



# The Chinquapin /'chi[ng]-ki-'pin/

*The Official Publication of  
The Royal Oak Nature Society*

*A volunteer group working to protect and promote Royal Oak's nature pre-  
serves, while enjoying and sharing environmental education with the community*

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## The End for a Great Forest in Chesterfield Township?

Excerpts from an article by Bill Collins

Last October, Bill Collins, an ecological consultant from Huron Ecologic, talked to the Society about wetlands. He defined them for us, described wetland vegetation, regulations, loopholes and a lack of enforcement concerning them.

Recently, the Society received the following report from him about four parcels of forested wetland/uplands in Chesterfield Township (just southwest of New Baltimore) ranging from 20 to 32 acres, that are about to be lost to residential development.

Substantial portions of these four parcels are very mature. They consists of large American Beech, Sugar Maple, Black Cherry, White Oak, and Red Oak, which is similar to what can be found in Royal Oak's Tenhave Woods. Herbs such as Red Trillium, Dutchman's Breeches, Toothwort, and the usual array of woodland wildflowers are abundant across the upland portions of the forest floor. The forest is confirmed breeding habitat for many interior woodland birds such as Wood Thrush and various warblers observed on the sites.

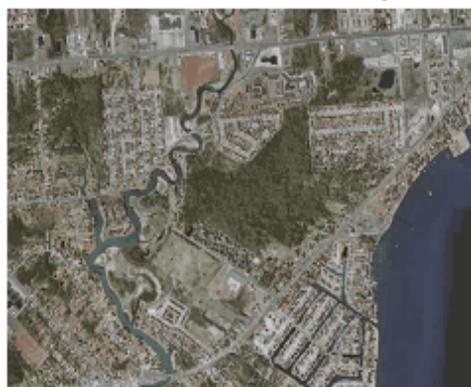
A 1992 preliminary wetland determination by Dr. Eugene Jaworski of J & L Consulting Services indicated that approximately 65% (18 acres) of one of the parcels was wetland. In 1998, the devel-

oper had a study done by a different consulting firm, concluding that only 0.17 acre of that 28 acre parcel was regulated wetland consisting of two small areas along the south property line, tucked well away from the central development area de-

sired. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) approved the second study because they said they didn't have jurisdiction over most of the wetland because it was not larger than five acres and is not considered contiguous with the Salt River or Lake St. Clair, which are nearby. The MDEQ did not notify the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) of the proposed development and if it were not for couple of residents alerting them, the wetland would never have the chance to be protected. Once notified, the USACE did a site inspection and disagreed with the MDEQ's determination. USACE then required a permit application from the developer, who lost

twice in the courts trying to challenge the jurisdiction of the USACE in this matter.

It is the opinions of Huron Ecological and the USACE, that permits are legally required for impacts to any of the wetland delineated on these four parcels, because it is part of a larger wetland area neighboring Lake Saint Clair and the Salt River, and also because most of it is part of a



wetland area greater than five acres.

On October 4, 2002 Macomb County Prosecutor, Carl Marlinga, and Assistant Prosecutor, Mark Richardson filed a Michigan Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) suit to protect this forest and the wetland within it. At least the Prosecutor's office has recognized the value and uniqueness of this area. Theoretically, MEPA is a very empowering statute in that it allows the plaintiff to set the environmental standard they feel is necessary for resource protection. Because the developer began clearing two parcels, the Macomb County Prosecutor, requested an injunction from Judge Don Miller, who happens to be U.S. Representative Candice Miller's husband. Judge Miller granted the injunction, but only a few hours later, in a so-called compromise, he partially lifted the injunction. The developers are still allowed to clear trees for roads and a sewer line, but they can't begin to grade the parcel. The judge will probably make a decision on that issue by the end of March.

