and learn from Phil's experiences in the hunt for them. Find out what mushrooms we have here in Michigan, their identification and uses.

"Green Fire, Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic For Our Time" is being held on **February 5th**. This program will be a documentary video on Aldo Leopold. Leopold is the author of "A Sand Creek Almanac, a book written in the late 1940's. This was the first and possibly the best book on understanding that we need to look at the whole environment not just about the species found in it. He captured the emotion and love of the land and how its health is the only way to preserve our wild spaces. This video has been shown recently by environmental and nature groups and has been used as a fundraiser. The Royal Oak Nature Society has secured the right to show it and we are offering it to the general public as a service. If you are familiar with Aldo Leopold, you will find it enlightening about where he developed his thoughts about nature. If you are not familiar with him, please join us and learn about one of the most important people in the movement to protect and understand the wild land around us.

Royal Oak Nature Society Friends of Fungi is a group that promotes the understanding of, and an appreciation for, fungi in general and those fungi found in Tenhave, Cummingston, and other local urban woods. This group is open to anyone who wants to learn more about fungi which also includes mushrooms. During the winter, the group meets one Wednesday a month at the **Royal Oak Senior Center** (3500 Marais) beginning at **7:00 pm**.

"Using Guidebooks and Keys" is being held on **January 15th**. This program is being presented by Mary Fredricks, Royal Oak Nature Society Mycologist.

"Slime Molds" is being held **February 12th**. This program is being presented by Mary Fredricks, Royal Oak Nature Society Mycologist.

"Photographing Fungi" is being held on March **12th**, This program is being presented by Mary Fredricks, Royal Oak Nature Society Mycologist & professional photographers, Pat & Ray Coleman.

NATURE WALKS

CUMMINGSTON PARK: Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay

TENHAVE WOODS: Park in Marais/Lexington lot and meet at the Lexington entrance (300 feet east of parking lot). For the Owl Hoots & Full Moon walks, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

ARBORETUM: Park and meet on the north side of the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais)

Wearing boots while in the parks is recommended in the winter & spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer. All public nature walks are free & reservations are not required.

"Mammals of Tenhave" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Sunday, **December 8th**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Come and learn about the mammals that live in Tenhave Woods. We will look for signs of these mammals and have skulls and skins with us to help describe them and how they live.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Cummingston Park** on Thursday, **December 19th**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into the park and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Winter Birds" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Saturday, **January 11th** beginning at **2:00 pm**.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Friday, **January 31st**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into Tenhave and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Valentine Day Full Moon Walk" is being held on Friday, **February 14th**, beginning **7:30 pm** at **Tenhave Woods**. Experience the woods at a time of day that the park is normally closed. You never know what you may hear and see when the light levels are low. Bring a small flashlight.

"Trees & Shrubs" is being held at **Cummingston** on Saturday, **February 15th**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Come and learn how we identify trees & shrubs and what we can learn from their bark, buds etc.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at Cummingston Park on Friday, **February 28th**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into the park and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

(Continued from page 2)

lights from the football/soccer field neighboring the pond and the masses of American toads that were on walkway at the end of April. We needed sticks to clear the toads off the path so we wouldn't step on them when we left the park in virtually total darkness,

Frogs and toads are prime indicators of environmental health. Amphibians with their permeable skin are sensitive to changing factors in the environment. The presence of frogs and toads in Dragonfly Pond and their increase or decrease over the years give an indication of the health of Tenhave Woods.

WHAT NEW FROGS WILL WE DISCOVER NEXT YEAR?



Laura Gogola & Laurine Cybulski preparing to record amphibian calls

2013 Dream Cruise Wrap Up

The Nature Society has had the Gunn Dyer Park Dream Cruise parking concession since 2004. Depending on the weather, we have made in the past, anywhere between \$500 and \$1,100. With the great weather we had on Dream Cruise Day this year, we had our best day ever. Between collecting parking fees from 6 to 8:30 pm on the day before the Dream Cruise & on Dream Cruise day itself, we made \$1,300, with the rest going to the city. Just like last year, we had to close the park down several times in the afternoon because we ran out of parking spots. As soon as a car left the park, we were able to let another one in.

The Nature Society wants to thank the following people for volunteering their time at this year's Dream Cruise: **Bob Muller, Ted Vickers, Ann Holcomb, Helen & Connie Cost, Don & Joyce Drife, Richard & Pat Stoll, Bonnie Michalak, Mitzi Hoffman, Ann Holcomb, Jack Kerby, Pat & Mike Brady and John Semchena.** Also, a big thanks goes out to **Greg Rassel** and his crew for getting the park ready for us.

