



# The Chinquapin

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Summer 2020

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

## Royal Oak Nature Society's Three New Board Members

by Erin Parker

In late 2018, the Royal Oak Nature Society's then-president, Donald Drife, penned an open letter to the Society members and the public: the Board of Directors, and the organization as a whole, needed help. The volunteer-run Society manages two parks and a growing Arboretum for the community, provides nature education, and keeps natural history records on many species. But, there were no young members coming up through the ranks to assist with the projects, none to help utilize social media in order to promote the organization, and no one joining the Board- where the youngest member was 60 years old. By January 2020, things were starting to look a bit different; with three new younger members added to the Board and a variety of help from community members.

New President, Karen Blenc, who works as a trademark docketing manager, began volunteering with the Society by taking photographs, assisting with Friends of Fungi walks, and doing data collection. She said, "I had really enjoyed walking in the parks and arboretum prior to that. I think green space in cities is very important." Blenc wishes more of the Royal Oak community knew that the Nature Society is "an all-volunteer group and the majority of our funds come from donations. So volunteering as little or much as you can really help our group!" Her favorite time to visit Tenhave Woods or Cummingston Park: "I love Spring in our parks. The first time I visited Tenhave all the white trillium were in bloom and I've been hooked ever since!"

The Society also welcomed two new Directors-at-Large, Christine Utter and Michelle Watson.

While this year is Christine Utter's first year as a voting board member in the Royal Oak Nature Society, she and her family started participating in nature walks many years ago. She said, "My two oldest boys especially loved attending every walk. We learned so much about what was changing in the woods with the seasons, as well as some history of the area around us each time. After several years, we started participating in more than just the walks, we began to volunteer. With my two youngest boys, we signed up to help with work projects

and have been regular volunteers on the fence patrol. I have so many great family memories in Tenhave Woods."

What was Utter's motivation for joining the board this year? She said, "The Nature Society and our woods have been a consistent part of my family's life for two decades, so when I was asked to join the board, I immediately accepted. I'm excited to be part of the team working on bringing in new programs and new learning opportunities. I am especially driven to give as many people as possible the great memories our woods have given me."

Michelle Watson focuses on helping coordinate volunteers and assists Utter with the Society's Facebook page. Watson works as a human resources manager for a local engineering company and had been volunteering for the last few years with Society projects. She has been a member of the Society for more than 10 years. She believes that, "The Nature Society provides opportunities to people in the area to experience and learn about nature. Having wooded areas that have never been cleared is not something that many urban cities have. Once I had some more time to volunteer, I knew that it was the Nature Society that I wanted to work with."

All three new board members point to the importance of getting kids outdoors and appreciating nature and also just getting more volunteer and member support to keep things like trash and graffiti out of the parks.

Watson added, "Having woods in our city that have never been clear cut is really special. They offer opportunities to see what Royal Oak looked like many years ago. They offer a glimpse of both the vegetation that was here and have interesting historical connections to our community."

In the upcoming year, the three new members are looking forward to looking into some ways to bring more information to people while they are in the woods, such as through codes that people could scan on their phones and adding programming and walks that are geared toward children.

**NOTICE: We have posted our summer nature walk schedule on page 4. If you are planning to go on one of these walks, please check our website ([www.romi.gov/nature](http://www.romi.gov/nature)) first to see if it is still scheduled or if it has been cancelled.**

## Tenhave Woods Biggest Trees

by Don Drife

On February 22, 2020 a dozen people met at Tenhave Woods to walk through the park searching for big trees. We walked the southern half of the park. The circumference of each tree sampled was measured four-and-a-half feet from the ground and divided by pi to get the diameter at breast height (DBH). Each tree was identified to species except one oak which could be a hybrid. The legend records our data.

