



The Chinquapin

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Fall 2021

The Official Publication Of The Royal Oak Nature Society

NATURE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Membership for the 2021/22 season begins now and ends in August, 2022. To see if you owe membership dues for the 2021/22 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 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

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President's 2021 President's Report

by Karen Blenc

Ever since my first visit to Tenhave Woods a few years ago, I've been telling my friends what a magical place it is. It is especially so, in the spring when the wildflowers are in bloom. One of my friends visited Tenhave with me for the first time this past spring. It was late in the day and the light had a greenish tint as it filtered through the emerging leaves to the forest floor carpeted with white trillium. As we were returning to our cars, we saw a fox sparrow rustling through the leaf litter in the arboretum, a first for both of us. My friend was surprised at the beauty and hadn't truly understood what a special place it was. She vowed to come back again when she had more time to explore.

Both of our nature parks and the arboretum are special places that the Royal Oak Nature society and it's volunteers has been maintaining for the past 20 years. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we have found ways to keep up with our activities. We've offered speakers programs via Zoom. If

you missed these programs several of them can be viewed on our YouTube site, so check them out when you have a chance. We've slowly been offering more and more nature walks. These are a great way to learn about the flora, fauna, fungus and history of our parks. We've also resumed scheduling park workdays where we do park clean-up, invasive plant removal and other tasks. If you are interested in going on a guided nature walk or volunteering for a workday, please check our website or Facebook page for the most up to date information.

Thanks to all of you who have supported us this past year with monetary donations. We couldn't do it without you! We haven't been able to hold our annual fundraiser the past two springs, so every donation or paid membership helps us continue our work in the parks. Lastly thanks to all of our volunteers who help with the work of keeping the parks such magical places.

Cummingston Park: Beginning in 2001

by Ted Vickers & Bob Muller

Twenty years ago, Cummingston Park was flooded. A pond two to twelve inches deep filled the area between Leafdale Trail, the north fence, the Eagle Scout Trail, and the berm behind the meadow. The area west of Leafdale Trail over to the west fence was flooded north of the Leafdale sewer drain eight to twelve inches deep. Both of these areas did contain raised islands where vegetation was able to grow. By July, the water would recede leaving large areas of bare ground between the islands. This water was an excellent mosquito breeding ground. Local kids called Cummingston "Mosquito Woods." Cummingston could host nature walks from July to December when the park

flooded again. January and February walks were possible in years when the water froze.

The meadow which supported a diverse flora in the 1970s had become an impenetrable thicket of River Grape with intertwining vines three feet deep. No trails existed east of the fence along eastern side of the park or west of Leafdale Trail. Leafdale was the only north-south trail and only parts of the Gentian and Chinquapin Trails existed.

TRAIL SYSTEM: Many of the new trails and many of the trail improvements

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were done as part of Eagle Scout projects. The *Leafdale Trail* has been in existence well before 2001. It shows up on a 1949 aerial map as a road or trail. It has been said to be the name of a farm owner who sold his land to George H. Cummings in the early 1900's. The *Chinquapin Trail* was built in 2002 and part of it could have been part of the old Spicebush Trail that existed in the 1960's. The eastern half of the trail was made by foot traffic. Several Chinquapin trees can be found in the east section alongside the trail. The *Gentian Trail* was built in 2002 in the vicinity of the old one that existed in the 1960's. Gentian plants could be found in the park in the 1960's, but currently do not exist there. The *Eagle Scout Trail* was built in 2002 to connect the Chinquapin & Gentian trails half-way between the Leafdale Trail and the east fence. *Arkona & Shagbark Trails* were built in 2004 as an Eagle Scout project. A section of the Arkona trail was part of the Lake Arkona beach ridge that runs through Cummingston Park. Shagbark Trail has 30 trees that can be found alongside it that are in the hickory family. The *Turkey Trail* was built in the fall of 2016 by Nature Society volunteers. It runs close to the east fence & connects to the Arkona, Chinquapin & Gentian trails. The trail was named after a fungus that is common along it. In the 1960's, the west side of the park had the May Apple, Hepatica & Cardinal Flower trails. By 2001, they no longer existed. The *Screech Owl and Outlet Spur trails* were built in December 2016 to replace them.

POND: Crawfish Pond work took place in the fall of 2008 with the removal of trees and then dirt being excavated. Crawfish Pond has become as interesting as Tenhave's Dragonfly Pond. The plants at Crawfish that showed up the first year from the seed bed were amazing and different from what has seen at Tenhave. Cardinal Flower was seen in Cummingston for the first time in years. American Toads were found in the pond during the first year and thousands of young toads were eating the mosquitoes. The pond also has produced many other insects that eat mosquitoes and for the first time in any of our memories, you can walk into Cummingston in the summer without being eaten alive. In November of 2011, we had the pond size expanded. The purpose of doing this was to increase the breeding ground for amphibians and to extend the pond to the north in order to attempt to eliminate the phragmites that had taken over the area between the pond & the fence along Meijer Drive. Phragmites does not like to grow in deeper water. It helped somewhat, but the phragmites still

proliferates in some areas as it continues to migrate from north of Meijer Drive.

