



# Adventure Areas

Using a series of abandoned sand and gravel mines, Oakland County Parks and Recreation and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources set about to create a park that would be enjoyed by drivers and riders of all off-road vehicle types. ORV users with decades of experience evaluated every aspect of Holly Oaks ORV Park and proposed a series of *Adventure Areas* highlighting a variety of riding experiences “from the mild to the wild.”

Each *Adventure Area* is uniquely themed and capitalizes on the landscape left behind by the sites previous miners. Most of the *Areas* are designated as “*Pick Your Own Adventure*.” Essentially, they are scramble areas where riders are free to explore and choose the experience that best suits them and their rigs. Riders are encouraged to follow well-worn “two-tracks” through these areas, especially if they are in a stock vehicle or just becoming familiar the site.

Some of the *Adventure Areas* are considered “*Closed Courses*” meaning they have limited entrances/exits to preserve one-way travel and restrict the size of vehicles allowed on the trails. In a couple cases, those areas included designated *Short Courses* that allow riders to experience higher speeds or directional challenges.

A primary access route through the park has been established on the bed of the original mining “Haul Road.” Together with a series of *ORV Routes* that crisscross the park, the Haul Road allows patrons to meander through the site, navigate to the various *Adventure Areas* and rig-watch along the way.

A 2-mile uni-directional *Endurance Trail* has also been added to give patrons an exciting way to circumnavigate the site or travel between *Adventure Areas*.



Full size 4x4



UTV / SxS



ATV, 1 or 2 passenger



Motorcycle / Dirt Bike

## Badger Head



Type: Overlook

Vehicle Use: All

Landscape: Gravel Lot on Clay Knob; Grass; few trees

*Badger Head* is a spit of land that juts out into the park offering nearly a 360-degree view of ORV activity including vehicles scrambling across *The Rumbles*, navigating the *Bottomless Pit*, crawling on *Mt. Magna*, and picking their way through *The Borderlands* scramble area.



## Base Camp



Type: Rest and Regroup Spot

Vehicle Use: All

Landscape: Sand/Gravel Lot surrounded by treed hills

*Base Camp* is located in the heart of Holly Oaks. Accessible by the Haul Road, the site hosts the entrance to the *Sandbox*, our tight short course built of loose soils for motorcycle use only.



## Bathtub

Type: Landmark

Vehicle Use: None

Landscape: 8'-10' deep retention pond

Water flows downhill...and at Holly Oaks, a lot of it ends up in the Bathtub. This natural area at the park creates a picturesque backdrop for the nearby *Endurance Trail* and the trail spur that lets Riders make a "ring" around the *Tub*.

The 8'-10' retention pond is too deep to use as an ORV feature, but it provides an important source of water at the park. The overflow from the *Bathtub* creates one of the few "water fording" spots at the park where vehicles can get a bit wet without the fear of getting stuck in the mud... as long as they stick to the trail that is.



## Big Easy



Type: Hill Climb; Pick Your Own Adventure

Vehicle Use: All

Landscape: Sand/Gravel Hillside; Sparsely vegetated

This climb looks easier than it is... and you can take fate into your own hands by picking the line that you feel best suits you and your rig.

*The Big Easy* is what remains of the head wall from the sand and gravel mining operation. A couple hundred feet wide with a 100' elevation gain, the hill climb traverses a series of sand and gravel veins. The west side of the climb is bordered by a bi-directional ORV Route (for those have a bit of trouble getting up).

## Big Valley

Type: Hill Climb; Pick Your Own Adventure

Vehicle Use: All

Landscape: Sand/Gravel Hillside; Clay Fill; Muddy Depression/Crossing

*Big Valley* is the border between the active and in-active portions of the Holly Disposal Mine Lease. The Adventure Area is narrow, but it features a 96” bi-directional challenge trail with extreme slopes and rutted surfaces which can be insurmountable after a storm event.

*The Electric Slide* is the portion of the trail that scales the side of The Shelf above the Big Easy. Extreme caution must be taken when driving The Electric Slide (up or down). The trail runs along the boundary fence and it is easy to get hung up if you are not careful. Be prepared that the Electric Slide may be closed if park staff determine that it cannot safely be driven by even experienced drivers.

*The Big Valley Trail* is the access route to the bottom of The Gully Washer climb and to the two-track that leads through The Troubles Adventure Area.



## The Borderlands

Type: All Terrain; Pick Your Own Adventure

Vehicle Use: All

Landscape: Rolling Hills; Rocky/Gravel Slopes; Grass and some trees

The *Borderlands* is a “pick your own adventure” area that encompasses the old “spoil piles” from the processing of sand and gravel. Surfaces will range from silt and gravel to “river-rock” cobbles.

