

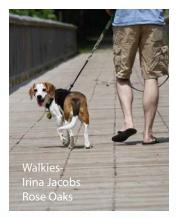




Annual Report
50 Years of Excellence

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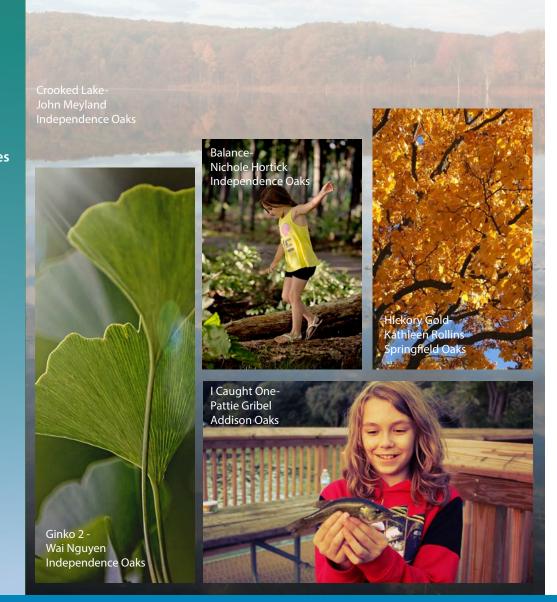
Pics of the Parks finalist

Detroit Radio Personality Spike, of Channel 95.5's Mojo in the Morning Show, chose "Taking in the Sights" by Martha Myers of Oxford as Best of Show in the 2016 Pics of the Parks Photo Contest, featured on the front cover.

"I love how the image conveys a family enjoying Oakland County Parks together - I look to photographs to tap an emotion and in this case, it's pure joy! Even as the (assumed) father & son are walking away, it's clear they are on a journey to enjoy nature and capture it with their camera. And the photographer used the walkway trail to lead the viewer's eyes right into the picture... and into the park with the father & son," Spike said of the cover photo.

Spike is an avid photographer. His work can be viewed at BuzzClickPhotography.com





The State Of Oakland County Parks And Recreation 2016

Reports from most users of Oakland County parks are very positive! They indicate that the parks are excellent resources for residents in the northern and southern portions of the County; parks staff members are helpful; and that facilities and programs provide positive experiences for individuals, families, and businesses.

These high marks flow from significant efforts over the past 50 years by the Parks and Recreation Commission and members of the parks staff – efforts made possible by the support of Oakland County voters who have consistently approved the park millage. There is much to be proud of!

Of course such news must nearly always be accompanied by a footnote. In the case of our glowing parks report, the footnote is that our funding millage is tied (appropriately) to the valuation of private property in the County as determined for property taxation purposes. After the property value downturn of 2008, the amount of money generated by our millage dropped precipitously.

The good news is that actual property valuation in the County has recovered for the most part. But the unfortunate news is that the Headlee Amendment of the Michigan Constitution will prevent our level of funding from fully recovering for at least five or six years.

Your Parks and Recreation Commission is committed to pressing forward –and thriving – in the face of this financial challenge. We are economizing where possible without compromising the high quality parks and recreation experience our county residents deserve. We are also searching for partnerships, and maintaining an open door to generous philanthropists who recognize the value of exceptional parks and recreation facilities and programs.

We are confident that the County's parks and recreation programs will continue to be excellent resources for all of our residents. We will use immediately-available revenues to maintain the park resources on our books while continuing to plan for the day when sufficient revenues become available to fund new resources.

The Parks Commission remains committed to our mission of providing quality recreation experiences that encourage healthy lifestyles, support economic prosperity, and promote the protection of natural resources.

Thank you.



Gerald A. Fisher-Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commision Chairman



The 2016 Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (left to right) A. David Baumhart III, David W. Potts, Gary R. McGillivray, Vice Chairman J. David VanderVeen, Chairman Gerald A. Fisher, Secretary John A. Scott, Christine Long, Robert E. Kostin, Jim Nash and Ron Fowkes. The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission was established by Public Act 261 of 1965. Founded in 1966, the commission is the policy-making board that oversees the system's 6,700 acres. Commissioners are tasked with allocating resources throughout 13 parks and making decisions about purchasing park land, constructing facilities, preserving maintenance standards and developing innovative programs and services.

Urban Recreation Rural Recreation





Athlete shares Olympic journey

Paralympic medal winner, World record holder and Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame inductee are just a few of Cheryl Angelelli's accomplishments. A tragic swimming pool accident as a teen left her a quadriplegic.

