

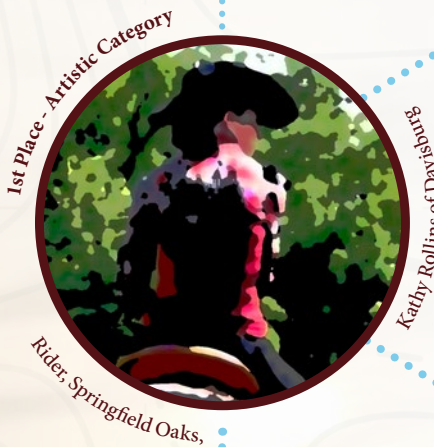
# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING A BETTER EXPERIENCE



# ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

1. Capturing majesty and wonder of 13 parks
2. Chairman's Message
3. Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission recognized with national award
4. Safety path project connects two parks, enhances access  
Former beach transformed into wildlife habitat  
Keeping lakes clean top priority
5. Addison Oaks trails selected for pilot project  
Hiking, walking options rank #1 with guests
6. Providing great customer service to 2 million annual visitors involves many moving parts  
Volunteers add familiar faces, great value to programs
7. Partnership aims to preserve local history  
Treasure hunters in training
8. Camp mixes retro skills with history, games  
Facility takes aim at growing sport
9. Grooming future golfers  
It's great to be a kid - again
10. Fresh, healthy food a priority for all county residents  
Oakland County Fair blends rural past, fast-paced fun
11. Parks projects improve visitor experience
12. Unique program makes dreams soar  
After hours event for 50+ 'kids' to test drive attractions  
Monster movie madness invades Red Oaks Waterpark
13. Parks & Recreation Commission Fiscal Year 2018 Actuals
14. Awards and accolades



## Capturing majesty and wonder of 13 parks

Sundown SUP, pictured on the cover, was photographed at Orion Oaks County Park, and selected by Spike, Radio Personality of Channel 955's Mojo in the Morning Show, as Best in Show in the 2018 Pics of the Parks Photo Contest. The image was captured by Dustyn Blindert of South Lyon, a first-time entrant.

"This year's photo entries capture Oakland County residents enjoying the parks in so many different ways. But the winning photo highlights Michigan's real star attractions: our lakes. This image perfectly captures the inviting lake and peaceful surroundings. A low perspective by the photographer helps the subject of the photo stand out against the sky while also highlighting details of the water's reflections. And the entire scene features warm-to-cool colors as your eye moves across the photo - it makes me want to be in that lake too," Spike commented.

Thirty local photographers submitted 101 entries that were judged by members of the Oakland Camera Club.

Spike's work can be viewed at [BuzzClickPhotography.com](http://BuzzClickPhotography.com).



# Chairman's Message

## HIGHLIGHTING TWO PRIORITIES

Paying attention to the expressions of park users – and potential park users, provides important guidance for the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission. It's a pleasure to highlight two very different types of facilities that are being actively pursued based on widespread positive citizen input.

First, Oakland County citizens have clarified that they love our park trails. In Oakland County Parks, our residents use trails for a variety of purposes – all of them very meaningful and healthy: hiking with family members and friends; jogging or cross-country skiing to stay in good shape; enjoying the companionship of pets; participating in large-scale events; engaging in nature photography . . . and I could go on.

Oakland County Parks and Recreation is in the process of making these trail experiences even more enjoyable and safe. Projects are in various stages of development to provide new surfaces, remove obstacles, and enhance wayfinding signage. Park users, including those who rely on accessible opportunities, will soon be well-served by these new improvements.

Entirely new for Oakland County, the second type of facility that has received extremely strong citizen expression is a long-awaited venue for off-road vehicles (ORVs). The citizens of Oakland County are among the most enthusiastic users of ORVs in the entire state. For many years, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has attempted to establish this type of facility in Southeast Michigan. Earlier attempts have not been fruitful. But now, the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is very close to completing a proposed first-of-its-kind partnership with MDNR to provide for this growing demand. Over a measured period of time, actions along an uncharted course have been taken to achieve a workable partnership concept, and to secure a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to be used by MDNR to acquire the necessary site in the shadow of the Mt. Holly Ski facility along I-75. Assembling the land took a major effort, and at this point, a sufficient portion of the property is under control of the state. We are about to finalize a proposed operating agreement and will soon be making a recommendation to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. Due to the unique nature of this endeavor, progress has been laboriously deliberate, but we are now very close to making this facility available to the many enthusiasts who are eager to enjoy it.

Of course, there are many other parks and recreation programs and improvements that are worthy and important. We look forward to seeing you in the Oakland County Parks and at Oakland County recreation programs in the coming year.

Respectfully,  
Gerald A. Fisher



**Gerald A. Fisher**  
Oakland County Parks and Recreation  
Commission Chairman

**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 parks 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.

## 2018 Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission



Pictured left to right: Jim Nash, Gary R. McGillivray, Vice Chairman J. David VanderVeen, Robert E. Kostin, Christine Long, A. David Baumhart III, Chairman Gerald A. Fisher, Hugh D. Crawford, Andrea LaFontaine and Secretary Ron Fowkes were photographed near Crooked Lake at Independence Oaks County Park.

Oakland County Parks and Recreation, programs, services and facilities are made possible by millage funds supported by Oakland County residents. For a home valued at \$200,000, the homeowner pays less than \$25/year to support Oakland County Parks and Recreation.



# Oakland County Parks and Recreation recognized with national award

Providing recreation to more than 1 million residents outside its park borders since 1982 earned Oakland County Parks and Recreation national recognition.

The Recreation Assistance Partnership Program (RAPP) won the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials' 2018 Park and Recreation Program Award.

