



Upcoming Activities

Please join in! Our walks last about 90 minutes. Our meetings about two hours. While activity lengths vary, feel free to come and stay as long as you can. Make sure you check our *Facebook* page for updates since events are subject to change. All events are family friendly. Sorry, no dogs allowed. Questions? Contact us at HollidayAssociation@hnpa.org or via our *Facebook* page.



River Day 2024. See page 3.

◆ Fall Color Walk and Work I

Sat., Oct. 5, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Koppernick section, Koppernick Road, south of Joy Road, west of Hix Road. Enjoy the forest colors, then join us in removing seed pods from the swallow-wort to reduce the spread of this nasty plant. Gloves and loppers provided. Walk, work, or both. NOTE: If contractors are working in area, we will park on Hix Road for our walk.

◆ Fall Color Walk and Work II

Sat., Oct. 12, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Newburgh entrance, east of Newburgh Road, just north of Warren Road. Enjoy more colored leaves, then we'll do more work in the field. Gloves and loppers provided. Walk, work, or both.

◆ Late Fall Color Walk – NO Work

Sat., Oct. 19, 10 a.m. - Noon. Parking at Hix Park entrance, on Hix Road, just north of Warren Road. Enjoy falling leaves and cooler temperatures in this least visited area. We'll look at some of our Tonquish Creek Rescue sites.

◆ Crunching Leaves Walk

Sat., Nov. 2, 10 a.m. - Noon. Cowan entrance, Central City Parkway, west of Wayne Road, north of Warren Road. Most trees will be bare. This is an up and down walk along Tonquish Creek. NOTE: If contractors are working, we may have to cancel.

◆ HNPA Annual Membership Meeting

Sat., Nov. 16, 10 a.m.- Noon. Robert & Janet Bennett Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Road, Livonia. Opportunity to discuss issues concerning the Preserve, receive updates on grant projects and plans for 2025. Join us and share some donuts with members and friends—off the trail.

◆ First Day of Winter Walk

Sat., Dec 21, 10 a.m. - Noon. Ellsworth entrance, parking at Nankin Mills, on Hines Drive, east of Ann Arbor Trail. Yes, truly the first day of Winter. Embrace our Winter Wonderland. At least we hope there's snow! P.S. This trail has its ups and downs and can

President's Report



on some draft projects: removing bridges, building new bridges, parking lot changes, and trail work. This generated many questions, some of them answered and many, not. We presented our positions and our proposed changes

June 1 (photo). At this meeting, we discussed the two meetings with Parks, and discussed and debated next steps. One next step agreed upon was a meeting between HNPA and neighborhood representatives. This meeting was held on June 9. As a result, HNPA drafted another position letter (see website). I must say that not everyone at the June 9 meeting agreed on what was presented to Parks.

We have not received any response from Parks and as of this newsletter no work has begun. We will be watching.

Wayne County Parks, held its public meeting on May 15 to discuss plans for big projects in the Preserve. The meeting was well attended by HNPA members and the public. Parks and its consultants gave a presentation

(see website).

Koppernick parking lot changes raised many concerns, and on May 31 HNPA and neighborhood representatives met with Parks to discuss them.

HNPA held our biannual membership meeting on

A Look Back at April Walks

April 13: Early Spring Walk in Koppernick

April 20: Late Spring Walk in Cowan



Nature Connects Us

This past April I got an email from Lynn Waskelis informing me that her mother Suzan had passed. Suzan was one of HNPA's long distance (Valparaiso, IN) members. Lynn asked about the best way for people to make donations to HNPA in her mother's memory. Well, I must say, I was very moved by Lynn's notice and question. I thanked her for considering HNPA for memorial donations, which in turn led to a series of interesting email exchanges. (see below).

I went to check out their house on the 8000 block of Ravine, which Suzan and brother Paul lived in from 1945 to 1961. Besides the added garage, the house looks much the same. Of course, the surroundings have changed: Nankin Township is now Westland; the conservation club relocated; some of the woods they explored became the William P. Holliday Forest and Wildlife Preserve; Clyde Smith's farm became condos; the abandoned dump had an EPA cleanup; and the Tonquish Creek got wider. Thankfully, the nature they enjoyed is still enjoyed by the neighbors living on Ravine today.