Inspiration–maker is what Angelelli was at Olympic Day, sharing her story and medals with 500 day campers, a tie-in to the Rio 2016 Olympics.

"By sharing my story I hope they left knowing that anything is possible through hard work, commitment and dedication. This applies not only to sports but more importantly to life and the choices you make that will define your path," Angelelli said. "My biggest victory is changing perceptions and attitudes about what people with disabilities can do."

Her current athletic pursuit is wheelchair ballroom dancing. Angelelli and partner Tamerlan Gadirov won first place at the Fred Astaire World Championships.

Inside|Out, sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, celebrates the richness and diversity of the museum's extensive collection.

Culture 'On the Road'

Visitors to the Orion Oaks Dog Park viewed artwork by a child prodigy.

Chevy by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, an English painter, sculptor and engraver (1802-1873) was displayed via the Detroit Institute of Arts Inside|Out Program. High-quality reproductions of masterpieces are hosted by communities as part of the DIA's community engagement efforts.

"Art shared in local communities is crucial to creating artistic awareness and a commitment to embracing creativity and enhancing cultural impacts on children, residents and families," Lisa Sokol, director of community programs for Orion Township, said.

Orion Township featured the seven Inside|Out sites on a tour map for self-exploration, including the dog park, Orion Center, Polly Ann Trail, Camp Agawam, Wildwood, Orion Township Public Library and Friendship Park.

Projects improve access for all

Uneven surfaces and natural topography outdoors aren't always easy for individuals with disabilities to traverse. Oakland County Parks is actively changing that with Americans with Disabilities Act initiatives to make routes to park facilities readily accessible for all.

"We are improving routes to various recreational facilities that were not previously accessible, so all guests, including those with disabilities, can better access lakes, trails and other park facilities," Chief of Facilities, Maintenance and Development, Mike Donnellon said.

Construction of a fishing pier at Groveland Oaks will include an asphalt trail to the pier to improve access to Stewart Lake and recreation like kayaking.

In addition, a three-quarter mile stretch of paved trail at Addison Oaks was upgraded to increase access to the fishing piers, beach and boathouse. The trail was graded to a maximum five-percent slope for ideal wheelchair access.

A five- percent slope was also installed near the Twin Chimneys site at Independence Oaks, home of the annual Wheelchair Daze event. Nearly \$70,000 was invested to improve accessibility in this entire area, including the pavilion, playground, horseshoes pits, boathouse and restrooms.

Many parts of these construction projects are built and installed by Oakland County Parks staff, averaging a 20-25 percent cost savings, Donnellon added.





Family treasure gets new life

For more than a century, the Ellis Barn was a landmark along Dixie Highway in Oakland County. Built in 1884, its Madawaska Twin design featured crown molding, gingerbread details, elegant dormers and two huge gable roofs facing the road.

Through a Michigan Department of Transportation grant, the barn was relocated, board by board, to Springfield Oaks County Park where it now serves a second life as a unique historical venue for everything from exchanging wedding vows to looking for that rare find at the Michigan Antiques Festival.

Each summer nearly 100,000 visitors pass through the barn at the Oakland County Fair, and each fall the barn doors open for live music and line dancing at the annual Ellis Barn Dance, where visitors from all over Metro-Detroit gather for good music, food and drink, and old-fashioned country fun.



Cousins Picnic: A 130-year tradition

The decedents of Cornelius Davis and other founding families of Davisburg have been gathering for a "Cousins Picnic" since 1836. Most of those gatherings, after the 1870s, have taken place at the J.H. Davis House located on the Springfield Oaks Golf Course.

The house has been painstakingly restored and lovingly furnished by members of the Springfield Township Historical Society. The annual Cousins Picnic is not only an important family function, but it is also a reminder of the donation of 169 acres (and the Davis House) to Oakland County by Manly Davis in 1926 for the creation of a county-owned park system – this was the beginning of what would become the Oakland County Parks.

Great Blue Heron

Kevin Kane

Addison Oaks

Water access floats to top

Over the past two years, Oakland County Parks has focused on increasing water and trail access. Recent projects included access routes and parking constructed to Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. The improvements expanded recreation opportunities including kayaking, fishing, boating and hiking.

With funding provided by a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant, a fishing dock and kayak launch were constructed at Addison Oaks. Grants were also used to build a fishing dock at Groveland Oaks and kayak launch at Independence Oaks.



Intern's event Off the Hook

Providing real world experience is key to internships.