The Park and Recreation Award recognizes a unique or exceptional program, activity or event, which provides an outstanding example for others to follow. Nominations are judged on uniqueness, effectiveness in achieving program goals and public response.

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission commits \$200,000 annually to the program.

“We started RAPP to reach out to residents at the city, village and township level. The role of the county park system is not to duplicate what those entities offer, but to enhance, and to provide innovative recreation opportunities for the entire benefit of Oakland County,” Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. “What we found was some programs and non-profit organizations needed assistance with programming or supplemental activities to fill a critical void for the people living in their communities.”

A RAPP grant provides up to two outreach programs such as Get Outdoors! Adventures Units, including GO! Fish and GO! Cache, inflatables, one nature education visit plus one bus trip. Requests are granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

“The City of Oak Park and the Oak Park Recreation Department are grateful to Oakland County Parks for the opportunity to benefit from the RAPP program. RAPP enhances all our community events and special programs. It generates experiences and opportunities our city/department would not be able to afford to provide,” Recreation Director Laurie Stasiak said. “From inflatables, the nature center, and its mobile planetarium and buses for our summer day camp participants, the wide variety of amenities that Oakland County Parks has to offer is exemplary. The staff that accompanies the units are professional, punctual and engaging with our community.”



The Chaos Obstacle Course is a popular request from the RAPP program. O CPR's mobile recreation units are hosted by trained staff.



Seasonal Program Specialist Benjamin Prowse hosts an evening in StarLab, a portable planetarium, that brings the wonders of the night sky indoors.



RAPP's Nature Table community outreach program is also an enhancement for O CPR events like Pirate Day at Waterford Oaks Waterpark. Seasonal Program Specialist Val Preston presents animal facts to visitors.

At GetOutdoors! Adventures, like GO! Cache, children can learn the basics of geocaching including Leave No Trace outdoor ethics.





## Safety path project connects two parks, enhances access

With trails being the number one reason people visit the Oakland County Parks, Oakland County Parks and Recreation was pleased to partner with Independence Township to build a 1.6-mile safety path along Sashabaw Road, connecting Independence Oaks main park with Independence Oaks-North. The 8-foot-wide asphalt path includes 870 linear feet of 10-foot-wide boardwalks through wetland areas.

The \$1.34 million project was funded by \$740,000 from the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission and

\$600,000 from Independence Township. The pathway also includes two resting stations featuring benches, bike racks, a bike-fixing station and air pump.

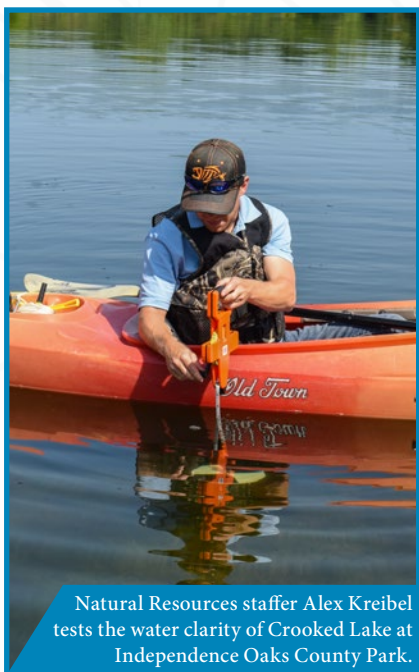
“We’re proud our partnership could promote trail connectivity, access and additional recreation opportunities for our park guests and the local community,” Executive Officer Dan Stencil said.

## Former beach transformed into wildlife habitat

A new native wildlife habitat was established at Addison Oaks County Park in 2018. A stretch of the shoreline along Adams Lake was converted from a sandy beach area into a natural shoreline with native plants that will support bird, pollinator, turtle and fish populations.

Some of the plants that will be flowering along the shoreline include Blue Flag Iris, Hairy Beard Tongue and Cardinal Flower. Planned additions for 2019 include new turtle nesting structures and woody debris which support fish populations.

In addition to providing native wildlife habitat, the shoreline will also prevent erosion and help ensure that stormwater is properly filtered. The effort is cost-effective, since mowing and maintenance time will be reduced. The parks system’s Natural Resources Management team estimates it may take two to three years for the plants to fully establish.



Natural Resources staffer Alex Kreibel tests the water clarity of Crooked Lake at Independence Oaks County Park.

## Keeping lakes clean top priority

With more than 1,200 acres of open water and adjacent wetland habitat within its nearly 7,000 acres, stewardship of these freshwater resources is important to Oakland County Parks and Recreation. The Natural Resources Freshwater Stewardship Unit participated in the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) program sponsored by Oakland County in 2018.

MiCorps is a network of volunteer water quality monitoring programs created to assist the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in collecting and sharing water quality data.

Oakland County made sampling supplies free to trained participants for one year. OCPHR accomplished its water quality sampling goals with this support.

Freshwater Stewardship staff participated in the countywide training and tested water quality in three lakes: Buhl Lake at Addison Oaks County Park, Crooked Lake at Independence Oaks County Park and Lake Sixteen at Orion Oaks County Park. These three lakes experience the highest use and will serve as a pilot to assess the program for internal expansion in 2019. Staff also engaged local volunteers to help with sampling and promote community support of stewardship activities.

