# Holly Oaks ORV Park

## Park Plan and Standards Manual

Joint State/County Public Park

Draft Date: January 2, 2020

# Appendices

The following appendices are available at OaklandCountyParks.com/Planning

A. Public Engagement Report
B. Site Development Plan
C. Approval Resolutions
D. Operating Agreement
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H. Recreation Plan Excerpt
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# Holly Oaks ORV Park Plan

## Executive Summary

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) was tasked many years ago with developing an opportunity for legal, public off-road vehicle (ORV) recreation in southeastern Michigan. Oakland County has the highest percent of licensed ORVs in the state, and residents purchase the highest percent of DNR ORV permits, yet there are no legal riding areas in the county. A county-operated ORV park will encourage safe, legal riding and keep people from illegal riding on utility corridors, railways, and private land.

Oakland County also has several depleted sand and gravel mines that are unlikely to be redeveloped for residential or commercial use because of topography and noise created by I-75. The ORV Park site is a perfect complement to both the adjacent freeway and Dixie Highway, as well as the large swaths of nearby state land that are reserved for hunting, fishing, camping and non-motorized use.

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund approved a grant to fund the acquisition of 235 acres (nearly $2 million). The DNR ORV Program approved $185,000 in 2019 and $262,000 in 2020 to the design and development of the park, from the DNR ORV Trail Improvement grant fund. The park will be operated by Oakland County Parks and Recreation (OCPR) in partnership with the DNR Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) and has a projected operating budget of $663,565 for the first year of operation, including $204,940 from Unrestricted Net Position.

The goal of the park is to be self-sustaining. The DNR PRD has agreed to annually reimburse OCPR for 50% of any documented operating losses at the park. Any revenues over expense at the park will be held in a restricted account and re-invested back into the park. Therefore, after the first few years of operation, there is no anticipated expenditure of OCPR millage, DNR PRD funds, or other dollars to fund the operation of the park.

ORV enjoyment is not limited to one's residence, profession, income bracket, gender or ethnicity. Like state and federal lands, this ORV park is located where the landscape is most conducive to the recreational experience. The site is less than a 40-minute drive for most residents in Oakland County (and less than 90 minutes from most large urban centers in Southeast Michigan). This ORV park will be the closest public riding opportunity for all county residents.

Michigan has had a long history of using motorized vehicles to enjoy its public lands and waters. Vehicles, ranging from pontoons to campers, have been used by residents of all ages and abilities to spend time out-of-doors, visit with family and friends, meet new and different people, and re-create themselves by escaping from the routine of work and our urban/suburban lives. For some, the feel of scaling a ridgeline from the seat of a Jeep is no less a matter of their health and wellness than a night spent in a cabin or relaxing in a tube on a river.

### HOLLY OAKS ORV PARK FACTS

- 235 acres – 113 open in 2020, remaining open by 2023
- Acquired by DNR PRD with a $2.9M grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund
- Former sand and gravel mining operations located at I-75 and Grange Hall Road, adjacent to (west and south of) Mt. Holly
- Initial development funded through DNR ORV grant program
- Open to all types of ORVs – full-size, side-by-sides, ATVs/quads, motorcycles/dirt bikes
- No DNR Recreation Passport or OCPR Vehicle Permit required for entry – but DNR ORV stickers required, and daily entry fee will be charged per vehicle

- DNR is contracting with Mt. Holly Ski and Snowboard Resort to utilize its parking lot, ticketing area and restrooms during their off season, saving OCPR and DNR hundreds of thousands of dollars in capital development, for a fee of $54,000/year.
- OCPR and DNR are working with ROWE Professional Services for park design and phasing plan
- A series of test events were held in 2019 via the DNR's special use permit process for planning and public engagement at the park
- Construction scheduled for spring 2020; estimated park opening July 2020
- Operating agreement between OCPR and DNR PRD with 20-year term and 10-year renewal, begins January 1, 2020
- Will become the 14th Oakland County Park, operated in partnership with the DNR
- Expected to be self-sustaining after initial launch (by year four), with revenue over expenses being retained for park development/maintenance or with DNR contributing 50% of any potential operating losses
- A request for proposals will be released each year to invite the business community to partner with OCPR and/or invest in park development

# Community Context

## Community Description – Michigan

Michigan consists of 83 counties in the Lower Peninsula and Upper Peninsula. The estimated population in 2017 in Michigan was 10 million and the estimated median household income in 2017 was $52,668 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

Michigan has a wealth of natural resources. With 3,126 miles of shoreline bordering Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, and Lake Superior – Michigan has more freshwater coastline than any other state. It also has more than 11,000 inland lakes, more than 36,000 miles of streams, and 19 million acres of forest cover (Michigan.gov).

## Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Within the State of Michigan, the Parks and Recreation Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages 103 state parks and recreation areas, 1300 developed boating access sites, and 19 state-managed harbors. DNR offers many opportunities throughout the state for ORV recreation, including the designated ORV trail / route system and frozen surface of public waters, state forest roads (unless posted closed to ORVs), Silver Lake State Park ORV Area, and ORV-friendly state parks and state forest campgrounds.[1]

## DNR: Holly State Recreation Area

At more than 8000 acres, much of the Holly Recreation Area surrounds the proposed Holly Oaks project area. This park consists of a variety of recreational opportunities including camping in the McGinnis Lake Campground, Swimming at Heron Beach, the 24-hole Hollywoods disc golf course, 24 miles of mountain biking trails in the Holdridge Lakes mountain biking area, 8 miles of hiking and biking trails in the main park area, 3 launch ramps allowing access to four different lakes, picnic shelters, a park store and various other attractions. Much of the land in the recreation area is maintained for wildlife management by the DNR Wildlife Division and provides excellent hunting and nature watching opportunities.

## Community Description – Oakland County

Oakland County is in southeast Michigan, approximately 20 miles northwest of Detroit and covers 910 square miles. Within the county there are 30 cities, 21 townships, and 11 incorporated villages in urban, suburban, and

[1] Where to Ride: https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79148_80314---,00.html

rural landscapes. The county's estimated population in 2017 was approximately 1.3 million persons and the median household income in 2017 was $73,369 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

Oakland County is home to the headwaters of five major rivers, the Clinton, Flint, Huron, Rouge, and Shiawassee Rivers, all of which are important to the long-term health of the Great Lakes ecosystem. Many diverse ecosystems are in the county due the area's complex topography and geological history and are an important element in the character of the county.

## Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Oakland County Parks and Recreation (OCPR) provides parks and recreation services within the geographic boundaries of Oakland County, but are also open to visitors to the county. Since 1966, OCPR has expanded and diversified the park system from four parks to thirteen, now totaling more than 6,700 acres. Key attractions include managed natural areas, nature centers, waterparks, golf courses, conference centers, campgrounds, fairgrounds and over 75 miles of park trails. OCPR also offers a variety of entertaining and educational recreation programs and services for various ages and abilities.

## OCPR: Groveland Oaks County Park

Holly Oaks ORV Park is located adjacent to Groveland Oaks County Park and on the west side of Dixie Highway. Groveland Oaks was established in 1968. The 361-acre park features a campground, a beginner skate park and pump track, picnic and play areas, a beach area, and non-motorized boating and fishing on Stewart Lake. Groveland Oaks preserves open space and natural areas in the headwaters of the Flint River watershed and is the first park in Michigan to be environmentally certified by the Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program.

## Community Description – Groveland Township

Groveland Township, located in the northwest quadrant of Oakland County, covers 36.1 square miles. The estimated population in 2017 was 5,699 and the median household income was $87,148 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Country living, rural agriculture, and large state recreation land holdings provide the undeveloped rural character of this township. It is a favorite location for several church, educational and youth organization camps (Oakland County, 2012).

## Community Description – Holly Township

Holly Township, located in the northwest quadrant of Oakland County, covers 36.6 square miles. The estimated population in 2017 was 11,625 and the median household income was $63,265 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). The Township boasts a beautiful and unique downtown located in the Village of Holly and the natural beauty found in the Holly Recreation Area and Seven Lakes State Park (Oakland County, 2012).

## Dixie Highway Corridor

Holly Oaks ORV Park is accessed from Dixie Highway, which runs parallel to I-75 and provides access to I-75 in two locations. Multiple businesses along the corridor have the potential to benefit by serving the food service, fuel, repairs, and other commercial and retail needs of users of the proposed Holly Oaks ORV Park.

## Continued Planning for Economic Development – Main Street Oakland County

Groveland Township has been accepted for community participation in the Main Street Oakland County (MSOC) Affiliate Level program as part of a multi-community heritage corridor, primarily built prior to 1950. The proposed heritage corridor follows Dixie Highway and includes the townships of Groveland, Springfield and Holly. The MSOC program seeks to maximize the economic potential and preserve the heritage and sense of place of Oakland County's historic downtowns and commercial districts. Goals of MSOC Affiliate Level participation are to establish broad-based community support, prepare mission and vision statements, and to foster a historic preservation

ethic. Participants are expected to track key statistics: net new jobs, net new businesses, and total public and private investment. According to Groveland Township Supervisor Bob DePalma, "*We are seeing the winding down of sand and gravel mining and a shift away from solid waste disposal in our County; and we are seeing the recognition of the economic value of cultural, historical, and natural resources in our State. Now, with the potential investment of both the DNR and OCPRC in an Adventure Recreation Park, it is essential that we consider how we will manage future development along Dixie Highway so that it benefits our entire community*."

The Holly Area Chamber of Commerce is working on a plan to brand the Dixie Highway corridor as the Dixie Byway, a recreational byway and destination. This marketing tool would allow for the Chamber, the communities, and businesses to market the area as a connected series of unique recreational opportunities.

### Private Recreation Providers

In addition to the public resources described above, the recreation opportunities in the region also includes private recreational providers. Mt. Holly is a ski area located directly north of the Holly Oaks project area. The Renaissance Festival held annually in Holly provides additional draw for recreation visitors. A KOA campground is located just south of the ORV Park.

## Service Area and Demographics

Two main markets for the ORV Park are projected. Frequent use is expected from ORV-users living within a 30-minute drive of Groveland Oaks. More occasional use is expected from ORV-users who travel to multiple ORV recreation areas throughout the state.

### Service Area

The projected median drive-time for the ORV Park is 30 minutes (i.e. 50% of the participants will drive 30 minutes or less). The median drive-time was calculated from ZIP code data collected in 2014 at the Dixie Gully Run (DGR) events. DGR I (8/9/2014) was marketed to a statewide audience and DGR II (11/1-2/2014) marketing was focused on Oakland County. For those who drove farther than 30 minutes – DGR I participants drove farther than DGR II participants. Additionally, DGR I had a higher percentage of out-of-county participants (58%) than DGR II (40%). As the park ramps up operation, we will be able to collect additional information on park users to gain a better understanding of where people are coming from and how often they may visit the park.

