



THE Chinquapin

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Summer 2008

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to become a Royal Oak Nature Society member or renew your membership, 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. If a family membership, please be sure to list ALL family members.

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 free to anyone who enjoys learning about nature.

Donations are tax deductible.

LOST FLORA

by Don Drife

One of the legacies of the nature program that was conducted in the 1970s was a list of the plants recorded in the two nature parks. This list was compiled by Bob Gasiorowski, Howard Miller, Tom Goliber and me in 1974. The portion of the list for Tenhave Woods was revised in 1976 as part of a biology class project. In 1999, Bob Muller and I (with others) began to study the flora again. Since that time, we have re-found all but 72 species that appeared on the earlier list. The flora of our two nature parks is ever changing, sometimes for reasons unknown. We can however, speculate about why some of these plants are missing.

Both parks have denser understories now than they did in the 1970s. Buckthorn has become more abundant in both parks. Garlic Mustard was not in the nature areas in the 1970s and has filled some of the open spaces.

New England Aster, Wild Bergamot, Boneset, **Bouncing Bet**, Rough-fruited Cinquefoil, Intermediate Dogbane, Sneezeweed and Showy Tick-trefoil are gone because the openings that they once grew in are gone.

The meadow area near the entrance of Cummingston has more trees now and a dense cover of grapevines. Blue-eyed-grass,

which is not a grass but a member of the iris family, was lost due to the dense shade in the meadow. Cocklebur, Coneflower, Daisy, Dead Nettle, and Sunflower were probably choked out by the grapevine that took over the meadow. Yellow Goat's-beard, Field Horsetail,

Everlasting Pea, Common Scouring-rush, **Common St. John's-wort**, Giant Ragweed and Black-eyed Susan may have been choked out or just lost through natural succession.

Some plants were nothing more than weeds that occurred in disturbed soil. They might reappear again if the conditions are right. In the 1970s we would take a car to the center of Tenhave Woods. We would drive in the west gate, down what is now the Goodwin Trail, so we could get bird-banding equipment into the park. We would also drive into Cummingston along the two main north south trails. This caused areas of raw soil to be formed along the trails.

Hoary Alyssum, Japanese Brome, Hop Clover, Field Mustard, Pepper-grass, Pineapple-weed and Shepherd's-purse occurred in these areas. None of these are native and their loss may indicate that the woods are actually in better condition now than in the 1970s.



Common St. John's-wort

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Bouncing Bet

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS & NEW MEMBERS

The Royal Oak Nature Society would like to thank the following individuals/families for either becoming new members or renewing their membership:

Gayle Bettega
Linda Bradley
Carol Bradshaw
Patricia Derocher
Tracy Dorn
Don & Joyce Drife
Don & Lillian Erwin
Linda & Gary Friedman
Jack Hannert
Chris Hartwig
Marcia Hovland
Katherine Howell
Melville Kennedy
Dominique King
Jennie Klein
Stephanie Lusis
John McPhail
Kathleen Meyer
Bob & Kelly Muller
Scott Newman
Sue, Bob &
Stephanie Schneider
Dena Serrato
Cadey Sonntag
Tim Turner
Ted & Nancy Vickers
Susan Ward

DIRECTOR POSITION OPENINGS

The Education Director is responsible for provides outreach and liaison to outside individuals, groups and schools to promote environmental education.

The Fundraiser Director coordinates and organizes the Annual Spring Fundraiser and other fund-raiser programs approved by the board.

If you are interested in volunteering for either of these positions, please contact Ted Vickers at either 248-549-5366 or naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us

Winter Nature Nights 2008

Another season Nature Nights has come to an end. On Friday, January 18, we were at Royal Oak's Oakland Elementary School. A month and a half later (Thursday, March 6) we wrapped Nature Nights up by visiting Royal Oak's Oakridge Elementary. As usual, we had a good family turnout this past winter with a total attendance of over 250 which included children and their family members. The Nature Society wants to thank Kelly Orloski from Oakland Elementary and Leslie Collins from Oakridge Elementary in coordinating the Nature Night programs with us. Without their help, we would not

have been able to put on these programs this year. And a special thanks goes out to all of our 2008 exhibitors: Nancy Vickers: Crafts; Troop 1627: Tree Rings; Dena Serrato: Seed Planting; Bob Muller: Skulls; Tim Turner: Skulls & Skins; John Topor: Fossils; Jimmy Kipps: Insects; Kristine Hammond: Birds; Daniel Brier: Little Creatures; Leo Long: North American Native Fish; & Edi Sonntag: Reptiles and all of their helpers.

