



The Chinquapin

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Fall 2020

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Membership for the 2020/21 season begins now and ends in August, 2021. To see if you owe membership dues for the 2020/21 season, please check either your street address label found on the last page or the e-mail subject line.

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 and up per year and gets you all of the above benefits plus being listed as a supporting member in our newsletter. Patron Membership is \$50 and up per year and gets you all of the above benefits, listed as a patron member in our newsletter, an invitation

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When I was elected president in January, I was looking forward to a regular year of helping out with speakers programs, guided nature walks, work days in our parks and our annual fundraiser. Never in my wildest dreams would I ever had predicted we would have a worldwide pandemic, everything would shut down and we'd have to cancel all of our spring and summer programming. I never expected we'd be wearing masks and social distancing while working in our parks clearing trash or downed trees.

We've had to learn and use new technology. Our monthly board meetings have been held via Zoom, since we were unable to get together. Don Drife and Bob Muller began posting really informative videos and photographs on Facebook spotlighting the flora and fauna in our parks. We continue to have a dedicated group of volunteers, spearheaded by Vanessa Schultz, working in our arboretum while social distancing. If

you are interested in volunteering in the arboretum please let us know - no gardening experience required.

We appreciate the generous monetary donations we've received over the past few months. With our inability to hold our fundraiser this year, we rely on the donations in any amount for invasive species removal as well as the continued development of our Oak opening in the arboretum among other projects.

Although it's been a very different year than what I anticipated in January, there is one thing I find really positive that has come out of the past few months and that has been the increased usage of our nature parks. They have become a place for so many of us to escape our homes and experience nature during the shutdown. Please keep exploring our parks and arboretum. You never know what you may see.

Oak Tree Giveaway

by Bob Muller

In 1820, the Territory of Michigan organized Oakland County; this was one of the first areas to attract settlers and 17 years before we became a state. The year 2020 is Oakland County's 200th birthday and several activities had been planned to celebrate this event, but the Corvid-19 shutdown put a damper on most of these. One thing that did go on was that the county offered Oak trees to be planted as memorials for the anniversary. Three species of Michigan native oaks were offered which included White Oaks, Burr Oaks and Swamp White Oaks. The City of Royal Oak was offered the trees and approached the Nature Society to see if we would like to handle giving them out. We partnered with the Historical Society on this. On May 23 in the Senior Center parking lot at the Arboretum, the Nature Society set up a table and distributed over one

hundred trees to residents. We are developing a Lake Plain Oak Opening, a botanical community that was here when the first settlers arrived. We were able to use some of the Swamp White and Burr Oaks. This saved us purchasing them as well as the Oak Opening will also be a memorial grove of these bicentennial trees.



Dragonfly Pond's 15th Anniversary

by Erin Parker

Dragonfly Pond, located in Tenhave Woods and home to a diversity of wildlife, was restored to its present-day condition in the fall of 2005. While Dragonfly Pond is not technically a true vernal pond, or pond that dries up seasonally each year, it plays a similarly critical role in maintaining amphibian populations. Frogs, toads, and salamanders must utilize water for breeding in the spring, but because these pools dry up in the summer, they cannot support a fish population that would be major predators of the eggs and tadpoles. In the 15 years since its restoration, it has only dried up once and even that only lasted a week.

Ponds, like all landscape features, have a life cycle. Ponds slowly fill with sediment, become wet meadows or marshes, and eventually grassland and woodland. Urbanization, which changes the waterflow and increases the rate at which sediments can accumulate, can speed up this life cycle. The project to restore Dragonfly Pond was designed to "turn back the clock on the natural slow filling of ponds over time," according to Nature Society Board Member Bob Muller.

Muller recalls making years of observations of the water table and how water levels fluctuated throughout the year. While it was likely a year-round pond with a stream flowing in it back in the 1920s, by the 1970s it looked much as it does today. When water samples were taken back in 2005, they found extremely low dissolved oxygen due to the shaded location and amount of decaying plant material. When leaves and organic matter decay in the bottom of a pond, the microorganisms responsible for breaking things down can use all of the available oxygen in the water and the shade keeps aquatic plants from flourishing and adding dissolved oxygen via photosynthesis.

In the first year after the restoration, more than 25 different wetland plants came up from the seedbank and nearly all the macroinvertebrates that can be found arrived that first year, too, including the aquatic larval stages (nymphs) of dragonflies and damselflies whose adult stages then hunt insects and lend their name to the pond.