### Demographic Profile and Trends

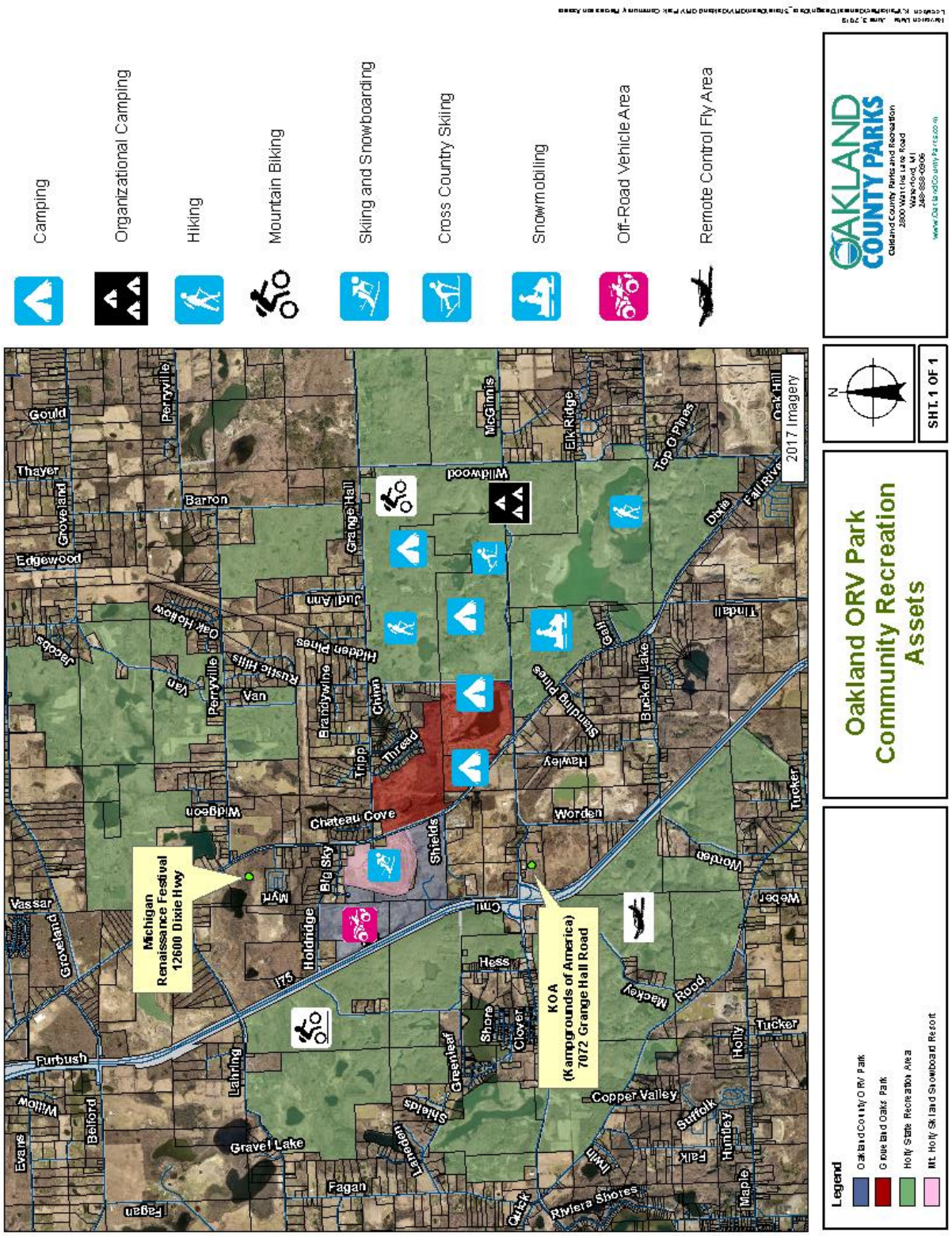
GENDER: Survey-based ORV studies published in 2010 and 2014 show that the proportion of ORV-users who are male (93-94.1%) is much greater than the proportion of males in the general population (2014 U.S. Census) (48.8%) (McCole, 2014) (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010).

AGE: The mean age of the ORV-users is 49.6 (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010). U.S. Census forecasts a slow decrease in the 45-54 age group between 2010 and 2019.

RACE: The reported race is similar to the U.S. Census for white/Caucasian (approximately 80%) and for black/African American (approximately 16%). Less than 1% (0.41%) of ORV-users report being Hispanic, which is lower than the general population (4.5%)(McCole, 2014).

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: In the 2014 ORV study, a greater percentage of ORV-users reported annual household incomes over $100,000 (36%) than the general population (21%) (McCole, 2014).

*Figure A: Community recreation resources*



# Economic Effects

Holly Oaks ORV Park is expected to have a positive impact on the local and regional economy in a number of ways, including:

- Anticipated increase in ORV License and Trail Permit sales due to increased availability of public ORV areas
- Sales of new or used ORVs and ORV equipment
- Campsite rentals at Groveland Oaks, Holly State Recreation Area and KOA Campground for ORV-users who camp during multi-day trips to Holly Oaks
- Lodging at area motels for ORV-users during multi-day trips to Holly Oaks
- Fuel sales for ORVs and vehicles hauling ORVs
- Parts, repairs, towing services for ORVs and vehicles hauling ORVs
- Restaurant and bar sales for ORV users and their families
- Grocery sales for ORV visitors, especially campers
- Other retail sales for ORV users and their families

## Information Sources

Economic impacts of ORV use and ORV parks have been documented at the state level, with the 2010 *ORV Use and Users* study (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010), and at the local level, with the effects of Silver Lake State Park on the local economy (MDNR - Silver Lake SP, 2014). With the surveys at the two Dixie Gully Run events, we began to capture information about the effect of event participants on local businesses. Economic impacts in the community will be an important set of outcomes to track after the Holly Oaks launches operation. Groveland Township has recently applied for membership in the Main Street Oakland County program, which will support continued evaluation of these outcomes.

## Non-Trip Related ORV Expenditures in Michigan

Over a 12-month period in 2008-09, ORV-owning households in Michigan spent a total of $212 million on non-trip related expenditures, including new or used ORV equipment, repair/maintenance, ORV insurance and off-season storage. The average ORV-related expenditures per ORV-owning household was $1,850 (for 114,858 ORV-owning households). (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010)

## Spending on ORV-Related Trips

The 2010 *ORV Use and Users* study (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010) analyzed the spending of households with at least one licensed ORV reported on their most recent public land trail riding trip of 100 miles or overnight and outside of the region of residence[2]. The average trip involved $541 in spending of which 24% was at home, 22% en route, and 53% near the destination. The greatest percentage of spending was for groceries (29%), tow vehicle expenses (24%), restaurant/bar (14%), ORV expenses (13%) and lodging (12%). Total spending on public land riding trips outside of the region of residence in 2008-09 was $110 million. When the estimated ¼ of the trips outside of the state are excluded, total ORV trip spending in Michigan was $82 million. The Northern Lower Peninsula received slightly more than half (52%) of the trip spending with $43 million, followed by the Upper Peninsula ($28 million) and Southern Lower Peninsula ($11 million). Approximately $16.8 million was spent by out-of-state ORV riders visiting Michigan. (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010)

[2] For the purpose of economic impact analysis, the study divided the state into three regions: Southern Lower Peninsula (**SLP**) – counties south of the Bay City/Muskegon Line; Northern Lower Peninsula (**NLP**) – counties south of the Bay City/Muskegon Line; and Upper Peninsula (**UP**)

### Economic Impacts

Including secondary effects[3], ORV trip spending by Michigan residents supported 800 jobs in the state in 2009. The largest number of direct jobs was in restaurants and bars (227), lodging (157), and retail trade (59). This supported $17.4 million in direct labor income and $28.9 million in direct value-added. (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010)

The statewide impact from the $16.8 million spent by non-resident trips was 174 jobs. This supported $6.8 million in direct labor income and $11.62 million in direct value-added. (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010)

### Silver Lake State Park Economic Impacts

Silver Lake State Park is located on the western shore of Michigan approximately 36 miles north of Muskegon. It provides 3,085 acres of public land, 1600 acres of which is open sand dunes. The Silver Lake State Park ORV Area is approximately 625 acres or 20% of the park (MDNR, 2012). Using 2005 use data, DNR calculated that Silver Lake State Park generated over $12 million in total spending and supported nearly 400 jobs annually (MDNR - Silver Lake SP, 2014).

### Use of Local Businesses by ORV Event Participants

In each event survey, we asked event participants if they patronized local businesses and/or used local camping facilities.

*Table 1: Use of local businesses and campgrounds by event participants*

| Choices related to local businesses and camping | Dixie Gully Run I | Dixie Gully Run II | Ironman | Frozen Mines | Bent Wheels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| patronized local restaurants | 34% | 50% | 47% | 41% | 36% |
| patronized local gas stations | 54% | 64% | 73% | 61% | 49% |
| patronized other local business | 22% | 16% | 18% | 10% | 16% |
| camped at local campground | 14% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 7% |

- Dixie Gully Run I on August 9, 2014: 15 campsites at Groveland Oaks were rented by participants. Additionally, Holly State Recreation Area reported that 10 campsites were rented by event participants.
- Dixie Gully Run II on November 1-2: 1 6-person cabin was rented for 1 night; 1 campsite was rented for 1 night; and 2 campsites were rented for 2 nights at Groveland Oaks.

## Site Description

### Location

Holly Oaks ORV Park consists of 5 parcels owned by DNR totaling approximately 235 acres in an area bounded by I-75 (east), Dixie Highway (west), Holdridge Road (north), and Shields Road (south).

*Groveland Township: T.5.N, R.8.E, Southwest quarter of Section 18 and North half of Section 19*

- 02 18 351 017 12.9 acres
- 02 19 100 003 88.8 acres

*Holly Township: T.5.N, R.7.E, Southeast quarter of Section 13 and Northeast quarter of Section 24*

- 01 13 401 003 15.6 acres
- 01 24 227 001 27.1 acres

[3] Secondary effects: multiplier effects as the spending circulates within the state or region

- 01 24 277 001 9.2 acres

## Access

Peak season parking will be at Mt. Holly Ski and Snowboard Resort. The DNR has entered into a lease agreement with Mt. Holly that is incorporated into the Operating Agreement between the DNR and OCPR. The lease provides for use of Mt. Holly's parking lot, indoor ticketing/sales area and restrooms by OCPR staff operating the park. The DNR is working with Mt. Holly to improve a road between the Mt. Holly Parking Lot and Holly Oaks ORV Park so that vehicles can enter the park from Mt. Holly without having to go back onto Dixie Highway (critical for non-street-legal vehicles). During the peak season most vehicles will park and/or unload in the Mt. Holly parking lot. Noisier vehicles such as certain motorcycles and ATVs will be asked to off-load in the park, utilizing the Dixie Ledge parking lot adjacent to Dixie Highway.