DRAINAGE: In spring of 2005, Cummingston Park survey showed that the sewer in the park was lower than the water levels, but paths to the drain were blocked. In November 2006, excavators and shovels were used by volunteers to deepen parts of the ditch so water could flow from one end of the park to the other. After the excavation, the ditch flowed like a stream all winter and throughout the spring. The water levels in the central area of Cummingston park had now returned to the way they were years ago. But the west side of park still had a water problem in winter & spring. In February 2010, City of Royal Oak workers dug a four foot deep ditch in the southwest corner of the park and connected it to a street sewer located at the corner of Delemere & Torquay. The result was immediate. Water levels in the west area of the park were lowered to levels that were present before Meijer Drive dam was built.

MEADOW: Over the years, the area became overgrown with plants like burdock, honeysuckle, wild grapes and others. In 2016, we decided to begin a long-term project to restore the Cummingston Meadow. First, the trail was rebuilt. Then dead vegetation, glass & other debris, invasive plants were removed from the meadow area as part of an Eagle Scout project. As the invasives have tried to come back, work projects have been scheduled to remove these plants. As we move forward, the tasks of controlling invasives and defining and maintaining the trail will continue. We won't know for a while what other interventions will be necessary or possible. With diligence and patience, we will be able to restore this important habitat to Cummingston Park.

These were some of our major accomplishments in Cummingston Park over the past 20 years. In our winter issue, we will look back at the arboretum beginning in 2008.



**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 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 currently do not have any speaker programs scheduled for the spring. If we decide to do any, we will post it on our website, our Facebook page and send a notice to all of our members.

Looking back at Nature Nights & Open Houses

Nature Night was a program held during the evening where children and their families could get involved with nature-based exhibits by observing and asking questions about them. Exhibits included arts and crafts, seed planting, composting, fossils, tree rings, animal skins and skulls, birds, live reptiles, insects, owl pellets, amphibians, owl pellets & native fish displays.

Our first Nature Night was held in April 2002 at Whittier Elementary School and our last took place in January 2015 at Keller Elementary School. In all, we put on 20 nature nights, with a total attendance of 2,840 which averages out to 142 children & adults per program. Locations included Royal Oak Library (2), Salter Center; Shrine Grade School (2); Royal Oak elementary schools including Whittier, Starr (2), Upton (2), Oakland, Oak Ridge (2) Keller (4), Addams; and Northwood (2). We considered this program an overwhelming success. The children & parents that attended these programs had a great time & learned a lot about nature.

Before 2007, we had thousands of people attend our nature programs. We knew many of them were using our nature parks, but from conversations with the public, a lot of those people never heard of the Nature Society and Royal Oak's two nature parks. So, our idea was to put on an Annual Open house at Tenhave Woods. It would give more people the opportunity to discover and enjoy one of Royal Oak's natural jewels.

The Nature Society held Open Houses yearly from 2007 to 2015 at Tenhave Woods. They took place from late April into early May. Total attendance for those 9 years was 680 people that averaged out to 75 per program. Activities included bird walks, pond studies, nature photography, wildflower walks, animal habitat for children, tree walks, and others.

This program was also quite successful. Hopefully, many of the people who came to our Open Houses years ago, are still enjoying our beautiful nature parks.

Recollections from Nature Society member Betty LeMay

I discovered Tenhave Woods on an early spring walk lead by the Nature Society in April 2013. I was so excited to see the natural beauty of the woods and all the wildflowers growing there, as well as the pond and wildlife. I thought you had to be with the Nature Society to enter the park, but I found out you could enter anytime, so I returned many times at different times of the year. With my newly found hobby of closeup photography, the

woods had so much to photograph. I eventually made a photo book entitled "Wild Flowers of Tenhave Woods" which I donated to a fundraiser. I have attended several of the walks, and always learned something new. I also visited the Arboretum, which gave me an opportunity to photograph the beautiful butterflies and plant life.

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 usually required. The group normally meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, November, January, February and March at the Royal Oak Senior Community Center (3500 Marais).

Because of COVID 19, we currently do not have any speaker programs scheduled for November. If we decide to do any, 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 NORMALLY 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).

