

Holliday Nature Preserve Association



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• WINTER-SPRING 2004

Westland video highlights park

Westland has undertaken a three-part video series on some of the special places in Westland citizens can enjoy and learn about nature. The first production "Hix Park - Hidden Treasures" aired on Westland's local cable channel. The program also highlights the Holliday Nature Preserve and Tonquish Creek since both can be easily reached from Hix Park. Part of the video was filmed in the Preserve. HNPA President Bill Craig was interviewed in the video.

See **Video**, page 3

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 resources. 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.

BRIDGE WORK PLANNED FOR 2004



Bridge accessing the Ellsworth Trail near Nankin Mills.

2. Repair the bridge near the **Three Fires parking lot**, (see photo on page 3) near the former Nankin Mills Inn on Ann Arbor Trail (west of Farmington Road). This bridge is important in that it allows access to the trail running along the Middle Rouge.

At a meeting on Nov. 5, Parks Director Joe Nardone told HNPA President Bill Craig that something was finally going to be done for the Preserve, and asked for bridge and project recommendations.

That next weekend the HNPA Board reviewed and updated our groups' past recommendations and handed the report to Mr. Nardone on Nov 17. These are the projects HNPA would like considered in order of priority:

1. **Repair the bridge over the Middle Rouge River**, across from Nankin Mills (above photo). The deck is uneven and erosion is undermining the supports at either end. The bridge is important as it is used by students learning about nature and the Preserve during visits to Nankin Mills.

3. **Look into reopening the Newburgh entrance** with a new parking lot immediately off of Newburgh Road for greater security and visibility.

4. **Create a parking lot off of Koppnick Road** providing access to the Koppnick and Foxlands section of the Preserve and eliminating security concerns caused by the present lot that is isolated.

5. **Add signage, maps, trail markers near Preserve entrances.** There aren't any maps near the entrances that show the trail system. In addition, there are no signs that would tell visitors what is allowed (hiking) and not allowed (bikes, motorized vehicles, cutting trees, etc) in the Preserve.

See **Bridges**, page 3

REVIEW OF TWO FALL HIKES

Foxlands in October



Our late Fall walk in Foxlands turned out to be a walk through tall grasses, brown goldenrod, dried out asters and lots of plants with seeds that stuck to our clothes. The trail we had cleared and mowed in the Spring had grown over during the summer. Luckily for us, the shrubs had not yet grown long enough to block our passage. We will have to come back before summer with a mower and loppers and re-establish the trail.

We walked from the Foxlands sign (photo below) to the wooded section with the pond, then completed a wide circle back to our cars. We enjoyed the bright colors of sugar maples and oaks. A sharp shinned hawk flew



overhead. We also saw fresh deer tracks, but no deer.

After the walk, we talked about

how this area was once a sod farm and was destined to become just another subdivision. Luckily, the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy was able to purchase the 40-acre parcel and turn it over to the county to be added to the Holliday Nature Preserve. Now its turning into homes of a different type offering refuge to birds, plants and animals as the sod has given way to shrubs and now trees.

Cowan in November



On November 15, eight warmly dressed, nature lovers gathered in the Central City entrance parking lot to hear about our Rouge Rescue clean up in June before heading off into the woods. The entrance to the trail system at this site is much more open now since part of the work at Rouge Rescue included removal of honeysuckle, an invasive species that was spreading wildly. We hope to have a better showing of wildflowers in the Spring before those pruned invasive plants reappear.

Talking done, we walked to the pond to see if the group could spot the Great Blue Heron nest. Of course, without leaves,



the large stick nest was very easy to locate. Julie Craves first reported the nest that was found to contain three chicks. The group went on to see the results of the big windstorm (Nov 13).

The winds took a heavy toll of dead oak and ash trees. The fallen limbs made an obstacle course of the trail. We got some exercise, plenty of fresh air and spotted six sleeping raccoons. Another funny highlight was when one of the hikers tripped into Bill and almost knocking him off a high bank at the edge of the trail and into Tonquish Creek.

VANDALISM IN THE PRESERVE

Someone is cutting understory trees and saplings in the Ellsworth section of the Preserve, across from Nankin Mill.

This damage was reported to the Parks Division. HNPA President Bill Craig took the additional step of meeting with Principal Steven Schwecke, Lutheran High School on Cowan Road, who is the adjoining

property owner. Mr. Schwecke was unaware of that activity. The teachers use the Preserve for nature study, but no one should be cutting trees. Bill asked if his teachers and students could keep eyes open and report anyone damaging Preserve.