Shoulder and winter season will utilize the Dixie Ledge parking area (as Mt. Holly will be utilizing its parking lot for the ski resort operations). The entrance to the Dixie Ledge parking area is off Shield's Road, at 14551 Shield's Road.

Maintenance access may also be possible from CMI Drive, a private road that starts at Grange Hall and heads north into the park, adjacent to existing recycling and concrete production facilities.

## Land Use

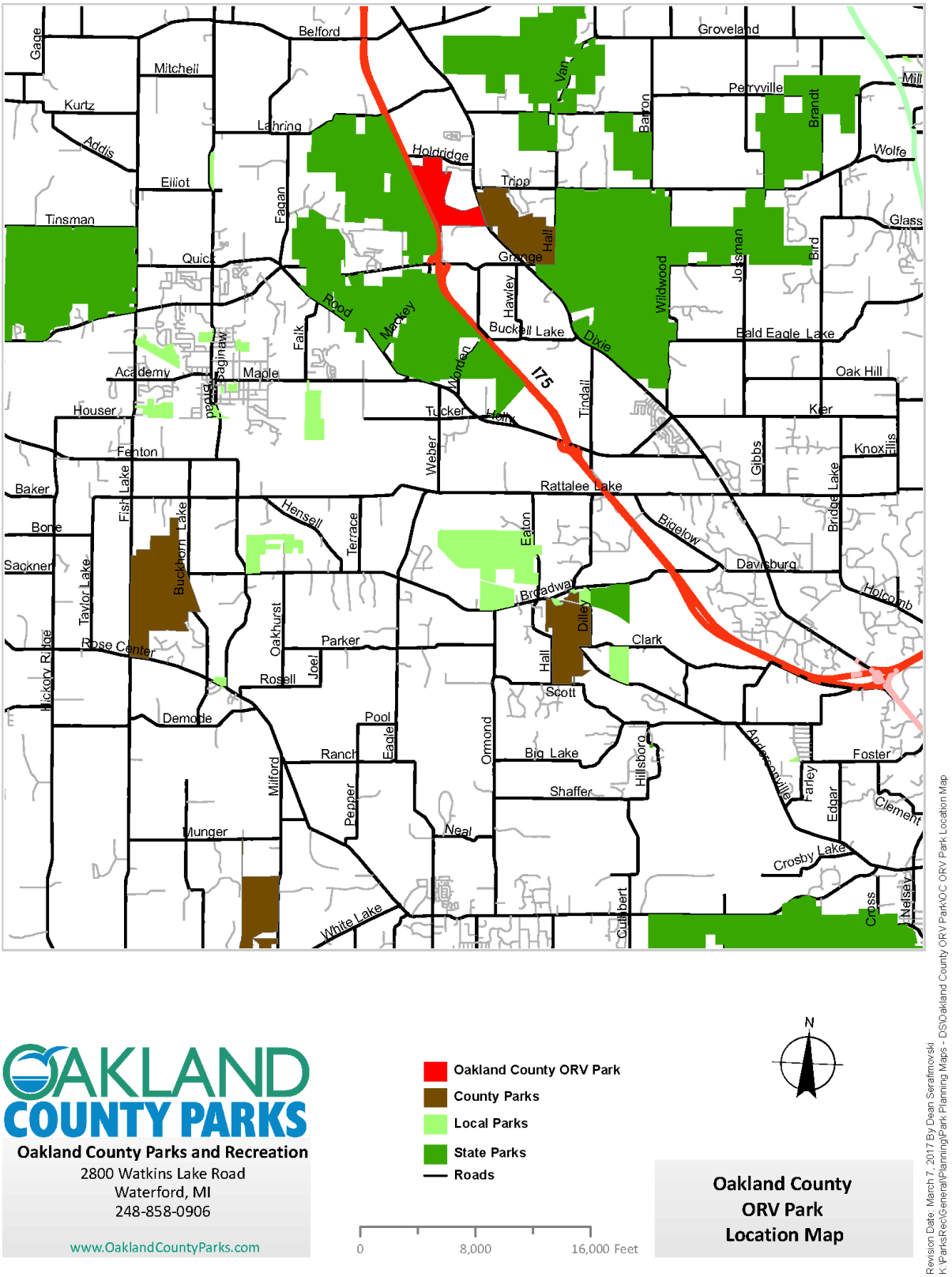
The historical aerial photograph from 1940 shows agricultural fields and forested areas throughout the Holly Oaks site. Beginning in 1963, it appears that extraction has begun to occur starting in the northern end of the site, with most of the forested areas remaining intact. By 2012, the entire site appears to be mined.

The most recent land use at Holly Oaks has been mineral extraction for the purpose of sand and gravel mining. Extraction has ceased in the two Groveland Township parcels. Commercial extraction in the Holly Township parcels (by the former owner, Holly Disposal) is expected to continue through 2023.

Adjacent land uses include recreation to the east (Mt. Holly Ski Area). Land uses south of Shields Road and north of Grange Hall Road include gravel mining (Desert Sands), materials processing (Bedrock), concrete production (Quikcrete by Gibraltar cement company), and office/utilities (Consumers Energy District Operations Center). There is residential land use (3 residential lots) to the south along Grange Hall Road. A 33-acre site was until recently operated as a farm with seasonal operation of an ice cream parlor and farm market. ITC operates a high-tension power line corridor on an easement located on property owned by Groveland Township.

Beyond the I-75, Grange Hall Road, Dixie Highway, and Holdridge Road bounded area – the predominant land uses are recreational with some residential and commercial (including a carpet outlet, a professional office building, two restaurants/bars, two gas stations/convenience stores, and a small liquor/party store). The Groveland fire station is located on the northeast corner of the Dixie Highway/Grange Hall Road intersection. The Groveland fire station also houses the community EMT service and a temporary field post for the Michigan State Police.

*Figure B: ORV Park Location Map*




OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

**Oakland County Parks and Recreation**
2800 Watkins Lake Road
Waterford, MI
248-858-0906

www.OaklandCountyParks.com

- Oakland County ORV Park
- County Parks
- Local Parks
- State Parks
- Roads

0 8,000 16,000 Feet

N

**Oakland County ORV Park Location Map**

Revision Date: March 7, 2017 By Dean Serafimovski
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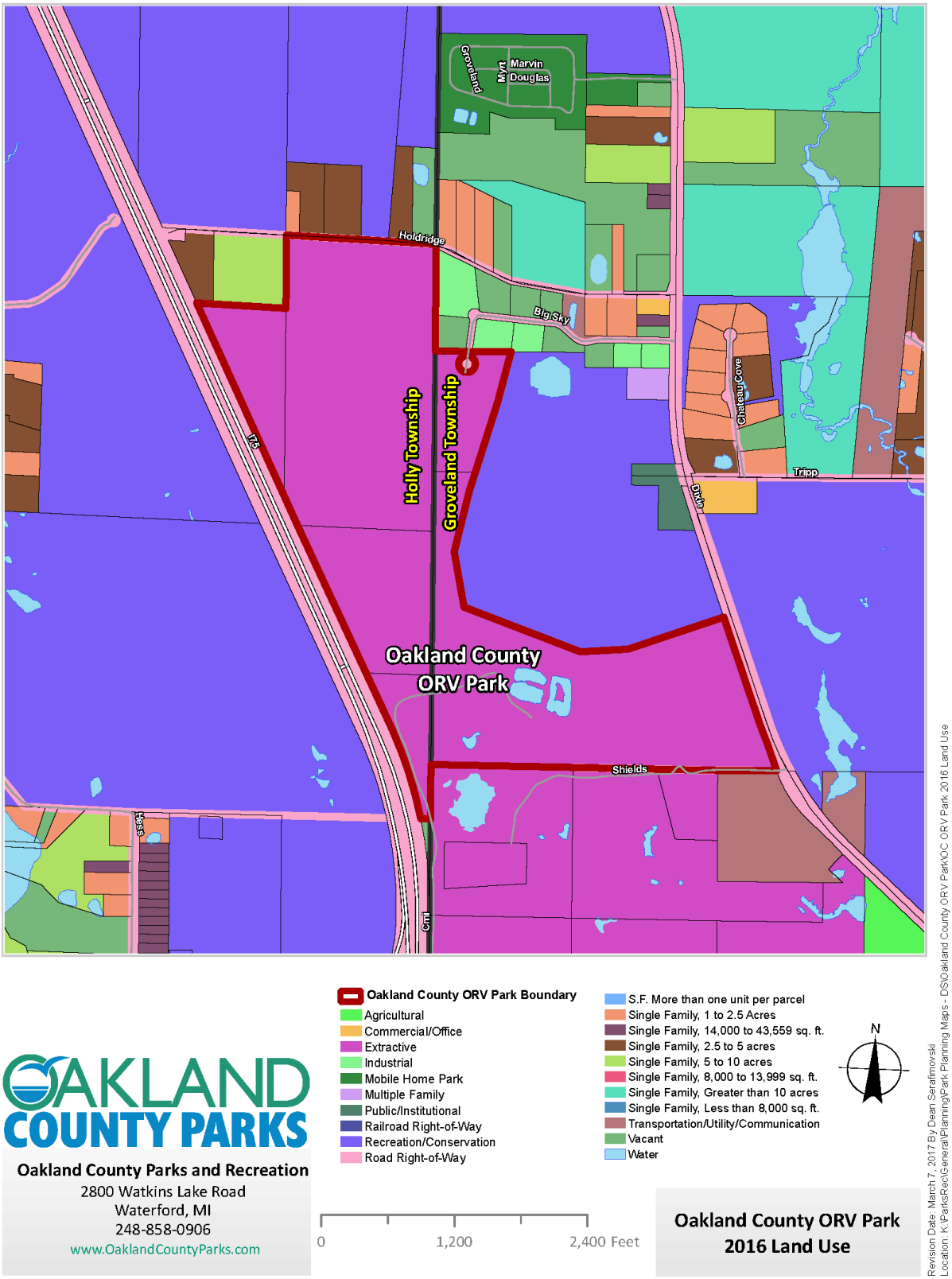
*Figure C: ORV Park Land Use Map*



## Geology, Topography and Soils

The glacial history of Oakland County has resulted in rich deposits of consolidated aggregates that have been relatively easy to extract and process to support the development of the greater Detroit metropolitan area. At one time, more than five separate mine sites were operated just between I-75 and Dixie Highway including the Holly Oaks site. The bulk of the extraction has focused on the production of MDOT Class II fill sand for use in road construction projects. Premium washed sand for use in the production of concrete was also of significant value, resulting in the on-site location of the Gibraltar cement company.

Mining extraction has resulted in the lowering of the Holly Oaks site as boulders, stone, gravel, and clay/silt piles have accumulated on the site over the years and have been periodically sold off as landscaping products.

Except for the portion of the project site that is still in farm production, extraction and mine processing altered the topography and soil conditions so that they bear little resemblance to the original landform. Even in the areas buffered by mine setbacks, the creation of material berms and stockpiles have altered the landscape up to the property boundaries. Current topography is characterized by steep cliffs, hills of mine byproduct (primarily clay or silt), deep ravines caused by surface run off, and shallow ponds located over pockets of fine material.

