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.

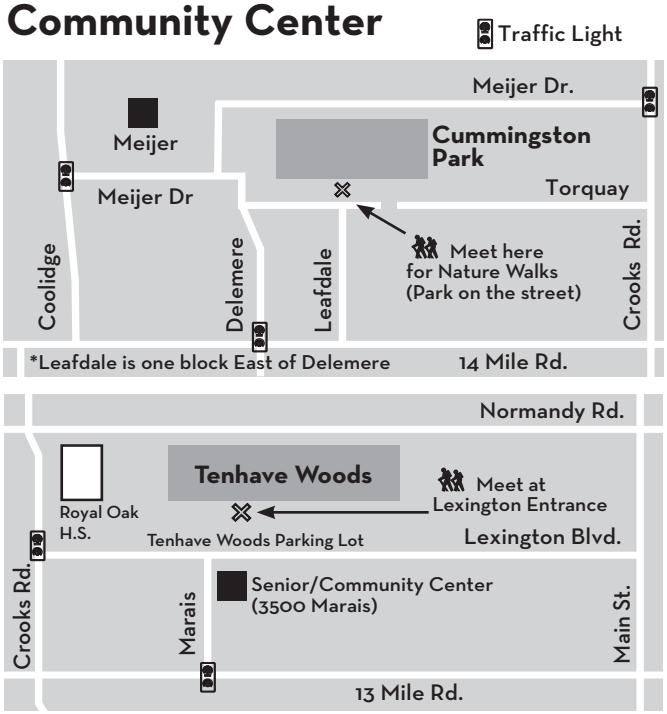
Program: Coordinates and schedules nature walks & nature oriented speaker programs, develop programs for outside organizations and catalog plants, trees & birds.

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

Board of Directors

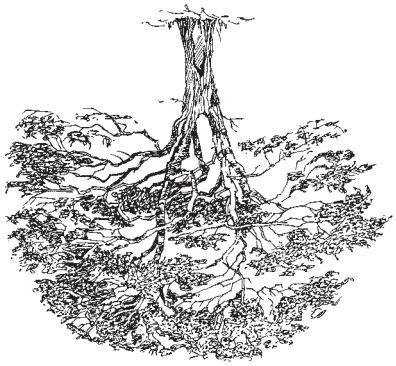
President: ***Tim Turner*** 248-320-4819
Vice President: ***John DeLisle*** 248-585-9002
Beautification & Restoration: ***Jack Kerby [Cummingston]*** 248-879-8010
Dena Serrato [Tenhave Woods] 248-542-2820
Communications: ***Ted Vickers*** 248-549-5366
Treasurer: ***Jeanne Sarnacki*** 248-548-1149
Education: ***Open*** • Fundraising: ***Open***
Program: ***Bob Muller*** 248-398-0195
Ways & Means: ***Helen Cost*** 248-549-9423
Newsletter: ***Ted Vickers*** tgv1121@sbcglobal.net
Ann Williams ann.m.williams@comcast.net
Engineer: ***Richard Stoll***

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 locations.**

The Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. CAMPBELL ROAD
ROYAL OAK MI 48067



FIRST CLASS MAIL

VOL. 6 ISSUE 3

THE Chinquapin

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SPRING 2007

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to become a Royal Oak Nature Society member for the 2006/2007 season (September 2006-August 2007), 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.

BOARD POSITION OPENINGS

***The Education Committee* focuses its efforts on**

continued on page 4

The New Tenhave Woods Entrance

Entrances and Exits: Current Status & Future Changes

BY BOB MULLER & TED VICKERS

Last fall, the City built a concrete path from behind the Senior/Community Center over to Tenhave Woods, just off of Lexington Blvd. For several months, it was a just a sidewalk that went to the fence and stopped. Now it leads somewhere because during the last weekend of 2006, the fence was cut and a gate was installed that could swing open and also be locked. For now, the gate at the southwest entrance (see map on page 2 for gate location) will be used as the entry point for our Tenhave Woods nature walks. When there aren't any nature walks, the gate will remain locked. Eventually, a turnstile will be installed next to the gate and that will be used as a park entrance/exit during park hours.

