



# The Chinquapin

VOLUME 14 Issue 2

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Winter 2014/15

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 2015 edition), you need to be a paid-up Associate, Supporting or Patron 2014/15 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

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## What We Have Been Doing 2013/14

by Bob Muller, Don Drife & Ted Vickers

After we made the Tenhave Woods fences deer proof in 2012 (preventing the deer from jumping over them), we had over 100 volunteers form a line and walk through the woods to make sure that there weren't any deer left in Tenhave. In the spring of 2013, we were amazed to find two does in the park. We walked the fence and couldn't find an area where we thought a deer could jump the fence. Then a neighbor along Custer told us the does he had seen had scratches on their backs. We determined that they must have been crawling under a gap under the fence. Those does produced four fawns and when their mothers left in the fall, it appeared that the fawns did not know how to get out of the park. This past summer, the grown fawns turned out to be one buck and three does. We have placed logs where there are gaps (between the bottom of the fence and the ground) along the entire Tenhave fence line. Next summer we plan on getting dirt from the city and making a berm to fill in those gaps. Presently, we have the Lexington gate chained open so hopefully the deer will leave. After it snows, we will know if any deer are still in the park if we see any deer tracks in the snow. If there are tracks, then we will have to have another deer walk this winter to move them out. The only good point in all of this is that they did not browse enough to prevent the plant community from being able to grow back. However, if left to further deer reproduction, this would change fast.

It has been reported that we have a coyote living in Tenhave Woods again but we have not seen it. Since we have at least 100 raccoons in Tenhave, a very large un-natural number, the coyote may be living in an easy place to find food and thus assisting in the health of the woods. We like to see raccoons but they are also a predator, just on smaller stuff. Two years ago, painted turtles that were more than likely escaped pets, found their way into Dragonfly Pond. We know that painted turtle lived in the pond during the 1950s. So it was fantastic to have them back. Even with

small boys attempting to catch them, we had five or six turtles wintered over the last two years. Painted turtles lay eggs for over 50 years and in that time maybe one nest escapes being a raccoon's dinner. So with an over abundance of raccoons in Tenhave, we expected that there was no chance for turtle reproduction. Then this past summer, a two inch painted turtle was seen sunning its self on a log. Maybe it should thank the coyote.

One surprise was the Rosy Reds and color morph of fathead minnows used as feeder fish in aquariums, managed to survive last winter in Dragonfly Pond after someone placed them in there last year. There are now tens of thousands of them in the pond. We are not sure which pond inhabitants they will affect. What makes the vernal pond special is that there are usually no fish predators because the pond normally dries up once a year. However, there are years where Dragonfly Pond hasn't dried up. But until it does, we will watch to see what happens in the meantime. We also continue to find garter snakes of all sizes so we know we have a breeding population of them, as well as the spring peepers, western choir frogs and grey tree frog, all of which found the park on their own.

Controlling invasive plants species has been a concern of the Nature Society since our beginning in 2001. Recently we contracted Natural Community Services, a company that specializes in invasive species control, to remove Norway Maple, Common Buckthorn, Multi-flora Rose, Honeysuckle, Asian Bittersweet, and Barberry. It was money well spent and the results far exceed our expectations. They understand and practice control techniques that are effective and environmentally friendly.

Invasive species have several strategies to out compete native plants. Some are alleopathic, meaning they affect the soil chemistry,

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preventing the germination of the seeds of native species. Most invasives leaf out before our natives and stay green later in the year. This allows them to photosynthesize longer and produce more food. Invasives tend to form dense colonies, choking out native species.

Japanese Barberry, Multi-flora Rose, and Norway Maple have increased dramatically since the die-off of our Ash trees from the Emerald Ash Borer. The forest canopy is more open now than in the past. This allows sunlight to reach the forest floor and the invasive species are taking advantage of this opportunity. We have had several major work sessions in the past to remove Common Buckthorn and the best we did was keep the species in check.. It has increased alarmingly since the 1970s and is the only plant growing in several areas of the park. The control of Buckthorn is easy to see around the Lexington turnstile. Honeysuckle and Bittersweet have not increased in numbers in the park but were removed so that they would not “take-off” when the other invasives were removed.