The 1990's were initially hailed as "The Decade of the Environment", which, by about mid-decade

was soon twisted back on itself as "The Decade of Environmental Backlash". Here we are well into the next decade, and still virtually nothing is being done to protect significant habitats in southeast Michigan. Ignorance, greed, apathy, ecological elitism, and resulting lack of attention to these areas will ensure that in a short time, development will run its course in southeast Michigan, taking with it the few remaining areas such as this.

The region needs more than regulation and a few good intentions. It needs an informed plan of action implemented as soon as possible. Southeast Michigan is a very affluent and industrious region that should be able to do far better than this. It's time to cut the pep talk and do something about it. Is it too late for this forest in Chesterfield Township?

The Royal Oak Nature Society agrees totally with Bill Collins on this issue. Everyone should rally around stories like this, to make sure that our last local vestiges of forested land, remains as is. For the full text of this report, please go to

<http://www.great-lakes.net/lists/enviro-mich/2003-02/msg00179.html>

## Get Ready for Improvements Gretchen Greenwood

The Nature Society has been working on two separate grants in hopes of completing most of the physical improvements in Tehnave Woods at Quickstad Park.

Working with the City and the Mahany-Meining Senior/Community Center, the Nature Society has applied for a Community Block Grant. These are Federal funds that come back to our City. This grant will allow for the hard-surface trail between the Senior Center and Lexington Blvd. The trail will go through the wooded area behind the Center and add a new turnstile (and handicap gate) on the South-side of Tehnave Woods (off of Lexington). The Society hopes to replant the wooded walkway with native plants and hold nature walks for the seniors and Preschoolers. Work will begin this summer on this project.

The second grant is for is a Recreation Grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

These funds would allow for improvements to the natural trail system inside the woods. The trails will not be paved, just raised in a few areas that

are too wet to use during the rainy seasons. A boardwalk would be added in extremely wet areas and a study for recreating the vernal pond would be included. Other additions include such as trail-head signs, a new turnstile on the North-side of Tehnave Woods (off of Normandy), and benches. This grant will be submitted on April 1, 2003 and if received, all work must be completed in one year from the day we receive the grant.

The changes will allow for people to take more enjoyable nature walks without negatively impacting the flora and fauna of the woods. For more information, check out the Cummingston Park and Tehnave Woods Master Plans that are located on our web site.



**Newsletter Staff:**  
Heather J. Muller (Editor)  
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Gretchen Greenwood

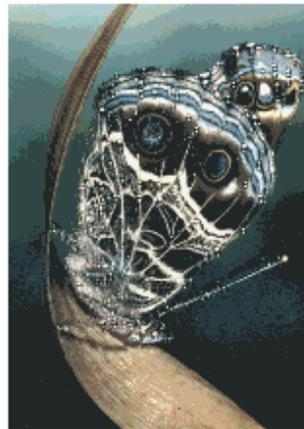
## Beauty of Nature Ted Vickers

For the past 40 years, Pat and Ray Coleman have been doing what they enjoy the most, photographing nature. Pat began taking pictures of people back in the early 50's for a short while, stopped and then started back up doing nature photography with her husband in the mid 60's.

When traveling, their preference is to go it alone and never go with groups. This allows them the extra time necessary to make sure that they don't miss a thing. Their travels have taken them as far north as Nova Scotia, and as far south as Trinidad. A majority of their time has been spent exploring the United States, where they have visited all but Colorado, Alaska and Hawaii.

Their motto is to take whatever nature gives them. When going out on their photo shoots, they usually looking for certain things, but if something else arises, they will capitalize on it. Pat said, "In the natural world, you never really know when nature is going to treat you to something special. The subject could be anything from butterflies and moths, to mammals, birds, insects, amphibians, or within the world of plants and flowers". The Colemans special pursuit is orchids, and they frequently go up to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario, to seek them out.

Pat and Ray are active with several nature groups, including Michigan Botanical Club, Detroit Audubon, the Nature Conservancy, and of course, the Royal Oak Nature Society. As accomplished photographers, they have been published in the Encyclopedia Britannica plus National Wildlife, Smithsonian, and National Audubon magazines. Because they want children to see and feel the beauty of nature, they donate many of their pictures for school textbooks.