The new entrance installed the last weekend of 2006.

If we can raise enough money at our next fundraiser (April 20, 2007), the turnstile for the southwest entrance should be installed by this coming fall. After the turnstile is put in place, the gate will be primarily used to bring in equipment necessary for park improvements and allow for wheelchair accessibility. In another year or two, the Nature Society should be able to raise enough money to install a turnstile in the northeast corner of the park.

When we had the public hearings six years ago and were writing the Nature Society's master plan, there was input from neighbors around Tenhave Woods that the entrances were not conducive to walking through the park. The west entrance was placed there originally because Marais went through that area. You could park near the entrance and enter Tenhave through the meadow. This changed when the city turned the meadows into soccer fields and the road was removed. This entrance was extremely poor for starting nature walks, as a long sidewalk through the athletic area certainly does not set the mood. The turnstile (northwest entrance) on Normandy was from its installation, a mistake. It was placed in the swamp forest corner of the park. In the spring it is regularly under as much as seven inches of water for at least 100 feet. Therefore, at that time of year it was not useable for most people.

The nature walk meeting area at the west entrance was hard to find. We generally waited just inside the west side turnstile. Our meeting place was not very

TENHAVE continued on page 2

BOARD continued from page 1

education outreach programs that promote understanding and appreciation of the environment by involving children with our local parks and nature programs.

The Fundraiser Committee **has just been recently created. It's goal will be to plan everything that goes into a fundraiser, including where to have it, getting donations for auctions, and selling tickets.**

If you are interested in any of the above positions, please contact Ted Vickers at either 248-549-5366 or tgv1121@sbcglobal.net.

TREE WORKSHOP

There will be a Tree ID Workshop on February 17 (Saturday) at the Senior/ Community Center. It will begin at 1:00 p.m. A classroom session lead by Don Drife, our Nature Society botanist, will include everything needed to ID trees in the winter. Afterwards, the group will walk over to Tenhave Woods for a nature walk. In the park, a few more things will be discussed and then everyone will be given the opportunity to test their newly learned skills.

This program is free and open to everyone. Pre-registration is not required. Please call 248-246-3380 for more information or e-mail us at naturesociety@ ci.royal-oak-mi.us. Please see map on last page for the location of the Senior/ Community Center.

TENHAVE continued from page 1

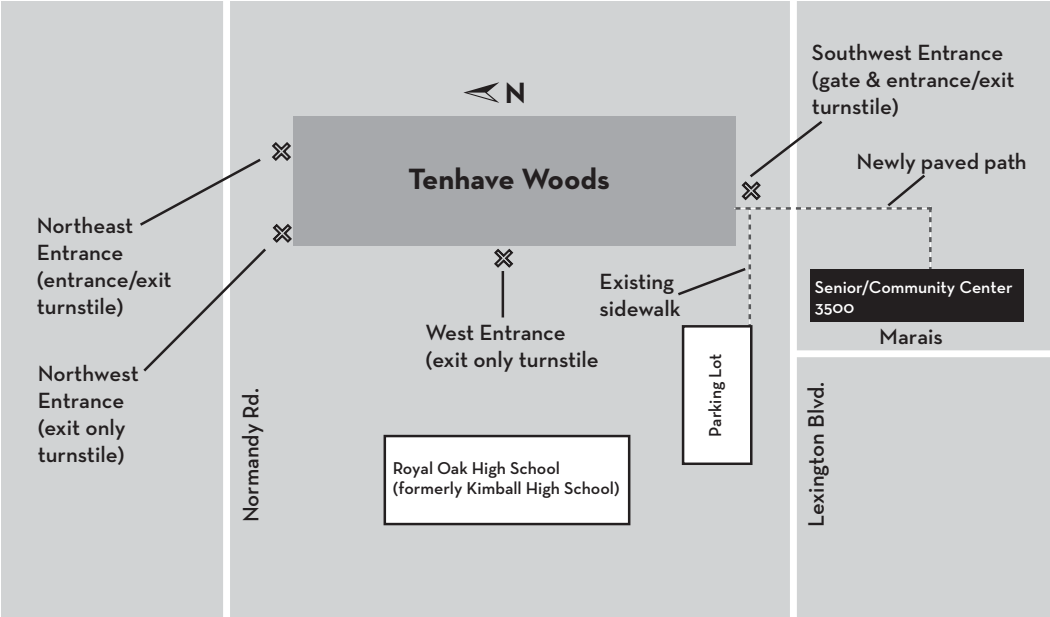
noticeable as it was a long distance from the parking lot and somewhat hidden. Thus, many people over the years were not able to find our nature walks even though we placed a signs by the parking lot and the turnstile.