Once a year, this becomes an easy way for the Nature Society to make some extra money. The City of Royal

Oak sets everything up and all we have to do is collect the entry fee and direct people to available parking spots.

Because it was so busy again this year, we could have used more help. Hopefully, when Dream Cruise comes along next year, you might consider joining our volunteer crew for a few hours to help the Nature Society collect a few bucks that will help pay for future expenses/projects.



2013 Dream Cruise

NATURE SOCIETY'S 9th ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Our next annual fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, **April 11th, 2014** at the Royal Oak Elk's Club. Please **SAVE THE DATE** and get more details in our next newsletter

(Spring 2014) and also from our website beginning in early 2014.

Please check out our Facebook page & become a fan of the Royal Oak Nature Society.

Page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Royal-Oak-Nature->



4934 Fernlee
Royal Oak, MI 48073



DIGITAL PUBLISHING & PRINT SERVICES
www.heathpress.com

Phone: 248.288.5580
Fax: 248.288.1430
printdoctor@heathpress.com

Royal Oak Nature Society Membership Form

Please make check payable to: **Royal Oak Nature Society**
MEMO: **Membership**

Mail completed form & check to:
Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. Campbell Rd.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Names (household members): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

1 year Household Membership
(September-August)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General (free) | Receive newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (\$5) | by: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (\$10 & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular mail OR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$50 & up) | <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail |

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

Please contact us if you would like to become actively involved with one or more of our teams:

Stewardship: Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods, Cummington Park and the Arboretum.

Communications: Publicizes organizational activities to the general membership and public through various mediums and performs any other forms of communications required by the board.

Education: Provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

Fundraising: Is responsible for the fund-raising efforts of the Nature Society, which includes the coordinating and organizing of the Annual Spring Fundraiser & other fund-raiser programs approved by the board.

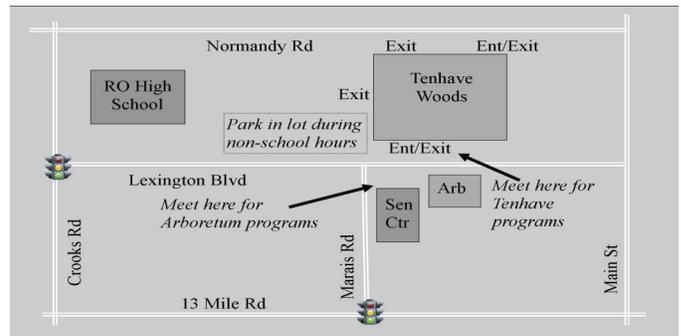
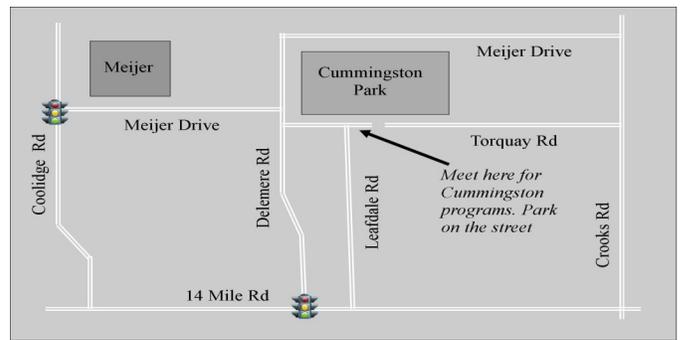
Programming: Is responsible for setting up the speaker programs, workshops and all of the nature programs within Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum.

Ways & Means: Investigates means of grant solicitation and then follows through accordingly.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Don Drife (248-528-0479)
 Vice President & Communication: Ted Vickers (248-549-5366)
 Treasurer & Ways & Means: Helen Cost (248-549-9423)
 Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers (248-549-5366)
 Education: Chris Ethridge (248 229-9335)
 Program: Bob Muller (248-398-0195)
 Stewardship-Arboretum: John DeLisle (248-672-7611)
 At Large: Dena Serrato (248-542-2820)
 Troop/Pack 1627 Representative & Engineer: Richard Stoll (248-398-2437)

Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummington Park trail maps, please go to our web site (listed below under our tree logo), link on to "Park Locations" and then "Map for park trail locations"

The Royal Oak Nature Society is a nonprofit education and stewardship group working within the city of Royal Oak's two nature parks, Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park. Our mission is to foster awareness and usage of these two natural areas. We accomplish this by providing stewardship for the continuing improvement and maintenance of them. In addition, we are in the process of creating an arboretum in Worden Park East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs.

The Royal Oak Nature Society
 1600 N. Campbell
 Royal Oak, MI 48067
 248-246-3380
 nature.society@ci.royal-oak.mi.us
 www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature



FIRST CLASS MAIL