Fall "Mushroom Walks" begin at 10:00 am:

Saturday, September 25th at Tenhave

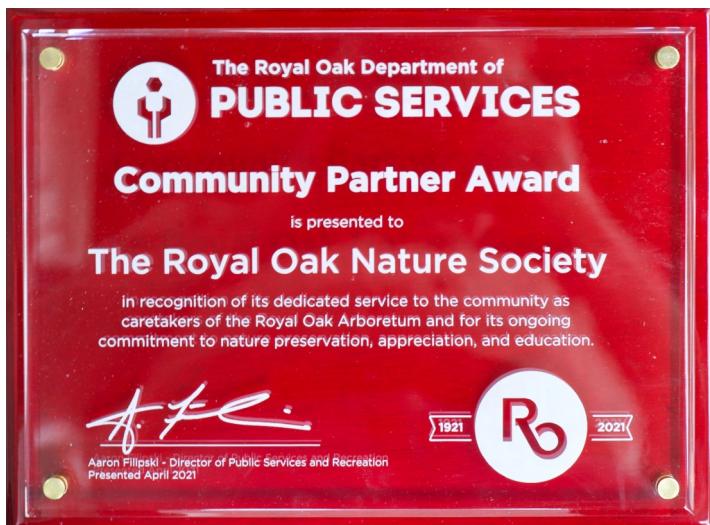
Saturday, October 23rd at Cummingston

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. There is no cost, but you will need to register in advance at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054EABAA229-mushroom>

If we decide to do any additional walks, we will post them on our website, our Facebook page and send a notice to all of our members.

Royal Oak Community Partner Award

On Arbor Day, April 29, 2021, Department of Public Services Director Aaron Filipski presented the department's first Community Partner Award to the Royal Oak Nature Society for the their contributions to the city's parks and programming. The presentation took place on the grounds of the Senior Community Center where a tulip tree was planted that day as a commemoration of Arbor Day.



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Patron member, please fill out a membership form (see p.5 for the form & instructions) 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). If you want to pay with a credit or debit card or PayPal, please fill out this [MEMBERSHIP FORM](#) and follow the instructions. Type the word "membership" on the payment form where it says, "Add special instructions to the seller."

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.

For those who choose not to continue being members, you 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.

The Nature Society is on YouTube! Check out our first virtual Fungi Walk hosted by Mary Fredricks. See some of the fungi (and more) that was in Cummingston Woods in July 2020.

Just go to YouTube and search for "Royal Oak Nature Society" to find our channel.



You can Subscribe to our channel and get notifications when new content is added. It is free!

You can also click here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTBfeN1EIWtF90P4tu6EpcQ>

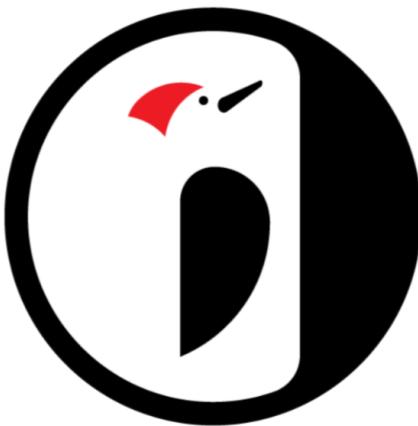
Please check out our Facebook page & "like" the Royal Oak Nature Society.

<https://www.facebook.com/Royal-Oak-Nature-Society-228095233882566>



Please check out our Instagram page:

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



Tree First
ARBORICULTURE

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

Fundraiser: Open

Program: Bob Muller

Stewardship-Tenhave & Royal Oak Arboretum: John Semchena

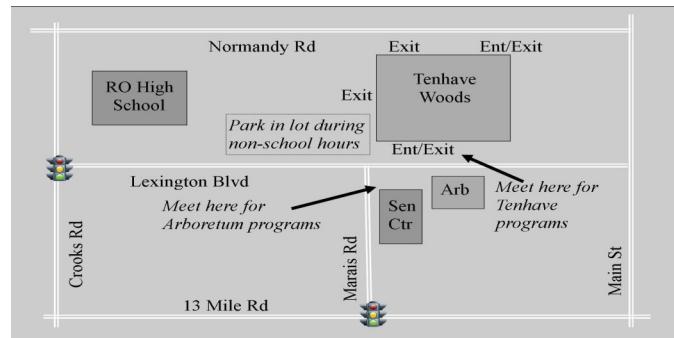
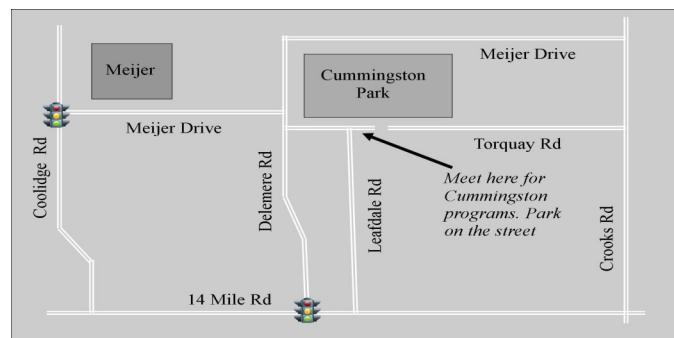
Stewardship-Cummingston: Mary Fredricks

At Large: Michelle Watson

Scout 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 Worden Park East. We also offer a wide range of natural history educational programs for children and adults.

www.romi.gov/407/nature-society
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The Royal Oak Nature Society

