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Spring 2020

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

Dead Trees: A Natural Resource

by Bob Muller

There is a large burr oak just outside of the Lexington turnstile at Tenhave Woods. At slightly over four feet in diameter it is one of the largest oak trees in the city. In fact, we believe the tree was along the fence row between Seth and Samuel Goodwins' farms, who were sons of the original settler that purchased the land from the United States government in 1823.

Several years ago, it started showing signs of ill health and a year ago it died. The city marked it for removal. The Nature Society's immediate thought was we might be able to count the rings and determine the year it began to grow. We asked the city to leave a stump about three feet high to be used as an educational feature at the beginning of nature walks. This was approved by the city, but then a new opportunity presented itself that would allow us to preserve much more of the tree.

The Nature Society partnered with Tree First and began to learn more about the burr oak outside Tenhave. Tree First is more than just a tree removal or trimming service. They are a group of three young arborists whose major goal is to educate people on how to care for their trees. They suggested leaving the dead tree standing. Dead trees provide important habitat for wildlife and should be left standing in a natural forest. A large dead oak tree can provide food (insects) and shelter (tree cavities and crevices under bark) for many years after its death.

Tree First volunteered to assess the risks of leaving the tree standing. They climbed through the tree inspecting it and gave us a document for the city recommending trimming some weak branches but leaving the tree. The city agreed to leave the tree. A few months later Tree First climbed again to trim the branches they felt were dangerous. Even their trimming is customized to both the tree and the site. Limbs were not just cut off cleanly but sculpted to look as if they naturally broke off. They will redo a risk assessment every two years and trim if needed.

Tree First has also walked both Tenhave Woods and Cummingston Nature Park and will take care of any cutting that needs to be done in them. They have already done some work for us in the Arboretum taking down trees there. Two of these trees within our developing Lake Plain Oak Opening had their trunks left at about six and ten feet high with their tops sculpted to look as if they broke in a storm. On the taller tree a birdhouse was sculpted into it.

The Royal Oak Nature Society is lucky to have Tree First partner with us; they provide a service that we could never duplicate and the standing dead trees that remain will be beneficial as habitat for wildlife and teaching tools for the public.

Photo shows workers for Tree First doing a tree assessment on the large Burr Oak just outside the Lexington entrance in early August, 2019.



Royal Oak Arboretum Opening Development

by Bob Muller

A decade ago, the Royal Oak Nature Society decided to create the Royal Oak Arboretum with the goal of having an example of every native Michigan tree that was already found in our two nature parks. However, some of Michigan's trees are very rare and not grown by nurseries so we continue to search for seed sources for our missing specimens. One piece we have accomplished is that we now have all 12 species of Michigan oaks.

A second goal developed as we realized that many people believe that when the first settlers arrived in Michigan, the entire landscape was heavily forested. Tenhave Woods and Cummingston are examples of these forest types. However, the understanding that this region was primarily forest is incorrect as it was a mosaic of forests, prairies, both wet and dry grasslands without woody plants (trees and shrubs), as well as unique oak opening habitat. We wanted to develop these other plant communities, along with our arboretum, to be able to teach about this area's natural landscapes including the forests and grasslands. Our prairie has been developing since the beginnings of the Arboretum but the Oak Openings development only started this summer.

Oak openings are savannas, basically prairies with scattered oak trees maybe hundreds of feet apart. These oaks grew not like the tall forest trees without branches for many feet, but instead as low, wide spreading oaks

like those that today have grown in open fields without competition from other trees. Both prairies and oak opening were among the first areas to be changed into farm fields. The fields could be plowed and planted without removing many trees. Oak openings are found only in a small region of northern Ohio and southeastern Michigan, tied closely to sandy glacial soils.

There are several types of oak savannas in Michigan. The type we wanted to develop is called a Lake Plain Oak Opening as it was found in Royal Oak. The area in the Arboretum we are developing is located between the power lines and Lexington. We removed all of the plants, both native and invasive, that would have not been in a Lake Plain Oak Opening. Then we had a custom seed mix of the grasses and prairie plants that were found in these oak openings created. The seed mix is sprouting and maybe by next fall a few wildflowers will bloom.