We also did Poison Ivy control in the Arboretum. Natural controls exist in Tenhave Woods to keep Poison Ivy in check but we have disturbed the Arboretum, allowing Poison Ivy to increase. While this is a native species, the Arboretum is a controlled garden. We do not want beds of Poison Ivy in the Arboretum as we need to protect our visitors and volunteers from contact.

Invasive plant control will be an ongoing project for the Nature Society. We must address this problem if we are to continue to be good stewards of our two Nature Parks.

Several projects took place this past season (September 2013 to August 2014). On a nice comfortable day in early November of last year, Nick Jelonek lead a crew of scouts, adults & siblings from Troop 1610 on an Eagle Scout project that included removing buckthorn, cottonwood and silver maple saplings from around Dragonfly Pond. Also, Wood Duck houses were installed in the swamp section of Tenhave. A week later, his crew installed two benches near the northwest corner of the Arboretum. In April, Troop 1627 took part in a scout service day and helped clean up the arboretum by removing logs, branches, and concrete from the area east of the sidewalk running behind the Senior Center.

From May into early summer, it seemed like one tree after another was falling like dominoes across Tenhave’s trail system. By the end of July, trees were blocking sections of the

Sandbar, Goodwin, Pond, Sassafras, Scout & Fern Trails. In early August, seven volunteers came in and removed all of those trees. A big thanks goes out to Adam Stacey & his chain saw for helping to remove the large trees that were blocking some of the trails. It took around an hour to remove an almost three foot diameter tree that was laying across the Sassafras Trail.



Adam Stacey cutting up a fallen tree limb

Educational programs for students continued to take place this past season including an owl program presented to Jane Addams students in November of last year. In the spring of this year, a tree/bird program was put on by Chris Ethridge for the children of Sunflowers Christian Preschool and 18 of Nicole Murowski’s RO High School students learned from Bob Muller about geology and history of Tenhave Woods on the walk over to Tenhave and while in the park, there was a discussion about Dragonfly Pond. And for the 5th year in a row, the Nature Society did a program at Tenhave for Jane Addams 3rd graders on the last day of the school year. Two Nature Nights were held in early 2014. One was at the Royal Oak Public library in mid February & the other took place at Oakridge Elementary School in early March. Over 110 children and 90 adults got the opportunity to learn about flora and fauna and ask questions.

One of the things that we have observed this year is that there seems to be teachers giving more extra credit to their students that attend our nature walks. Also as in past years, the Nature Society continues to see the general public walking the trails and enjoying our little bit of nature. These observations help make all the work that is put into the parks, well worth it.

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want to be an Associate, 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@romi.gov](mailto:naturesociety@romi.gov).

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.

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

## **SPEAKER PROGRAMS**

*Our monthly general meeting/speaker programs (September to May) is held at the **Royal Oak Middle 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 **7:30 pm**, with the speaker program following several minutes later.*

**"Frogs of Michigan"** speaker program is being held on **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Michigan is home to 13 species of frogs. Many of them are never seen by the average person because of their secretive habits. Retired Sterling Heights naturalist Gordon Lonie was able to capture twelve of Michigan's thirteen species on video including the threatened Cricket frog and the U.P.'s Mink frog. In addition to seeing frogs calling, mating and laying eggs at night, you will see local salamanders and a crazy assortment of other pond life.

**"The Highs And Lows Of Birding Peru"** speaker program is being held on **January 7<sup>th</sup>**. In Peru, birding can take you from the Amazon River basin at 750 feet all the way to mountains above 14,000 feet. With habitats ranging from hot and humid to dry and cold, the variety of

birds is simply tremendous. Don Burlett, Oakland Audubon Society President, will discuss his recent trip to Peru and the fantastic sights and animals seen there.

