

Report to the Orchard Hills Homeowners Association on the Thurston Nature Center, March 20, 1968.

You would find it a muddy walk around Thurston Pond right now. This is the result of installation of pipes into and out of the pond to help solve the problem of basement flooding. It was not possible to complete this work before winter and the landscape requires considerable renovation. We hope that by summer it will be possible to enjoy the pond and environs without wearing boots. In order to have passable trails we would like to lay down wood chips. We make considerable effort to obtain free wood chips. Any help you can give in this regard would be greatly appreciated.

We are planning our Annual Thurston Nature Center Plant-Out for Thurston School students on Friday, April 19, followed by laying of wood chips, erection of bird houses, installation of benches, etc. by Scouts, Cubs and others on the next day, Saturday. Although the Thurston teachers and children work with Dr. Stapp, University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources, and his Ann Arbor Schools nature education staff to plan this, parents are also involved. They will help plan during the meeting of the Thurston Nature Center Committee a week from tomorrow, Thursday, March 28, 7:30 P.M. at Thurston School. You are invited to participate, also. Your help is needed to carpenter, to dig post holes, to hold ladders to put up bird houses, to plant larger trees, etc.

The east portion of the pond area, Outlot A, now owned by the Orchard Hills Athletic Club, will be beautified by tree planning. The Trees and Shrubs Sub-Committee, chaired by Dave Fithian, is planning this. They are working out a compromise between opinions ranging from restored wildness to arboretum to park. Since this area is back of Orchard Hills homeowner's back-yards this presents a special challenge of land usage.

This report cannot detail the frustrations and accomplishments of last year. Some of us can envisage the Thurston Pond area as an urban enclosed wilderness that you can walk to from your homes. There is a growing awareness that we need these bits of wilderness to restore our appreciation of nature. This appreciation is necessary to prevent the further deterioration of our environment and alienation from nature. We need to prevent the further uglification of our landscape which reduces our mindscape.

This summer young fishermen can look forward to larger fish. Last year's seedling evergreens should have grown a little. Frog catchers should catch larger frogs and we hope that all the sewer engineering has not seriously reduced our bird population for the bird watchers. And the walk around the pond will be opportunity to observe the herons and the muskrats, which you will never see if you walk the sidewalks or drive the streets.

Thurston Nature Center

Melvin L. Larson, Chairman