Drainage at the site varies based on the underlying material. Ponding is common, but the site, in general, is well drained. The lowest portions of the project site tend to be 20-30 feet above the water table. A significant amount of unconsolidated, non-compacted, excavated material (fill) has been brought into the site particularly on those parcels located in Holly Township.

## Natural Resources

The historic plant communities at the site were Oak-Hickory Forest over the majority of the site and Black-Oak Barren in the northern areas. Except for occasional areas of scrub and second-growth forest, there are no plant communities at the site. Establishment of zones of native vegetation will be important to the project to help stabilize soils and slow runoff.

Holly Oaks is also located along an ecological corridor in the Flint River watershed. The corridor, identified by Oakland County's Green Infrastructure Vision, facilitates connectivity between the large "hubs" that encompass Holly State Recreation Area and Groveland Oaks County Park. Site restoration that enhances remnant tree row and fence line vegetation could be helpful in reestablishing the ecological corridor, while improving buffers between the recreational site and the surrounding land uses.

*Figure D: ORV Park Geology*

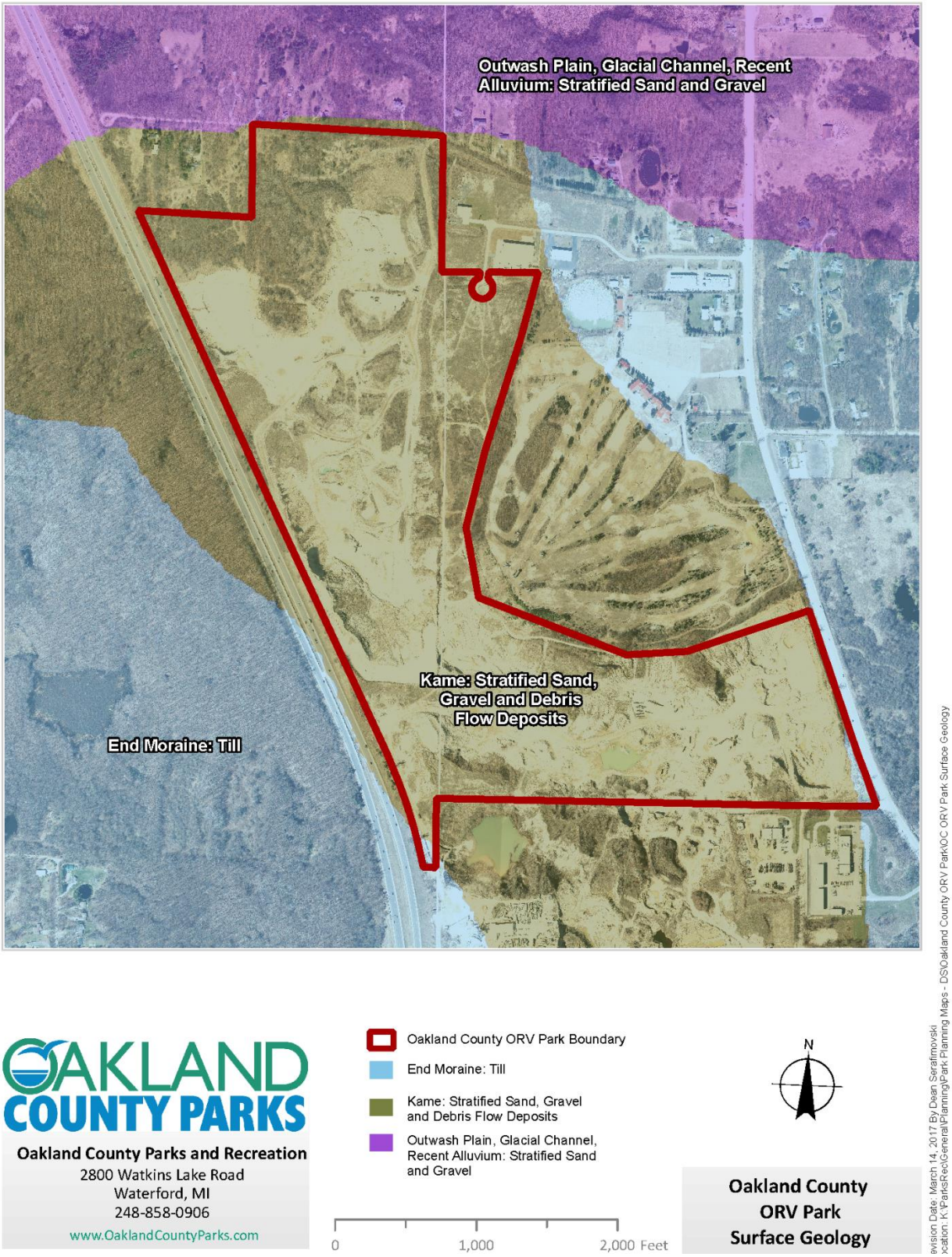
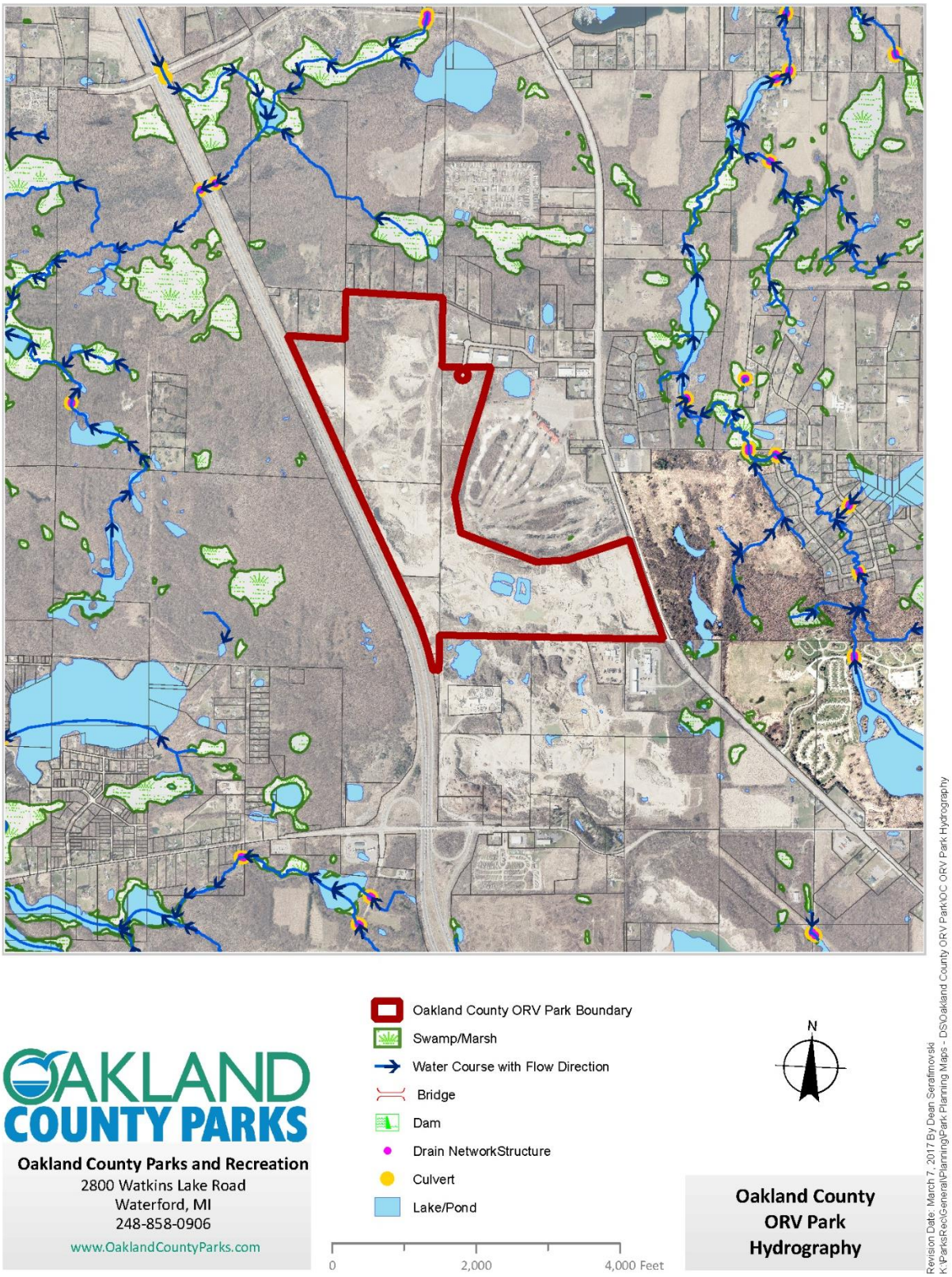


*Figure E: ORV Park Hydrography*



## Property History – see Appendix F

Three significant Native American trails were in the Holly Oaks ORV Park area, which indicates activity by local and regional Indigenous populations beginning at least five hundred years ago. Records also indicate that a major group of Native American ceremonial mounds formerly existed in Groveland Township. Vegetation surveys by land surveyors in the early 1800s indicates the property consisted of a rolling landscape with oaks and hickory.

Records of land ownership begin in the 1830s with a series of landowners, most of whom relocated from New York state and became farmers and merchants in the area. The eastern half of the property was purchased by the Michigan Department of Conservation in 1947. With the construction of I-75 in 1962, the land was sold to private parties, which helped fund the purchase of additional park land. The aerial photographs from 1940-1980 below show the transition of the property from farmland to the sand and gravel extraction operations that created the current landscape and the subsequent opportunity to create the Holly Oaks ORV Park.

*Figure F: Aerial photographs 1940-1980*

1940

1963

1974

1980

# Park Vision

## 10-Year Park Vision for Off-Road Vehicle Park

In the first 10 years at Holly Oaks ORV Park, we will transform a landscape that was shaped by surface mining into a recreation area that is frequented by Oakland County ORV-users and is a valued addition to the selection of ORV facilities in Michigan. The area will offer multi-use ORV trails, event and competition venues, and winter-time recreation opportunities. It will be a gateway to ORV recreation by offering introductory experiences and the opportunity to advance in skills. The park will be financially sustainable and an asset to the economic development of surrounding communities.

The proposed Holly Oaks will be the centerpiece of a larger recreation area that incorporates state, county, local and private recreational facilities and events. Together, these facilities will help meet the need for ORV and other types of adventure recreation at the county level and will constitute a statewide tourist destination. (OCPRC, 2/1/2018, pp. 8.27-28)

# Facility Concepts

Facility concepts were identified in the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan 2018-2022 (OCPRC, 2/1/2018, pp. 8.28-29) that was approved by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners on February 1, 2018. The concepts have been modified and expanded to reflect the collaborative planning efforts of OCPR, DNR, ORV users and user groups, and consultants. The concepts identified in the Recreation Plan are attached as Appendix H.