OCPR Chairman Gerald A. Fisher officially opened the \$1.34 million Sashabaw Road safety path in August. Celebrating the partnership between Oakland County Parks and Recreation and Independence Township are: David Henderson, Independence Township Safety Path Committee member; Commissioner Robert E. Kostin; Safety Path Committee Chair Deborah Froehlich; Commissioner Jim Nash; Independence Township DPW Director David McKee; Commissioner Andrea LaFontaine; Secretary Ron Fowkes; Fisher; Vice Chairman J. David VanderVeen; Commissioner Hugh D. Crawford; Commissioner Christine Long; Commissioner Gary R. McGillivray; Commissioner A. David Baumhart III; Independence Township Parks, Recreation & Seniors Director Derek Smith and Independence Township Safety Path Superintendent Kevin Daniels.





## Addison Oaks trails selected for pilot project

Oakland County Parks and Recreation recommended the Buhl Lake Trail and Mountain Bike Trail at Addison Oaks County Park for the Southeast Michigan Council of Government's (SEMCOG) pilot project to create maps of various trails throughout the state.

Essentially a trail version of Google Street View, Terrain 360 Trail Mapping provides users with an opportunity to see what the trail looks like, in a 360-degree view, at any point along the route. The ability to view terrain, topography, viewsheds, trail crossings and other amenities, all from a computer or mobile phone prior to visiting a park, will enhance trail use.

"We think this is a great way to highlight two of our most beautiful trails. The single track Mountain Bike Trail at Addison Oaks is one of the best around, and we hope seeing it firsthand will encourage more people to give it a try," Melissa Prowse, Supervisor-Planning, said.

Addison Oaks County Park offers 5.6 miles of groomed trails for fat tire biking, cross-country skiing and hiking.

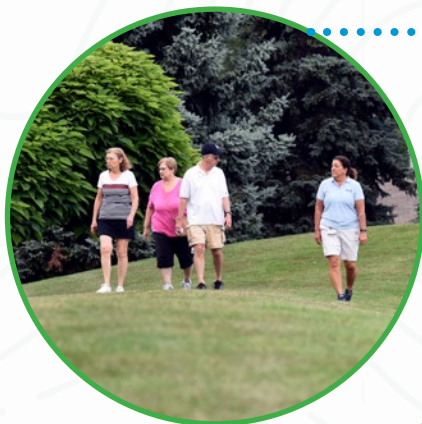
## Hiking, walking options rank #1 with guests

With trails the number one reason people visit the parks, Oakland County Parks and Recreation offered unique options to encourage its guests to get unplugged, off the couch and into the outdoors for some physical and mental exercise.

The **TrailBlazer Walking Series** featured a friendly staff guide who offered historical tidbits and park information during a one-mile evening hike at six different parks. Walkers visited Addison Oaks, Catalpa Oaks, Independence Oaks, Lyon Oaks, and Waterford Oaks county parks and Friendship Woods at Red Oaks Nature Center.

In its 12th year, **River Walk** took place at Red Oaks Waterpark where adults walked for fun and fitness against the current of the River Ride attraction. The popular program was open to all abilities and fitness levels, with punch cards issued for eight, 16 or 24 visits, attracting more than 2,700 participants.

Off the trail but still outdoors -- **Yoga** enthusiasts and newcomers enjoyed free 45-minute classes once a month on Saturdays during the summer at the Oakland County Farmers Market. The first 20 participants received a free yoga mat. The program attracted approximately 20-25 yogis each session.



The TrailBlazer Walking Program, new in 2018, featured staff-led one-mile hikes.



Yoga at the Market was a program that tied healthy lifestyles into fresh produce available from local vendors.

Red Oaks Waterpark hosts the popular River Walk program for those seeking a unique fitness opportunity.







A Lyon Oaks Golf Course staffer drives a tractor to retrieve range balls. Golfers shoot 18,000 buckets of balls at the range annually.



OCPR lifeguards at two waterparks and one beach were awarded the 2018 Gold International Aquatic Safety Award by Ellis & Associates, Inc.



## Providing great customer service to 2 million annual visitors involves many moving parts

An Oakland County Parks and Recreation guest may only encounter a few of the people who make the magic happen behind the scenes at the 13 parks and nearly 1,400 programs and special events. OCPR relies on the dedication and hard work of 75 full-time employees, 758 seasonal employees and 727 volunteers who donate 26,000 hours annually.

In addition to its own programs and special events, Oakland County Parks and Recreation also sponsors, partners and participates in community events like Fire & Ice in downtown Rochester, the Michigan State Fair at Rock Financial Showplace in Novi, The Brookside Way at Oakland University, the Airport Open House at the Oakland County International Airport and Arts, Beats and Eats in Royal Oak, just to name a few.

However, the OCPR guest is most likely have a great experience at one of the 13 Oakland County Parks – they all end in “Oaks”. Parks staff behind the scenes ensure a quality experience from the 70 miles of trails that are maintained, construction projects that bring new experiences to park visitors and operations staff that run campgrounds, nature centers, golf courses and dog parks. The facilities maintenance and development staff ensure electrical and plumbing are operating correctly, natural resources staff manages the system’s 7,000 acres and recreation programs and services staff provides outreach, mobile recreation visits and a summer camp.

Whatever location you visit, Oakland County Parks and Recreation staff and volunteers are dedicated to providing clean, safe, beautiful places for residents to relax, learn and play.

Kegan Schildberg and Luke Murchie of OCPR’s Natural Resources staff mowed trees and shrubs during winter 2018. This management technique is effective in reducing invasive shrub cover, promoting native plants and providing habitat for native animals including monarch butterflies, Blanding’s turtles and grassland bird species. Winter mowing also decreases disruptions to the life cycles of native wildlife, such as giving birth and rearing young.

## Volunteers add familiar faces, great value to programs

The Adaptive Recreation Unit provides special events and programs for individuals with disabilities, including socials, a Saturday sports program for youth plus outings to Red Oaks Waterpark and the Oakland County Fair.