If you know of someone who has a nature collection or display and might be interested participating in an upcoming Nature Night, please have them contact us.

Fat Tuesday Fundraiser at Pronto's

A big thanks goes out to everyone who came to Pronto! on Fat Tuesday (February 5th) to support the Women's Club & Nature Society by dining in or ordering a carryout. And a HUGE thanks to Pronto!'s generous owners, Bill Thomas & Jim Domanski, who shared proceeds from that day with the Women's Club 7 and another HUGE thanks to the Women's Club 7 who in turn shared those proceeds with the Nature Society. Our share came to just over \$1,000, which absolutely surprised all of us. The money will help us in our quest to raise enough money this year to purchase & install another turnstile

at Tenhave Woods. Again, our hats go off to everyone who helped make Fat Tuesday at Pronto! a tremendous success.



Woman's Club 7 members Jeanne Sarnacki, Kelly Muller, Laura Romito, & Sandy Wilkins, holding a Pronto Gift Basket that is being auctioned off.

Karen Anderson Has Stepped Down

Due to her heavy work schedule, Karen Anderson has stepped down as our Fundraiser Director. The Nature Society wants

to thank her for the great job she did on our 2007 fundraiser & wish her the best in the future.

Looking For Dream Cruise Volunteers

Dream Cruise is only a few months away. It is time to step forward and volunteer to help us with parking for a couple of hours at Gunn Dyer Park on Saturday, August 16, 2008. We start around 7:30 am & stay until around 7 pm.

If you have some free time that day, give Ted Vickers a call at 248-549-5366 or e-mail him at naturesociety@ci.royal-oak.mi.us to volunteer. You'll be glad you did.

PLEASE NOTE A CHANGE IN OUR SPEAKER PROGRAM VENUE

Beginning in September 2008, our monthly speaker programs/general meetings will be held at the Royal Oak Middle School (formerly Dondero High School). The school is located on Washington, between 11 Mile Road & Catalpa (11 ½ Mile). The program/meeting will be held in the “Commons Area” which can be reached via the school’s southeast entrance. The starting time will still be 7:30 pm.

General Meeting/Speaker Programs on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

June’s speaker program will be on **June 4th**, at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center, (3500 Marais—just north of 13 Mile Rd, between Crooks & Main). The program should be about the **Everglades**, but it is possible that the speaker may not be able to do the program at that time. If not, Bob Muller will do a program about the **Napo River in Peru**. See below for descriptions of both programs:

“Everglades”: This presentation is a compilation of three separate visits to Everglades National Park by Roger Bajorek, a retired naturalist from Stoney Creek Metro Park, who explored its wonders on foot, by canoe and by mountain bike. The amazing bird-life as well as alligators and crocodiles along with the wonderfully adapted vegetation will be featured.

“Napo River in Peru”: The Napo River flows south into the Amazon in the rain forests of Peru. Bob Muller, Royal Oak Nature Society Naturalist, spent a week traveling through the area surveying fish and seeing and learning about the river people and this fascinating environment. He swam with piranhas every day, but became more fearful of the plants and ants. Come and see where many of the world’s colorful tropical fishes come from.

September 3rd “Fall Hawk Migration Thru Lake Erie Metropark & Point Mouilee” will be held at the **Royal Oak Middle School** (on Washington between 11 Mile Rd & Catalpa).

The southeast Michigan area is situated at the end of a geographic funnel formed by Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron. Because migrating raptors from eastern Canada are reluctant to cross these lakes, the geography diverts the birds in their journey south and west, concentrating their numbers as they cross the comparatively narrow Detroit River near the western end of Lake Erie. Come to our first speaker program being held at the Royal Oak Middle School and learn from Paul Cypher, president of Southeast Michigan Raptor Research, about monitoring of the hawk migration over Lake Erie Metro Park & Point Mouilee during the fall. The data count for one or two seasons is not all that worthwhile by itself, but when combined with several seasons from the same site or with data from other sites across the country, it offers valuable insights into population and breeding trends for these species. Join us and be amazed by the tens of thousands of raptors including hawks, falcons, eagles that fly over these two areas each fall.