## Cairn Hill

Type: Landmark

Vehicle Use: None

Landscape: Rolling Hills; Sparsely vegetated

*Cairn Hill* will provide a bit of wayfinding for the gear-head in all of us. Tip your hat to notable off-road destinations, make plans for trips to come, leave a stone to show fellow pilgrims that you were here.

*Cairn Hill* will feature a “M.A.S.H.-like signpost” directing folks to wicked off-road areas and iconic businesses (near and far).



## Darlene's Ridge - Partially Open



Type: 24” uni-directional trail; 96” Endurance Trail; Close Course

Vehicle Use: Varies by trail type

Landscape: Steep Ridgeline; Dense shub and small tree cover

Forty years ago gravel mining took the head wall up to the southern face of Mt. Holly. Clay fill was brought in to stabilize the slope and the resulting ridgeline revegetated with a thicket of brambles and thorned black locust. Where most see a landscape that could only be crossed on hands and knees, we see a place to dance with gravity.

The 96” uni-directional *Endurance Trail* (open to all vehicle types) bisects *Darlene's Ridge* into an upper and lower section, as it rolls and plunges across the northern boundary. The upper and lower sections will each feature a 24” uni-directional trail (open to motorcycles only) that can be accessed from *Base Camp* or the nearby *Endurance Trail*.

*Hardcore 24* runs through the upper section and is OPEN. It features a zig-zag section, affectionately known as Twisted Sister that hopscotches across a ridge of spoils that runs along the old mine road. *Double Back* (COMING SOON) will run along the lower section and feature a narrow “goat path” cut into the steep face of the Ridge.

## Deadwood

**Type:** Hill Climb; Overlook; Pick Your Own Adventure

**Vehicle Use:** All

**Landscape:** Steep, Ruttled, Erodeable Slopes; Sparsely vegetated

Some slopes we just don't want folks on...and what could be a better deterrent than a few gnarled old trees?

We strategically placed logs and stumps to close a few slopes that would have crossed the *Endurance Trail* or eroded the sides of *Flat Top*...but never fear, there is still a lot of terrain to climb at *Deadwood*. *Sand Scratch* is a favorite of the *Riders* and can be combined with a few lines across the *Big Easy* if you are careful crossing the ORV Route.

## Endurance Trail

**Type:** 96” Endurance Trail; 2 mile loop; Circumnavigates Site

**Vehicle Use:** All

**Landscape:** Rolling Hills; Low Flats; Steep Ridgeline; Vegetation varies

There is no better way to get the lay of the land than to jump on the *Endurance Trail*. This 2 mile trail circumnavigates the site rolling through the landscape, like a roller coaster off the rails. The trail is uni-directional, but with the switchbacks you should always look to the signage to make sure you are headed in the right direction.

At 96”, the uni-directional *Endurance Trail* is open to all vehicle types and is graded to promote good flow. The layout minimizes trail/road crossings, but it is important to be aware that you may come upon slower moving vehicles or vehicles that have accidentally gone the wrong way.

**(Rider Tip:** High points and expansive drops along the trail create opportunities to pull off and allow faster vehicle to pass or to allow for the trail to clear.)

## Flat Top

**Type:** Overlook; Gathering spot

**Vehicle Use:** All

**Landscape:** Gravel lot on Fill Knob; sparse vegetation

Like the haircut that inspired the name, the design of *Flat Top* focused on removing everything but the essential. Drive to the edge, park your rig, and get a front row seat to watch riders taking the *Big Easy* hillclimb, dropping down from the *Endurance Trail*, the whipping around the *Sandbox*, and the crawling up the shotcrete peak of *Mt. Magna*.



## Holly Glen

**Type:** Closed Course; Short Course

**Vehicle Use:** Full Size, Side-by-Side

**Landscape:** Rolling Hills; Low Flats; Drainage Depressions

When OCPD and the DNR first looked at the southern corner of the abandoned mine with its near vertical head walls the first thought was “well that’s of no use.”

But then the dozer operator on our crew rocked back on his heels and said “sure it is, that’s a *Tallegada Turn*.”

The *Holly Glen* Short Course is 30’ wide and a little more than a half mile in length. The course features approximately 50’ in elevation gain/loss, sweeping and tight turns, step-up jumps, and an expansive signature rise that can push you into your seat or take weight off your springs.



## Mt. Magna

**Type:** All Terrain; Pick Your Own Adventure

**Vehicle Use:** All

**Landscape:** Shotcrete Crawl; Rubble Crawl; Hill Climb (clay fill); Wet Area

How many of us will have a chance to drive in Moab? What if we could bring a bit of Moab to Oakland County? With generous financial support from *Magna Powertrain* and the persuasive ability of our friends at the *Oakland Mine Riders*, Oakland County was able to work with Trail Hero’s Rich Klein to simulate Moab sandstone in shotcrete.