As open space in Oakland County

golf and other recreation uses will

become increasingly important.

becomes scarce, the vision of mixing

At Oakland County Parks that translates into planning a signature event as a "grand finale," according to Jim Dunleavy, former intern and Chief of Park Operations – North District.

For his 1988 internship, Dunleavy hosted a mountain bike race. His 2016 intern Brendan Westley zeroed in on fishing as his cumulative project, securing Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World as sponsor and event partner.

"Some kids had never been fishing and were overwhelmed they caught a fish on their first true fishing trip. I hope the 70 kids who came out to fish took away two things," Westley said. "Fishing is fun and that it's important to practice good fishing ethics so that future generations will be able enjoy it."



Michigan last hope for rattlesnake

Nature's Pollinator

Jack Cunningham

Highland Oaks

In September 2016 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake (EMR) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

"Michigan is one of the last strongholds for Massasauga in the United States. It's important to conserve the snakes because they help to control small mammal populations," Natural Resources Coordinator Brittany Bird said.
"By preserving wetland and upland
habitats used by Massasauga, we also
create benefits like storm water mitigation
and retention sites which help reduce
flooding", she said.

Oakland County Parks function as ecological "hubs" within Southeast Michigan by supporting ecosystems for the rattlesnake. Breeding populations have been confirmed at two parks and occurrences recorded at five others.

Oakland County Parks is in the final stages of working with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Michigan Department of

Natural Resources to create an approved Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances which outlines best management practices to conserve rattlesnakes in the parks, and provides penalty exemptions for incidental takings.

Management provisions for EMR will benefit additional species of Greatest Conservation Need found in the parks, including: Blanding's Turtle; Butler's Garter Snake; Eastern Musk Turtle; Eastern Tiger Salamander; Four-toed Salamander; Northern Leopard Frog; Northern Ribbon Snake; Pickerel Frog; and Spotted Salamander.





OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

50 Years of Excellence

Oakland County is a great place to live, work and play. As Oakland County Parks celebrates its 50th anniversary and past successes, the parks system remains focused on continuing to provide outstanding recreation experiences for current guests and planning ahead for another 50 years of innovation and memories.



Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is created by the Oakland County Board of Supervisors on Feb. 8, 1966, under the authority of Public Act 261 of 1965. The parks system is officially established on April 8, and Oakland County voters approve a one-quarter millage on Nov. 8. Springfield Oaks Golf Course opens in 1967.



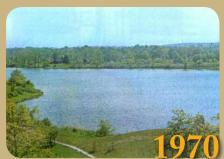
The 197-acre Paradise Campground and Beach is purchased and renamed Groveland Oaks County Park.



The Commission purchases the Evangelical Mission Church and Campground, which is now Waterford Oaks County Park.



The 700-acre Tudor Hills Gun Club and Game Preserve in Leonard is purchased and renamed Addison Oaks County Park. Addison Oaks opens for day use and camping later that year. The property includes a 1927 historic conference center, formerly the summer home of Detroit industrialist Lawrence Buhl and his wife, Cora.



With the purchase of 337 acres from the Broock and Pew families, Independence Oaks County Park is established.



White Lake Oaks, formerly Twin Lakes Golf Course, is acquired. The 18-hole course features rolling terrain, wetlands and tributaries of the Huron River.



Through a land lease with then Oakland County Drain Commission, 9-hole Red Oaks Golf Course is built atop the Red Run Drain.



Michigan's first wave-action pool opens at Waterford Oaks. This is the second municipally-owned wave pool in the United States. Soil excavated for the pool is molded into the adjacent bicycle motocross track.



Glen Oaks Golf Club is purchased. It features 18 holes and a 1926 historical English Tudor stone clubhouse on 137 acres.



Orion Oaks is acquired. The 927-acre park is part of a parcel once owned by the Chrysler Corporation.



The Lewis E. Wint Nature Center at Independence Oaks County Park opens, offering hands-on natural history exhibits as well as a feeding station/viewing area. Year-round educational programs are conducted by park naturalists.



Red Oaks Waterpark opens, featuring the largest wave-action pool in Michigan and a giant triple waterslide.



Lyon Oaks opens to the public, becoming the first park and golf course combination within the parks system. The park offers an 18-hole, Arthur Hills-designed championship golf course; pro shop; banquet and conference center; dog park; hiking trails; and picnic shelter with playground.



Rose Oaks is acquired. Located near Holly, the park features gently rolling open meadows and wooded uplands. Rose Oaks has become a favorite among local equestrians.



