



Investment in recreation continues countywide

Holly Oaks ORV Park was officially dedicated on Friday, Sept. 11. The park, a cooperative effort between Oakland County Parks and Recreation and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, officially opened to the public Sept. 17.

Holly Oaks ORV Park provides an opportunity for legal, public off-road vehicle recreation in southeast Michigan. Holly Oaks is open to all types of ORVs – full-size jeeps and trucks, side-by-sides, ATVs/quads and motorcycles/dirt bikes.

The park is a former sand and gravel mining operation located at I-75 and Grange Hall Road, adjacent to (west and south of) Mt. Holly Ski and Snowboard Resort.

“The excitement about this park has been overwhelming,” Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. “Oakland County has the highest percentage of licensed ORVs in Michigan and residents purchase the highest percentage of ORV trail permits, but with no legal riding areas. Now, there’s an opportunity to visit after work or on weekends instead of traveling hours Up North or out of state. We also feel this park provides benefits to the community because dollars will stay local, special events can be hosted on site and sponsorships can attract new opportunities to the area.”

The park will be operated by OCPD in partnership with the DNR, which purchased 235 acres with a \$2.9 million grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to purchase the 235 acres. Currently, 113 acres are open with the remaining land to come on board by 2023.

Holly Oaks has a per vehicle entry fee and requires a DNR ORV sticker and ORV trail sticker. [Visit the Holly Oaks ORV webpage for more information.](#)

Moving across the county to Royal Oak, the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission has committed \$1 million to the development of **Normandy Oaks**, a park owned and operated by the City of Royal Oak. The Oakland County Board of Commissioners voted to approve

the investment in Normandy Oaks due to its location in the highly populated southeast quadrant of Oakland County where greenspace of its size (40+ acres) is not abundant or available for acquisition. OCPD’s monetary contribution will be funded over three years.

Oakland County Parks and Recreation is funding park trails, a nature area and bridge providing trail access to Normandy Oaks from the adjacent Elks Park into the nature area.

According to John Fedele, Royal Oak Superintendent of Recreation, construction at the park is progressing. Both soccer fields have been graded and irrigation lined. The playground and pavilion are nearly complete.

“The loop to the Oak Savannah and most of the trails have been cut. The Oak Savannah is progressing quickly as well,” Fedele said.

OCPD Natural Resources Management and Planning staff are working with Royal Oak staff and consultants to develop interpretive signage unique to this project. The signs will highlight the park’s restoration process as well as Lakeplain Oak Openings, Pollinator Gardens and the importance of Vernal Ponds.

At **Red Oaks Waterpark** in Madison Heights, the existing children’s water playground and splash pad have reached the end of their life cycles. The attractions on SplashTown island will be replaced by similar features, including a large zero-depth splash pad with fountains, bubblers, spray “trees”, an interactive climber and bucket. Additionally, a new shade structure will be installed, making a total of five shady areas on the island. Upgrades to the sanitary sewer line for the new water features will also allow for restrooms to be installed on the island in the future.

Red Oaks Waterpark opened in 1987, with SplashTown interactive water playground opening in 2002. The waterpark welcomes 110,000 visitors annually during its 85-day season. The waterpark did not open in 2020 due to Covid-19.

Commission updates amenities at Catalpa Oaks County Park



A walking path and soccer fields will be dedicated at **Catalpa Oaks** County Park in Southfield on October 2.

The Parks Commission invested \$702,000 to increase accessibility for residents.

A .6-mile aggregate perimeter pathway, meeting Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, was constructed. The project also included concrete pathways connecting into existing neighborhood sidewalks and the Greenfield Road sidewalk.

Two of the park's four soccer fields now have improved drainage and irrigation. The fields will open for play in Spring 2021. The park hosts more than 30,000 visitors each year for soccer.

