

2020

ANNUAL REPORT

Parks and Recreation -- Essential Service



Image of Lake Sixteen, Orion Oaks County Park
Ashish Phansalkar, Auburn Hills MI (Instagram)

 **OAKLAND**
COUNTY PARKS
Great Parks for Great People

Chairman's Message

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Dear Resident,

Our vast Oakland County Parks and Recreation system provides extraordinary outdoor enjoyment while protecting our environment for future generations. At the Parks Commission, we take seriously our role as guardian and fiscal steward of these assets and are grateful for the support of Oakland County residents. With your support, we are now planning for the capital improvements and additional activities that enhance the health, well-being, and quality of life of our residents.

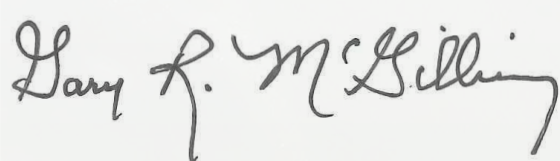
Our parks continue to serve as an important outlet during this difficult global pandemic. During the Stay at Home order we opened our parks for free, followed health protocols, and changed our activities to provide virtual and other safe activities. At the same time, we teamed with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to open the first and only off-road vehicle park in southeastern Michigan. We believe that families from all over Michigan and even people from out of state will be users of the new Holly Oaks ORV Park. It will also serve as a location for premier off-road events and activities.

Another focus for the Parks Commission is to provide recreational activities near our population centers. We partnered with the City of Royal Oak to meet the top requested recreation need – more walking trails – at Normandy Oaks Park set to open in 2021. We have also improved our Catalpa Oaks County Park with updated soccer fields and a much-needed walking path around the park's perimeter.

I'm excited about 2021 because with the passage of the millage in November, we will be able to improve our parks and recreation programs. We will work hard to improve Oakland County Parks and Recreation to make Oakland County an even better place to live and work.

Thank you for your support,

Gary R. McGillivray
County Commissioner &
Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman



Parks Commission Chairman
Gary R. McGillivray

“Thank you
for your
support and
see you in
the parks”

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 14 parks and making decisions about purchasing park land, constructing facilities, preserving maintenance standards and developing innovative programs and services.

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is dedicated to providing all residents quality recreation experiences that encourage healthy lifestyles, support economic prosperity, promote the protection of natural resources and enhance the quality of life throughout Oakland County.



J. David VanderVeen, Vice Chairman
Clarkston • Appointed 1998



Ebony Bagley, Secretary
Farmington Hills • Appointed 2019



Christine Long, Executive Committee Member
Commerce Township • Appointed 2009



Dan Stencil, Executive Officer
Joined Parks staff in 1977



Amanda Herzog, Commissioner
Royal Oak • Appointed 2020



Gregory C. Jamian
Bloomfield Hills • Appointed 2020



Robert E. Kostin, Commissioner
Clarkston • Appointed 2009



Sue Wells, Manager of Parks & Recreation
Joined Parks staff in 1988



Andrea LaFontaine, Commissioner
Birmingham • Appointed 2018



Jim Nash, Commissioner
Farmington Hills • Appointed 2013



Nancy L. Quarles, Commissioner
Southfield • Appointed 2019



Oakland County Parks, programs, services and facilities are made possible by millage funds supported by Oakland County residents. At the .35 millage rate, the owner of a home or business with a market value of \$200,000 will pay approximately \$35 to support Oakland County Parks and Recreation yearly.

Happy 200th Birthday Oakland County

Nature Program Coordinator Benjamin Prowse leads participants on a Woodpecker Walk. Guided nature walks soared in popularity as people found solace in the outdoors.

The year 2020 marked Oakland County's Bicentennial offered Oakland County Parks and Recreation an opportunity to spotlight the importance of history in its parks.

After all, the Parks Commission, staff and volunteers are not only caretakers of important natural resources but also caretakers of important historical resources. These resources include historical structures like the Ellis Barn at Springfield Oaks County Park and the Buhl Mansion at Addison Oaks County Park and also former farmsteads, foundations and fence rows. These are important reminders that some of the parks were once farms.

Parks Historian Carol Egbo has been hard at work researching the rural heritage of the parks system. This has resulted in the collection of a wide variety of historic maps, photographs and family histories relating to the people who once called the parks home.

To share this information, Egbo created a video series called "History in our Parks." This series, now numbering more than 30 episodes, focuses on people, places and events connected to the history of the park lands. Topics range from the story of a Civil War soldier whose farm is now part of Independence Oaks County Park to the Underground Railroad connections discovered while researching Catalpa Oaks County Park. The series has proven to be an important contribution to the celebration of Oakland County's two hundred years.