Photography has seemingly always been a way of life for them. It offers them the chance to go into the natural world, where they discover the beauty of nature and have the opportunity to bring it home to show others.

To get a chance to see their beautiful photographs, please join us at the Mahany-Meining Senior/Community Center on April 2 (Wed) at 7:00 pm. This is a golden opportunity to see nature the way it should be seen, up close and personal.



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## General Meeting with Speaker Programs

7:00 p.m. – Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior/Community Center

| Date      | Speaker (s)         | Topic                                 | Description   |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| April 2nd | Ray and Pat Coleman | Focus on Nature                       | Ray and Pat Coleman, professional photographers, gave us a beautiful slide show on butterflies last year and this year they are back with another slide program on the beauty of nature.  |
| May 7th   | Bob Muller          | Parks Update & Wild Flower Slide Show | Bob Muller, a Royal Oak Nature Society naturalist, will be talking about what has been happening with the Society & Royal Oak's two nature parks for the past year. In addition, there will be a slide presentation on wildflowers. |
| June 4th  | Don Drife           | Michigan Orchids                      | Don Drife, a Royal Oak Nature Society naturalist & botanist, will present a slide show on some of Michigan's more elusive wildflowers, our native orchids.  |

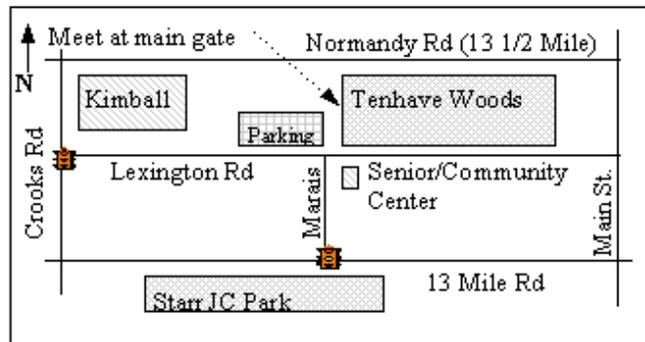
## Nature Walk Programs

Meet at the park

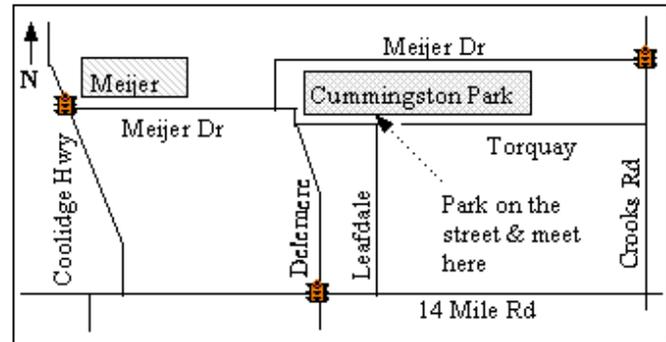
| Date       | Day       | Time       | Location         | Theme            |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| April 12th | Saturday  | 10:00 a.m. | Tenhave Woods    | Woody Plants     |
| April 26th | Saturday  | 10:00 a.m. | Cummingston Park | Spring Explosion |
| May 3rd    | Saturday  | 7:00 a.m.  | Tenhave Woods    | Bird Walk        |
| May 3rd    | Saturday  | 10:00 a.m. | Tenhave Woods    | Wildflowers      |
| May 14th   | Wednesday | 7:00 p.m.  | Tenhave Woods    | Wildflowers      |
| May 17th   | Saturday  | 7:00 a.m.  | Cummingston Park | Bird Walk        |
| May 17th   | Saturday  | 10:00 a.m. | Cummingston Park | Wildflowers      |

## Our Parks

### Tenhave Woods at Quickstad Park



### Cummingston Park



### Royal Oak Nature Society — Board of Directors:

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 Secretary – Gretchen Greenwood (248.288.2002)  
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