Nature Walk Programs (Meet at the Park)

June 21st (Saturday), 10:00 am at Cummingston Park
Late spring & the beginning of summer Come see what is happening in the woods.

July 15th (Tuesday), 7:00 pm at Tenhave Woods

The pond in summer – The water should have dropped and we can look at the wetland plants, aquatic life and the dragonflies that the pond was named for.

August 5th (Tuesday), 7:00 pm at Cummingston Park
Late summer woodland

Saturday Workshop

June 14th (Pond Life) The workshop will begin at 1:00 pm at the Senior/Community Center on Marais. If weather permits, we will begin at Dragonfly Pond and sample the aquatic life.. We will then move to the classroom and use guides to identify the group each animal is in. Microscopes and projectors will be used to

show the detail of these forms of life. Life histories will be discussed. Program is free & pre-registration is not required. Please call 248-246-3380 or e-mail us at naturesociety@ci.royal-oak-mi.us for further information. There are no other workshops currently scheduled.

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Cummingston Park is now wetter than it had historically been. As the area around it was developed the natural flow of water was altered, changing the composition of the woods. Some improvements to the drainage have been made with the addition of a ditch, but there is still more work to be done.

Bladdernut, Golden ragwort, and Cardinal-flower grew at Cummingston Park. They like a wet habitat but not one with standing water. The changes in the water flow brought on by the construction of Meijer's Drive, and the additional development north of the park must have affected these plants. I know within a few feet where Dissected Grapefern and **Wild Ginger** grew in Cummingston. Both of these areas are still underwater from spring time to early summer. Wild Columbine, Mertensia and Dog Violet might have disappeared because of the



Wild Ginger

woods being too wet.

A few plants are probably in one or both parks but have been overlooked: Quaking Aspen, Northern Bedstraw, Cleavers, Silky Dogwood, Sharp-lobed Hepatica, Round-lobed Hepatica, Honewort, Horse-balm, Indian-tobacco, Black Locust, Stinging Nettle, Wild Parsnip, Black Snakeroot (*S. gregaria*) [we have other species of snakeroot in the park] and Water-hemlock. These species have either a short blooming period, insignificant flowers, look like another species, or were so widespread throughout the two parks that I just cannot believe they all died out. Aspen still grows behind the Senior/Community Center.

Another group of plants are ones that might never really have been in the parks. They could be on the list by mistake. They were noted from only one of the parks. These include Bellwort (we have sessile bellwort), Pin Cherry (maybe confused with choke or black cherry), Shrubby St. John's-wort (confused with Shrubby Cinquefoil), Lopseed (might have been mistaken for Greater Enchanter's Nightshade) and Enchanter's Nightshade (could be a small plant of Greater Enchanter's Nightshade). To get a species on the old list just one person had to remember seeing the species. The trouble with a

list based solely on sight records is that you can't go back and check to see that a species was correctly identified.

Plants that may have been garden escapes or dumped in the park are another group of missing elements: Creeping Bell-flower, Shrubby Cinquefoil, Asiatic Day-flower, Elecampane, Swamp Rose Mallow, Garden Phlox, Spiderwort and Chinese Wisteria. These grew in areas where we saw garden refuse being dumped and are well known garden species. All of them persisted for three or more years but may simply have not survived.

Some species may have died out for more than one reason. Southern Blue Flag might be an example. It grew at Cummingston in two areas. One of these has standing water in it for part of the year and the other has become a dense European Buckthorn stand. At Tenhave it grew near the center of the park in an area that currently has a heavy growth of silver maples. It also grew along the west side of the old pond. The shrubs choked it out. The species does not occur on any of the lists of plants that survive in the seedbank. Seedbanks are areas that retain viable seeds for long periods of time. Most of the species that re-appeared when we excavated Dragonfly Pond came from the seedbank but this one has not re-appeared by the pond.