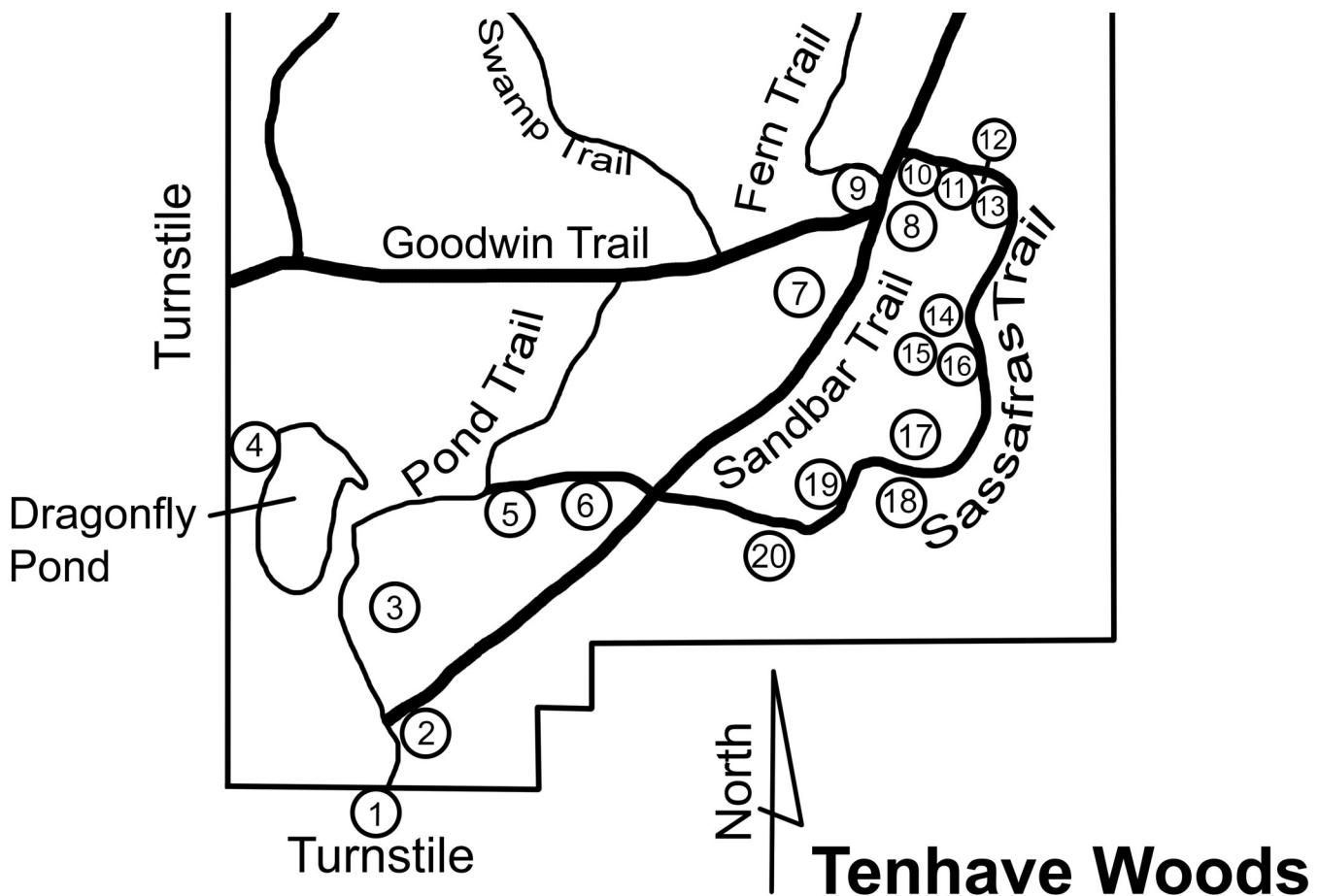
The dead Burr Oak next to the Lexington turnstile is 51-inch DBH (see photo on page 3). Tenhave's largest tree is the Red Oak in the intersection of the Goodwin and

Sandbar Trails. It is 54-inch DBH. When we measured the tree in 2009 it was 46-inch DBH. Cummings' largest tree is a 45-inch DBH Red Oak. We found one or two Pin Oaks along the Sassafras Trail. These are the only Pin Oaks that we know of in the park.

Next winter, when the ground is frozen, we need to return to Tenhave with our tape measures and study the Silver Maple forest in the northwestern corner. It was too wet to go into on this trip. Our two nature parks are botanical gems. We need to study them.

