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Holly Oaks ORV Park revs up for opening weekend

OAKLAND COUNTY – With the highly anticipated opening of the Holly Oaks ORV Park just days away on Thursday, Sept. 17, staff is gearing up to welcome the public to an exciting, new level of off-roading fun.

After years of planning and collaboration, Holly Oaks ORV Park will be the second state park area in Michigan to be jointly managed by a state and county recreation agency.

The park, situated in Groveland and Holly townships near Groveland Oaks County Park and Campground on Dixie Highway, will be operated by Oakland County Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division. The property is considered part of Holly Recreation Area.

An invitation only ribbon cutting celebration for special guests, local officials and the media on Sept. 11 included a press conference and tours of the 235-acre park located on the site of former and active sand and gravel mines.

The park's first 106 acres officially open to the public on Sept. 17. Holly Oaks is the first off-road vehicle park in southeast Michigan, ready to serve an active riding community. The site utilizes former and active sand and gravel mines, making it a unique destination for all types of ORVs, including full-size vehicles, side-by-sides, all-terrain vehicles and ATVs, as well as motorcycles.

Riders will be challenged by features like 4x4 trails, single track trails for motorcycles, steep hills, water crossings, rock crawls and other challenge elements. Mt. Magna, a 9,000-square-foot peak designed to replicate the experience of popular, massive rock formations in Moab, Utah, is a signature feature made possible through a donation from Magna Powertrain in Troy.

Fees and hours

A \$15/vehicle daily entry fee and an annual DNR ORV license (\$26.25) and trail permit (\$10) are needed to enter the park. A DNR Recreation Passport or Oakland County Parks and Recreation Annual Vehicle Permit will not be required.

Daily entry can be purchased online or in-person at the park's contact station. The park will begin selling ORV licenses and trail permits starting in mid-October. Until then, visitors can purchase their ORV license and trail permit online at Michigan.gov/DNRLicenses or at participating DNR license agents, including dozens within and around Oakland County. For a list of locations, visit Michigan.gov/DNR and click on the "Buy & Apply" tab at the top, then navigate to "buy license at a retailer."

Operating hours will vary depending on the season. Current hours are:

- 2-8 p.m. Sept. 17
- 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Sept. 18-20
- 2-8 p.m. Sept. 25
- 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Sept. 26-27
- 2-7 p.m. Oct. 2, Oct. 9, Oct. 16, Oct. 23 and Oct. 30
- 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Oct. 3-4; Oct. 10-11; Oct. 17-18; Oct. 24-25; and Oct. 31
- 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Nov. 1; Nov. 7-8; Nov. 14-15; Nov. 21-22; and Nov. 28-29

Winter hours will be announced by mid-October.

Background

In 2017, the DNR, supported by a \$2.9 million Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, purchased 235 acres on the former mining and gravel site in southeast Michigan. In 2019, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners approved a 20-year operating agreement (with an additional 10-year option) with the DNR. That same year, the DNR ORV Trail Improvement Fund allocated \$160,000 for park design and development. Another \$262,000 grant from that fund has helped with park development.

"We've been working on this project with the DNR for the better part of the last 10 years, trying to find a location in southeast Michigan that could offer the types of experiences available at Holly Oaks," OCPR Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. "We're excited to see it finally come to fruition, and it will keep growing and changing in the years to come, providing new experiences with each visit."

Under the agreement, OCPR will operate, maintain and staff the park with part-time, full-time and seasonal county employees.

"The idea for the ORV park was set in motion years ago when the long-term goal of establishing an ORV trail in southeast Michigan was set as part of the Statewide Trails Plan and the DNR recognized an opportunity to bring off-roading opportunities to the population center," Ron Olson, chief of the DNR Parks and Recreation Division, said. "We realized that Oakland County had a large number of licensed ORVs, but no nearby riding opportunities. This was the perfect opportunity to bring outdoor recreation to a different part of the state."

Holly Oaks ORV Park is designed to be “self-sustaining,” meaning revenue over expense will be held in a restricted account and reinvested back into the park for maintenance and improvements. Revenue will be generated through daily entry fees, sponsorships, public and private events and corporate use for filming and testing.

The park is currently hiring, and those interested can visit [OakGov.com/jobs](https://oakgov.com/jobs) to apply.

Desirability and access

The park’s remaining 129 acres of ORV trails and terrain is expected to be ready for riders by 2023 as mining operations wrap up. Located off I-75 in an area that minimizes potential impact on local residents, the site is ideal for ORV use. The park is also an easy day trip for many as it’s less than a 40-minute for the majority of Oakland County residents and no more than 90 minutes from most large urban centers in southeast Michigan.

Holly Oaks ORV Park is located off I-75 at the Grange Hall Road exit. Take Grange Hall Road east to Dixie Highway and go north approximately half a mile. From mid-April through mid-October, visitors will access the park from the Mt. Holly Ski and Snowboard Resort parking lot. During the off-season from mid-October through mid-April, park access will be off of Shields Road at 14551 Shields Road in Holly.

Restrooms, including portable facilities in the off-season, are available and the park will be patrolled by the Oakland County Sheriff’s Office Parks Unit.

For more information about the Holly Oaks ORV Park, call 248-653-0710, visit [OaklandCountyParks.com](https://oaklandcountyparks.com) and/or follow Holly Oaks ORV Park on [Facebook](#). For more information about ORV riding in Michigan, visit [Michigan.gov/ORVInfo](https://michigan.gov/ORVInfo).

Visit [OaklandCountyParks.com](https://oaklandcountyparks.com) for more information. Join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).