All of this required a major volunteer effort this summer as well as a cost of over \$2,000 for professional help. We still hope to add at least two large pin oaks, and will make a public request for funds in the near future. By fall of 2021, Royal Oak's 100 birthday of becoming a city, the area should be in full bloom. Keep your eyes open and watch the development of these historic natural communities.

Trick or Treat in Tenhave Woods

by Nancy Vickers

On October 26, 2019 the Royal Oak Nature Society hosted a new event at Tenhave Woods. We invited families to join us on this Saturday afternoon to walk the trails and Trick or Treat through the woods.

The Nature Society is an all volunteer group and this event was no different. Many wonderful volunteers gave of their time and enthusiasm to make this event a great success. We had treats and decorations donated to assist in the treating. We had a couple of games for young children to enjoy. Michelle Watson donated her Corn Hoe game and we had a toddler's bowling game. Our volunteers helped the kids to play and enjoy their afternoon. We scattered treat stations along a simple loop trail with volunteers happily passing out treats to the guests. The weather was drippy. We hoped for about 100 guests at best and the final total we counted was 176 treaters in the one hour before the rain became much heavier. The families with children ranging from infants to young teens had a great time. Kids were all in costume, as were many of the parents and grandparents that accompanied them. The Nature Society volunteers had almost as much fun and the young treaters.



We are so grateful to all the volunteers. We could not have done this without their help.

Trick or Treat at Tenhave Woods was a great success. Families have come up to members of our board since the event and asked us to please host this event in 2020 and we are planning to do just that. We are very glad our guests enjoyed this event as much as we did.

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

We normally have our monthly general meeting/speaker programs from **October to April**. Our speaker programs are **scheduled to be held at the Mahany/Meiningen Senior Community Center which is located at 3500 Marais**. At our monthly **Wednesday** meetings, we present speaker programs that are usually Power Point presentations 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 to follow.**

"What Can We Do to Save the Bees?" speaker program is being held on **March 4th**. This program was originally scheduled for March, 2019, but was cancelled because of a scheduling conflict. Rich Wieske, partner in Green Toe Gardens and A Royal Oak resident, shares two decades experience as a local beekeeper, mentor and advocate of natural biodiversity. His presentations are informative, fun and accompanied by breathtaking images. Bring your questions about bees, trees and the queen's knees. Can I have a beehive in my backyard? What kind of trees and weeds to plant for bees? Do honeybees and native pollinators compete? If you've ever wanted to learn more about honey bees this evening is the place to bee.

"Great Lakes Hummingbirds" speaker program is being held on **April 1st**. In the autumn of 2001, the Great Lakes HummerNet project was formed by Allen Chartier to primarily learn more about hummingbirds in the Great Lakes region by enlisting the help of volunteer observers throughout the region. The main focus is on Ruby-throated Hummingbirds found in Michigan. Data is gathered through observation as well as banding studies. This presentation will describe the research objectives of the project, tell you how you can participate, provide helpful hints on how to attract and feed hummingbirds, provide hummingbird gardening tips, and review what has been learned so far. The program will also review the status of other species of hummingbird confirmed to occur in the region.

Royal Oak Nature Society Friends of Fungi Mycology Club 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. There is no preregistration or cost for any of the fungi walks or meetings. Everyone is welcome.

Friends of Fungi will meet on Wednesday, **March 11th**, beginning at **7:00 pm at the Senior Center (3500 Marais)**. The video "Mushrooms of America" by Taylor Lockwood, world renown mushroom photographer, will be shown.

Friends of Fungi Report - 2019 by Mary Fredricks

Friends of Fungi is the mycology arm of the Royal Oak Nature Society. Our focus is learning about the Kingdom of Fungi (which includes mushrooms, yeasts and molds) and spreading the word about these amazing and important organisms.

Much of the learning happens during our four indoor programs held in January, February, March and November. A different aspect of fungal life is considered each time. In 2019 the topics covered included basic information about fungi; a video by world renown photographer Taylor Lockwood called *Spirits of the Forest*, featuring glow-in-the-dark mushroom; the multitude of ways people are harnessing the special powers of mushrooms to create everything from strong, biodegradable packaging to solutions for oil spills and erosion; and the many "mushrooms" found in our woods that don't look like the ones sold in markets because they don't have gills.