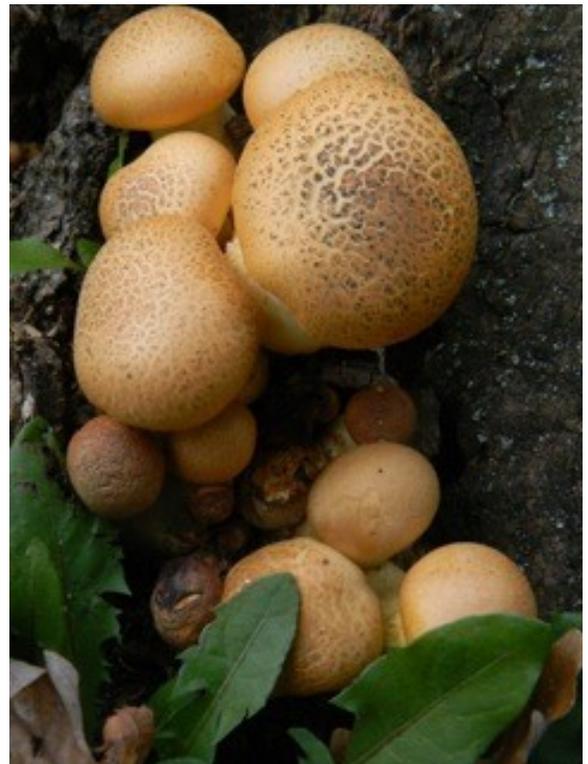
**"Aliens Among Us"** speaker program is being held on **February 4<sup>th</sup>**. Many of the organisms that we see in nature were not here before Europeans settled the land. Come and discover which everyday plants and animals are really 'strangers in a strange land. Join Royal Oak Nature Society botanist Don Drife as he explores the sometimes surprising facts about alien invaders.

**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 (November, January, February & March) at the **Royal Oak Senior Center** (3500 Marais). There is usually a specific topic that is being talked about at each of these meetings. Mary Fredricks heads this group. Check out the Nature Society's website for more information.

**Fungus Among Us: Fungi in Our Lawns and Gardens** is being held at the **Royal Oak Senior Center** on **January 14<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **7:00 pm**. This program is being presented by Mary Fredricks, Royal Oak Nature Society Mycologist.

**"Poisonous Mushrooms"** is being held at the **Royal Oak Senior Center** on **February 11<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **7:00 pm**. This program is being presented Chris Wright, a mycologist at the University of Michigan.

This cluster shown on your right is on a fresh stump just outside the fence at Tenhave. Mary Fredricks is guessing that it is some kind of *Pholiota* but there are other possibilities. To her, it smells like radishes.



## NATURE WALKS

**CUMMINGSTON PARK:** Park is just east of Meijers. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay

**TENHAVE WOODS:** Park is just east of Royal Oak High School. 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 is recommended in the winter and spring months. Using insect repellent and dressing appropriately is advised from late spring to the end of summer.*

**"Mammals of Tenhave"** is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Sunday, **December 7<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Park at the Lexington & Marais lot & meet at the Lexington entrance. 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 18<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay. We will walk into Cummingston 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 10<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Park at the Lexington & Marais lot & meet at the Lexington entrance..

**"Owl Hoot"** is being held at **Tenhave Woods** on Friday, **January 30<sup>st</sup>**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. Park & meet at the Lexington & Marais lot.. We will walk into Tenhave and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

**"Trees & Shrubs"** is being held at **Cummingston** on Sunday, **February 15<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **2:00 pm**. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay. 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 27<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay. We will walk into Cummingston and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

### "The Weed Busters" by Karen Pettke

The plentiful rainfall this past spring encouraged the growth of all of the plants at the Royal Oak Nature Society Arboretum, which is located in back of the Senior Center.