2021 budget focuses on maintenance projects, customer service goals

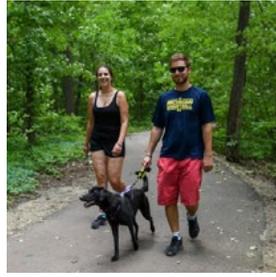
The \$28,033,484 Oakland County Parks and Recreation budget for fiscal year 2021 was approved by the OCPR Commission Sept. 2 and the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Sept. 23. This year's budget objectives emphasize maintenance initiatives needed to meet visitor expectations for maintained, accessible and safe facilities. Among the projects in the 2021 budget are:

- Replacement of the children's water feature at Red Oaks Waterpark in Madison Heights
- Replacement of HVAC system at the Activity Center in Springfield Oaks County Park
- Electrical improvements at Addison Oaks County Park's Conference Center
- Natural area restoration at the Mill Pond Dam in Springfield Oaks County Park
- Continued Natural Resource stewardship at all park locations
- Replacement of the irrigation system at White Lake Oaks County Park
- Upgrades to the disc golf course at Addison Oaks County Park
- Painting the historic Ellis Barn at Springfield Oaks County Park in Davisburg

"The parks commission works tirelessly to ensure that taxpayer funding is utilized in a way that meets the needs and wants of our residents," OCPR Executive Officer Dan Stencil said.

The parks system provides nearly 80 miles of trails, parks, campgrounds, dog parks, waterparks, golf courses, nature centers, a farmers market plus year-round programming and special events.





Oakland County Parks and Recreation asks for first-ever millage increase

In 1966, Oakland County Parks and Recreation opened with one park and 190 acres.

Fifty-four years later, the system has 13 parks and nearly 7,000 acres.

In all that time, the system has been operating on a .25 millage, which in recent years has been rolled back to its current rate of .2310. OCPR has never asked for an increase. On Nov. 3 voters will be asked to approve a ballot question raising the millage to .35 for 10 years.

“If you think of all the technology that has changed in 54 years or how prices have escalated since 1966, you can understand why Oakland County Parks and Recreation needs to get current with the times,” Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. “We have cut budgets, extended the life of equipment and put capital and maintenance projects on hold for years. Parks Commissioners and staff want to make the investment in recreation for our residents, their families, businesses and partners in Oakland County.”

On November 3, Oakland County voters will be asked to reinvest in their parks.

The current .2310 millage rate is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2021. This rate has never been increased since 1966. They will be voting on a millage replacement and increase to .35 mills to improve, operate and maintain parks, open space and water areas, trails and recreation activities.

If approved, the .35 rate will cost the owner of a home or business valued at \$200,000 (taxable value of \$100,000 approximately) \$12 more, for a total of \$35 year to maintain the Oakland County Parks and Recreation system.



The .35 mills will be used to increase access to:

- Allow OCPR to offer free annual vehicle permits to Oakland County residents who are seniors (62 and older), active military, veterans and residents with permanent disabilities
- Refresh parks system assets to meet current and future needs
- Expand trails throughout Oakland County
- Enhance outreach and support of local recreation programs
- Increase environmental conservation efforts across the 910 square miles of Oakland County to protect important natural habitats

For more information, [please visit OaklandCountyParks.com](http://OaklandCountyParks.com).