About 25,000 square feet of shotcrete were applied to the top of Mt. Magna and sculpted to approximate iconic rock forms from the *Hell’s Revenge Trail* near Moab, Utah. This first phase of the project includes our version of *Rocker Knocker*, *Golden Crack*, a *Hot Tub*, and *Potato Salad Hill*.

Mt. Magna also features Michigan “two-tracks” that circumnavigate a muddy area (*The Bottomless Pit*) and provides access to *The Rumbles* and *The Notch* (technical crawling areas built of chunks of concrete and boulders).



## Oasis

**Type:** All Terrain; Pick Your Own Adventure

**Vehicle Use:** Full Size, Side-by-Side

**Landscape:** Small Lake; Sand/Gravel Erodible Slopes; Washouts; Forested Knob

They say you can’t step in the same river twice...the same is true for driving in the *Oasis*. Gravity, wind, rain, and a number of *Mine Riders* are constantly reshaping this loose sand/gravel bowl around *Steve’s Lake*.

Michigan “two-tracks” have been cut around *Steve’s Lake* and up onto the old *Skyline Drive*. Riders can stick to the trails or test their skills climbing *Horsepower Hill*, navigating a wooded thicket (*Sherwood Forest*) that overlooks *Steve’s Lake*, or explore the hidden gullies that crisscross the *Washouts*.



## Rim Runner

**Type:** 50” unidirectional trail; Bisected by 96” Challenge Trail; Closed Course  
**Vehicle Use:** Varies by trail type  
**Landscape:** Clay Fill; Lightly Vegetated Grassland

We have seen kids with dirt bikes or quads cut tight and windy trails through their backyards to the point that there is more trail than yard. Well we wanted to pack as much trail as possible in this reclaimed slope that overlooks the active *Holly Disposal Mine Lease*. Not saying that the switchbacks will make you loose your lunch...but you may be a bit disoriented when you leave the 5-0 Trail at *Rim Runner*.

*The Five Oh!* has two iconic gatekeepers that limit access to vehicles 50” and under, to ensure that the trail stays tight and winding. The trail is bisected by the *Gully Washer*, a 96” unidirectional climb that snakes it way through a washout that is continually being cut through the terrain with each successive rainstorm.

## 75 Ridgeline and the Dragon’s Tail

**Type:** Challenge Trails; Closed Course  
**Vehicle Use:** All  
**Landscape:** Narrow Treeline; Low, Steep Slopes

Technically, the *75 Ridgeline* and the *Dragon’s Tail* are 96” treads...but it doesn’t mean for how long. This trail was cut by removing the smallest amount of vegetation possible to allow a full-size vehicle to squeeze its way along this old mining berm that have been vegetated over the past 50 plus years. The challenge for the bigger vehicles is that they may have to make a thousand small turns to fit between the trees.

These two trail sections are open to all vehicle types, and the smaller vehicles may not think there is much of a challenge, but for the wider vehicles **BODY DAMAGE IS HIGHLY LIKELY!**

Look for signage to point you the right direction on this unidirectional trail and to identify the *Escape Hatches* when you have had enough.



## Sandbox

**Type:** Closed Course; Short Course  
**Vehicle Use:** Motorcycle, Quads, Side-by-Side  
**Landscape:** Tightly Rolling Sand/Gravel Hills; Sparsely vegetated

Who doesn’t like to play in the sand? Well our *Sandbox* might not be sugar sand, but at least it is well drained. This half-mile short course is cut into a series of tightly rolling hills that were a byproduct of the old mine operations.

*The Sandbox*, is a 24’ wide short course that is tightly winding but sloppy on the curves. At this time the Sandbox is open for **MOTORCYCLE USE ONLY**. A gatekeeper is installed off Base Camp for access.

*The Sandbox* is a 24’-wide short course that is tightly winding but sloppy on the curves. The Sandbox is open to side-by-sides, quads and motorcycles. A gatekeeper is installed off Base Camp for access.



# Soundcheck

**Type: Guest Services; Infrastructure**

**Vehicle Use: All**

**Landscape: Entrance Road**

Nothing kills public ORV access like noisy pipes. *DJ's Soundcheck* inserts a little bit of humor into the necessary process of verifying that vehicles meet the sound specs.

Located adjacent to the contact station at *The Funnel* (entrance to the riding area), *DJ's Soundcheck* is rustic archway where staff will use DBA meters to test vehicle exhaust systems. Vehicles that, by look or sound, appear to be in violation of the state sound control order will be diverted from the entrance lane into the *Soundcheck* station testing. Vehicles that do not pass will be redirected back into the parking area and denied entry to the park without a refund. See the park rules for sound check guidelines.