My sister, Gail, and I wanted to tame the species that were invading this area--prickly Canadian Thistle, ever present buckthorn, spindly wild roses, and the huge grape vines which were strangling everything. We, also, wanted to open all of the trails that were mostly overgrown. Our progress was slow until John Semchena arrived with his mighty Weed Wacker. Soon all of the trails were opened up. Those who walked through the arboretum soon afterwards were able to explore new paths.

Thanks goes out to John, Carol Ludwig and all of the others who brought their pruning shears and worked to make the Royal Oak Arboretum a pleasant green space.

As you can see in the accompanying photo taken in early October of this year, this trail is still in good shape, as are the others that were cleared out. If you think that you might be interested in helping out in the arboretum next summer, please contact us. This past summer, Karen & her gang worked for about two hours on Tuesdays, beginning around 8:30 am. If you want, you can work whatever hours that are convenient for you.



## 2014 Dream Cruise Wrap Up

It is hard to believe, but this 3rd year in a row where we had almost perfect weather for the Woodward Dream Cruise (August 16). The temperature was around 80 degrees and no rain. This year, we made over \$1,100 for 2 1/2 hours of work on Friday, August 15th plus 12 hours on Dream Cruise Day.

Just like the last two years, we had to close the park down between 12:30 & 3:30 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, Carol Bradshaw, Ted Vickers, Ann Holcomb, Helen & Connie Cost, Don & Joyce Drife, Richard & Pat Stoll, Mitzi Hoffman, Mary Fredricks John Semchena, Mary & Cathy Kleiss.** 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.

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.



## NATURE SOCIETY'S 10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Our next annual fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, **April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015** at the Royal Oak Elk's Club. Please **SAVE THE DATE** and get more details in our next newsletter

(Spring 2015) and also from our website beginning in early 2015.

Please check out our Facebook page & "like" the Royal Oak Nature Society.

Page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society/228095233882566>



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### 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, Cummingston 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.

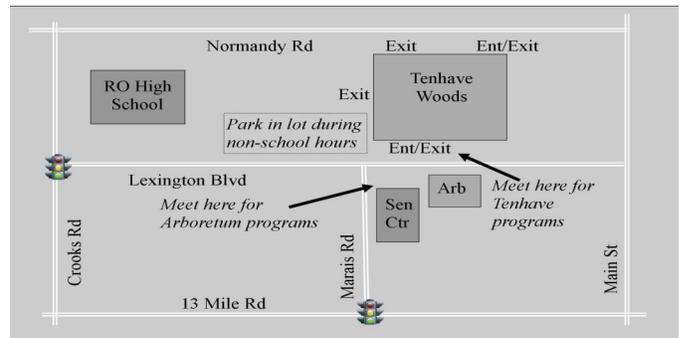
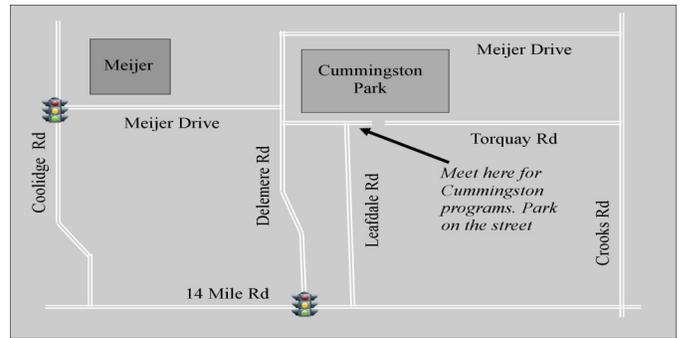
**Programming:** Is responsible for setting up the speaker programs, workshops and all of the nature programs within Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods and the Arboretum.

**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)  
 At Large: Dena Serrato (248-542-2820)  
 Troop/Pack 1627 Representative & Engineer: Richard Stoll (248-398-2437)

## Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum



To locate and print out Tenhave Woods & Cummingston 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 Cummingston 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.*

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