Our seven walks, held in alternating woods from April through October, give people a chance to experience the Kingdom of Fungi for themselves. Although I can get excited about the most common mushrooms, and hope

other people will feel the same way, it really was thrilling to find in our woods and share with others three species I had never seen before as well as a surprising variation of one seen often in Cummingston. The four fungi are scarlet cup, blushing rosette, big black foot polypore, and the terrestrial form of lacquered polypore. You can find photos and brief descriptions of these fungi on the Nature Society's [website](#).

My heartfelt thanks go out to Karen Blenc and John Semchena for their help with the walks, for showing up and lending their support at the indoor meetings, and for helping me lead the panel discussion that was one of the indoor presentations. Karen, who is now my official assistant, also led one of the walks when I was visiting my daughter in Wisconsin.

Although both of our woods are small, compared to others in our area, they hold delightful surprises for those who spend time in them. Please help us protect these special places by not removing anything from them except trash, photos and memories. Picking mushrooms is not allowed, however tempted you may be.

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

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**, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

ARBORETUM: Park and meet on the north side of the **Mahany/Meininger Senior Community Center** (3500 Marais)

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Tenhaye Woods** on **Tuesday, March 10th**, beginning at **7:30 pm**. We will walk into Tenhaye and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Owl Hoot" is being held at **Cummingston Park** on **Thursday, March 12th** beginning at **7:30 pm**. Park We will walk into Cummingston and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls.

"Early Spring" nature walk is being held at **Tenhaye Woods** on Saturday, **March 21st**, beginning at **2:00 pm**.

"Spring Wildflower Walk" is being held at **Cummingston Park** on Sunday, **April 19th**, beginning at **2:00 pm**.

"Mushroom Walk" is scheduled for Saturday, **April 25th**, at **Tenhaye Woods** beginning at **10:00 am**. Mary Fredricks, a member and botanist/mycologist of the Royal Oak Nature Society, will lead the walk. Anyone with an interest in learning more about mushrooms and other fungi of the urban woods is welcome.

"Spring Wildflower Walk" is being held on Saturday, **April 25th**, beginning **2:00 pm** at **Tenhaye Woods**. We will be looking for Red & White Trillium, blue & yellow violets, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Bloodroot, Trout Lily, Wild Geranium, Spice Bush, Spring Beauty, Wood Poppy, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, & Wood Anemone and more.

"Spring Wildflower Walk" is being held on Sunday, **May 3rd**, beginning **2:00 pm** at **Tenhaye Woods**. We will be looking for Red & White Trillium, blue & yellow violets, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Bloodroot, Trout Lily, Wild Geranium, Spice Bush, Spring Beauty, Wood Poppy, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, & Wood Anemone and more.

"Spring Wildflower Walk" is being held on Saturday, **May 9th**, beginning **2:00 pm** at **Tenhaye Woods**. Park We will be looking for Red & White Trillium, blue & yellow violets, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Bloodroot, Trout Lily, Wild Geranium, Spice Bush, Spring Beauty, Wood Poppy, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, & Wood Anemone and more.

"Pond Life" program is being held on Sunday, **May 17th**, beginning at **2:00 pm** at **Tenhaye Woods**. Park at Lexington/Marais lot, go to the Lexington entrance & follow the Pond Life signs. 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.

"Mushroom Walk" is scheduled for Saturday, **May 23rd**, at **Cummingston Park** beginning at **10:00 am**. Mary Fredricks, a member and botanist/mycologist of the Royal Oak Nature Society, will lead the walk. Anyone with an interest in learning more about mushrooms and other fungi of the urban woods is welcome.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PATRON MEMBERS

A special thank you from the Nature Society goes out to our following 2019/20 Patron members for their generous financial contribution to us:

Don & Kathy Gavin
Barbara Grinke
Cole & Priscilla Hawkins
Bonnie Michalak
Jim & Laura Rogers
Richard & Pat Stoll
Jean Watson

ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY'S 15th ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

WHEN: Friday, April 24, 2020

WHERE: Royal Oak Elks Club (2401 E. 4th Street at Stephenson Hwy, Royal Oak)

TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

FOOD & DRINKS: Light refreshments & a cash bar

ACTIVITIES: Silent and live auction, and a 50/50 raffle.