A first-time Springfield Sock Hop drew 80 participants for coney dogs, an ice cream sundae bar and of course, 50s music. Sandy Dorey, Recreation Program Supervisor, credits dedicated OCPR volunteers for their enthusiasm in making events like these come to fruition.

“Oakland County Parks and Recreation has been a leader in providing recreation opportunities for more than 30 years. Many of Oakland County’s 62 cities, villages and townships do not have the staff to provide programs specifically for individuals with disabilities,” Dorey said. “We collaborate and offer opportunities throughout the county. Training is provided to our staff to create the best environment and recreation experience for our guests.”

Volunteers are an asset to Adaptive Recreation programs. Dorey said there is a core group of 20 volunteers who assist with programs and special events.

“The benefit is familiar faces to parents and caregivers, which provides a sense of community and security,” she said. “Volunteers and staff work together as a team.”



Dressing in costume for social events creates an atmosphere of fun for participants, staff and volunteers. Top row, left to right: Rachel Boyd, Mark Jones, Mary Rosseel-Jones, Terry Quinlan, Mike Smithson and Debbie Anthony. Bottom row, left to right: Sandy Dorey, Julee Erskine, Darlene Quinlan and Jessica Steele.



## Partnership aims to preserve local history

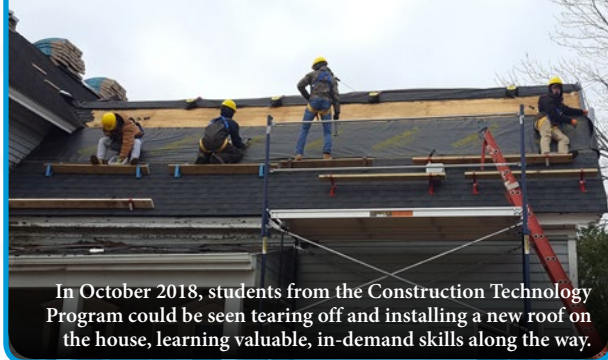
In 2016, Oakland County Parks and Recreation was presented with a challenge. OCPR and Independence Township were constructing a new safety path along Sashabaw Road that would connect both entrances of Independence Oaks County Park. However, the path was designed to go right through what is now known as “the Bailey House,” which fronts Sashabaw Road on the Independence Oaks-North property.

The Bailey Family was among the first to settle the Independence Township area; and the house, built in 1883, is considered by many to be a significant part of that early settlement history. It is a prime example of a T-plan farmhouse style built within the township in the late 1800s.

The house (and the 188-acre “Upper Bushman” property) were acquired by the parks system in 2010, with grant assistance from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Continuing to rent the house, as the previous landowners had done, was not an option in the grant guidelines.

Having no designated use for the house that would meet grant guidelines, nor the funding dedicated to repair and maintain it, staff released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in August of 2016 for the deconstruction or removal of the house to another site. It was quickly learned that moving the house was cost prohibitive, due to the road crossings and power lines in the area.

However, the RFP generated significant interest in the Clarkston and Independence Township community, especially by a local contractor, Sam Moraco of MLC Building, and Clarkston Community Schools. Through a series of meetings and discussions, a coordinated group of individuals and businesses (now known as Preservation Clarkston) made a proposal to the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission to utilize the house as a hands-on educational



In October 2018, students from the Construction Technology Program could be seen tearing off and installing a new roof on the house, learning valuable, in-demand skills along the way.

opportunity for students in the district’s fast-developing Construction Technology Program. Their proposal was persuasive, and the Parks Commission granted the group two years to develop a long-term plan for the house.

In return, the group would work with Clarkston Schools to have students mothball the house and put on a new roof, to ensure its protection from the elements.

“This kind of project provides a perfect opportunity for our students to not only get hands-on experience in a skilled trade, but to also gain a better understanding of historic preservation and the power of community involvement,” Jeff Peariso, one of the teachers in the Construction Technology Program, said. As part of the project students received fall hazard training, learned to build and use scaffolding, learned how to tear off and install a new roof, as well as other project and site management skills.

“We’re thrilled to have this partnership with Preservation Clarkston, MLC Building and Clarkston Community Schools,” OCPR Executive Officer Dan Stencil, said. “We may not have a use for the Bailey House here at parks, but we understand its significance to the local community – it’s great to see people coming together to preserve a part of local history.”

## Treasure hunters in training



Claire Coffey sifts through debris dug up at the dig site.

Secretly, we all want to be Indiana Jones. There is no sensation quite like finding something old poking out of the dirt, and wondering about the journey that has led it to now be in our hands. In 2018, Oakland County Parks and Recreation launched a program to create real archeological experiences for young people in its parks.

Under the watchful eye of Oakland University faculty member Carol Bacak-Egbo and OCPR staff, volunteers from the Oakland County Parks History Corps surveyed and secured the remains of a farm dump near the historic William Bailey house at Independence Oaks-North. Technically referred to as a midden, the dump was potentially used by the family as far back as the 1870s when the nearby house was built. Surface artifacts that once littered the site have been removed and catalogued by volunteers, and a string grid system divides the site so that amateur researchers can map where objects are found.

Volunteers painstakingly removed layer after layer of soil from the grids, digging their way back in time to learn about the people who made the parkland their home. The artifacts that emerge are boxed and labeled for cleaning and

the soil is screened to reveal the small fragments that often tell us the most about how people lived.

Bacak-Egbo likes to point out that unlike most archeological digs, midden excavations unearth a lot of artifacts, and OCPR volunteers tend to act like “kids on Christmas morning” as they pull bottles and broken china from the ground. It was actually this work with the volunteers that inspired OCPR Recreation Programs and Services staff to see park-owned farm dumps as an incredible resource within the parks system.