Watch a 1.5 minute millage introduction from the Executive Officer



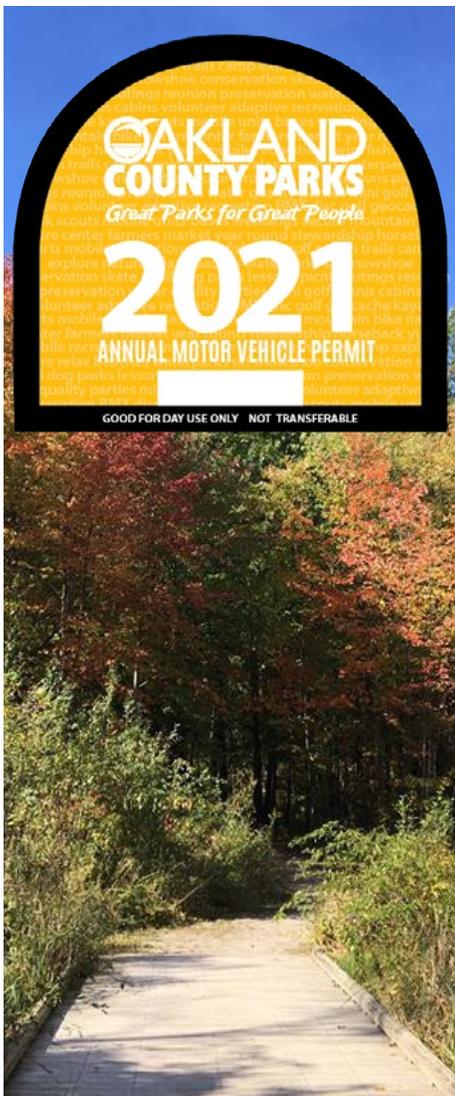
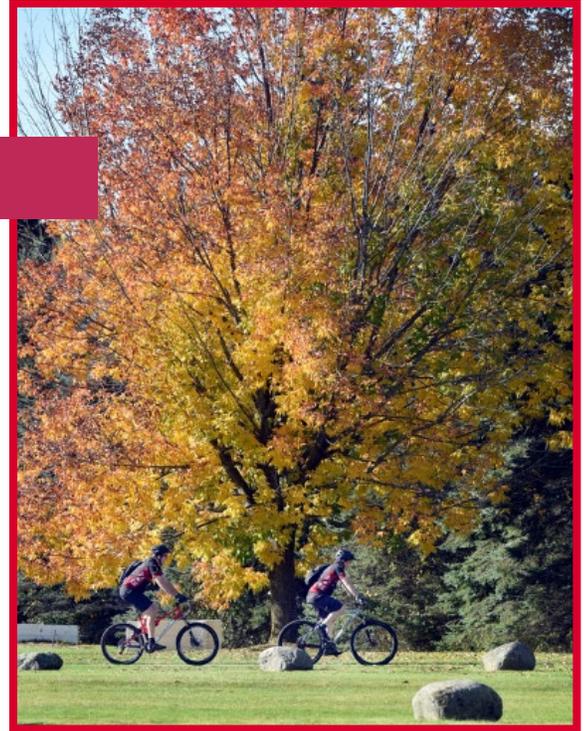
Watch a 7.5 minute overview of Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Free park entry for appreciation days

During an Oakland County Parks and Recreation *Appreciation Day*, visitors can enjoy free daily park entry with access to trails, dog parks and park amenities like playgrounds. Park hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset or posted at the park.

O CPR offers free park entry on: November 11 – Veteran’s Day; November 26 – Thanksgiving Day; December 24 – Christmas Eve; December 25 – Christmas Day and December 31 – New Year’s Eve.

To find the park nearest you, [visit OaklandCountyParks.com](http://visitOaklandCountyParks.com)



2021 vehicle permits provide access to recreation

Once again, the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission has voted to continue the low cost of the 2021 Annual Vehicle Permit at \$30 for residents to enjoy access to eight Oakland County Parks. The parks system offers nearly 80 miles of trails, plus dog parks, picnic areas, nature centers, and other amenities.

If the Oakland County Parks and Recreation millage is passed on Nov. 3, it would allow for free annual vehicle permits for seniors (62 and older), active military, veterans, and residents with permanent disabilities.

The permit cost for non-residents is \$48 with a discounted senior/adaptive/military/veterans non-resident rate of \$32.

When purchasing one permit at regular price, residents can pay just \$15 in the same transaction for a second permit that can be used on another vehicle in the same household. The fee for non-residents is \$38 for a second permit in the same transaction; seniors pay just \$11 for the second permit.

Permits can also be purchased at special group rates: 25-100, \$25/each; 101-250, \$20/each; and 251-500, \$15/each.

In addition to park admission, vehicle permit holders receive free entry to the Fourth of July fireworks at Groveland Oaks County Park, as well as free parking at the Oakland County Fair on the grounds of Springfield Oaks County Park on two Oakland County Parks and Recreation Days in 2021.

A Parks Perks Pass is also offered, allowing entry to eight Oakland County Parks and 13 Huron-Clinton Metroparks. The cost is \$64 regardless of residency.

The annual permits may be purchased online, by mail or in-person at many locations throughout Oakland County. Visit OaklandCountyParks.com for a complete list of locations.

The 2021 permits will go on sale after the November 3 election results are finalized. Check OaklandCountyParks.com for details.