

Crowley

1967

The second year around Thurston Nature Center was filled with creative constructive action, in continuation of the first years' negotiating and planning. Most school activity was carried out through the classes. The younger grades studied the plants and trees and identified them. Sixth grade organized a safety committee and particular attention was given to winter safety and ice skating. Fourth grade group studied pond life and gave recommendations for shrubs and trees needed to encourage wild life. Fifth grade classes planted tree nurseries, Art Classes sketched from life around the pond and Science classes toured the Center, learning about their particular class lessons. Classes from other schools use this area as an important source of nature information. A special nature study collection is developing in the school library. It includes nests, birds and other objects found in the Nature Center. These are on display and can be loaned to classes for special study.

In April 1967 the entire school body and youth groups from both neighborhoods participated in a two day program of planting and trail making. Under the direction of Mr. William Stapp, Thurston children planted about 4,000 trees and shrubs which will be protection and food for birds and small animals. These plants included Black, Red and White Pine, White Spruce, Douglas Fir, Cedars, Honeysuckle, Dogwood, Cranberry, Fragrant Gumac, Silky Dogwood, Autumn Olive, Washington Hawthorn and Weeping Willow.

Scouts and Cubs helped mark, clear and lay trails thru the woods and around the new plantations. About a mile of wood chip paths were completed. Display cases about the area were erected. Bridges spanning the west end of the pond were made to establish a path for school children. The School Board completed an asphalt walk from the woods to Thurston School on the west side to give the children a clear way. A dam was constructed between the pond and the drainage ditch to establish a permanent water level.

All the action, including about 700 children and many adults, was recorded on film for a movie entitled "We're On Our Way". This movie, which was made for Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, is about the Youth of America and what they can do to beautify their Country. The Thurston site was one of only seven in the Country included in the film.

In September 1967, "We're On Our Way" was premiered at the White House by Mrs. Johnson and the youth attending a conference on beauty. Dr. Stapp was invited to be at the meeting in Washington. He was accompanied by Mr. Scott Westerman, acting Superintendent of Ann Arbor Schools, and a student representative of Thurston School, Julie Weinhold from the fifth grade.

A special showing of this film will be open to the public on Tuesday, November 14, at Thurston School at 3 o'clock. All residents are given a special invitation to come and see some of the things children are accomplishing.

The results of all the past labors and the continuing action are rewarding. Even on a cold May morning last spring, over 50 varieties of birds were sighted by the 250 people who turned out for the annual bird walk conducted by Dr. Stapp and his staff from the University Department of Natural Resources.

The Duck and Rail population was varied and numerous all summer. Most active were the green Herons who multiplied and enjoyed the many frogs in the pond. On occasion the Great Blue Heron was sighted. Two immature Black-capped Night Herons visited the area for a few weeks and we hope they return next spring. Many mornings a bare limb of a dead tree was a perch for the Kingfisher who delighted in the many fish. Children also found several good fishing sites to catch (and return to the pond) fish stocked last year.

Thru the School and the neighborhood there is a growing awareness of the opportunity to protect the natural environment and stimulate wildlife. Thurston Nature Center is "on its way". For the future there are fascinating possibilities.

"We're On Our Way"
November 14, Tuesday 3:00 PM
Everyone is Welcome!

THURSTON NATURE CENTER
CARD PARTY
November 30th THURSDAY
THURSTON 52401