It was originally thought we should move the two turnstiles, but we have had many comments from women that they felt at risk if alone in the park because of the lack of exit routes. The last thing we want to do is have members of the general public not enter the woods out of fear. The more people that are using the park, the less chance there is of having paint ball wars, beer parties, campfires and the like. We are looking at turnstiles that can be set up only as exits. We would want to move the two existing turnstiles to new locations and put the two new "exit only" ones in their place. This may even provide more security for the nature area, as both of the new entrances would be visible to homes in the area. Presently, the west entrance can be entered without anyone noticing.

The existing turnstiles will be moved to both ends of the Sandbar Trail where it meets with the fences. This trail is dry all year long. Both these entrances would come out of the sylvan areas of Quickstad Park and provide lots of nature items to talk about. The southwest entrance would also shorten the distance into the park from the Lexington parking lot and Senior/Community Center. This entry point will allow us to run programs out of a classroom environment (Senior/ Community Center) and directly into the woods. A gate to be used only for nature walk programs has already been installed. The northeast entrance where it is dry throughout the year would make it easier for people who would prefer entering the park from the Normandy Road side. See the below map for the location of future entrance/exit locations.

Money from our past and future fundraisers will be used to purchase and install these two additional turnstiles and move the current ones to a different location. Turnstile purchase price is currently $3,600 for each one plus $750 to make it work only as exit. It will cost an additional $800 to install each one.

Below is a map showing where the turnstiles are going to be located and how they are going to be configured. Current turnstiles include the Northwest and West ones which are presently entrances/exits.



Spring Speaker Programs

March 7th *"The Rising Threat of Invasive Species"* The global spread of non-native invasive species poses one of the most serious threats to biological diversity on our planet today. A growing number of invasive species are wreaking havoc in North America. They include pigs, starlings, and the viruses responsible for infectious diseases like AIDS and SARS. The cost of trying to control the spread of invasive species and mitigate their effects once they get established in a new area is phenomenal, exceeding $100 billion annually. Dr. David Susko, Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, will discuss several examples of prominent invasive species, such as rats and the introduced weed known as garlic mustard, and their impacts on human society.

April 4th *"Management of Wildlife, Habitat and Public Use at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge"* Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge provides important habitat for a great diversity and abundance of wildlife. As many as 40,000 ducks and 25,000 geese stop at the refuge during spring and fall migration and 277 species of birds have been documented there. Consequently, Shiawassee Refuge has been designated a U.S. Important Bird Area and one of the top 25 destinations for birders in the Midwest. Steven Kahl, manager of the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, will describe the refuge's wildlife resources, habitat management programs, and compatible public use opportunities. He will also provide an overview of the

continued on page 4

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

General Meeting with Speaker Programs

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

Date	Program
March 7th	*The Rising Threat of Invasive Species*
April 4th	*Management of Wildlife, Habitat and Public Use at Shiawassee*
	National Wildlife Refuge
May 2nd	*Ferns, A Frond Remembrance*
June 6th	*Dragonfly Pond and the Explosion of Life It Has Attracted*

Nature Walk Programs Meet at the park

Date	Day	Time	Location
March 11th	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
April 14th	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Tenhave Woods
April 22nd	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods
April 28th	Saturday	10:00 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.	Tenhave Woods
May 5th	Saturday	10:00 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.	Tenhave Woods
May 20th	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Tenhave Woods

Nature Walk Descriptions

March 11th *Winter tree and plant ID* Since there are no leaves this time of year, we will look at other things to give clues to identification. We will also keep an eye out for the first signs of the beginning of spring as well as a small look at Dragonfly pond.