Muller added, "Now we have a breeding population of painted turtles." The American toad population exploded and soon spring peepers, Cope's gray tree frogs, gray tree frogs, and chorus frogs found their way. The increased amphibian population sustains a large garter snake population.

The pond also provides important stopover habitat for migrating warblers and other

birds, as well as a resident population of mallards and wood ducks. It's even home to a unique plant, an aquatic liverwort that might look a bit like floating duckweed to the casual observer. In a typical spring, pond programs are held for the public to explore and identify the plants and animals that call Tenhave Woods home with plenty of tadpoles and macroinvertebrates to discover.

One thing that the pond doesn't support is a large population of mosquitoes. "Mosquito larvae are rarely found in the pond because they are eaten by other wildlife," said Don Drife, former Royal Oak Nature Society Board President. "I wish people would understand that!"



Dragonfly Pond before restoration began



Dragonfly Pond after restoration was completed

**ALL SPEAKER PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.
PREREGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED**

SPEAKER PROGRAMS

We normally have our monthly general meeting/speaker programs from October to April at the Mahany/Meiningen Senior Community Center (3500 Marais). 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.

Because of COVID 19, we are currently NOT planning on having any fall speaker programs. If we decide to do one or more of them, we will post them in our website, our Facebook page and send a notice to all of our members.

Videos

by Bob Muller

Due to the pandemic, the last naturalist lead nature walk we did was last February. For over twenty years, our major way of interpretive nature has been our naturalists talking to people. The interaction between those of you on these walks and us giving them has always been enjoyable. Then all of a sudden, human interaction came to a screeching halt just at the time of year when spring wildflowers began to appear. They were in a mad rush as they needed to come up to bloom and begin to make seed before the trees leaf out and blocked the sunlight. If you wanted to see every one of those flowers blooming, you would have needed to go into the woods every four days as some flowers would have already come and gone. This is the reason why we have a nature walk every week for a period time during the spring.

So, what do we do? How can we tell people what is happening in the woods? Videos! This past spring, we

began going into the forest twice a week to shoot videos. Hopefully, we were able to let people know when to take a walk and to look for wildflowers themselves. Don Drife and I have shot over 30 videos. Most of them have been about 30 seconds long. We have had good responses to them. If you have not seen these videos, please take a look on our Facebook page for them.

No one knows how long it will be before naturalist lead walks will happen again, but even if we start them back up, we will continue shooting more videos as the year progresses. We have begun thinking of half hour pond life programs and maybe tree identification videos. We probably would never have started shooting videos if not for Covid-19 forcing our hand. If there something you are wondering about in the forest, send us an e-mail asking about it. Maybe, we will be able to do a video about it.

Some of the videos that can be found on Nature Society's Facebook Page

American Toad	Bloodroot	Boxelder Flowers	Common Blue Violet
Cut leaf Toothwort	Dutchman Breeches	Dwarf Ginseng	False Morel
Hawthorn'	Jack-in-the-Pulpit	Large False Solomon Seal	Maple Swamp Forest
Mayapple	Pawpaw	Purple Cress	Red berried Elder
Sessile Bellwort	Spring Beauty	Trillium	True Solomon Seal
Virginia Waterleaf	Wild Geranium	Wood Poppy	Yellow Trout Lilly
Yellow Violet	Silver Maple	Eastern Garter Snake	Red Tailed Hawk

ROYAL OAK NATURE SOCIETY FRIENDS OF FUNGI

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. Mary Fredricks & Karen Blenc head this group. There is no cost to belong and preregistration is not required. The group normally meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, November, January, February and March at the Mahany/Meiningen Senior Community Center (3500 Marais).

Because of COVID 19, we are currently NOT planning on having our November meeting/program. If we decide to do it, we will post it on our website, our Facebook page and send a notice to all of our members.

**ALL NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.
PREREGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED**

NATURE WALKS

There is at least one naturalist lead walk per month with additional ones added during the spring wildflower and fall color seasons. An emphasis is put on understanding the different forest types found in our parks. Further information is given on individual plant and animal species, geology and human history of the area. There is no preregistration or cost for any of our public nature walks. 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.

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

TENHAVE WOODS: Park is just east of the High School. Park in Marais/Lexington lot and meet at the Lexington entrance (300 feet east of parking lot). For the Owl Hoot walks, park and meet at the Marais/Lexington lot.

ROYAL OAK ARBORETUM: Park and meet on the north side of the Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais).

Because of COVID 19, we are currently NOT planning on having any fall nature walks. If we decide to do one or more of them, we will post them in our website, our Facebook page and send a notice to all of our members.