Holly Oaks ORV Park was created from two depleted sand and gravel mines. In order to determine what aspects of the mines should be kept, modified, or replaced, it was important to understand what types of experiences are desired by ORV drivers and their passengers. This understanding was made possible through the generous participation of the diverse group of ORV enthusiasts who comprise the Stakeholder Advisory Team. For a record of the Team's discussions, see Appendix A.

Also important to the design process has been the experience gained from four private events that were held on-site. These events were made possible through special use agreements with the Department of Natural Resources. Although these events were not hosted by OCPR, we were able to collect detailed surveys from participants at the first three of the events. The events and dates were:

- Ironman Invitational – 12/1/2018
- Frozen Mines – 2/23/2019
- Bent Wheels – 5/11/2019
- Detroit 4Fest – 9/14/2019

With the expertise of the Stakeholder Advisory Team and the experience from the private events, the features of the park have been built, tested, modified, and (in some cases) replaced by other features or abandoned entirely. This process resulted in the current design of the ORV Park and the features that exist in the park now. The ORV features are based on the type of ORV driving that can be accommodated at each location. The areas have been shaped according to existing topography, design best practices (to reduce potential user conflict, manage soil erosion, and accommodate drainage), operational/maintenance concerns, and the desire to create opportunities for all vehicle types and driving abilities.

The various features of the park are categorized as follows:

1. ORV Adventure Areas
    a. Open Access
    b. Controlled Access

2. Roads, Routes and Trails
    a. Roads
    b. ORV Routes
    c. ORV Challenge Routes
    d. Trails
        i. Closed Course
        ii. Endurance Trail
        iii. 50" Single-Track
        iv. 24" Single-Track
3. Parking and Guest Services
4. Maintenance Areas

## ORV Park Feature Descriptions – see Appendix I

The individual features are described in detail in Appendix I.

## Natural Resources Management Plan

Mission: The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is dedicated to providing quality recreation experiences that encourage healthy lifestyles, support economic prosperity, and promote the protection of natural resources

Goal: Protect Natural Resources: Increase land dedicated to protection of natural resources, preserve existing high-quality ecosystems, and improve ecological communities that are fragmented or degraded

Overview: Holly Oaks ORV Park will be primarily used for intensive recreation, making it incompatible with natural resources preservation or restoration. There are several potential future considerations on-site related to invasive species management, forestry, and wildlife that could be incorporated into the park plan if vehicle use is restricted to specific areas. Natural Resources Management staff surveyed the property in summer 2019 to determine the property goals and recommendations listed below:

Natural resources goals: Minimize spread of current invasive species on-site and ensure compliance with Stormwater best practices both during construction and operation of the park.

Natural Areas: There are significant populations of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, including *Phragmites australis*, on site. Contact with off-road vehicles will result in potential spread of these invasive species on-site and off-site as the vehicles return to their places of origin or travel to other ORV parks. Vehicles (including maintenance and construction equipment) should be decontaminated before and after use. A decontamination station should be installed at the entrance/exit of the park. Natural Resources staff will also provide native seed recommendations for erosion control as necessary.

Stormwater/Freshwater Stewardship: All activities on site should comply with stormwater best management practices, Phase II permit requirements and soil erosion/sedimentation control or other Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy permits. Construction of park facilities and parking lots will require permit review to ensure necessary permits are pulled. Numerous spill kits should be available on site across the park along with signage to assist with containment of vehicle related spills. Additionally, any dust management plans should be created in coordination with Natural Resources staff to ensure compliance with permits and protection of groundwater. Treatment of water resources on site (ponds, etc.) should be done in coordination with Natural Resources Management. However, no current management is recommended.

Wildlife: Natural Resources Management will survey the property annually to document unique or rare wildlife on site and create a management plan for the identified species. Ideally, this land will be enrolled in the DNR CCAA via the OCPR Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Implementation Plan as unmanaged land for organizational and species protection. Any discovery of Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes (or other Threated or Endangered species) will be reported to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine a reasonable course of action for species protection.

Forestry: There are few trees on site, however, an annual survey of the property will document any current or future tree diseases. Additionally, there is a forested ridge on the northern boundary of the park with trees that would benefit from management. If plans do not include vehicle use along this ridge in the future, NR Forestry will manage that woodlot for ecological health.

# Marketing Plan

The Marketing Plan identifies target customers, methods to best reach those customers, and philosophies and strategies to keep them coming back to Holly Oaks ORV Park.

The impetus for creating a public ORV riding facility in southeast Michigan is to provide the service where the people are. The southern Lower Peninsula is home to 58% of all licensed ORV users in the state of Michigan. The vast majority of these users travel outside the metro-Detroit area to reach a trail or ORV facility that meets their needs.

Metro-Detroit (especially Oakland County which is home to Chrysler's world headquarters) has a very strong "car culture." People in Michigan love their cars, recently evidenced with the development of the M-1 Concourse in Pontiac – a place for people to house their cars, interact with other car-lovers from across the area, and show off their "toys." Holly Oaks will be able to tap into that culture to draw ORV users and car enthusiasts to the park.

The benefit of the existing culture is the multitude of clubs, businesses and networks that already exist within the area that OCPR and the DNR will be able to (and have already begun to) tap into. This type of outreach, in addition to our typical marketing outreach (including special events, trade shows, Web, social media, print media, etc.) will provide ample opportunity to connect with our target customers, get them to the facility, and keep them coming back.

## Target Market Identification

Summary of Key Findings from OCPR ORV Market Analysis

### *Oakland County Parks and Recreation Market Overview*

- Oakland County Parks and Recreation's primary target market is the residents of Oakland County
- It also has a strong regional draw and provides many services to non-residents

### *Identification of Target Markets*

- The target market for ORV use at Holly Oaks ORV Park is males ages 35-55 within a 30-minute drive time of Groveland Oaks, with an average household income of $40,000 - $80,000. The secondary target market will be males in the same age/income category but within all of southeastern Michigan. The third target market will be those with a drive time of more than 2 hours, and/or from outside the state.
    - While males tend to dominate the market, there is also a growing market for women and family participation in ORV recreation. OCPR and DNR intend for this park to be a family-friendly destination and will be marketing to families and women as well as men.

### *Off-Road Vehicle Market Overview*

- Oakland County has the highest percentage (6.5%) of ORV licenses of counties in Michigan and the Southern Lower Peninsula is home to 58% of all licensed ORV users in Michigan
- The public designated ORV system provides a 3,512-mile designated trail/route system and five publicly operated scramble areas
- There are 18 private ORV facilities in Michigan; 13 of these cater specifically to motorcycles and ATVs

### *Service Area*

- Groveland Oaks' 30-minute drive-time radius intersects with the (assumed) similar drive-time radius for the Mounds
  - Within a 3-hour drive-time radius of Groveland Oaks, there are multiple ORV facilities

## Unique Selling Proposition

There are several factors that make ORV recreation at Holly Oaks a unique opportunity.

### *Location*

Holly Oaks ORV Park will be the closest public ORV facility to metro-Detroit. The market analysis has shown that those most likely to visit the park multiple times per year live within a 30-minute drive time. By being located within Oakland County, Holly Oaks will be easily accessible to all county residents, and an easy drive for the majority of metro-Detroit. One of the main goals for the development of the park is to provide this type of recreational experience close to home, making it more easily accessible and allowing more frequent recreational opportunities (vs. the less-frequent trips ORV users may make to northern Michigan).

### *Site*

Holly Oaks ORV Park is located in what was (and in some areas still is) a sand and gravel mine. Due to the nature of the use of the property over the past years, a very unique and interesting landscape has developed on the site. The mining operations have created extreme topographical conditions including cliffs, hills, valleys, and water features that seem almost "lunar-like." Park users will feel as if they've been transported far away from southeast Michigan, making the viewsheds and feeling of being "off the grid" a significant attraction in themselves.

### *Partnership Development – Car Culture*

Due to its location within Oakland County, there are multiple opportunities to capitalize on the "car culture" of the area and develop long-term partnerships with different facets of the automobile and ORV industries.

- ORV Clubs
- Car Clubs
- Parts Suppliers and Original Equipment Manufacturers
- Customization/Repair Shops
- Dealerships – ORV and full-size vehicles
- Car Companies – Opportunities for sponsorship, demos, R&D, testing, private events

### *Joint venture with OCPR and DNR*

Many Michigan ORV users are familiar with the DNR's off-road trail system in northern Michigan. The trail network is recognized as well-maintained, safe, and fun. OCPR partnering with the DNR on the development and management of Holly Oaks lends a significant amount of credibility and support for the project. The park will be the first jointly planned/managed county/state recreation facility in Michigan, making it a unique partnership of two well-known and reputable recreation providers.

*Ever-changing site development plan*

The most unique selling proposition for the park is that it will continue to change and evolve over time, keeping it exciting and relevant and keeping users coming back year after year.

## Pricing and Positioning Strategy

- Pricing structure – Pricing will be developed that makes visiting Holly Oaks ORV Park sustainable, but also affordable for local residents to attend on a regular basis. The intent is not for the park to be a once-a-year destination, but rather for it to serve both out-of-town visitors and local visitors alike.
- An annual pass is still being considered for year 1 operations. This may be something developed in year 2 as we get a better handle on the park operation.

## Potential Offers

- Grand Opening special
- Future annual pass
- Shoulder season discounts
- Camping packages – discounted park entry with camp site rental

## Marketing Materials

*Logo development*

Work with OCPR and DNR graphic designers and marketing teams to develop a logo for Holly Oaks ORV Park. The park will have its own logo separate from both the branding of the OCPR an DNR park systems. However, it will be developed to coordinate with current branding/marketing efforts of each organization.

*Limited print marketing materials*

For strategic placement at partner/sponsor locations, suppliers, dealerships, trade shows, etc.

- Palm/postcard – key park info/web site
- Annual site map/brochure (to change with changing layout)
- Stickers (smaller, not for vehicles) – think Moosejaw stickers

*Promotional Items (Swag)*

Use at promotional events, trade shows, special events. Possible merchandise/sale item at the park. People like to associate themselves with the things they like, and that their friends like. Display items such as window stickers or keychains provide a way for people to express their affiliation with ORV recreation, and, more importantly, Holly Oaks ORV Park. Providing a promotional item to everyone who attends a grand opening event/weekend will help reinforce and welcome the creation of community and culture around the park, driving future/repeat business and marketing the facility simultaneously. Other examples include logo shirts, water bottles and other items.

*Keychain*

Car/outdoor related, i.e. tire pressure gauge or carabiner. Or more traditional rubber/plastic logo keychain.

## Window decal

ORV users take pride in their love of all things off-road. Vehicles and trailers are often seen plastered with decals and stickers, representing the places a person has been, or companies he/she supports. The Holly Oaks decal is an ideal marketing tool, building community support, and spreading the word about the park.