April 14th 10:00 a.m. *The Spring Explosion* More than any other season dramatic changes happen fast this time of year. Early Spring Wildflowers: spring beauty, trout lily, bloodroot, spicebush and more.

April 22nd *Spring Wildflowers* Trillium, blue & yellow violets, spring beauty, Wood Poppy, jack-in-the-pulpit, wood anemone and more.

April 28th 10:00 a.m. *Spring Wildflowers* Trillium, blue & yellow violets, spring beauty, wild geranium, jack-in-the-pulpit, spice bush, wood anemone and more.

April 28th 11:30 a.m. *Pond Life* We will be sampling the vernal pond for what is living in it. We will have viewing trays to examine what we find. For those interested small aquarium nets will be available for you to catch your own pond life and have us identify. Come and learn about the interesting aquatic wildlife of Dragonfly Pond.

May 5th 10:00 a.m. *Spring Wildflowers* Wild geranium, foamflower, jack-in-the-pulpit, trillium, wood poppy and more.

May 5th 11:30 a.m. *Pond Life* We will be sampling the vernal pond for what is living in it. We will have viewing trays to examine what we find. For those interested small aquarium nets will be available for you to catch your own pond life and have us identify. Come and learn about the interesting aquatic wildlife of Dragonfly Pond.

May 20th *Pond Life* We will be sampling the vernal pond for what is living in it. We will have viewing trays to examine what we find. For those interested small aquarium nets will be available for you to catch your own pond life and have us identify.

SPEAKERS continued from page 3

refuge's history and future challenges.

May 2nd *"Ferns, A Frond Remembrance"*
Don and Joyce Drife of the Royal Oak Nature Society have been studying ferns for many years. Their talk will focus on the common ferns of Southeast Michigan and will teach you how to identify them in the field. Despite what you may think, they don't all look alike! If you have always wanted to learn more about this fascinating group of plants, this will be a great opportunity.

June 6th *"Dragonfly Pond and the Explosion of Life It Has Attracted"*
When the Nature Society restored Dragonfly pond, it was hoped that aquatic life would return. In the first year, both animal and plant life seemed to rush in as if trying to fill a vacuum. The area was covered with aquatic plants, most of which must have been hiding for years in the seed bed. The abundance and diversity of aquatic invertebrates was amazing. The pond was well named, as at least five kinds of dragonflies have been seen there. Come and learn from Bob Muller, Royal Oak Nature Society naturalist, about the life in and around the pond and how it has changed Tenhave Woods.

MARCH OWL HOOTS
They will all be held at Tenhave Woods beginning at 8:00 p.m. Meet at the parking lot on Lexington & Marais. We will attempt to lure in or have the screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.
March 6th (Tuesday)
March 14th (Wednesday)
March 22nd (Thursday)

Our Attempt to Bring the Wildflowers Back to Cummingston Park

BY BOB MULLER

Back in the summer of 2001 when we were just setting up what was to become the Royal Oak Nature Society, Gretchen Greenwood, Jack Kerby and I toured both parks with Greg Rassel of the City. We had a nice walk in Tenhave Woods, but when we got to Cummingston we only made it fifty feet into the woods before retreating, as we were attacked by an unbelievable number of mosquitoes. The problem was that Cummingston was flooded, creating an enormous area for the mosquitoes to breed. The flooding is due to the construction that has occurred on all sides of the park as development filled the area. This flooded condition has killed the incredible diversity and a large amount of wildflowers. Having all of those wildflowers was the purpose in creating the park. One of our first goals for the Nature Society was to determine how to drain Cummingston and return it to its original condition.

