

RECEPTION FOR MICK BELL

Sometimes it's nice to honor someone who quietly works behind the scenes, year after year, to get the job done. Mick Bell was a founding member of the Highland Conservancy and as our president he did everything from creating and maintaining our website to passing out flyers in the freezing rain, to meeting with landowners and attending countless meetings. Some folks like to go on and on about how much they have done and how great they are – but not this man. Mick has done so much to help Highland Township stay green and beautiful. Sadly he is moving out of state in a few weeks, so we wanted to celebrate his dedication and efforts. Please join us this Tuesday, October 2nd at 7pm at the Highland Station House (the old library) at 205 W. Livingston Road (across from the Fire Station).

WE HAVE A NEW PARK!

It was a beautiful fall day for the dedication of Oakland County's 13th park - the new Highland Oaks Park. As I wound around the lakes driving to the event, trees were turning crimson and gold against the blue sky. I felt excited to see the new brown park signs along the roadways. I turned into the park off Milford Road north of Clyde and parked inside the new gate. Looking around at people's name tags it seemed all the usual politicians and important people were there. Yet what surprised me more was how many more "regular" folks were there with names like Joe, Mary, or Sue who just came to celebrate our wonderful new park. Dan Stencil of Oakland County Parks opened the ceremony by thanking everyone who had shared in bringing the park into being. As I sat there listening to different officials giving thankfully brief speeches, my mind wandered back to a Highland Conservancy meeting October 15, 2004. It was the first year of our group and we were trying to decide what land and projects to focus our efforts on. Ron Flannery and his wife Beth excitedly brought up the idea of saving this same 264 acre parcel of land. They described it in detail noting it had been for sale for some time. Could we do something to save it? Sharon Greene then shared her ideas on steps we could take to protect it. That was the beginning. Ron and Sharon worked as a team to pitch the idea to the appropriate people, setting into motion the slow but steady process that brought the park from being just a dream into a reality. Many, many people had a hand in its creation over the next three years. I sat quietly as the land owners received plaques honoring their selling of the property. I listened as people were given credit for everything from providing the food and parking for the event, to writing the grants and attending meetings. At first I was hurt that recognition was given to so many but the one man who originally planted the seed seemed forgotten amidst all the accolades. But as I watched dozens of Oakland County trustees and others sprinkle wild prairie grass into the surrounding field, I realized something. For all the grandstanding and newspaper articles with one person or other group claiming credit for the park I thought, *it doesn't matter who did what, why and when*. What matters most is that one person can make a difference. One man can have a dream and if you follow it through, amazing things can happen. I hope you will visit and enjoy our new park sometime soon!

FRIENDS OF HIGHLAND OAKS

The Highland Conservancy will be working hard to protect the natural beauty of our newest county park, Highland Oaks. We welcome you to join us along with other groups in protecting this special place. I walked the beautiful trails with my retriever Saturday and saw fields of goldenrod, fringed gentian, butterflies, a snake, hawks and grouse. There will be various kinds of stewardship needed including removing invasive, non-native plants and maintenance of trails. Please contact Jim Lloyd at 248-887-3952 if you are interested in participating.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed lately. Your donations help keep Highland green and beautiful!

Sincerely,

Katheryn Krupa, Editor
Highland Conservancy
205 W. Livingston Road
Highland, MI 48357
248-887-4643
artfingers@comcast.net