It took a little bit of testing, mainly using the children of park staff as subjects, to develop a program that allows young people to participate in actual research being conducted in the parks. Staff even developed a process for making the dig mobile by having volunteers remove contents of the excavation grid in buckets and transport it to the nearby Wint Nature Center where it was sifted, sorted, and washed by kids in the Camp OAKVentures program.

About 90 kids participated this year. It turns out that the little fingers and sharp eyes of these kids are perfect for archeology.



# Camp mixes retro skills with history, games

Camp OAKVentures, a new day camp program for ages 6-12, promoted a sense of adventure and discovery of the outdoors.

Campers sampled activities at multiple locations including the wave pool and bicycle motocross track at Waterford Oaks County Park; fishing, the archery range and nature center at Independence Oaks County Park; and the soccer complex and waterpark at Red Oaks County Park. At Catalpa Oaks County Park, a large sports field was an ideal location for oversize games and mobile recreation units.

“We also worked in unique experiences like an archeology dig and historical talk by an Oakland University professor, StarLab, our inflatable planetarium, geocaching, nature hikes and zip line,” Recreation Program Supervisor Kelley Marcaccio said. “We hoped to spark an interest in a new activity or hobby they may not have tried before. We live in a world of technology and children may not have the opportunity to try these outdoor activities. It was great to see how excited the campers were about fishing, archery and the archeology dig.”

Participating communities included Berkley, Clawson, Huntington Woods, Independence Township, Madison Heights, Oak Park, Orion Township, Pleasant Ridge, Southfield, Springfield Township and Waterford Township. Transportation was provided via OCPR buses.



## Facility takes aim at growing sport

An archery range was constructed at Independence Oaks County Park in 2018, thanks to the generosity of mParks (Michigan Recreation & Park Association) and the Clarkston Area Optimist Club. The mParks grant provided funding for archery equipment and staff training to operate the modular archery range. The Clarkston Area Optimist Club provided additional funding for the purchase of equipment and site development.

“There has been a downward trend in the sport of archery in Michigan and nationwide, whether it’s target shooting or hunting. Our goal is to be the entry level platform and generate interest in the sport again. We are equipped to get youth and adults involved at the beginner level,” Recreation Program Supervisor Melissa Nawrocki said. “As their skills grow, we can refer them to clubs like the Oakland County Sportsman’s Club where they can gain additional skills and learn about archery hunting as a sport, if that is an area of interest.”

In Summer 2018, an Open House introduced 125 individuals to the range and sport. OCPR’s Camp OAKVentures incorporated the range into its six-week day camp for 250 participants and a scout group used the range in September.

Plans for the range include introductory lessons and programming for Boy and Girl Scout badge programs. Supervised open range times are scheduled to begin in Spring 2019.



Recreation Program Supervisor Melissa Nawrocki provides instruction at the new archery range.



The new archery range at Independence Oaks County Park was dedicated Sept. 19 by the Clarkston Area Optimist Club and OCPR staff.







The First Tee teaches golf, life lessons and leadership skills. Players learn values like honesty and responsibility by calling penalties on themselves and reporting their own score.



## Grooming future golfers

Oakland County Parks and Recreation teamed up with The First Tee of Greater Detroit to introduce area youth to golf.

The six-week lesson series was hosted at Red Oaks Golf Course in Madison Heights, the system's only 9-hole course.

"The kids had a great time learning the fundamentals of golf but even more so, The First Tee principles. At The First Tee of Greater Detroit, we teach young people Nine Core Values – Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Courtesy, Sportsmanship, Confidence, Judgment and Perseverance – while learning the game of golf," The First Tee of Greater Detroit Board Chairman Niall Hay said. "Our volunteers' passion for golf and helping kids are the lifeline of our program. They commit their time and talents to coach and mentor our program participants."

## It's great to be a kid – again

Recognizing the critical role grandparents play in families, Oakland County Parks and Recreation created activities built just for them and their favorite "littles." Grandparents Mini-camps, hosted at Red Oaks and Wint nature centers, invited Grandmas, Grandpas, Nana, Papas and special adult mentors to explore windy wonders – all things related to flight and wind. Children and adults alike made paper airplanes, blew bubbles, flew kites and learned how animals soar.

The Grand Adventures Guide Book offered information on events and activities throughout the parks system. Various parks and events provided stickers and selfie stations to commemorate their times together.

"Grand Adventures is a great intergenerational program for families to get outside and explore their favorite Oakland County Parks and discover new ones," Brandy Boyd, Chief of Recreation Programs and Services, said. "The program is designed for quality family time, finding new adventures and spending the summer making memories."

The program culminated in a Grandparents Day event in September where holders of the guide book received a commemorative coin.



Grandparents are fun and essential for passing on family traditions. Naturalist Karen Anneberg leads a Grandparent Mini-camp at the Wint Nature Center.



# Fresh, healthy food a priority for all county residents

The Oakland County Farmers Market continued its efforts to make fresh, healthy foods available to everyone, with four important programs:

SNAP/EBT tokens were available year-round for those on the national Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Market shoppers using a SNAP Bridge Card doubled their money with Double Up Food Bucks, allowing them to purchase fruits and vegetables that have been grown in Michigan.

A national initiative, Project FRESH, is an educational program providing participants with coupons to purchase locally grown fresh vegetables and fruit. Coupons were distributed on a select date in August to eligible participants.

On select dates in July and August, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, known as Senior/Market FRESH, provided eligible older adults with locally-grown produce.

In addition, the Oakland County Farmers Market also hosted weekly educational programs for all ages during the summer months and special events throughout the year.



