

Holliday Nature Preserve Association



Published three times a year for Friends and Supporters of The Holliday Nature Preserve

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• WINTER- SPRING 2003

New County Exec And The Preserve

Robert Ficano is Wayne County's new county executive. One of the area's he will oversee in that role is Wayne County Parks. That includes our Holliday Nature Preserve.

While Mr. Ficano will have his hands full addressing such things as the multi-million dollar county deficit, we hope he takes time to address park-related issues that are so essential to the quality of life here. Maybe HNPA can get Mr. Ficano to take a walk in the Preserve. As soon as he settles in, we'll send an him an invitation.

HNPA MISSION

The Holliday Nature Preserve Association is a group of volunteers dedicated to the Holliday Nature Preserve. Like Arthur Richardson who made a gift of the Preserve in memory of his uncle, William P. Holliday, we seek to nurture a greater appreciation of this unique local natural resource. We also seek to educate local communities on the importance of this Preserve within the Wayne County Parks system.

We host walks, assist with clean-ups, and work with government officials to ensure the continued protection of this 500+ acre preserve that runs along the Tonquish Creek, a Rouge River tributary. Our activities are free and are open to everyone.

SCOUT PROJECT IMPROVES PRESERVE, ADDS TO ENJOYMENT

A question came into our web site

www.hnpa.org

about something new in the Preserve. Pastor Dean Johnson and his family recently moved to a house near the Preserve. While jogging in the Koppnick section he came upon some new benches. He contacted HNPA President Bill Craig asking about those benches and wondering about getting a map of the Preserve's trails. Bill did not know about the benches and explained that, sadly, no updated trail map of the Preserve exists - yet. Bill sent a copy of an old trail map. (The map can also be found and printed from the HNPA web site.)

As to the benches, Bill went to the County Parks office at Nankin Mill where the Park's Matt Noble-



Richardson explained that three benches were installed as an Eagle project by Jason Black, of Troop 889. The project took Jason over 150 hours to plan, build and install the benches. The project cost \$210. Jason planned and ran two deposit bottle drives as fundraisers.

One bench is at the junction of the Tonquish and Tulip Trails, another on the Beech Trail by the bridge over Deer Creek, and the other at the far west end of the Tulip Trail.

Bills said that "anyone who passes them or uses them can see that these are quality benches. They are a fine improvement to the trail system." What impressed Bill the most was that there was hardly a sign of disturbance by the way they were installed. No tire tracks, no cut trees, no excessive clearing. Jason Black and his helpers took extra care and respected the Preserve. HNPA commends Jason, his assistants and supporters for a good job.

HNPA TO CELEBRATE 15 YEARS

There have been many changes in the Preserve since HNPA formed 15 years ago. Some good and some bad. And in many cases (such as getting the County to improve such things as signage, trails, and bridges,) there hasn't been enough changes.

We will review the last 15 years in our next newsletter, along with how a forest and wildlife Preserve came about in the first place.

We would enjoy having you e-mail any comments you might have regarding the Preserve. Changes you've noticed and liked or disliked. and perhaps what you would like to see done. We'd also like to have you share any good memories you have of the Preserve. Send us an e-mail to www.hnpa.org or drop us a note to the address on the back page.



A CONTINUOUS TRAIL THROUGH HOLLIDAY?

A question came in via e-mail: "How does someone travel the Preserve from end to end? There does not seem to be a useable, continuous trail to follow?"

According to HNPA President Bill Craig. There is no good way. "To go end-to-end, one must rough it and traveling cross country." Bill explained that there is no bridge over Morgan Creek and the bottleneck at Wayne Road where a walker must either go under the bridge or somehow cross Wayne Road. Many walkers feel uncomfortable going under the bridge.

A walk along the length of the Preserve can be done and Bill made the walk last spring (he described the walk in the last issue of our newsletter. His article can be found on the web site.)

While industrious walkers can make the trek, it is not recommended as the lack of a trail and the length of the Preserve makes for a long and difficult walk for the average person. The HNPA does not support a continuous trail system. The association feels that any county funds would be better used on projects that would receive more use and could also protect the Preserve.

LOSS OF A GOOD FRIEND

This fall saw the passing of Ron Treppa, a long-time supporter of HNPA and the father of HNPA board members Kathy and Roberta Treppa. Mr. Treppa helped with publishing our newsletter. He was a nice man and will be missed.

Wayne Bridge Project Completed

Repairs to the Tonquish Creek bridge at Wayne Road (just south of Joy Road in Westland) were completed in November.

For 15 years this bridge never got much attention and for 15 years the two stormwater drain pipes off the road to the East were in disrepair and gushed stormwater down the banks of Tonquish Creek, causing severe erosion and sedimentation loading. (See photo at lower left.) The recent bridge/road project fixed those problems. (See photo at lower right.)

It remains to be seen how effective the North side storm drain spillway will be. Stormwater is already spilling over and causing erosion. This is one of those bottlenecks that make a continuous trail through the Preserve difficult to achieve.

Once the job was completed and the workers gone, a check of the area showed that not all the construction materials were gone. Along with some construction material, someone left a 55-gallon drum of toxic concrete sealer on the edge of the Tonquish Creek.

That barrel was reported to the Wayne County Department of Environment 24-hour hotline at 1-888-223-2363. This resulted in an interesting but useless series of calls and transfers by HNPA

President Bill Craig in trying to identify who was responsible for the site so they could pick up the barrel.



Bill finally heard back from Eric Anderson from the Department of Environment. He took down the details and location, then called back two days later saying the barrel was safely removed. He also said the remainder of the materials will be removed soon.

