

**The Royal Oak Nature Society Master Plan for
Cunnington Park, Tenhave Woods
and Royal Oak Arboretum
Version 5
May, 2017**



*Questions or comments may be submitted
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Preface

Tenhave Woods and Cummington Park are the jewels of the Royal Oak park system. The development that started almost 200 years ago with the first settlers, has taken this land from a wilderness to an urban environment. The amount of tree, shrub and wild flower species found in the two parks is amazing. I was a Scout leader for over 40 years and have taught natural history in literally hundreds of forest campsites. Yet in the middle of Royal Oak, our two nature parks put all those forest campsites to shame. Our parks currently allow just a short walk to teach about Oak-Hickory, Beech-Maple and Southern Swamp communities. Aside from their value for teaching natural history both parks have a link to human history as they are remnant wood lots from the first farms within our city.

With this said, both parks have suffered due to the urban development that has occurred over half a century, however, it is not too late. With the commitment of the City and its residents, the Royal Oak Nature Society has made considerable effort to protect and restore the biospheres of the parks. We have at the same time made the parks much more available to the public and started development to turn them into world class educational facilities. It is important to make sure that the quality of these fragile parks is maintained for future generations. The parks are not only natural history classrooms, but windows through which to view what Royal Oak was like before its development.

*Robert Muller
Royal Oak Nature Society Naturalist*

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Introduction

In 2002, the Royal Oak Nature Society wrote its first Master Plan. Because goals over the years are completed, changed or new ones added, the Nature Society Master Plan was revised in both 2009 and 2013. Please review the new Master Plan (version 5.0) to find out what our current goals are for these three Royal Oak natural areas: Cummington Park, Tenhave Woods and the Royal Oak Arboretum, which is located behind the Royal Oak Senior Center (3500 Marais). Please feel free to make comments. Your input is important and will be taken into consideration as we continue to plan the future of these areas.

Increase Community Use of Tenhave Woods, Cummington Park & Royal Oak Arboretum

Many Royal Oak residents still do not realize these nature preserves exist. It is the goal of the Nature Society to improve the natural management of these park lands so they continue to be vibrant spaces in the community and continue to be utilized for both nature education and recreation.

Educational programs are managed by the Program and Education Committees.

The **Program Committee** focuses on environmental education for the general public. It has been providing services, free of charge, since the spring of 2001. Their current services are listed below.

- **Nature Walks:** The Nature Society currently runs a series of free nature walks for the public year round in each park. There is no operating cost for this program. Walks are lead by Royal Oak Nature Society Naturalist volunteers. We plan to establish a naturalist training program.
- **Speaker Series:** Nature Society currently provides monthly speaker series (October to May) on nature based topics. These programs are held at the Royal Oak Middle School and are generally designed for people 10 years and older. The first several minutes before the beginning of the speaker program is considered the General Meeting for the Royal Oak Nature Society. Currently, there is no cost associated with these programs. Normally, 25 to 60 people attend each monthly program. The purpose of these programs is not only to educate the community about nature but to make them aware of Royal Oak's natural areas.
- **Programming for Outside Organizations:** The Nature Society provides help in creating programs utilizing the natural areas to meet the needs of outside organizations (Garden Clubs, Scout groups).

The **Education Committee** focuses on outreach to the local schools. When the Nature Society was first formed, the committee conducted a survey of grade school teachers in the Royal Oak School District. The purpose of the survey was to determine what type of environmental education outreach programs our organization could provide for teachers. The results determined three areas that the Education Committee will work with schools to provide the following when feasible:

- **Guest Speakers** (naturalists) to present programs to students in the classroom
- **Naturalist**-guided field trip in the parks
- **Nature Night** programs that teach environmental education to children and their families through the use of nature based displays and activities.

We also want to increase the positive usage of these three parks on a daily-basis. This will be done through creating a safe environment. Updating trail systems at each park that encourage traffic through the parks, signage, and ongoing community events help achieve this goal.

What Will the Park Improvements Cost?