For the next two summers, we experienced drought conditions and with no water, it was impossible to study the problem. In the summer of 2003 we had water back but not as deep as usual. In the spring of 2004 the water was back to its maximum flooded condition; now was the time to start our research. That August when the park was dry, we used a posthole digger to put down a 36 inch deep hole in the area which had the deepest water in the spring. There was about six inches of good black soil and then clay below that. To our surprise, the hole instantly filled to 27 inches below grade. By December 11th it was at eight inches above grade. We have watched and recorded the above and below level of the water table ever since. In the spring of 2005 we started to survey water levels in the park in relation to the sewer that is along the west side of Leafdale trail. The sewer is about 100 feet into the park. We found that in several areas, the water was higher than the top of the sewers. At one point, the water on the east side of Leafdale trail was more than ten inches deeper than the sewer on the west side of the trail. If you have been on any of our nature walks, you have heard me talk about the old glacial lake ridges that run through the parks. We found that the Arkona beach ridge blocks the water from reaching the drain in the southern part of the park. When the water reached twelve inches deep, it is able to flow over the beach ridge and reach the sewer. As the water level in 2004 and 2005 dropped in the early summer, we carefully watched how much water was above the surface. From the combined memory from about fifty years ago, several of us came to the conclusion that seven inches of water above grade at our test hole was about the original water condition of Cummingston. Now we knew all we needed was to put in a ditch to the proper depth.

On November 5th, starting at 8:00 a.m., Richard Stoll, Aaron Dorn, Ted Vickers, Jack Kerby, George Aldea and I along with an excavator rented from Buttons (rented at a very favorable price), began to attack the problem. Richard was operating the excavator and first had to dig a ditch across both sides of Leafdale trail at the north end of the park. Leafdale trail is a bermed trail and formed a dam that blocked water on the east side from reaching the west side where the sewer is. While this was going on, I was laying out stakes to show Richard how deep he had to dig. Ted and Aaron were clearing sticks and logs out of where the ditch was going to be dug. Jack and George were using leaf blowers to clear the area. As Richard worked his way toward the front of the park, Ted, Aaron and I chopped roots

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WILDFLOWERS continued from page 4

and smoothed the dirt on the bottom of the ditch using rakes, axes and shovels. The ditch was being dug on the top of an old ditch that never was deep enough to provide enough drainage. We had carefully surveyed the plants growing along the old ditch to make sure nothing important would be damaged. The park's only alternate leafed dogwood was near the path that was going to be excavated. I marked it with yards of yellow police tape so that there was no mistake of cutting it down. Richard carefully worked his way around it. The process was slow and deliberate. By 4:30 p.m. we had reached the sewer. It had been a long hard day, sore muscles, aching backs and hands that had barely escaped having blisters. My mother's words came to mind when I was back in high school. She said that I should study hard because I wouldn't want to grow up and be a ditch digger. I never paid much attention to that, but obviously my mother knew what she was talking about. Now all that was left to do was load the excavator back on its trailer and wait for rain to fall to see if we had achieved our goal.

The day we dug the ditch the water in our test hole was 22 inches below grade. On November 14th the water was 14 inches below grade and on November 20th only 9 inches down. On December 16th the water was six inches above grade at our test hole and water was flowing down the ditch to the sewer. We will still have to wait until we have heavy winter rains and the snow melts to see what happens. Maybe we will have to fill some of the ditch in or dig it a little deeper to achieve goal of returning the park to its predevelopment water levels. Hopefully this will improve conditions for the wildflowers and they will begin to colonize the previously flooded areas.

Richard Stoll operating excavator

Bob Muller determining depth that ditch needs to be with Jack Kerby & Aaron Dorn looking on

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The Royal Oak Nature Society?

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CITY OF ROYAL OAK
MEMO: ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY

Mail completed form and donation check to:

Royal Oak Nature Society
1600 N. Campbell Rd.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Names _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Total Number of Family Members _____

1-year membership rates: (Sept–Aug)

❍ Individual: $5 ❒ Family/Supporting: $10 and up

Donations are tax deductible