Beginning March 2005, The Ellis Barn is moved, board by board, from its historic location on Dixie Highway and reconstructed at Springfield Oaks County Park. Today, the Ellis Barn is used for wedding ceremonies, the annual Oakland County Fair and other special events.



Catalpa Oaks in Southfield is acquired. The park now features two playgrounds; soccer, softball and baseball fields; restrooms; concession facility; picnic shelter; and connector path to Greenfield Road. Catalpa Oaks is the site of the Annual Marshmallow Drop.



Highland Oaks County Park, a 264-acre parcel in Highland Township, opens. The park features floating docks for fishing, and 2.5 miles of multi-purpose trails and boardwalks.



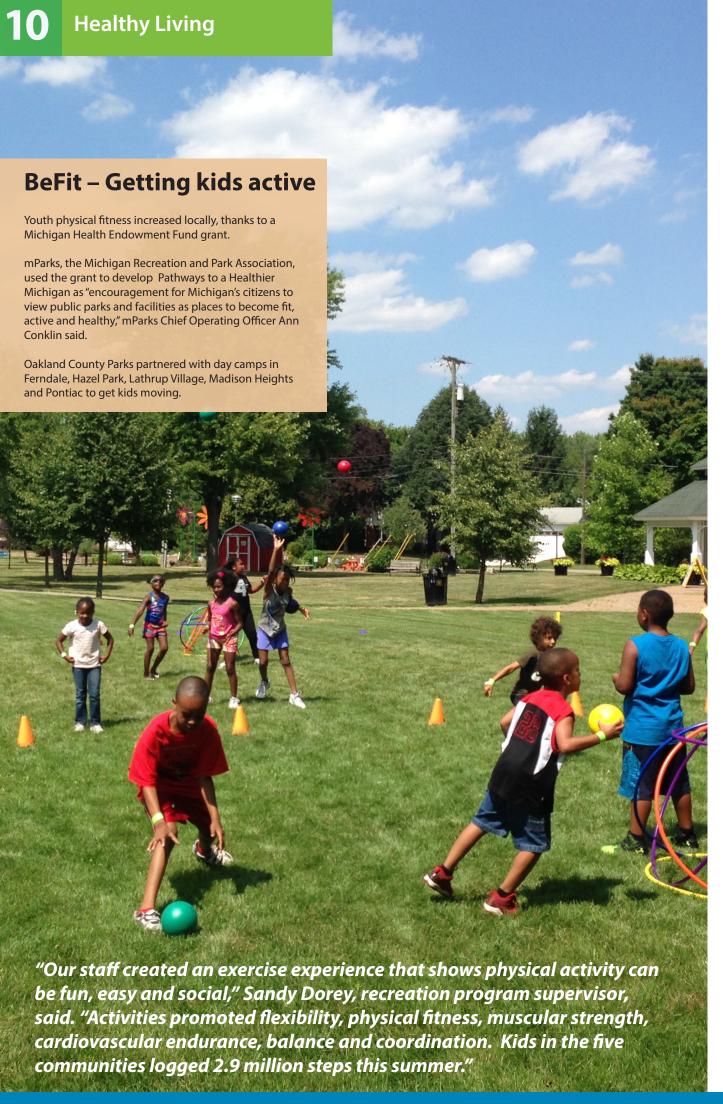
Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission assumed management and operation of the Oakland County Farmers Market.



Also in 2012, the parks system began operation and management of the Madison Heights Nature Center. The facility became part of Red Oaks County Park and was renamed the Red Oaks Nature Center at Suarez Friendship Woods.



Homecoming Picnic at Independence Oaks. Parks Staff, Volunteers and Commisoners celebrate the parks system's 50th Anniversary.





Market nourishes social need

Oakland County Parks staff made a strategic decision to assume operation of the Oakland County Farmers Market five years ago. The market had been active since 1955, but staff had a vision of increasing outreach to residents who might not otherwise visit the Oakland County Parks.

As the demographics of Oakland County shift, becoming older, more diverse and with fewer children, interest in many traditional recreational pursuits have declined, but the importance of recreation and social interactions to maintain health have remained.

"Farmers markets have been shown, for many families and older adults, to be not only an important source of fresh fruits and vegetables, but also a nourishing opportunity to meet new people, connect with community members, and learn new things," Market Manager Jeremy Brown said.

By adding events like a Food Truck Rally and community garage sales, the market has seen annual increases in attendance and sales. The market now participates in public assistance programs, which are critically important to nearby urban areas, and regularly hosts health education and cooking demonstrations in partnership with the Oakland County Health Division and Michigan State University Extension Health and Nutrition and Master Gardeners.