The Oakland County Farmers Market provides grower direct fresh produce, flowers and hand-made goods. Vendors showcase their products via indoor and outdoor stalls. Red Wood Grill provides on-site BBQ fare.



Events like Family Market Day provide activities in which youth learn fun facts about plants, fruits and vegetables.



During the winter, the market hosts popular cooking demonstrations with *edibleWOW*. Matt Shellig, Dorsey Schools Culinary Academy Program Director, shared his tricks of the trade. Recipes focus on items that can be purchased at the market.

## akland County Fair blends rural past, fast-paced fun .....

The Oakland County Fair is the largest special event hosted by Oakland County Parks and Recreation, in cooperation with the Oakland County 4-H Fair Association.

The event brought 102,167 visitors to Springfield Oaks County Park during its 10-day run July 6-15.

In addition to providing a glimpse into the county’s agricultural history, this year’s fair featured “Walking with Giants,”

a dinosaur and dragon encounter. Creatures eight feet tall and 16 feet long with realistic eye-blinking, tail-swooshing and mighty roaring sounds strolled through the fairgrounds.

Fairgoers also enjoyed evening arena events including demolition derby, figure-8 races, a rodeo and monster trucks. Youth and adult 4-H members’ projects and animal exhibits as well as the Miracle of Birth Barn rounded out the experience.







# Park projects improve visitor experience

Funds earmarked in the 2018 Oakland County Parks and Recreation budget provided significant improvements throughout the parks system.

“These projects were budgeted based on the high priority identified by public surveys to maintain, improve and manage more than 230 park facilities, buildings and structures within the 13 Oakland County Parks,” Chief of Park Facilities, Maintenance & Development Mike Donnellon said.



**Addison Oaks County Park, north of Rochester:** The 100-square-foot modified trailer boat rental building at Buhl Lake, constructed in 1978, was replaced by an 800-square-foot pole barn structure. The new, larger building provides space for storing life vests and oars and keeping small sale items such as bait on hand. The additional space also allows more than one employee to work per shift. The boathouse, built by OCPR staff, will open in spring 2019.

**Groveland Oaks County Park, near Holly:** With the addition of a second yurt on Cottage Island, the campground now offers four yurts for rent. A yurt is a wooden circular frame covered in fabric that sleeps six with two bunk beds and a queen-size bed. It is also equipped with air conditioning and heat. The newest yurt was added in June. Yurts are extremely popular rentals at the parks system’s two campgrounds.

Another addition at Groveland Oaks was an accessible GaGa Ball Pit. GaGa Ball is similar to dodgeball. Players try to tag other players with the ball below the knee. The game can be played individually or as teams.

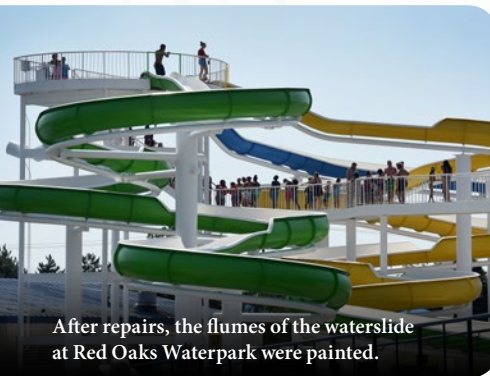


**Orion Oaks County Park, Lake Orion:** The dock on Lake Sixteen has always been a favorite among the canine visitors at Orion Oaks Dog Park. The original dock was constructed in 2000. Due to its popularity, staff decided to enlarge the dock, reusing the recently replaced dog ramps. Officially opening in spring 2019, the new dock will decrease maintenance needs, increase safety and improve the site’s appearance.

**Red Oaks Waterpark, Madison Heights:** Several improvements were made to the busy Red Oaks Waterpark. These included resurfacing the wave pool, repairing and painting the triple waterslide, replacing the waterslide pump and rebuilding the sand filters for the River Ride and wave pool. The ticket booth was also upgraded with additional sales windows to reduce wait times.

**Springfield Oaks County Park – Davisburg:** The water tower's outdated mechanical and safety systems were replaced, its interior and exterior painted and the OCPR logo was added. Passersby and those at Springfield Oaks Golf Course are able to see the new tower display rising up from the park.

Springfield Oaks’ Ellis Barn, a sought-after spot for social gatherings, especially weddings, will be equipped with a vertical lift by next spring. Work began in October. The vertical lift is being added to expand use of the barn and enhance accessibility.



After repairs, the flumes of the waterslide at Red Oaks Waterpark were painted.



Whoopie – adults experienced the joy of having Red Oaks Waterpark all to themselves at an event targeted to those 50+.



The water tower is visible on the greens at Springfield Oaks Golf Course.



# Unique program makes dreams soar

Every July, the Oakland County International Airport is the backdrop for stories that create goosebumps.

This is when Oakland County Parks and Recreation’s Adaptive Recreation staff and volunteer pilots join forces to host Dreams and Wings. Individuals with disabilities, ages 6-18, and up to two family members or friends, learn about airplanes and how they fly, then are paired with an experienced pilot for a short flight. Each youth receives a Dreams and Wings T-shirt, gold aviator wings and commemorative flight certificate. All costs are covered by philanthropic contributions.

“It’s not often we run across unique opportunities like this, which makes it all the more appreciated. Everyone there we spoke to helped to create a very supportive and enthusiastic atmosphere, making for a very special day,” Robin and David Haut of Swartz Creek commented about the program. “It was an incredible experience for our daughter.”



Kenzie Haut co-piloted a plane during Dreams and Wings.