Common Pondweed grew in the old pond, during one wet season that it did not dry up, and has not been re-found. We have a specimen from the 1970s and can confirm the old identification. We have found Sago Pondweed in Dragonfly Pond which is similar.

There are two plants that we have not found and do not know why they are gone. They are Hog-Peanut and Fringed Loosestrife. Both species are easy to identify over a long period of time. They occurred commonly in both parks but for some unknown reason seem to be gone.

The flora list can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ci.royal-oak.mi.us/nature/flora.html>. It can be consulted to find the scientific names for the plants in this article and which park or parks the old record came from. Our current list is based for the most part on the nomenclature found in Dr. Edward G. Voss' three volume Michigan Flora. The master flora list is a set of 3x5 cards. Every species has its own card that records each time it has been in our field notes, who recorded it and if it has been photographed. Species are normally noted each time they are seen in flower. Currently to get on the list two people need to identify the plant. This is not a problem with a plant because you can take someone back and show it to them. Notes must be taken in the field and we do not just trust someone's memory. You can take part in rediscovering old species or finding additional ones. When some of these species are re-discovered we will update the list on the website and maybe put a note in the newsletter. Take the list to the park and happy hunting.

New Native Plant Trail Takes Root by Dena Serrato

Since the Royal Oak Nature Society first organized, we've had a goal to build an interpretive nature trail running from the rear of the Mahany/Meininger Senior/Community Center to the entrance of Tenhave Woods. Even though we've been im-

proving the trails inside Tenhave, they aren't suitable for persons in wheelchairs or for families with strollers. In keeping with our mission to provide environmental education for all of

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our citizens, from the very young to older adults, we want to create a trail that everyone can access and use to learn about nature.

Last year, with the help of a Community Development Block Grant, the city installed a five foot wide by 450 foot long, concrete, accessible pathway. It winds through the wooded area of Worden Park East behind the Community Center, leads to the sidewalk at the south side of Lexington Blvd, and then continues on the north side of Lexington to the new Tenhave turnstile entrance.

Our next step is to plant native wildflowers, trees and shrubs along the length of the path. In the future, we plan on printing trail guides that will be available at the Community Center that identify the various plant species and describe which insects and animals depend on those plants for survival. We also plan to use the site as an outdoor classroom in conjunction with our series of nature study classes.

To help us reach our goal, the Nature Society recently applied for a grant offered by the Wildflower Association of Michigan and the Glassen Foundation. They award grants annually to projects "that pass on the appreciation and respect

New Paved Trail Behind the Senior//Community Center



for our native flora that will ensure survival of these species in the future." We were awarded \$300 for the purchase of native plants. We are very grateful to the Wildflower Association and the Glassen Memorial Foundation for their vote of confidence in our project. We will be purchasing plants from a nursery that specializes in growing species that are of local origin and planting them later this summer.

There is much to do in order to prepare the site for planting. Over the years, the wooded part of the park has become overgrown with an invasive shrub called buckthorn. It has become so thick in some areas that nothing else can grow. We will be enlisting the Boy Scouts to help us cut down the buckthorn. We also need to prepare a detailed landscape plan of the site and take an inventory of the existing flora.

will take many years to develop. We look forward to partnering with the city of Royal Oak, the Community Center and various groups such as MSU Master Gardeners, local garden clubs, the Scouts, and area businesses to make our vision a reality. We invite anyone who's interested in helping to contact the Nature Society.



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 (individual/family members): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

1 year membership rates (September-August)

Individual: \$5 Family/Supporting: \$10 & up

Donations are tax deductible

NATURE SOCIETY TEAMS

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

Beautification & Restoration: Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods & Cummingston Park.

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 and Tenhave Woods.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Tim Turner (248-320-4819)

Vice President: John DeLisle (248-585-9002)

Treasurer: Jeanne Sarnacki (248-246-3380)

Beautification & Restoration: Cummingston: Don Drife (248-528-049) & Tenhave Woods: Dena Serrato (248-542-2820)

Communication & Education: Ted Vickers (248-549-5366)

Fundraiser: Open

Program: Bob Muller (248-398-0195)

Ways & Means: Helen Cost (248-549-9423)

Newsletter: Ted Vickers

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.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY
1600 N. CAMPBELL ROAD
ROYAL OAK MI 48067