OUCARES for kids

Oakland County Parks collaborates with a number of community partners to develop adaptive programming that provides recreational, social and sports opportunities for residents with physical and cognitive disabilities.

A partnership with the Oakland University Center for Autism, also known as OUCARES, has provided nine summers of day camp visits. A new component was added when parks supervisors received Autism Spectrum Disorder training.

"Staff learned how to recognize common characteristics of autism spectrum and how to communicate effectively by breaking information down into simple steps, keeping verbal statements short and maintaining a low voice, among

other strategies," Recreation Supervisor Sandy Dorey said.

OUCARES began in 2004 with just one program and 25 families. Last year, it held more than 25 programs and assisted 1,400-plus families. Year-round programming includes sports, social clubs, employable skills programs, film camp, special events and a summer day camp. Oakland County Parks facilities host some of these activities.

"Oakland County Parks has gone above and beyond by having OUCares provide autism training for their staff to help them understand the disability and equip them with helpful strategies and techniques to effectively work with campers," Kristin Rohrbeck, Director of OUCARES, said.



The more I practice the luckier I get. -Arnold Palmer

Hole number 17 at Springfield Oaks Golf Course doubled as a memory maker for Judy Finke, a Michigan Senior Olympics participant. It's where she made a hole-in-one, won a Gold Medal for her age group and qualified for the 2017 National Senior Olympics in Birmingham, Alabama. Her golf partner, Marilyn Hall, witnessed the golf trifecta.

Making parks mobile

Upgrading to meet user technology, Oakland County Parks debuted a new website, OaklandCountyParks.com.

The site is integrated within the parent site, oakgov.com, which enables more engagement with the citizens and businesses of Oakland County. The project was a joint effort with the county's Information Technology Department.

"OaklandCountyParks.com is a responsive design which enables any user to see the site regardless of the device they are using," IT Project Manager-eGovernment Sherry Yaqiela said. "It is estimated that more than 60% of oakgov.com site visitors are viewing the site on a mobile device."

A Park Locator helps the site visitor search for a park within a specific search radius or by an activity. The locator functions similar to other Google map locators. The site also leverages existing Geographic Information System data to provide interactive maps.



Batman v Superman filmed at **Orion Oaks**

Loyal park users probably noticed some new buildings going up at Orion Oaks in the fall of 2014, which then guickly came down about six weeks later. With this year's release of Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice, Oakland County Parks can finally reveal that Orion Oaks was home to Wayne Manor in the movie.

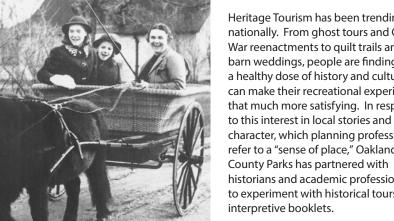
Those familiar with the park will see it in the sweeping exterior shots of Wayne Manor, as well as the beautiful scenery outside the windows of those scenes filmed within the set. The park was also home to the Wayne crypt set, seen in the



funeral procession scene of the movie. What appears to be a country road with cars traveling down it was in fact park trail within the large field area within the park.

"This wasn't the first movie filmed at an Oakland County Park, but it was definitely the largest, with the design and production team in the park for six weeks, despite actual filming taking only a few days. This type of park use is not only exciting for park users to see, but it also brings in added revenue to the park system for continued improvements and maintenance," Supervisor – Planning Melissa Prowse said.





In 2014, the first historical tour of the Buhl Estate at Addison Oaks was offered. Later, in 2015, the Buhl Estate

tours became a regular option for banquet services at Addison Oaks.

In 2016, tours of the estate and grounds were incorporated into Fall Color Tours. This year, park staff brought heritage tours to the west side of Oakland County with a bus tour in partnership with Springfield Township and the Springfield Township Historical Society. With the expert research and oratory skills of Oakland University professor Carol Egbo, Oakland County Parks led a sold-out tour of four local cemeteries, tracing the connections between the township's founding families and what would later become Springfield Oaks County Park.



Value doubled in giving back

Volunteers at the Clinton River Clean-Up Day event Orion Oaks, July, 13, 2016

Corporate and school work days have provided "added value" to the system's robust Volunteer Program.

In addition to providing opportunities for 1,334 individuals, Volunteer Service Coordinator Julee Erskine also facilitates group service projects. Cooley Law School students as well as youth from Notre Dame Prep and Roeper School hosted clean-up days at four parks. Companies including Stantec, Dish and DTE Energy set aside corporate volunteer hours for staff.