“For 20 minutes during the flight, all barriers are removed for our participants. For many, it’s the first time they have flown. For others, they are thrilled to see what the Earth looks like from their vantage point in the sky,” Recreation Program Supervisor Sandy Dorey said. “Our volunteer pilots donate their time, but they are giving a gift that cannot be measured.”

Dorey estimates 1,300 youth have participated during the past 25 years.

## After-hours event for 50+ ‘kids’ to test drive attractions

A waterpark isn’t a place someone would expect to get carded.

But the 50 and older crowd pulled out IDs for the adults-only Here Comes the Sun event at Red Oaks Waterpark in Madison Heights.

Recreation Program Supervisor Sandy Dorey said nearly 100 adults enjoyed the youth-free atmosphere and became kids again as they swam in the wave pool, rode the triple waterslide and floated on tubes in the River Ride.

“It was awesome. I felt like a kid again! My husband and I had a great time! It was wonderful to have the park just for the active adults,” Donna Bednarczyk of Berkley said.

Dorey said the oldest person to ride the triple waterslide was 77 years old. “That just goes to show you’re never too old to recreate,” she said.



Guests enjoyed treats associated with a movie promotion at Red Oaks Waterpark.

## Monster movie madness invades Red Oaks Waterpark

Sony Pictures cruised into Red Oaks Waterpark to promote *Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation* in June. The third film in the popular animated series starred Adam Sandler as Dracula and Selena Gomez as Mavis features the monster family taking a break from their hotel aboard a luxury cruise ship. Highlights of the event included a snow cone cart and movie-themed games including corn hole and crafts. Movie character cutouts also made perfect selfie backdrops.

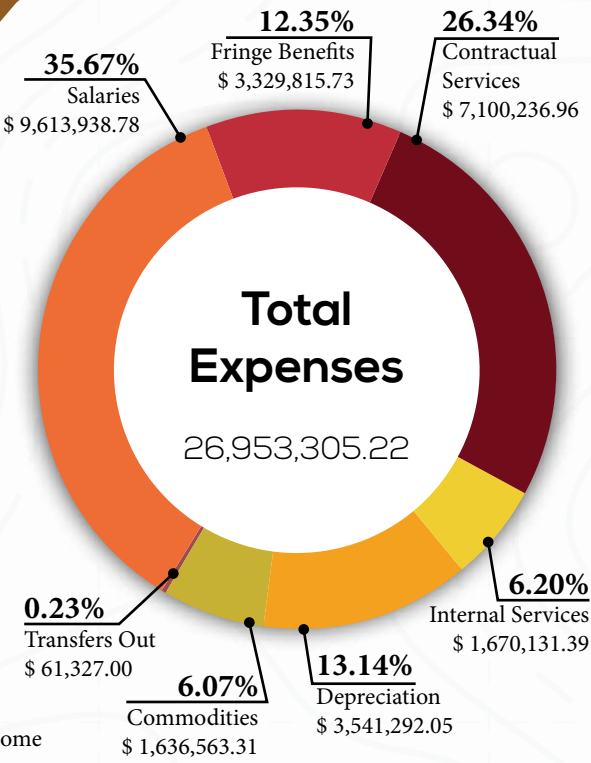
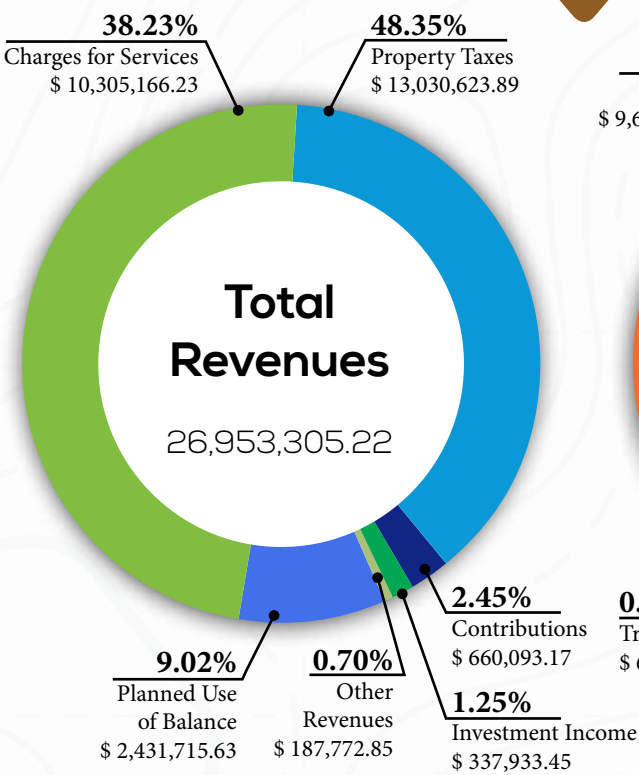


At Lyon Oaks County Park in Wixom, a cricket field and pitch provide a place to recreate for the sport's enthusiasts.

The Michigan Cricket Association uses the Lyon Oaks field for league play. The 1,041-acre park also features an 18-hole golf course; driving range and banquet center; plus day-use area with picnic shelter and playground; soccer field; dog park; and hiking trail.