Suzan often wrote a small note on the membership renewal form. I wish I could find one now. Perhaps I saved one in a box, in the garage. I regret that I never met Suzan. I'm sure I would have enjoyed corresponding with her with real letters. We would have written about books, politics and Girl Scouts. I would have told her about the trilliums blooming in Cowan, how that big pond still exists and that Ravine is still a gravel road.

I am pleased to know Suzan cherished her childhood memories exploring and playing in nature, and had an interesting, active and wonderful life. I'm pleased that she thought well of HNPA, since we are both connected to nature in the Holliday Preserve.

Bill Craig



Photo dated 1945. Suzan and Paul with their father. Suzan wrote this memory:

In January, we moved from Detroit to Ravine Drive, Plymouth, Michigan. The address is now in Westland, Michigan. Ravine Drive was a dead end dirt road running south off Joy Road between Newburgh and Wayne Roads. I remember moving in, playing with Paul, jumping around on the furniture.

In the spring we got puppy Laddy from Aunt Lola's farm in Applegate, Michigan. We had a chicken coop and I remember going to the hardware/feed store in Plymouth to bring home the box of baby chickens.

Ravine Drive was one of the best places to grow up, although it took me many years truly to appreciate it. The woods were there for everyone to play in, and now are called Holliday Park nature preserve. My parents had bought a tiny house on an acre.

Almost half that acre they planted in corn, tomatoes, beans, strawberries, raspberries, squash, peas, onions, potatoes, etc. About a quarter of the acre was the chicken yard, and the rest was our front and back yard.

Mama did the washing in a wringer machine and hung it in the back yard. The first year, we did not have enough water, and they had to tote water in a wash tub from a neighbor 100 yards away. Daddy set up a rain barrel and a cistern for flushing the toilet in the dry summer. We dunked in the rain barrel to cool off, but if it was a while between rains, we would come up with mosquito larvae stuck to us.

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Memorial Donations

**In Memory of
Suzan Eleanor Waskelis**

Jerry, John and Lynn Waskelis

Paul & Irene Overmyer

Ann E. Vallie

Carol Ann Russo

Amy Christin

Ravine Drive - Tonquish Creek Memories

By Paul Overmyer, April 22, 2023

I lived near the south end of Ravine Drive from 1945 to 1961. (Age 2 to age 18).

There was a trail that led from the south end of the street down to Tonquish Creek. We called it the Big Creek and didn't learn the name Tonquish until years later. (by "we" I mean the neighborhood kids, not just me) The creek that ran through the ravine that gave our street its name was called by us the "Little Creek". I don't know if it ever had a real name. The bottom of Tonquish Creek east of Ravine Drive consisted of gray clay. We would take pails down to the creek, wade in and dig up enough to take back home and use for our rough attempts at pottery.

Bridges – I don't recall any real bridges. There was a set of stepping stones at the end of that south trail. They were probably put there many years before I came along. By crossing there we could access what we called "Mijals Dump". This was the back end of the farm that sat where Cowan Road met Warren Road. The farmer let dumpers dispose of stuff over the edge of the Tonquish ravine. We could find lots of banana stalks with a piece of rope attached, which we collected, tied the pieces together, and used for all sorts of things like making forts. The bottom land of the creek ravine was mostly free of trees when we were young. There were a lot of canes growing there that we could pull up and use as spears to throw at each other. There were also lots of buttercups growing in the moister areas.

Further west on the south bank was more of Mijal's Dump where additional solid trash would show up, including empty 55-gallon barrels that my dad would roll to our house and use as "burning barrels" for our trash.

Going even further west there was a little dam near the south back end of Clyde Smith's farm. There was an electric pump and pipes that went up the top of the ravine to his fields to provide irrigation. What we found most interesting here were the remains of old farm wagons that had been pushed over the ravine. I think there were at least four of them.

Another "bridge" was due east of Ravine Drive (the creek makes a bend to the north) where a large tree had toppled over. We could shimmy over to the east bank and as we got older (and braver) we would walk across like tight rope performers. Being now able to explore the eastern area we wandered around ever closer to Cowan Road. One discovery was a large but shallow pond that I have recently learned is called a vernal pond. It certainly grew smaller as the summer progressed. I remember kicking over an old stump by the pond and seeing my first salamander.