"I have viewed all the History in our Parks episodes and now want to visit the parks I haven't seen. The videos add another dimension, reminding us of what came before," Rose Township resident Maura Jung said. "It enriches our appreciation of the families (European and Native) who came before us in our country."

Egbo began the year with several live presentations on park history for a wide variety of community groups. When the pandemic struck she shifted to virtual Fireside Chats. History was also incorporated into several Trailblazer Walking Series hikes and a few socially-distanced presentations in some parks.

Egbo has also led continued analysis of artifacts excavated during archaeological digs at Independence Oaks and Addison Oaks county parks. Plans are underway to continue those excavations as soon as conditions permit. In addition, Egbo is working with park naturalists and other staff to locate old foundations and other historical features that can help supplement the understanding of park history.

OCPR has continued to provide outreach support in history for community groups such as the Hadley Cemetery Association, the Rose Township Heritage Committee and the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. Such support enhances OCPR's community connections and broadens the role it plays in the communities it serves.



The Shoemaker Farm in the early 1900s This land would later become part of the Buhl Estate at Addison Oaks County Park.

[Click to see the *History in the Parks* YouTube playlist](#)

Providing an essential service during a pandemic restores sense of 'normalcy'



Themed Scavenger Hunts, coordinated for partners like the City of Troy, was a creative way to challenge families to get outdoors in their hometown and use their ingenuity to find clues. The program was developed to replace large in-person events normally hosted by the Recreation Programs and Services Unit. It had more than 2,650 participants in 10 communities.

When the COVID-19 world health crisis struck in March, pandemic executive orders issued by Michigan's Governor were quickly put into place. Oakland County Parks and Recreation immediately acted to mitigate spread of the virus by closing facilities and cancelling programs at the recommendation of the Oakland County Health Division.

Day-use parks remained open, welcoming visitors to hike and bike the trails, fish, and relax in 7,000 acres of natural surroundings. Staying physically and mentally healthy became a priority with many seeking the serenity of the parks system. Free park entry was offered March 20-June 1 – the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission agreed that during this time, it was critical for county residents to have free access to the parks.

As the season progressed, popular special events and programs were cancelled. Staff rolled up their sleeves and created new virtual programming, providing innovative ways for residents to explore the parks and stay active. Educational, historical and family-oriented programs were modified or introduced so participants could safely connect with nature in a way that kept them, and our parks staff, safe.

Weekly scavenger hunts took families outside to find nature's wonders in their own backyard or neighborhood during closure of the Red Oaks and Wint nature centers. With limits on indoor gatherings, outdoor spaces became classrooms. Touchless temperature checks, masks and social distancing were required for limited in-person programming.

For those at home, park naturalists created a weekly Nature Education Series featuring videos posted on social media. Topics included spiders, seed dispersal and migration.

OCPR staff was committed to reaching everyone, especially older adults who were safely staying at home. Programming was presented virtually, including Motown Sound, held in partnership with the Detroit Institute of Arts, where a musician led a Motown hits program. Fireside Chats was a historical Zoom series that provided participants with virtual "tours" of OCPR's historical buildings.

The I Spy program, which allowed people to virtually or physically learn more about park features, history, and parks natural resources, began in June. Each week a flyer containing little known facts about a specific park was posted on OCPR's website, encouraging people to visit the park to learn more.

Staff also introduced Quests for Adventure, or self-led scavenger hunts. Collaborating with local parks and recreation departments to create clues, participants cracked codes, pieced together puzzles and collected evidence to solve themed mysteries.

The Oakland County Farmers Market evolved into a community hub for residents and businesses to drop off donations of personal protection equipment. To keep the community nourished, the market hosted Gleaners Community Food Bank's drive-thru food distributions and offered curbside pickup and delivery options. A Sunday market opened temporarily to help prevent large gatherings during regular Saturday market hours.

OCPR's two campgrounds provided much-needed recreation options. All opened weeks later than usual and followed established cleaning and safety protocols once operational. Addison Oaks and Groveland Oaks campgrounds modified check-in processes, so campers did not need to enter the contact station. Cabin and yurt rentals were open for a day between guests to allow for deep cleaning and sanitizing.

Perhaps the biggest impact for campers was changes to the campground recreation program. The program was reduced significantly to avoid large groups congregating at recreation pavilions. Craft packages allowed campers to make crafts at their campsites, so everyone could still participate in the activity.