Principal Schwecke asked a very good question - "Where is the Preserve boundary?" This question

gets back to a longtime HNPA request to Parks, asking for a boundary survey, at least where the boundary is at risk of encroachment damage.

Regardless where the boundary really is, neither schools, nor Parks nor HNPA wants trees cut. Anyone with information should contact the Wayne County Parks Department at (734) 261-1990.

Bridges, from page 1



Bridge near Three Fires Parking lot. The bridge is needed to allow passage over Tonquish Creek. See Priority 2 in front page Bridge story.

6. **Restrict access to unsafe, non-essential bridges** pending repairs or demolition.

Whatever changes are made, they need to address the needs and safety of users, the mission of the Preserve as a wildlife sanctuary and the limited amount of funds that are available.

If you have additional suggestions, please e-mail HNPA President Bill Craig at envirowhc@aol.com or mail to HNPA, P.O. Box 53104, Livonia MI, 48152.

Video, from page 1

This video will be followed by one on a canoeing down the Lower Rouge River. The third will focus on the Nankin Mills Interpretive Center, its displays and programs and our connection to the Rouge River from before the coming of the Native Americans through today.

We hope to show the video at our Jan. 13 meeting. We will also be walking the Hix Park section of the Preserve on Jan 17. (See page 4 for information on both events.)

Special thanks go to the City of Westland, Westland cable's Lillian Dean and Greg Murphy and Kurt Kuban for raising awareness of the nature we have around us.

CHANGES TO YOUR MAILING LABEL

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Your mailing label may now show the year that your support of HNPA expires. That means if your label shows 2003, this might be your last newsletter. But that can easily change since we need you and your support to help better the Preserve.

The larger our organization, the more impact we can have with the Parks Department and local politicians. And all donations are used to support the Preserve including mailing this newsletter. So please, if you haven't mailed in your \$5 lately, do so at the earliest opportunity. You can even send in for multiple years or designate a portion toward dues and a portion to support our work in the Preserve.

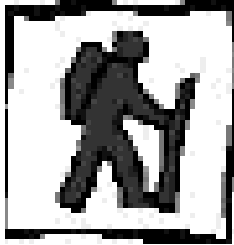
We're also giving you the option of providing your e-mail address to receive electronic notification of events and/or requests for you to take action (like contacting the Parks Dept. or your local legislator) on items that could impact the Preserve.

HNPA online

Our Web Master is continually updating our site at www.hnpa.org. There you'll find our newsletter, a

listing of entrances, contact information, a printable map, a history of the Preserve, and color photos of our activities.

Holliday Nature Preserve Association
Box 5310
Livonia, MI 48152



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, last from 1-2 hours and go regardless of weather. Dress warm. A good pair of boots are also suggested. Depending on conditions, trails may be snow-covered and/or muddy and are generally uneven.

Saturday, Jan.17 – Winter Walk. Noon. Hix Park entrance (off Hix, just north of Warren). Spend time exploring a natural, peaceful place that is just five minutes from Westland mall, but is a world away.

Saturday, Feb. 21 – Cabin Fever Walk. Noon. Central City

entrance (Formerly Cowan. Off Central City Parkway, just east of Nankin Blvd and across from former the Service Merchandise). Deer tracks are sometimes seen in the snow in this section and our walk will lead us along the Tonquish Creek.

Saturday, March 20 – First Day of Spring Walk. 10 am. Ellsworth entrance (Off Hines Drive across from Nankin Mills). Join us as the Preserve gets ready to toss off its winter coats and celebrate the coming of spring.

Meetings

All meetings of the HNPA take place at 7 p.m. at the Noble Library in Livonia. The library is located on Plymouth Road east of Farmington. If you plan on attending, please check to ensure the library is open or call (734-476-5127) or e-mail HNPA President Bill Craig envirowhc@aol.com to find out alternative place/time. Every effort will be made to hold meetings.

- Jan. 13
- Feb. 10
- Mar. 9

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

Morrece Elaine Cook

Cheryl Graunstadt

Pat Kobylarz

Noel Mullet

Elaine Rogers-Ewald

Kathleen Salai

John Wagatha

Join Us!

Name: _____
Address: _____ Apt: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip Code: _____ - _____
E-Mail Address (optional) _____
Would you like to be e-mailed about upcoming HNPA events or about opportunities to contact the Parks Dept. or local politicians on matters concerning the Holliday Nature Preserve? Yes _____ No _____
Amount designated toward dues..\$ _____ # Years (at \$5/yr) _____
Optional donation..... \$ _____
Total.....\$ _____
Make checks payable to Holliday Nature Preserve Association and mail to: HNPA, P.O. Box 53104, Livonia, MI 48152