## Promotions Strategy

Promotion through partners – dealerships, auto parts suppliers – create sponsorship/partnership opportunities to develop relationships and generate revenue.

- Grand opening event
- Web/Social media
- Radio stations
- Dealerships
- Press Release(s)
- Local news shows – rides for newscasters/camera crews

## Online Marketing Plan

We know that social media is a key tool for marketing this type of facility. The majority of the target market are users of social media, and entire online communities have developed around different ORV facilities and activities. In 2018, hearing the potential for a possible ORV facility in Oakland County, residents created a "Support an Oakland County ORV Park" page that has transformed into a "Friends of Holly Oaks ORV Park" Facebook page which has 2,649 members as of October 2019. Holly Oaks ORV Park Facebook page (managed by OCPR) has just under 1,100 likes as of October 2019. In addition to Facebook we will utilize multiple other online resources to promote the park, including the use of social media hashtags commonly used/followed by members of the ORV community.

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Polaris RiderX
- OCPR Web site dedicated park URL
- DNR Web site
- Clubs – local, state – utilize existing social networks and Web sites to promote the park

# ORV Park Standards Manual

## Introduction

The purpose of Oakland County Parks and Recreation (OCPR) planning, design, maintenance and operational standards is to increase the consistency and cost-effectiveness of management practices in all Oakland County Parks and to continually improve the enjoyment and safety of park visitors and the public. The purpose of this *ORV Park Standards Manual* is to standardize the process by which ORV facilities are proposed, designed, evaluated, approved, budgeted, constructed, maintained and monitored. The intended outcome of the consistent use of the *ORV Park Standards Manual* is a system of facilities and amenities for people and dog companions that are safe, attractive, and easy to navigate.

This manual is intended to be used by staff members who plan, build, maintain and operate facilities in the Oakland County Park system. By providing sound reasoning and philosophy as well as clear standards, it is intended to help staff to work through a variety of situations. This document illustrates design intent and should only be used as a guideline; no information in this document should be construed as an engineered element.

## Background and Policy Information

CAPRA Standard 7.5 – Maintenance and Operations Management Standards: The agency shall have established maintenance and operations standards that are reviewed periodically for management of all park and recreation areas and facilities, equestrian facilities, aquatic or athletic facilities, nature centers, where applicable. Parks, facilities and other recreational elements should be identified according to the intended use of the area, ranging from heavily used and highly developed areas to those that are lightly used and less developed visa a park classification or maintenance classification system. Each of these areas should be assigned an appropriate set of maintenance standards including both recommended frequency and acceptable quality (CAPRA 2014).

## Philosophy

The following discussion describes the philosophy that is the foundation for Oakland County Parks and Recreation's management of the ORV Park and describes the fundamental strategies of the program.

### Joint Work Group

The Joint Work Group was established in 2017 to develop recommendations for how the park should be developed, funded and managed. This Joint Work Group met regularly for 2 years to develop the Operating Agreement that governs the relationship between Oakland County Parks and Recreation and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Members of the Joint Work Group (in alphabetical order) are/were:

Jacklin Blodgett, Assistant Chief, Parks and Recreation Division, MDNR
Gerald Fisher, Chairman, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission
Jason Fleming, Chief Parks and Recreation Division, Resource Protection and Promotion, MDNR
Ron Fowkes, Commissioner, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission
Jody Hall, Corporation Counsel – Oakland County
Bob Kostin, Commissioner, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission
Ron Olson, Chief of Parks and Recreation Division, MDNR
Melissa Prowse, Supervisor – Planning, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission
Dan Stencil, Executive Officer, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission
Sue Wells, Manager of Park Operations, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission

## Holly Oaks ORV Park Work Group

The inter-agency planning team for the park has evolved over time to bring in new individuals as certain aspects of the park has been developed. This group has been responsible for the development of the park master plan, standards, operations planning, design and marketing. The following is a list of all members who have participated in the Inter-agency planning team for Holly Oaks ORV park (alphabetical order).

D.J. Coffey, Park Supervisor, Holly Oaks ORV Park (and Groveland, Highland and Rose Oaks County Parks)
Jim Dunleavy, Chief – North District Park Operations, Oakland County Parks and Recreation
Jason Fleming, Chief Parks and Recreation Division, Resource Protection and Promotion, MDNR
Donna Folland, Senior Planner, Oakland County Parks and Recreation
Jessica Holley, Statewide Motorized Trails Program Analyst, MDNR
Jon Noyes, Principal Planner, Oakland County Parks and Recreation
Melissa Prowse, Supervisor – Planning, Oakland County Parks and Recreation
Shawn Speaker, Park Supervisor, Holly State Recreation Area, MDNR

## Stakeholder Advisory Team

A user-based advisory group was formed in 2018 to begin soliciting feedback on park design and operations. Since announcing the future development of the park OCPR and DNR have been the recipients of hundreds of hours of volunteer time to provide input into the development of Holly Oaks ORV Park. This group of dedicated ORV enthusiasts have provided a wealth of information that has been critical to the planning process for the park. The group has met regularly with OCPR and DNR planning and operations staff, as well as provided on-site input and volunteer time to prepare the site for special events (2019) and the eventual opening of the park in 2020.

While people have come and gone from this group, the following is a list of key volunteers on the advisory group:

Brian Aherne
Aaron Baumbauch
Russ Clifton
Bob DePalma
Alex Determan
Kourtney Determan
Chad Gilbert
Paul Hittie
John Jacobs
Mo Jilani
Basil Khaja
Jim Kitson
Kevin Mason
Jacob Meganck
Jon Moore
Hal Neighbors
Dana Waxler
Tom Zielinski
Matt Zurbrick

## Project prioritization

Project prioritization in the first year of the park is and will be based on safety and efficiency. In the first years of the park, the limited development funding available will be prioritized for parking, circulation, fencing and signage. Additional projects such as feature development may come to fruition through sponsorship and donations to the park. Over time, the park is anticipated to be revenue positive, and any revenue over expense will be invested back into the park (per the Operating Agreement) which will allow for additional improvements to be made.

## Create a diverse off-road experience and a gateway to ORV recreation

Providing diverse experiences for a variety of vehicle types, as well as offering introductory experiences and opportunities to advance as skills increase, will help us build a robust user base.

### Minimum accessibility standards

Access to the ORV park will meet or exceed minimum accessibility standards as documented in the *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design* (DOJ 2010). If needed, an ADA Transition Plan will be developed for Mt. Holly facilities that will be utilized by park patrons. Evaluation of Mt. Holly facilities is in process.

### Service Portfolio – Staffed Park Use

The Service Portfolio is an inventory of our recreational services with market and cost recovery analyses. The overarching goal is a clear understanding of the services we provide, who benefits from these services, and a determination of the appropriate level of cost recovery. ORV park services are determined to be in the Service Portfolio Tier 2, providing a considerable community benefit and with a cost recovery target of 75%. The service category is Staffed Park Use. It should be noted that the long-term budgetary goals for Holly Oaks is to exceed the 75% target, as revenues are expected to provide funding for future improvements. (OCPR, 2/1/2018, pp. 5.9-10)

### Management of special events

Due to limited staff resources, special events will be managed through a third-party entity via contract with OCPR. The goal of the contract will be to host special events at the site and provide revenue to the park while inviting in people who otherwise may not visit the park. This will help engage new park users and increase overall participation. It will also help bring state and national recognition to Holly Oaks ORV Park. Special events will be limited to 12/year, and no more than one per month and will be locked in at least 12 months in advance so they can be well-advertised and noted on the park calendar.

### Management of corporate and special use

Management of corporate and special use will follow OCPR's standard process for this type of use on OCPR property. A Facility Use Agreement and standard (TBD) rates will be utilized for corporate use of the site and will be managed (in year one at a minimum) by OCPR's Planning & Resource Development unit in conjunction with park operations staff.

### Role of volunteers

Volunteers have played and will continue to play an important role at Holly Oaks ORV Park. Volunteer position descriptions are under development.

## Descriptions and Specifications

### Off-Road Vehicle Types

The park is designed to accommodate use by drivers and the following vehicle types:

*SUVs*

SUVs are characterized by a width of 60" or more. Many of these vehicles are licensed as on-road vehicles by the Secretary of State and off-road use is often secondary to transportation or work uses. May include full-size 4-wheel drive vehicles, sport utility vehicles, as well as specialty vehicles such as dune buggies.

*UTVs*
UTVs are 50" or wider (typically 54 to 65 inches) and accommodate an operator and one or more passengers. The driver and one passenger can site side-by-side in the vehicle. UTVs are not designed for use on paved surfaces. May include utility terrain vehicles, utility uehicles, and side-by-sides.

*ATVs*
ATVs are four wheeled vehicles with a tread width of 48" or less. An ATV is designed for one operator and is straddled. They have low-pressure, knobby tires designed for riding on unpaved surfaces. May include all-terrain vehicles, quads, and 4-wheelers

*Motorcycles*
Motorcycles may be designed specifically for off-road sports or designed for dual purpose use both on and off road. Motorcycles that can be used on roads are termed "street-legal."

# Recreation Trends

## Statewide Trends in ORV License and Trail Permit Sales

Data requested from DNR 10/1/2019.

## ORV Licenses in Oakland County

According to the 2010 study by Michigan State University, Oakland County residents purchased 6.4% of the ORV licenses sold in Michigan in 2007-08, which is the highest county percentage of licenses sold in Michigan. This can be calculated to **11,626 ORV licenses sold to Oakland County residents** – out of the 181,659 ORV licenses sold in Michigan during that period (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010).

## Statewide Trends in Annual ORV Riding Days

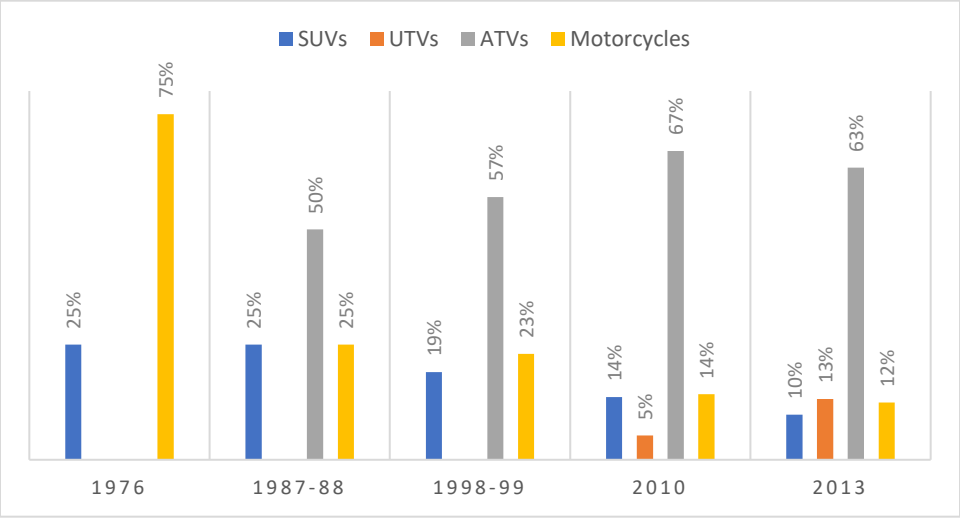
An ORV user riding day is defined as the use of one ORV for any portion of one day. According to the 2010 *Michigan Licensed ORV Use and Users* report, there was a 46% increase in ORV licenses and a 38% increase in the annual number of ORV riding days on public lands since a comparable 12-month period in 1998-99. The addition of new classes of ORVs such as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), which began to appear in the late 1970s, and even more

recently, the increased use of utility vehicles (UTVs), has significantly changed the landscape of ORV use in Michigan (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010).