# Parks & Recreation Commission Fiscal Year 2018 Actuals







Project Manager:  
Desiree Stanfield

Graphic Design:  
Garrett Ebbeling

Writers:  
Patricia Brockway  
Jon Noyes  
Melissa Prowse  
Desiree Stanfield  
Mary Zednik

Print Production:  
Mary Zednik

Photography:  
Vaughn Gurganian  
Steve Wyckoff  
Mary Zednik

Printed with  
vegetable-based  
inks on recycled  
paper by Dearborn  
Lithograph, Livonia



In 2018, the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission and staff worked with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to develop an operating agreement for an off-road vehicle park that would allow OCPD to manage the facility as a state/county park. The 235-acre site sits south and west of Mount Holly and across from Groveland Oaks County Park and will offer scramble areas and trails for all types of ORVs, including full size, side-by-sides, ATVs and motorcycles. An operating agreement for the ORV park is expected to be approved by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners in early 2019. Planning efforts are underway at the site which is anticipated to open in 2020. In Michigan, the majority of ORVs are registered in the southeast portion of the state, and this collaborative effort between OCPD and the MDNR will provide a place for the sport's enthusiasts to recreate close to home.

## ► Awards & Accolades ◀



**National Association of County  
Parks and Recreation Officials**  
2018 Park and Recreation Program  
Award for the Recreation Assistance  
Partnership Program



**Parks<sup>SM</sup>**  
Michigan Recreation  
& Park Association

**mParks Community Service Award**  
Fire & Ice Festival



**Parks<sup>SM</sup>**  
Michigan Recreation  
& Park Association

**mParks Community Service Award**  
The Daisy Project – MI



**Parks<sup>SM</sup>**  
Michigan Recreation  
& Park Association

**mParks Community Service Award**  
Volunteer Steve Stolaruk



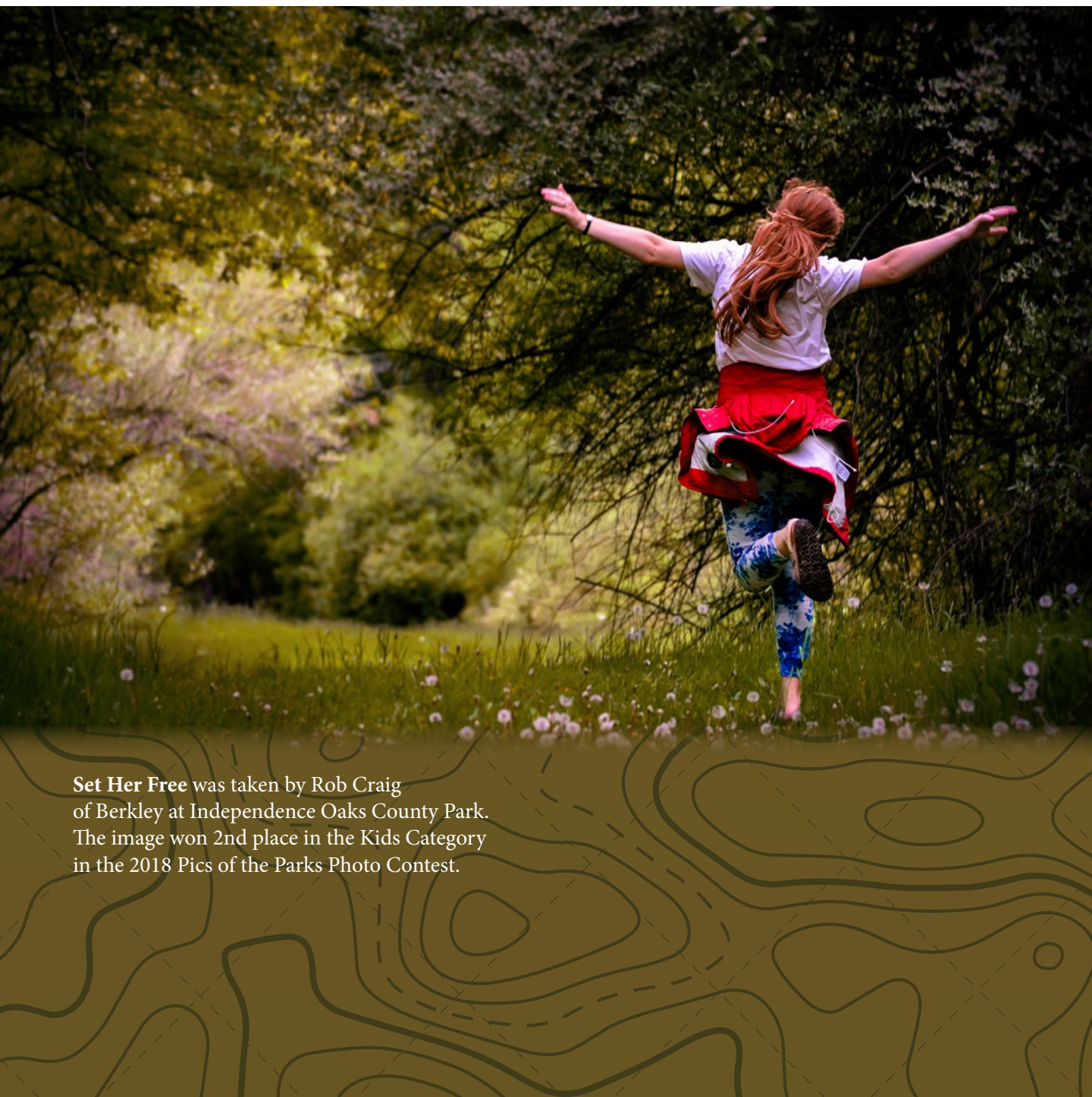
**Jeff Ellis and Associates**  
2018 Gold International  
Aquatic Safety Award



**The Detroit Free Press**  
Lyon Oaks Golf Course named  
one of the top 10 public courses  
in Metro Detroit



PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ROYAL OAK MI  
PERMIT 14



**Set Her Free** was taken by Rob Craig  
of Berkley at Independence Oaks County Park.  
The image won 2nd place in the Kids Category  
in the 2018 Pics of the Parks Photo Contest.