What's Happening in the Royal Oak Arboretum 2020

by Bob Muller

Don Drife and I came up with the idea of the Royal Oak Arboretum several years ago when we realized there were several interesting species of trees still surviving in the invasive Buckthorn thicket behind the Community Center. The idea of getting rid of the Buckthorn and planting native Michigan trees that are not found in either of our nature parks was born. In 2008, with the help of Nolan Tillis' Eagle Scout project, we began cutting down the Buckthorn. Ever since, we have slowly been adding trees, developing our prairie and commencing the development of our Lake Plain Oak Opening. This spring we planted 25 trees and numerous prairie wildflowers. Most of the trees have to be caged to prevent deer from browsing them. The cages are made from four-foot high chicken wire and while they are not attractive, but they serve their purpose. We try to plant at least two of each species in case we lose one. Of the 87 tree

species native to Michigan we still need to add seventeen species. We do have five of those in our Nursery waiting to get tall enough to move to the arboretum. Some of the species we still need are not grown commercially and their seed is not available for purchase. It will take some field trips to find these species and gather the seed to grow our own. A few species are endangered or threatened in Michigan and gathering seeds require special permits. Of the 25 trees we planted this spring, four were new to the Arboretum's collection. We have created a sub-group of the Nature Society, the Arboretum Eco-scapers, to do the work of keeping up a botanical garden. They meet every Tuesday morning from 8:00 to 10:00, spring through the fall. Anyone interested in joining should contact the Nature Society. See list of the trees planted this past spring (right).



Planted Tree List:
White Cedar
Tamarack
Peach Leaf Willow
Black Willow
Balsam Poplar
Hop Hornbeam
Choke Cherry

Pumpkin Ash
Black Ash
American Mountain-ash
White Birch
Swamp White Oak
Burr Oak

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to our pre-Dream Cruise picnic at Gunn Dyer Park and two free tickets to our annual fundraiser. If you want to be an Associate, Supporting or Patron member, please fill out a membership form (see below) and mail it along with a check to the Royal Oak 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 (see below) and send that information to: naturesociety@romi.gov

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

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



Please check out our Instagram page:

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



www.treefirst.org
info@treefirst.org

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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)

- 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:

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.

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: Karen Blenc

Vice President & Communication: Ted Vickers

Treasurer & Ways & Means: Helen Cost

Recording Secretary: Nancy Vickers

Education: Open

Program: Bob Muller

Stewardship-Tenhave & Royal Oak Arboretum: John Semchena

Stewardship-Cummingston: Mary Fredricks

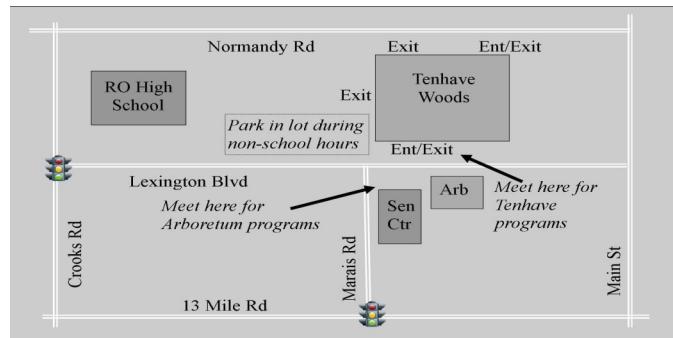
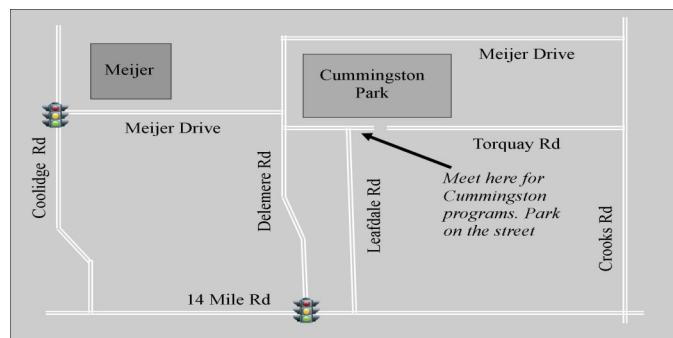
Scout Representative: Richard Stoll

At Large: Michelle Watson & Christine Utter

Troop/Pack 1627 Representative: Richard Stoll

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
248-246-3380
www.romi.gov/407/nature-society
nature@romi.gov