### Statewide Market Share by Vehicle Type

ATVs account for almost two-thirds of all licensed ORVs in Michigan. UTVs are becoming more common and have the advantage of behaving in many ways like a "workhorse" ATV with the capability to have multiple people aboard. To accomplish this range of functions and capability for transporting multiple riders, the width of a UTV is 54-58". It's important to note, this does not fit the dimensions of most of the designated trail system currently in place (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010).

*Figure G: Relative Market Shares of ORVs*[4]




## Regional Recreation Inventory

Silver Lake State Park is almost 3,000 acres along the Lake Michigan shoreline. This area includes both sand dunes and acres of mature forest. One of the park's biggest draws is the 450-acre off-road vehicle area.

ORV Use on State Forest Roads: Lower Peninsula and Upper Peninsula state forest roads are open (unless posted closed) to riders. Thousands of miles of state forest roads have recently opened to ORV use. Of the total 7,552 miles of state forest roads in the Northern Lower Peninsula, 6,308 miles will be open to ORV use. An ORV license is required.

Bull Gap ORV Hill Climb and Trailhead: Bull Gap Hill Climb is the only designated motorized area on the Huron-Manistee National Forests open to cross-country travel. The sand hill is 0.2 mile and at a 35 - 40% grade. Bull Gap is open to all vehicles with a valid DNR ORV trail sticker. If you chose to use hill climb in a vehicle 50" wide or less, you are required to use the 50" return trail to return to the bottom of the hill. Users in motor vehicles greater than 50" are required to use the full-size motorized vehicle return route.

Genesee County Parks and Recreation: The Mounds is open 365 days a year; however, from March 15 through May 15, all trail areas of the Mounds are closed except for the 8-acre scramble area which is located to the North

[4] Data source for 1976, 2087-88, 1998-99, and 2010: (Nelson, Stynes, Wu, McCarty, & Hughes, 2010)
Data source for 2013: (McCole, 2014)

West of the ticket booth. Trucks are not permitted. ATVs, UTVs and dirt bikes are allowed. The Mounds' Rock Crawl area offers a variety of challenging obstacles suited to all vehicles from stock to heavily modified.

St. Helen Motorsport Area offers over 50 miles of designated motorized trails that form long loops. The terrain is mostly flat and sandy but there is a small scramble area with moderate hill climbs. The trail system also has direct access to a gas station and a campground with modern amenities. Trails are open year-round and during winter months snowmobiles are permitted.

ORV-friendly state parks and campgrounds allow ORV operation to and from designated facilities:

State Forest Campgrounds:

- Ambrose Lake State Forest Campground (Ogemaw County)
- Black Lake State Forest Campground (Cheboygan County)
- Carrieville State Forest Campground (Lake County)
- Holland Lake State Forest Campground (Luce County)
- Jackson Lake State Forest Campground (Montmorency County)
- Long Lake (Wexford) State Forest Campground (Wexford County)
- Muskrat Lake State Forest Campground (Oscoda County)
- Pickerel Lake (Kalkaska) State Forest Campground (Kalkaska County)
- Weber Lake State Forest Campground (Cheboygan County)

State Parks:

- Baraga State Park (Baraga County)
- Bewabic State Park (Iron County)
- Clear Lake State Park (Montmorency County)
- Muskallonge Lake State Park (Luce County)
- Twin Lakes State Park (Houghton County)

There are 22 private ORV facilities in Michigan; 17 of these cater specifically to motorcycles and ATVs (Data from RiderPlanet (riderplanet-usa.com).

- Baja Acres
- Battle Creek Motorcycle Club
- Big Air Motocross
- Bulldog Motorcycle Club
- Bundy Hill
- Cadillac Motorcycle Club
- Dan Raymond Park
- Dutch Sport Park
- Grattan Raceway Park MX
- Log Road Motocross
- Martin MX Park
- Michigan Mafia MXC
- Morelands MX Park
- Ogemaw Sport and Trail Center
- Red Bud Motocross Park
- Rocks and Valleys
- Sandbox MX
- Tahquamenon Motorcycle Club
- Turtle Ridge ORV Park
- Twisted MX
- Twisted Trails
- Valley Raceway Motocross

## Oakland County Parks and Recreation Inventory

Holly Oaks ORV Park will be the first off-road vehicle within the OCPR system.

# Public Engagement – see Appendix A and J

The public and stakeholders have been engaged throughout the process of planning and developing Holly Oaks ORV Park. Please see Appendix A for details on the sources of public engagement, to view data charts and tables, and to read full text of public comments.

## Public Comment on the Holly Oaks ORV Park Plan and Standards Manual

The feedback received from the public comment for the Holly Oaks ORV Park Plan and Standards Manual is incredibly important to the development and finalization of the plan. OCPR and MDNR were grateful to receive 424 responses to the survey, indicating a strong interest in Holly Oaks ORV Park and providing excellent feedback on the park development and operations. The survey was open from November 7 through December 9, 2019. The average age of survey respondents was 44, and the range was 18-77 years of age. The state and county where respondents live was identified using the zip codes, with 423 valid zip codes provided. Most respondents were from Michigan (97%), with nearly half from Oakland County (47%). Half of the respondents indicated they used a Full-Size Vehicle and/or an Off-Road Motorcycle/Dirt Bike.

Respondents were asked about the types of features they'd most like to see at Holly Oaks ORV Park. They could make multiple selections and the 3 highest ranking types of features were: hill climb area, uni-directional trails, and sand area. All three of these features are being planned for the park. Respondents were also asked what they thought would make Holly Oaks ORV Park a desired destination for ORV riding. Nearly half of respondents indicated location was important, indicating the significant benefit of being located in metropolitan Detroit; one quarter discussed the variety of ORV experiences; 11% each discussed amenities and safety issues.

The proposed park entry fees in the DRAFT Holly Oaks ORV Park Plan & Standards Manual were $20/day for full-size and side-by-side vehicles, and $15/day for ATVs and motorcycles. ORV Permit and Trail stickers from the Michigan DNR will also be required for park use. Respondents were asked to comment on the proposed daily vehicle fees. Nearly half of respondents indicated they thought the fees were fair; one quarter discussed the need for an annual or other type of bulk pass. Twenty-two (22%) percent said they thought the fees were too high and some (8%) felt they should be able to ride without a fee in addition to the ORV permits. Several respondents indicated they thought that all vehicles should pay the same fee. OCPR and MDNR will be using this feedback to set the final fees for the park in the coming months. A season pass will likely not be offered in the first year (2020) but is being planned for 2021.

Comments on the ORV Park Plan document were provided by 16% of the total respondents (67 out of 424). Of those comments, 31% had a positive comment; 21% had a negative comment; 19% discussed management issues; and 10% discussed fees.

Forty-four percent (44%) of total respondents provided additional comments (182 out of 424). General positive comments were provided by 41% - mostly indicating they appreciated the effort and were looking forward to the park opening. Others discussed the types of experiences they were looking for (14%), the location of the park (12%), and the importance of separating types of ORV use (10%).

# Planning Standards

## Select ORV elements to suit existing topography

Matching the design and use of recreational features to the existing topography will maximize the recreation and aesthetic value of existing slopes in former sand and gravel mines. The use of the topography will be limited by the ability of those features to sustain safe public access.

### Select directional travel based on safety

Unidirectional travel tends to increase speeds and is limited to controlled areas such as tracks and direct hill climbs that are designed for higher speeds; or where there are limitations such as blind spots or very narrow areas. Most technical elements and general ORV trails are bi-directional, with a focus on slow speeds and driving skills.

### Provide informational signage

Rules and regulations should be prominently displayed. High visibility signage should be placed throughout the course and in advance of any trail ascents and must include symbolic description of speed of approach, steepness of slope, degree of difficulty, and direction of travel.

### Manage site resources using best practices

- Slope Stability: Unrestricted use of slopes for hill climbs will rapidly degrade the erodible soils and promote high speeds. Creating varied trail route options to slow speeds and prohibiting fall line access through the use of vegetation, fencing, obstacles, and armoring of slopes will enhance the sustainability of existing slopes. Prohibit vehicle access to extreme slopes – signage, vehicle barriers and vegetation should be used to deter ORV and pedestrian access at both the top and bottom of the slope.
- Site Drainage: Control of site drainage will help to sustain topographical features and protect water quality. Water should be directed away from the steepest slopes.
- Water Bodies: Permanent bodies of water can create obstacles and challenge elements for ORV vehicles, serve as retention areas for site drainage, and enhance the overall appearance and enjoyment of the site. Deeper bodies of water should be signed accordingly.
- Vegetation: Maintain existing vegetation and establish native vegetation:
- Environmental Stewardship: Reference state environmental action plan, how the state handles spills, etc., and MTESP certification for Groveland Oaks
- Minimize trail crossings: Trail crossings should be minimized unless completely necessary. Existing trail crossings should have a plan for long-term use, including but not limited to the use of box culverts to create a bridge/overpass for trail crossings. In the short term all trail crossings should be adequately signed to alert trail users.

### Evaluate outcomes on a regular basis and be prepared to adjust

Preliminary design concepts are a framework that will be adjusted on an ongoing basis. Adjustments will be based on input for park users and non-users, success of marketing efforts to draw new and repeat visitors, constant change to the landscape from use and weather, and state/national recreational trends.

### Vehicle-Free Areas

Certain areas of the park will need to be kept vehicle free. Slopes between 125 and 150% that are too steep for safe or sustainable ORV use can serve as scenic outlooks that enhance the ORV experience. Other areas that need to be free of ORVs are environmentally sensitive areas (if any), areas close to residential development, or places designated for spectators. Constructed barriers may be in the form of fences or posts; or use natural materials that maintain aesthetics, such as logs, dense vegetation and large boulders.

## Design Guidelines – see Appendix B

Design guidelines are outlined in the Concept Design (Appendix B). Overall theming of the park is being developed to ensure that structures, signage, features, barriers, etc. have a common look and feel, providing cohesion to the overall park design.

# Operation Standards

## Season, Days and Hours of Operation

Establish annual schedule that maximizes availability of the park during daylight hours balanced with effective management of staff resources. We understand that, as the park begins operation, adjustments based on experience can be expected. Track attendance numbers daily (or hourly if appropriate) to support continued planning of open season and times. Document unmet demand during days and times when the park is not open to the public. Provide enough time for the park to be closed for maintenance of the park and its features.