The following are Tenhave Woods tree diameters measured at breast height (DBH). The trees are numbered and their location is shown on the map below.

- 1) Burr Oak (dead) 51" DBH, 2) Silver Maple 31" DBH, 3) Red Oak 44" DBH, 4) Eastern Cottonwood 37" DBH, 5) White Oak 39" DBH, 6) Bitternut Hickory 23" DBH, 7) Black Cherry 28" DBH, 8) Red Oak 54" DBH, 9) Butternut 29" DBH, 10) White Oak 32" DBH, 11) Black Oak 27" DBH, 12) Red Oak 47" DBH, 13) Tulip Tree 34" DBH, 14) Shumard Red Oak 32" DBH, 15) Pin Oak 18" DBH, 16) Pin Oak or Hybrid 23" DBH, 17) Tulip Tree 29" DBH, 18) Bitternut Hickory 26" DBH, 19) Black Cherry 32" DBH, 20) Sassafras 31" DBH.



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. 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.**

Photo (right) shows two volunteers helping our Nature Society botanist, Don Drife, measure the large Burr Oak located just outside of Tenhave's Lexington gate. The measuring is part of the Tenhave Woods Biggest Trees survey that took place on February 22, 2020. See page 2.



## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Listed below are some volunteer opportunities that the Nature Society has going on this coming summer. These are great chances to get out and enjoy the sun! If there are any changes, we will let you know by email. Also, you can find out if there are any changes by going to our website.

**Fence Patrol:** We are looking for people to help check on the fence at Tenhave Woods for problems and generally keep an eye on the woods once a week during the summer and fall months. The fence keeps out animals that eat the park's wildflowers, thus it is helpful to keep it in good repair. Volunteers walk the fence line and report any issues that they see. Interested people can choose a week they would like to walk their patrol. Time commitment is 45 minutes to an hour and only needs to be done once during the selected week. Patrolling will start the week of May 18<sup>th</sup> and run through November.

**Tuesday Mornings Gardening in the Arb:** Starting June 2nd, Nature Society members will meet weekly on Tuesday mornings from 8 to 10 to complete a variety of

tasks including pulling plants, trimming, and planting plants and trail maintenance. Please join us. No experience needed. Meet at the north end of the Senior Center parking lot and bring your gloves and clippers if you have them. If you don't, we will supply them to you. Arrive when you can. There is no need to sign up.

**Saturday Morning Workdays:** There are three scheduled days we will meet to take care of needed projects in the woods. We generally meet 10 to 12 noon. Dates are June 20<sup>th</sup>, July 11<sup>th</sup>, and August 8<sup>th</sup>. Details will be posted on our website when available.

Check page 5 for the need of volunteers for **Woodward Dream Cruise** (August 15) at Gunn Dyer Park.

If you are interested in learning more about any of these projects and/or you would like to be placed on a volunteer opportunity email list, please email Michelle Watson at [M2Watson@aol.com](mailto:M2Watson@aol.com).

ALL NATURE WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.  
PREREGISTRATION 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 **Royal Oak Senior/Community Center** (3500 Marais)

**NOTE: All of the walks listed below are currently scheduled to take place. As it gets closer to those scheduled dates, please check our website to find out if they are still scheduled or have been cancelled.**

**"Arboretum History"** is being held at the **Royal Oak Arboretum** on Tuesday, **June 9<sup>th</sup>**, beginning at 7:00 pm.

**"Meadow of the Arboretum"** nature walks are being held at the **Royal Oak Arboretum** at 7:00 pm:  
Wednesday, **July 15<sup>th</sup>**  
Wednesday, **August 19<sup>th</sup>**

**"Summer "Mushroom Walks"** begin at 10:00 am:

Saturday, **June 27<sup>th</sup>** at Tenhave

Saturday, **July 25<sup>th</sup>**, at Cummingston

Saturday, **August 22nd** at Tenhave

Mary Fredricks, a member and botanist/mycologist of the Royal Oak Nature Society, will lead the walks. Anyone with an interest in learning more about mushrooms and other fungi of the urban woods is welcome.

