

Community Connection

Spring 2012

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION NEWS

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Adds County Market to its Operations

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission will assume management and operation of the Oakland County Market June 2. With more than 300,000 visitors annually, the venue is a mainstay for providing grower-direct fresh produce and flowers to county residents and visitors since 1953.

"The market aligns with all aspects of the parks system's mission by encouraging healthy lifestyles, supporting economic prosperity and promoting the protection of natural resources, while at the same time providing high quality recreational experiences," Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil said.

"Future on-site services may include parks permits and gift card sales and educational activities," Stencil said. "Volunteers will be able to get involved as parking attendants, porters and more."

The 14-acre market includes indoor and outdoor vendor stalls, parking for 268 vehicles, an orchard and adjacent woodlot.

Hours of Operation	Farmers Market	6:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
	May through Dec. Year-round	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday Saturday
	Flea Market	9 a.m.–4 p.m.
	Year-round	Sunday

The Oakland County Market is located at 2350 Pontiac Lake Road. This addition to Waterford Oaks County Park will complement the parks system's greenhouse at 1580 Scott Lake Road that offers indoor and outdoor garden plots, education clinics and plant production.



Daniel J. Stencil,
Executive Officer

Independence Oaks-North Catch-and-Release Fishing

On April 1, Upper Bushman Lake at Independence Oaks-North in Clarkston became the only public access lake in Southeast Michigan with a Catch-and-Release-Only Special Designation. It is one of only seven catch-and-release-for-all-fish-species lakes in Michigan. This variance from the standard state fishing regulations was authorized by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

"The catch-and-release designation prevents the lake from becoming over-harvested and allows it to perform at its biological potential, producing and supporting a high quality fishery," Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. "This results in high catch rates and above-average sized fish including largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, bluegill and northern pike among many other fish species."

The adoption of this designation is important to the parks system's Strategic Master Planning Initiatives, Core Program Initiatives and Natural Resources Management Philosophy.

Hooked on Fishing, a free, youth-based catch-and-release fishing event on Upper Bushman Lake, is scheduled **June 9 from 1:30–4:30 p.m.** The program is part of the MDNR's annual Free Fishing Weekend and Clinton River Watershed Council's River Day 2012. Participants will learn about catch-and-release fishing techniques and join in fish-related children's crafts and activities. Poles and bait will be provided or participants may bring their own.



Pre-register by June 2 at 248.863.7020 or wascherc@oakgov.com. No fishing license is required June 9 and state regulations apply.

For additional information regarding catch-and-release fishing at Independence Oaks-North, visit DestinationOakland.com.

County Executive, Parks Earn Top State Honors

The Michigan Recreation and Park Association recently awarded several honors: Oakland County Executive **L. Brooks Patterson** was named as **Outstanding Elected Public Official. The Design Award** was presented for the universally-accessible Paradise Peninsula Playscape at Waterford Oaks County Park. Additionally, volunteer Regina Ellis, of Shelby Township, and the Independence Oaks Nordic Ski Patrol won **Community Service Awards**.

L. Brooks Patterson has been a champion of parks and recreation for more than 15 years. His firm belief that a high quality of life attracts visitors and businesses to Oakland County has led to the establishment of annual collaborative county-wide events including Arts, Beats & Eats, Fire & Ice Fest, the Brooksie Way Half Marathon and Count Your Steps, a fitness program for elementary school students.

Paradise Peninsula Playscape was designed to address issues of accessibility and promote inclusive play in an environment designed to simulate Michigan's rock, water and fossil features.

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2010, **Regina Ellis** volunteers at Addison Oaks County Park. She said working with children helped her find a different direction in her life. Ellis assists with hayrides, movie nights and dunk tanks. On Saturday nights, Ellis photographs campers as they enjoy campground hayrides, then the next day campers craft keepsake frames to hold their photos.



The **Independence Oaks Nordic Ski Patrol** includes four certified Nordic Ski Patrollers: Dave Boboltz of Waterford; Kathleen Dougherty of Waterford; Jim Meloche of Clarkston; and Jon O'Dell of Burton. They and 16 volunteer associates monitor 10 miles of cross-country ski trails at the park.

Where There's Smoke, There's...

In 2012, **prescribed burns** took place at 10 parks on a total of 359.5 acres of park land to restore natural areas and improve habitat quality within the parks. The timing of burns is carefully planned to minimize risk to park wildlife. Historically, regular burn intervals played an integral role in maintaining the ecological integrity of Michigan's natural communities.

Today, prescribed burns or fires are used as a land management tool to reduce the risk of uncontrolled wildfire, mobilize soil nutrients, improve habitat quality, and increase biodiversity.

Prescribed burns are safe, done by contract and with the cooperation and approval of the local fire department. The burns are weather dependent and occur between early March and mid-April, generally between the hours of noon and 7 p.m.

Contact Natural Resources Planner Brittany Bird with any questions: birdb@oakgov.com.

Give the Gift of Recreation

Rechargeable gift cards, ideal for Mother's Day and Father's Day presents, can be purchased online or at Oakland County Parks and Recreation facilities.

A minimum of \$10 is required on each gift card purchased. Cards expire five years from the last date of use. Cards can be reloaded at any time to extend the expiration date; they are not valid for food and beverages.