## The Bottoms

**Type: All Terrain; Pick Your Own Adventure**

**Vehicle Use: All**

**Landscape: Flooded Trails; Wet Pockets; Dirt Mounds**

*The Bathtub* is the drain for most of the water that falls on Holly Oaks, and sometimes that water spills over the *Tub* into *The Bottoms*. We saw this as an opportunity to create a technical driving area that would allow folks to drive from muddy pockets (including the Soup Bowl) to log climb challenges (Fishbones; Speed Bumps, and Steve's Sticks.)

The amount of water that covers the Bottoms will vary depending on how much has spilled over from the Tub.

## The Flats

**Type: Overlook; Gathering spot**

**Vehicle Use: All**

**Landscape: Dirt Flats**

The Flats are the Holly Oaks version of *Bonneville* or *Daytona Beach*...well at least the part where people sit on the hoods of their vehicles and watch people race by. *The Flats* are a lowland hangout spot along the *Holly Glen* straightaway where folks can watch the action, get some sun and chat up friends.

*The Flats* are separated from the closed course by barrier of old concrete fire rings. Despite being lower than the *Holly Glen* itself, this "overlook" offers the only unobstructed view of the entire Short Course including the *Talladega Turn*.





## The Troubles

**Type: All Terrain; Pick Your Own Adventure**

**Vehicle Use: All**

**Landscape: Clay Fill; Sparsely vegetated; Hillside Slough**

The shortest distance between two points is not always the fastest...or the wisest route to choose. But it can be the most entertaining depending on your perspective on The Troubles.

We began to refer to the area between *Rim Runner* and the *Big Valley Trail* as *The Troubles* because the ever-shifting ground seems to make it nearly impossible to traverse during some weather conditions.

A Michigan “two-track” runs along the western edge of *The Troubles* providing an easier way from the bottom of the Gully Washer to the top of *Rim Runner* and *Deadwood*... of course, some Riders may be looking for a bit of Trouble.

(Caution: The Troubles contains STEEP DROPS that may be obscured by high vegetation. Extreme care must be taken when “picking your own adventure.”)

# Coming Soon

## Pit Stop

**Type: Guest Services; Gathering spot**

**Vehicle Use: All**

**Landscape: Gravel Lot; Dirt Mounds**

What if we could create a guest services area that had the feel of a *Route 66 diner*, and the look of the *junkyard* that we all wished we lived in while watching Saturday morning cartoons?

Our Pit Stop will be defined by an iconic Junkyard Fence constructed of reclaimed pipe and adorned with salvaged car parts and vintage signs. The vision is to create an overall theme that will be supported by the façades and décor of the participating vendors.

The goal is to create an entertaining location for gearheads to kick back and tell stories of the day’s exploits. Sponsors will be recognized on vintage-themed signage and guest service amenities.

Vendors, and associated services, may change over time. We are planning for ORV rentals, some retail, and a food truck during subsequent of development.

## The Schoolyard

**Type: Closed Course; Short Course**

**Vehicle Use: 50’ and under; Motorcycle and Quads**

**Landscape: Loamy Topsoil/Fill**

It has been said by some that a life should be measured, not by the number of years, but by the number of scars and broken bones. The Schoolyard is the area that will be set aside for kids who are gaining confidence on their machines...no broken bones required. Adjacent to the Pit Stop and Mt. Magna, the Schoolyard will be a closed course that will contain one or more trail loops and even a few challenges for the young Trials-Bike Riders. (Yes, that is Trials not Trails...it is a type of bike used to climb obstacles.)

# Trial Run



Type: All Terrain; Pick Your Own Adventure

Vehicle Use: All

Landscape: Dirt Mound with Climbing Obstacles



One of the *Oakland Mine Riders* that has been a steadfast champion of *Trials Bike Riding* (and climbers of all sorts) has an Irish surname that means “horse master.” To watch him on his bike or some of the guys with the Rock Crawlers, we know it is often more a matter of finesse than it is about mastering horsepower. With this as inspiration, we have proposed *The Rocky Road to Dublin...* our take on an insane horizontal climbing route that is open to all vehicle types.

Through the incredible generosity of *Advanced Concrete Products* of Milford, staff has stockpiled concrete obstacles that will be set into the hillside of *Trial Run* to create a “*Rocky Road*” that will run the length of the Adventure Area.

When complete, the horizontal climbing route should be able to be run by a variety of vehicle types (depending on capability of the machine and the skill of the driver) and should have the ability to challenge the largest buggies and lightest *Trials Bikes* at the same time.