TICKET COST: \$10

WHERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS: Speaker programs, nature walks, from any Nature Society board member or sending a check in by mail. If you purchase tickets in advance, you will get the first chance at winning a door prize.

MAILING CHECKS:

- Write check out for \$10/person
- Payable to the "Royal Oak Nature Society" with "Tickets" written on memo line
- Mail check to the Royal Oak Nature Society, 1600 N. Campbell, Royal Oak, MI 48067
- Ticket(s) will be waiting for you at the door

PURPOSE OF THE FUNDRAISER: To raise money for improvement projects in Tenhave Woods, Cummingston Park, and the Royal Oak Arboretum which is located behind the Royal Oak Senior Center (3500 Marais).

The Nature Society could use your help with our annual fundraiser. We need volunteers to supply and bring in food on the night of our event. To cover our expenses, we are trying to find businesses/groups that might be interested in becoming a sponsor. They would be able to put their advertising material out on our "Sponsor" table just inside the hall entrance. The business/group name would be prominently shown on signage, in our program guide and in our upcoming fall newsletter. As a sponsor, the business/group would get two free tickets to the fundraiser. Cost is \$100. Also, we are also looking for donations from businesses that can be used as auction

items. If you know of anyone who might be interested in helping us out in any of these ways, please have them contact us at 248-246-3380 and leave a message or e-mail us at naturesociety@romi.gov.

This event is a great way to show your support for the Nature Society. You get to bid on over 140 interesting items while enjoying great food and drinks along with getting to chat with your friends and other Nature Society supporters. So, this is an cordial invitation for you to join us on April 24th. Hope to see you then!

Please check out our Instagram page:

<https://www.instagram.com/royal.oak.nature.society/?hl=en>



Instagram

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

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



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)

General (free)
 Associate (\$5)
 Supporting (\$10 & up)
 Patron (\$50 & up)

Receive newsletter
by:
 Regular mail OR
 E-mail

NATURE SOCIETY GROUPS

Please contact us if you would like to become actively involved with one or more of the following groups:

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.

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

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

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Karen Blenc

Vice President & Communication: Ted Vickers

Treasurer & Ways & Means: Helen Cost

Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers

Program: Bob Muller

Stewardship-Tenhave & Royal Oak Arboretum: John Semchena

Stewardship-Cummingston: Mary Fredricks

Scout Representative: Richard Stoll

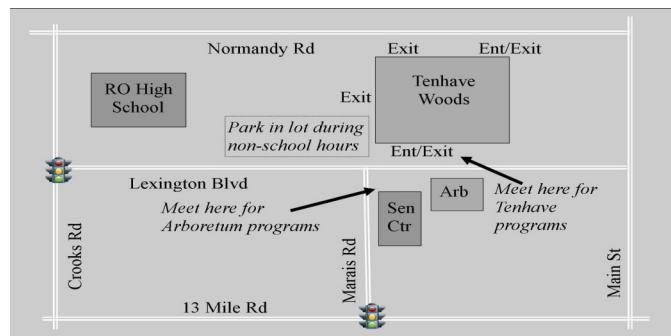
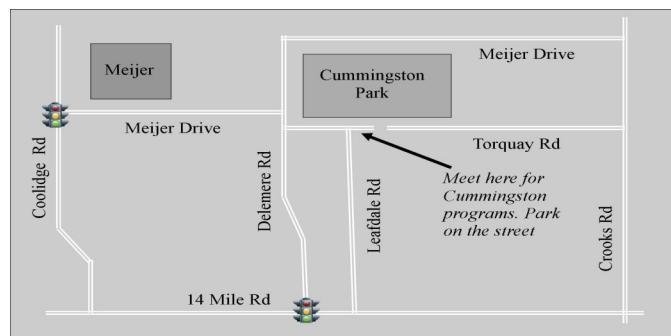
At Large: Michelle Watson and Christine Utter

Troop/Pack 1627 Representative: Richard Stoll

Education & Fundraising: Open positions

Cummingston Park, Tenhave Woods, and the Arboretum

Traffic Light



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 non-profit 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 developing an arboretum in Warden Park East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs for children and adults.

The Royal Oak Nature Society
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Royal Oak, MI 48067
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www.romi.gov/407/nature-society
nature@romi.gov