For purchase location information, contact 1.888.OCPARKS or visit DestinationOakland.com.

Annual Permit = Perks at Parks

A valid Oakland County Parks and Recreation daily or annual vehicle permit is required for entry at eight parks. As a bonus, annual permits also enable free entry for **July 4th Fireworks** and free parking on **Oakland County Parks and Recreation Day** at the annual Oakland County Fair. Annual permits may be purchased online at DestinationOakland.com or in person at many locations throughout Oakland County.



Parks adds New Food Service Vendor

Visitors to five of the 13 Oakland County Parks and Recreation facilities will now have a variety of food and beverage choices.

The parks system has awarded a five-year contract to Kosch Hospitality, a catering and food service contracting company headquartered in Rochester.

Kosch Hospitality will service the campgrounds at **Addison Oaks** and **Groveland Oaks** county parks, **Red Oaks** and **Waterford Oaks** waterparks and **Springfield Oaks Golf Course**.

In business since 1981, Kosch Hospitality plans to introduce many new health-focused menu offerings and strive to purchase as many locally produced products as possible.

"Our number one goal is customer service and that's a vision and commitment we share with the staff of Oakland County Parks and Recreation," Kosch CEO Gordie Kosch said. "We also want to support local farmers and manufacturers of Michigan-made products. Guests can look for these changes and updates to the concessions and food service facilities at our five new locations."

Wint Nature Center

The Wint Nature Center is now **open for walk-in visitation** Friday–Sunday, 1–5 p.m. **Registered groups and appointments** can be made Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Nature education is an important and valued service at Oakland County Parks and Recreation, which continually evaluates ways to efficiently broaden the reach of facilities, programs, services and operations at its 13 parks.

Oakland County Parks and Recreation is exploring potential partnerships with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Huron-Clinton Metroparks as well as possibilities to increase outreach education, share resources and expertise and continue to provide quality nature programming in a new, still-evolving format.

Questions can be directed to Executive Officer Dan Stencil at 248.858.0906.



Waterford Oaks Master Plan

The **Master Plan Draft** for **Waterford Oaks County Park** is now online at DestinationOakland.com. Within a 10-year timeframe, the master plan identifies 12 facilities within Waterford Oaks and develops a vision for the future of each. Under consideration are a new dog park, added waterpark features, expanded trail loops, improved picnic and gathering areas and a centralized parking lot. The vision builds on the park's character to develop a four-season destination.

Waterford Oaks County Park encompasses 185 acres including 4.5 miles of trails, a waterpark, Bicycle Motocross track, Paradise Peninsula Playscape, sand volleyball, platform tennis, activity center, banquet facility, sledding hill, picnic shelters, a greenhouse and the Oakland County Market.

The online preview provides an opportunity for Oakland County residents to review and provide feedback on park plans to enhance recreational experiences. Comments can be directed to Donna Folland, follandd@oakgov.com.

Catalpa Oaks Groundbreaking and Annual Marshmallow Drop

Oakland County Parks and Recreation mascot, "Oakie the Squirrel," with the help of several parks commissioners, broke ground at **Catalpa Oaks County Park** in Southfield on April 6. Pictured left to right are: Commission Secretary J. David VanderVeen, Commissioner Gary McGillivray, Chairman Gerald A. Fisher, Oakie the Oakland County Parks Mascot, Commissioner John Scott, Executive Officer Dan Stencil, Commissioner David Baumhart and Vice Chairman John P. McCulloch.

Construction has begun on several new additions to the park, including two



playgrounds, a concession/restroom facility, a picnic shelter and new parking lot. The expected substantial completion date is September 2012.

A record 7,000 residents attended the park's annual Marshmallow Drop immediately following the groundbreaking. Children 12 and under, divided into three age groups, delighted as a helicopter flew overhead and clouds of marshmallows poured onto the field below.

Children turned in one marshmallow for one goodie bag containing treats and a free waterpark admission pass.

Catalpa Oaks is located at 27725 Greenfield Road in Southfield. The park currently features 24 acres of open space, six soccer fields, a baseball diamond and softball field.



In Memory Of Ralph Richard

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation community is saddened to announce the passing of former Parks and Recreation Executive Officer **Ralph Richard**, a great leader, professional and friend. Richard lost his battle with pancreatic cancer on March 16 at the age of 69.

Richard was active in the Michigan Recreation and Park Association and was inducted into the MRPA Hall of Fame in 2011. He also served as president of the National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) in 1998, and was honored with a NACPRO Lifetime Award in 2006. Richard retired in 2006 after 42 years in the parks and recreation industry. Oakland County Parks and Recreation accomplished much under Richard's 22-year leadership.

"Ralph Richard was a true leader and advocate of public recreation in Michigan. He worked well with others to determine positive outcomes that would benefit the residents of Southeast Michigan," Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. "Ralph encouraged staff and always welcomed ideas. He was also very modest about his contributions, emphasizing that the organization's achievements were the results of his staff's combined efforts."

Richard is survived by his wife Diane; son Kyle; daughter Wendy; and grandchildren Austin, Kailey, Paige, and Brandon.

Water Garden, Independence Oaks County Park