For more details, see the following practices:

- ORV Park Schedule

## Special Events

Due to limited staff resources, special events will be managed through a third-party entity via contact with OCPR. The goal of the contract will be to host special events at the site and provide revenue to the park while inviting in people who otherwise may not visit the park. This will help engage new park users and increase overall participation. It will also help bring state and national recognition to Holly Oaks ORV Park. Special events will be limited each year, with 2 in 2020, and up to 4 each year in 2021 and 2022. There will be no more than one special event per month and events will be locked in at least 9 months in advance so they can be well-advertised and noted on the park calendar.

The level of public access to special events will vary with the individual event. As special events are scheduled, staff will contact key stakeholders and neighbors to ensure they are aware of the annual schedule of events.

## Private Rentals

Standard and practice is under development for private rentals.

Establish scheduled days for private rentals and manage with a Facility Use Agreement. Rentals may include exclusive use by clubs, corporations or other entities (not individuals). During the peak season, one day a week, Tuesdays, will be set aside for exclusive-use private rentals. During Flat fee will be charged for exclusive use rental on Tuesdays when the entire park is rented for the whole day. Fee by the hour will be charged on non-peak days (Monday – Thursday) that is not exclusive use and does not close the entire park. Fee scheduled to be determined. Notification of the public will not be required, because the park is closed on Tuesdays and rentals on other days do not close the park to the public.

## Daily Operation

Establish routine to prepare park for opening and provide enough time prior to opening for set up, ensuring that staff, materials and equipment are in place and ready for the day's operation. Welcome all visitors to the park. Provide clear information to about park entrances, vehicle entry fees, vehicle requirements, ORV license requirements and park rules. Manage parking. Provide clear information to visitors about park closing time and process. Structure park closing to ensure a safe and orderly exit of all visitors and their vehicles from the park. Establish routine to secure park after visitors have exited and to prepare for the next day of operation. Daily operation will be different in the winter season when Mt. Holly is open.

For more details, see the following practices:

- ORV Park Summer Operation
- ORV Park Winter Operation

### Evening Events

While not planned for year one, staff may consider in future years holding evening events in the dark. For example, a monthly "Friday Night Lights" event would give park users the unique opportunity to experience the park after-dark.

### Rules

Provide clearly stated rules that are approved by the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Parks and Recreation Division (PRD). Provide a shortened version of the rules for posting in various locations, making the full rules available on request or downloadable. As much as possible, language of the full rules should follow that of DNR-established rules to enable enforcement by both Oakland County Sheriff's Deputies and DNR Conservation Officers. Finalized rules are not included in the Holly Oaks Park Plan and Standards Manual at the time of approval but will be developed and approved by both OCPRC and the DNR and added as an appendix to the approved plan.

### Emergency Action Plan

Standard and practice under development.

### Fees and Ticket Sales

Fees at Holly Oaks ORV Park will be per vehicle and will include both a daily and seasonal pass rate. Daily rate for vehicle entry is still being evaluated at the time of park plan approval. The daily rate will be approved by both OCPRC and the DNR.

A season pass is being considered beginning in 2021 and would likely be approximately $200/year. Rates will be subject to review and change annually.

Fee collection will be done using OCPR's RecTrac point-of-sale system. Since Holly Oaks is a partnership with the DNR, there will not be an Oakland County resident discount at the park.

Park patrons will be allowed to leave the park and come back on the same day. An identifying tag/sticker/band of some sort will be affixed to the vehicle, identifying that they are paid for the day.

### Volunteer Friends Group

Standard and practice is under development for proposed ORV Park Volunteer Friends Group.

## Maintenance Standards – see Appendix B

Maintenance guidelines are outlined in the Concept Design (Appendix B).

# Operation Practices

## ORV Park Schedule

**STANDARDS:**

Season, Days and Hours of Operation – Establish annual schedule that maximizes availability of the park during daylight hours balanced with effective management of staff resources. We understand that, as the park begins operation, adjustments based on experience can be expected. Track attendance numbers daily (or hourly if appropriate) to support continued planning of open season and times. Document unmet demand during days and times when the park is not open to the public. Provide enough time for the park to be closed for maintenance of the park and its features.

Special Events – Schedule regular days and times when special events can be hosted by other entities (no more than one event weekend per month). Schedule events to not conflict with scheduled park operation and make sure event days are posted in advance to avoid the public being turned away on event days. Level of public access to special events will vary with the individual event.

Private Rentals – Establish scheduled days for private rentals and manage with a Facility Use Agreement. Rentals may include exclusive use by clubs, corporations or other entities.

| | **Peak Season** | **Shoulder Season** | **Winter Season** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dates** | Memorial Day to Labor Day | April and May to Memorial Day<br>September after Labor Day and October | November through March |
| **Days of Week** | Open to public 6 days a week<br>Closed Tuesdays | Open to public 4 days a week<br>Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays | Open to public Saturday and Sunday only<br>Closed Monday through Friday |
| **Special Events** | Limit to 12 weekends per year; dates to be locked in a year in advance | | |
| **Private Rentals** | Tuesdays | Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays | Monday - Friday |
| **Holiday Openings** | ▪ Open Memorial Day<br>▪ Open July 4<br>▪ Labor Day | ▪ Open Martin Luther King Day | Thanksgiving<br>▪ Closed Thanksgiving Day<br>▪ Open Wednesday before<br>▪ Open Friday after<br>Christmas<br>▪ Closed Christmas Day<br>▪ Additional open days TBD |
| **Maintenance Hours** | ▪ Grading 7 am – 12 pm<br>▪ Water cannon 12 – 6 pm<br>▪ Clean up 8 – 9 pm | ▪ Grading 7 am – 12 pm<br>▪ Water cannon 12 – 6 pm<br>▪ Clean up 8 – 9 pm | ▪ Grading 7 am – 12 pm<br>▪ Clean up 5 – 6 pm |
| **Open Hours** | 10 am – 8 pm | April, May and September: 10 am – 8 pm<br>October: 10 am – 7 pm | 10 am – 5 pm |

## ORV Park Summer Operation

| | |
|---|---|
| **STANDARD:** Establish routine to prepare park for opening and provide enough time prior to opening for set up, ensuring that staff, materials and equipment are in place and ready for the day's operation. Welcome all visitors to the park. Provide clear information to about park entrances, vehicle entry fees, vehicle requirements, ORV license requirements and park rules. Manage parking. Provide clear information to visitors about park closing time and process. Structure park closing to ensure a safe and orderly exit of all visitors and their vehicles from the park. Establish routine to secure park after visitors have exited and to prepare for the next day of operation. Daily operation will be different in the winter season when Mt. Holly is open and the parking lot unavailable. | |
| **Entry** | All vehicles (street legal ORVs, vehicles with trailered ORVs, other visitor vehicles) enter through the main Mt. Holly entrance on Dixie Highway |
| **Parking** | Patrons park vehicles without unloading hauled/trailered vehicles |
| **Check-in** | Visitors (drivers, riders) enter the Mt. Holly building to do following:<br>▪ Purchase vehicle entrance ticket or show prepaid ticket<br>▪ Confirm they have ORV license and ORV trail license or purchase<br>▪ Confirm they have a warning flag per rules or purchase<br>▪ Confirm other items per rules (spark arrestor, etc.) Specifics to be determined.<br>▪ Exit building and return to vehicle |
| **Unloading vehicles** | Unload most trailered ORVs; exception is vehicles with concern about noise levels that will disturb neighbors, not actual noise violations. Generally, motorcycles will remain trailered to be unloaded at Dixie Ledge parking area. |
| **Access drive entry** | ORVs and trailered motorcycles will be directed to the access drive by signage and/or guided by volunteers (like a starter at a golf course). |
| **Access drive exit and contact station** | Vehicles will take access drive into the Dixie Ledge parking area. They will either park or travel to the south end of the parking area where they can access the park. A contact station will be at this location year-round. Note that contact station will be portable building on skids. Contact station will check to confirm payment/access. Contact station personnel will monitor for non-compliant vehicles and not allow their entry into park. |
| **Monitoring park during operation** | Staff will remain observant for non-compliant vehicles and unsafe behavior and call 911 for assistance as needed. Oakland County Sheriff's deputies will be on-site during weekend hours of operation and will make routine patrols through the park 1-2 times per day on weekdays – potentially more frequently on peak days, especially during the first year of park operation. |
| **Alcohol and glass bottles** | Alcohol is not allowed. We will not routinely check coolers but reserve the right to check coolers. If alcohol is found, patrons will be asked to leave the park. |
| **Park closing and exit** | Drivers will exit via the access drive to Mt. Holly parking lot and out the main exit onto Dixie Highway. On pre-planned days or peak days per park supervisor's instructions, direct drivers who do not have rigs in the Mt. Holly parking lot to exit via Shields Road to Dixie Highway to alleviate congestion at the Mt. Holly entrance/exit. OCPR will have vehicles (donated) with lights to round up park users and guide them to the exits as needed. |

## ORV Park Winter Operation

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|---|---|
| **STANDARD:** Establish routine to prepare park for opening and provide enough time prior to opening for set up, ensuring that staff, materials and equipment are in place and ready for the day's operation. Welcome all visitors to the park. Provide clear information to about park entrances, vehicle entry fees, vehicle requirements, ORV license requirements and park rules. Manage parking. Provide clear information to visitors about park closing time and process. Structure park closing to ensure a safe and orderly exit of all visitors and their vehicles from the park. Establish routine to secure park after visitors have exited and to prepare for the next day of operation. Daily operation will be different in the winter season when Mt. Holly is open and the parking lot unavailable. | |
| **Entry** | |
| **Check-in** | Visitors (drivers, riders) do following at the contact station:<br>▪ Purchase vehicle entrance ticket or show prepaid ticket<br>▪ Confirm they have ORV license and ORV trail license or purchase<br>▪ Confirm they have a warning flag per rules or purchase<br>▪ Confirm other items per rules (spark arrestor, etc.) Specifics to be determined. |
| **Parking** | Vehicles will park in the Dixie Ledge parking lot. |
| **Unloading vehicles** | Unload trailered ORVs |
| **Monitoring park during operation** | Staff will remain observant for non-compliant vehicles and unsafe behavior and call 911 for assistance as needed. Oakland County Sheriff's deputies will make routine patrols through the park 1-2 times per day and potentially more depending on the number of park patrons utilizing the park during the non-peak seasons. |
| **Alcohol and glass bottles** | Alcohol is not allowed. We will not routinely check coolers but reserve the right to check coolers. If alcohol is found, we will ask them to leave the park. |
| **Park closing and exit** | Vehicles will exit the same way they entered, through the Shield's Road entrance off the Dixie Ledge parking area. OCPR will have vehicles (donated) with lights to round up park users and guide them to the exits as needed. |

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