"Not only do their efforts provide a much-needed resource for tasks like removing invasive species, spreading wood chips, trimming trails and pulling weeds, but the work days are also great opportunities for team-building and getting people outdoors connecting with nature," Erskine said.

Sustainability

Twenty-eight cross-country athletes and four coaches from Notre Dame Prep worked at Orion Oaks County Park as part of their school's mission to give back to the community.

"As an added bonus, the kids also run cross-country at the park where they cleaned up trails, so their efforts come full circle," Park Supervisor DJ Coffey said.



Parks stronger together, residents benefit

Oakland County Parks has teamed up with mParks, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Huron-Clinton Metroparks to establish a collaborative regional parks system

"Sharing resources benefits both the agencies and residents in the region by improving social, economic and emotional aspects of their lives," Executive Officer Dan Stencil said.

Regional cooperation can:

- Encourage communication and public engagement via regional surveys
- Help with planning by utilizing survey data to direct plans for facilities and recreational services; and reduce duplication of services

- · Ensure coordinated delivery of recreation opportunities and natural resources protection
- Improve communication to the region's population via coordinated marketing efforts
- Minimize expenditures through cooperative purchasing and sharing resources, equipment and staff
- Maximize grant monies through joint applications

"The phrase 'many hands make light work' certainly can be true of the recreation industry if all agencies work together to provide quality recreational experiences for our residents," Stencil said.





Heritage Tourism has been trending nationally. From ghost tours and Civil War reenactments to quilt trails and barn weddings, people are finding that a healthy dose of history and culture can make their recreational experiences that much more satisfying. In response character, which planning professionals refer to a "sense of place," Oakland historians and academic professionals to experiment with historical tours and

Oakland County Parks has had

4 Leaders in 50 years:

Kenneth Van Natta, Eric Reickel, Ralph Richard and Daniel Stencil

116
Bird specie

Bird species sighted at Red Oaks Nature Center

116,000

Worms fed to captive critters at the Wint Nature Center since 1985



1,500

ears of corn eaten at Oakland County Farmers Market pounds of invasive
Garlic Mustard
pulled by staff
and volunteers

7,800

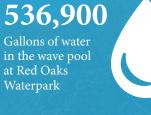
2,400

Miles walked

y River Walk

participants

Pounds of French fries sold at the Blue Water Grills



Hours of ser donated by 1,334 volunteers

Charges for Services

\$9,951,643.73

42.31%

1,040 Years

Combined years of service by 71 full-time employees at Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Property Taxes

\$12,246,823.80

Contractual Services \$5,544,049.28 **Depreciation** \$3,640,363.37 Salaries 15.48% \$8,782,763.82 **Total** 37.34% **Expenses** \$23,520,676 **Fringe Benefits** \$2,995,010.76 **Internal Services** \$1,596,180.00 **Transfers Out Commodities** \$60,000.00 \$902,308.93

Parks & Recreation Commission

FY2016 Actuals

Total Revenues \$23,520,676

Planned Use of Balance \$1,012,188.44 4.30%

Investment Income \$203,165.99 0.86%





MARKETING AWARD

OUTSTANDING VIDEO OCPR BY THE NUMBERS



2016 INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING AWARD

ANNUAL BUTTERFLY PARADE



2016 MEDIA ADVOCATE AWARD

AFTAB BORKA – THE OAKLAND PRESS & THE DAILY TRIBUNE



2016 FELLOWSHIP AWARD

DAN STENCIL, CPRE



OAKLAND COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PARKS UNIT ROBERT SCHULTZ & TOM BYRD



VOLUNTEER - MIKE DOUGHERTY



OCPR HISTORY CORPS CAROL EGBO



INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF THE ALHAMBRA DENIA CARAVAN OF SOUTHFIELD



MSU EXTENSION ROBIN DANTO & CAROL LENCHEK



WATERFORD COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD

50TH ANNIVERSARY



MICHIGAN MOUNTAIN BIKING ASSOCIATION HALL OF FAME

PAUL BAILEY



HONORABLE MENTION

Part-time Parks Deputy of the Year Bill Storm



GOLD INTERNATIONAL AQUATIC SAFETY AWARD

Oakland County Parks Lifeguard Staff



2016 OUTSTANDING PUBLIC OFFICIAL

Kathy Crawford



NACPRO
2016 REMOVING BARRIERS
SPECIAL AWARD

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CAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

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