The above example demonstrates the need for individuals and volunteer groups like the HNPA. It also shows people can make a difference. Your support of the HNPA gives us weight when we talk to bureaucrats and to community leaders. While it doesn't always mean things will get done quickly (like upgrading Holliday), it does let politicians and bureaucrats know that someone cares and is watching what is done and not done.

It's difficult to keep our waterways clean, erosion minimized and our parks looking nice for families to use. It's also difficult to preserve treasures like the Holliday Preserve. Without your support, it would be even harder.



The failed storm drain on the northeast side of Wayne Road before repair work. Note the erosion and lengths of drain pipe that have fallen off as a result.



Area after repairs. Eroded areas have been filled in and a spillway (the rocks) added. Whether it will be effective in the long term is not yet known but HNPA will continue to monitor it.

Preserve Update: The Trenching Continues

Someone is continuing to vandalize the Preserve near the Ann Arbor Trail entrance, across from the former Nankin Tavern. We first reported the problem in our last newsletter.

The person or people responsible are using a chain saw to cut down dead trees, then cutting the trunk to make bridges, trails and shore up trenches they dug to drain wetlands. While whoever is doing this “Better Homes and Gardens” project may think he (or they) are improving the Preserve, it is vandalism pure and simple. It is also a felony. HNPA notified the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Wayne County Parks of this illegal and destructive activity. The MDEQ provided Parks with a Notice of Violation poster.



Posting this notice changes the activity from a misdemeanor to a felony, should anyone be caught continuing this activity. Parks will eventually have to restore the area.

Whoever is doing this is treating public property – property that belongs to all of us – as their own and they have no right to do this whatever their motives.

If this person was doing this work to get rid of wetland areas and eliminate

the threat of the West Nile virus, he spent many hours with the mosquitoes, which defeated his intent.

We will have to live with West Nile virus, because we can not get rid of the mosquitoes. Face it, the Preserve is full of mosquitoes. Demand a vaccine, don't destroy the Preserve.

Preserve Update: Dying Ash trees



The HNPA is using Hix Park for many of its activities and walks. There is a good parking area and several trailheads to enter the Preserve. If you come from the South on Hix Road, you cross over the Tonquish Creek to get to the entrance of Hix Park. Many have noticed that all the trees lining the roadway have been cut down. Most of those trees were dead ash trees, victims of the Emerald Ash Borer.

Some were dead elm trees. Some were healthy trees, but they were cut as part of the simple plan for safety. Better to cut the trees than have one or more topple into the street or onto a passing car. A neater job could have been done, but there are far too many ash trees to remove to devote vanishing budget resources to neatness. Let's remember, this is a Preserve, dead tree trunks are useful. Woodpeckers and salamanders will benefit from the cutting.

HNPA Is Online

Our Web Master is continually updating our site at www.hnpa.org.

There you'll find newsletter articles, a listing of entrances, a way to

e-mail questions, suggestions or concerns, a printable map, a history of the Preserve, and color photos of our activities. The site also contains links that you may find helpful.



Holliday Nature Preserve takes on a new look when Mother Nature blankets the woods with a fluffy layer of snow. These photos are from the Central City Parkway section by Westland Mall.

The Preserve becomes especially peaceful after a snowfall. And as you walk, you might spot a chickadee hopping along the bark of a downed tree or see a raccoon snoozing in the afternoon sun. If you're lucky, you might even spot a deer.

You're welcome to join one of our walks if you want company (see page 4). Enjoy your time in Holliday looking for its varied inhabitants, but remember, in the Preserve you're a guest in their home.

Holliday Nature Preserve Association
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Westland, MI 48185



Reminder: Please renew your membership annually. Send address corrections to the above address or e-mail to envirowhc@aol.com

Preserve Walks

Note: All walks are free and go regardless of weather. Dress warm. A good pair of hiking boots are also suggested. Depending on conditions, trails may be snow-covered and/or muddy and are generally uneven.

Saturday, Jan.18 —Winter Walk.
Noon. Central City Entrance (formerly Cowan. Off Central City Parkway north of Westland Mall.) Spend an hour or so exploring a natural, peaceful place that is just five minutes from the mall but a world away.

Saturday, Feb. 15 — Cabin Fever Walk. Noon Hix Park (off Hix, just north of Warren). Deer tracks are sometimes seen in the snow in this section and our walk will lead us along a bluff overlooking Tonquish Creek to a quiet evergreen stand in the middle of the woods.

Saturday, March 15 — Preparing For Spring Walk. Noon Hix Park (off Hix, just north of Warren). Join us as the Preserve gets ready to toss of its winter coats and celebrate the coming of spring.

Meetings

All meetings of the HNPA take place at 7 p.m. in the lower meeting room of the Noble Library in Livonia. The library is located on the south side of Plymouth Road east of Farmington Road. Everyone is welcome to attend.

February 11

March 11

Join Us!

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ - _____ () NEW () RENEWAL

Make checks payable to Holliday Nature Preserve Association and mail to:
HNPA, 35151 Stacy Westland, MI. 48185

In Memory of:
RONALD TREPPA
*From His Friends
At The HNPA*

We wish to thank the following people for their recent new memberships, renewals or donations:

Ruth Hart

Dean Johnson

Elizabeth Keller

The LeBlanc Family

Dave & Susan Ostafinski

Irene Sequin

Jim & Pat White

YOUR SUPPORT

We ask a minimum \$5.00 annual donation to receive our newsletter.

All donations are used on projects benefitting the Preserve. If you have not sent in a donation within the last year, please take a moment to do so. Thanks.