A little further towards Cowan was the remains of an old venue of some sort. There was a band stand/dance pavilion and a covered picnic pavilion. All was made of wood and starting to fall down. I assumed it dated to maybe the 1920's. (In my later years now, I wonder if this was where the KKK or American Nazis held their meetings?)

On Joy Road, east of Dakota, was what we called "The Archery Club". The real name was Western Wayne County Conservation Club, but I have no idea what they were "conserving". They would have archery contests on many weekends during the summer. The club had trails in the creek bottom that led to various target areas. On Mondays after such contest many of us would get on our bikes and ride over to the Club and go exploring behind the target areas looking for lost arrows. We actually found quite a few.

The Club also had a gun range that could only be accessed from the end of Gray Street and was gated and only for club members or paying guests. We could hear the guns even from south Ravine Drive, especially in the run-up to deer season when hunters were sighting in their rifles. I went there once as a guest to sight in a rifle. I seem to recall that the backstop of the range was the opposite bank of the creek.

For several years a resident of the south end of Gray Street (we called it Gray Avenue back then) would raise pigs and turn them loose to roam the bottom land of the Tonquish. (At least I think it was done intentionally and they were not just escapees). Because several us had a nice collection of arrows from our scavenging at the Archery Club, we decided one summer to go pig hunting. We all had some store bought but very simple bows. The arrows, of course, were all called target arrows. We did manage to approach the pigs but quickly found that those arrows just bounced off the thick hide of a pig. The pigs went running off and so did we when the pigs started looking a little angry.

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Our Annual River Day Clean Up



We returned to Hix Park for this year's clean up on May 18.

The Plan was to follow WDM101: Clean and open Tonquish Creek further down from last year's work. WDM is "Woody Debris Management" by removing trash and removing some wood from the creek to improve its flow.

Volunteer teams worked in the creek; cut and stacked invasive plants; and pulled garlic mustard plants.

Even though it was hot and humid, members worked

hard for three hours to remove four buried tires,



cut a wide area of honey-suckle shrubs, pulled two large bags of garlic mustard, and collected four bags of trash.



What we collected was carried to the Hix Park gate for City of Westland disposal. Westland has always been a good partner. They even opened the park early for us that day.

A big thank-you goes out to our tired volunteers for a job very well done. See you next year (I hope).



A Look Back at May Walks

May 11: Walk in Ellsworth



May 19: Audubon/HNPA bird Walk



Who We Are and What We Do



Holliday Nature Preserve Association (HNPA) are volunteers dedicated to the William P. Holliday Forest & Wildlife Preserve in Westland, Livonia and Canton.

The Preserve consists of 500-plus acres of forests and wetlands that run along tributaries of the Rouge River. HNPA seeks to nurture a greater appreciation of this unique resource by hosting walks, conducting improvement projects in conjunction with Wayne County Parks and promoting the importance of the Preserve to the quality of life of Western Wayne County communities. Our activities are free. Find out more at hnpa.org or on our *Facebook page*.

Thanks to our Supporters



The following people joined HNPA, renewed their memberships or made donations. We thank them and appreciate the continuing support and the trust they (and you) put in us. We use the funds we receive for the benefit of the Preserve.

Nancy & Paul Bailey
Ana Bruni
Amy Christin
Margret Flowers
James Gilbert

David Mann
Patricia Mullett
Paul Overmyer
Jane Owens
David Polite

Carol Russo
Pam & Dennis Scott
Ann Vallie
Jerry, John & Lynn
Waskelis

Become one of our Supporters

Membership in the Holliday Nature Preserve Association is only \$5 per calendar year. Your support makes possible

our newsletters (even as printing and mailing costs rise); hosting a website (hnpa.org); offering walks; purchasing items for work projects; educating the

community; and promoting the Preserve.

Donations are used to benefit the Preserve. You may also earmark additional funds to extend your membership.

Name: _____

Address: _____ **Address 2:** _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____ + _____

Email Address if you wish to share it. (We won't) : _____

\$ _____ **Enclosed**

Please make check or money order payable to the **Holliday Nature Preserve Association** and mail to:
HNPA, P.O. BOX 532243 Livonia, MI 48153