The overall costs for the improvements may be low because labor will be completed by volunteers, unless it is a technical or dangerous job. In addition, we will use natural materials to build the trail system. The following are estimates of the cost of action items:

Fund to Pay for Speakers	\$800/year
Fund to Cover Printing/Mail	\$200/year
Invasive Species	\$5,000/year

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The following table breaks down the areas of work to be accomplished with specific action items: a timeframe for completing the task

- Immediate =Within One Year (before 2019)
- Short= 1 to 5 Years (before 2023)
- Long = Beyond 5 Years (2023 & beyond)

Tenhave & Cummingston Parks: Master Plan

Area	Action Item	Time Frame	Comments-Status
General Layout	Hard dirt trails should be lined 4' to 6' wide with brush cleared 8' high overhead as part of a maintenance program.	Ongoing	Use Nature Society volunteers
Projects	Invasive Species Removal	Ongoing	NCS with Nature Society to follow-up
Enhancement	Install signs that will read "Royal Oak Nature Society is Responsible for the Stewardship of (add the name of park) and include our contact info (e-mail address & phone number).	Short	To be done by the city of Royal Oak

Cummingston Park - Master Plan

Area	Action Item	Time Frame	Comments-Status
Enhancements	Add signs at 14 Mile/Leafdale and on Torquay, directing visitors to the park.	Short	To be done by the city of Royal Oak
Project	Improve trail network	Ongoing	
Project	Meadow restoration	Ongoing	
Project	Tree name signage	Short	
Project	Trail sign posts and trail map	Short	Potential Eagle Scout project

Tenhave Woods in Quickstad Park - Master Plan

Area	Action Item	Time Frame	Comments
Enhancements	Build a sidewalk from the main sidewalk up to the Normandy entrance turnstile	Short	To be done by the city of Royal Oak
Enhancements	Make a wooden sign with park rules at Normandy entrance	Short	To be done by the city of Royal Oak
Maintenance	Remove obstacles from the trails	Ongoing	Use Nature Society volunteers
Maintenance	Make sure that there are no breaches in the fence & that there are no fence/ground gaps in the park	Ongoing	To be done by our Park Patrol
Project	Remove trees, invasive species & shrubs along the west fence line to allow more sunlight to reach the pond.	Ongoing	
Project	Add bench at the Goodwin/Sandbar intersection	Short	Potential Eagle Scout Project
Project	Add dirt berm to gap under the fence that currently has logs filling that space	Short	

Arboretum at the Royal Oak Arboretum- Master Plan

Area	Action Item	Time Frame	Comments-Status
General Layout	Describe plans for completion of trail system. Develop a landscape plan.	Ongoing	
Maintenance	Gardening begins in May & ends in September	Ongoing	
Project	Add woodchips to trails as necessary	Every 3 to 4 years	Use scout troops
Enhancement	Install sign that will read "Royal Oak Nature Society is Responsible for the Stewardship of the Royal Oak Arboretum and include our contact info (e-mail address and phone number).	Short	To be done by the city of Royal Oak
Projects listed below	Continue with development	Ongoing	Make plans as we go
Area #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8	Invasive species removal	Ongoing	NCS with Nature Society to follow-up
Area #2	Plant native trees and create a true prairie at the north end	Short	Use volunteers
Area #6 (Backyard Wildlife Habitat)	Begin development. Remove invasive species to make room for new plants.	Short	
Area #7	Planting new native trees and protecting them with mesh	Short	Use volunteers
Area #8	To develop a mushroom garden	Ongoing	Use volunteers

Area	Action Item	Time Frame	Comments-Status
Rain Garden	To create new one	Short	
Butterfly Garden	Maintained by gardening crew	Ongoing	
Memorial Garden	Maintained by gardening crew	Ongoing	

*NCS: Natural Community Services
See appendix for map of Arboretum areas

Revision Notes

Version	Date	Content Changes
1.0	December 4, 2001	
2.0	March 4, 2002	-Added <i>What Will Park Improvements Cost?</i> ; -Added specific costs to park description tables; -Updated the Organization of the Nature Society to reflect election of Board; -Grammar and format changes
3.0	December 2009	Complete revision of version 2.0
4.0	December 2013	Revision of version 3.0
5.0	May 2017	Complete revision of version 4.0

Royal Oak Arboretum