## Arboretum & Tenhave Woods Birdfeeders

We want to thank Jennifer Law-Sullivan for taking over the filling our arboretum & Tenhave birdfeeders during this past winter. The Hawkins family had been doing it for the past several years, but they recently moved out of state.

Jennifer appreciates nature and this is a way for her to get outside to enjoy it.

Her goal was to fill up the feeders anywhere between every 1 to 2 weeks.

Photo on the right is Jennifer filling up the arboretum birdfeeder on a Sunday afternoon in early March.



## Looking For Dream Cruise Volunteers

The **Woodward Dream Cruise** is currently scheduled for **August 15, 2020**. If it hasn't been cancelled, try something different and sign up to help us with parking at Gunn Dyer Park. The park located at Hampton and Chester, is just a few blocks north of Memorial Park and one block east of Woodward. Our day begins around 8 am and finishes up around 8 pm. Shifts are only about 3 hours long.

Our main responsibility is to collect parking fees and direct drivers to open parking spots. It can get extremely busy in the early afternoon, so, we could use all of the help that we can get. If you volunteer for us at Dream

Cruise, you are invited to our annual **pre-Dream Cruise picnic**. It will take place on the Friday (14<sup>th</sup>) evening, the day before the actual Dream Cruise. Time is from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. The Nature Society supplies the hot dogs. This is a pleasant way to sit back and enjoy the pre-Dream Cruise atmosphere. While we are there, we collect money from people who park their cars at Gunn Dyer.

If you have some free time on Dream Cruise Day and would like to give us a helping hand, please call us at 248-246-3380 & leave a message or e-mail Michelle Watson at [M2Watson@aol.com](mailto:M2Watson@aol.com).

## A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTING MEMBERS

A special thank you from the Nature Society goes out to the following 2019/20 Supporting Members for their support and financial contribution to us:

**Doris Applebaum**

**Ron Gamble**

**Lauren & Anthony Hallett**

**Cully, Marg, Aurora Hawkins**

**Donna Kuchapsky**

**Glenn Latinen**

**Tessa, Grant, Ivy, Quinn, Canon Orthmeyer**

**Karen Pettke**

**Yvonne Schilla**

**Robert Schneider**

**Charles Svalya**

**Muriel Versagi**

**Sandy & Keith Wilkins**

**Sean & Shaleen Wilkins**

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.

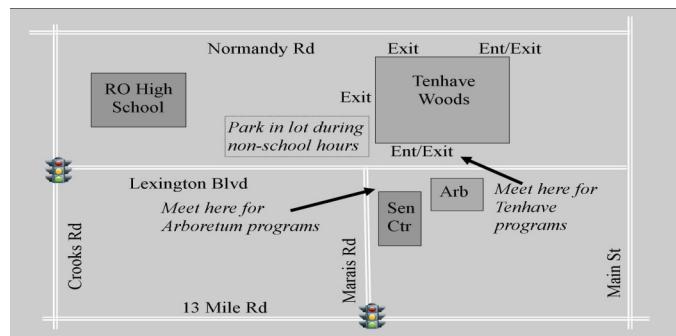
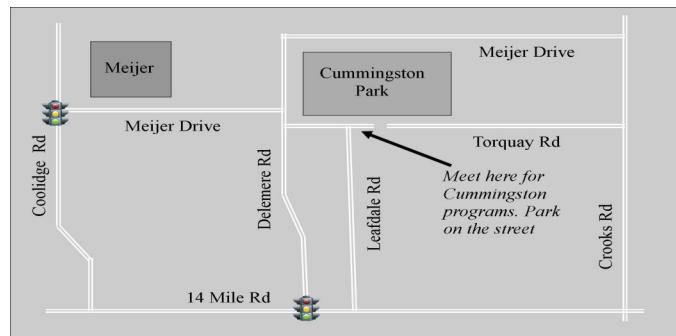
**Stewardship:** Maintains a trail system and enhances the overall park experience at Tenhave Woods, Cummingston Park and the Arboretum.

**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 Semchenko  
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



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

The Royal Oak Nature Society is a non-profit organization working within the city of Royal Oak's two nature parks, Tenhaw Woods and Cummins Station 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.

www.jom.iq/407/nature-society  
nature-society@jom.iq.gov