Popular Halloween weekends continued with campsite decorating contests and events, but trick-or-treating was eliminated, and replaced with a spooky scavenger hunt.

Getting outdoors was the mantra for a healthy way to cope with COVID-19 stress.

Staff at five golf courses worked around many issues – a two month opening delay; golf cart restrictions; shortened league season; and new systems to put in place for everyone's health and safety.

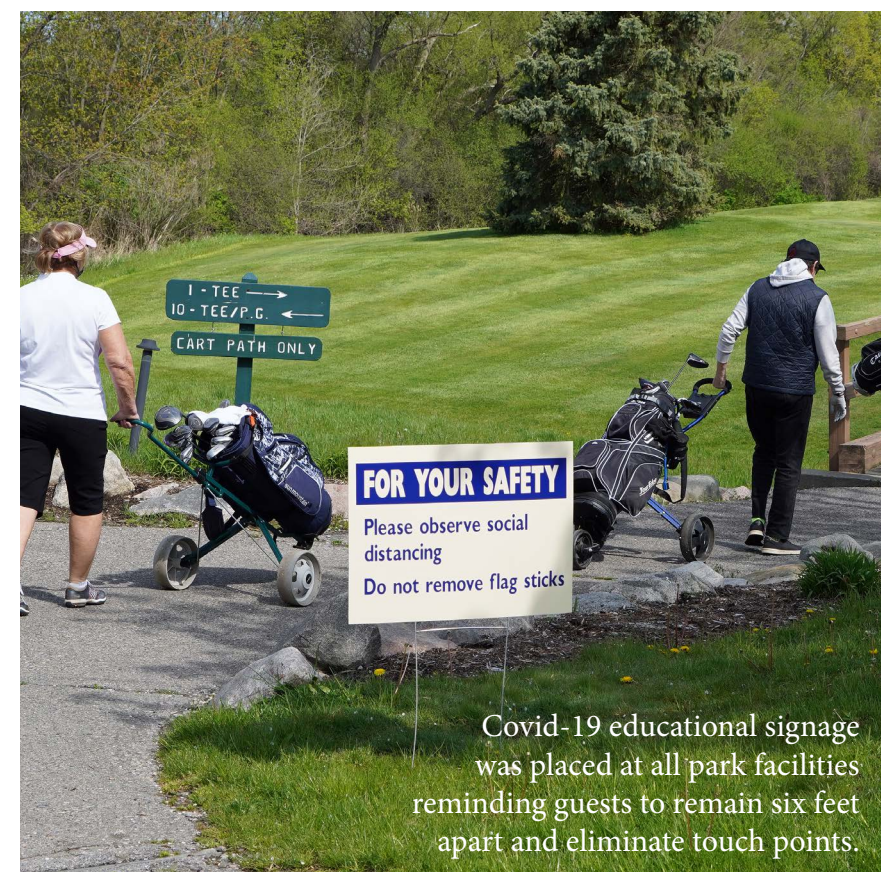
"All the delays were worth it to hear compliments from guests saying they appreciated our efforts," Chief of Park Operations and Maintenance-South District Tom Hughes said. "By August and September, we were turning away golfers because of no available tee times. And October was the best we've had in years."

Nancy and Ron Rodda of Clarkston said the precautions taken at Springfield Oaks Golf Course made them feel safe.

"The carts are cleaned and brought up the hill with our name on it. Not having pencils and scorecards, but the ability to get them online. The signage and cleanliness. I felt proud to be a part of Oakland County taking safety so seriously," Nancy Rodda commented.

Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil thanked staff for their extra efforts in 2020.

"We're proud to say that in a global pandemic we answered the call for our residents," Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. "Staff worked tirelessly so our residents could get outdoors with their families for the benefit of their physical and mental health, and for a short time, experience some sense of normalcy. This difficult year has really driven home the fact that parks and recreation are most certainly essential services."



Covid-19 educational signage was placed at all park facilities reminding guests to remain six feet apart and eliminate touch points.

Voters approved increased millage for next 10 years

When more than a half million people vote “YES” for a parks and recreation millage, the reaction is “we must be doing something right”.

A record 537,857 voters supported the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Millage Replacement and Increase to .35 mills in the November General Election. OCPR garnered a 76.32% approval.

“To see that support, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, was incredibly humbling and affirming to our parks commission and staff,” Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. “We always say we provide an essential service to residents, and to hear them echo our professional belief is beyond words.”

As a result of the millage passage in November, the parks system began distribution of free 2021 Annual Vehicle Permits to eligible residents; seniors (62+), active military, veterans and individuals with permanent disabilities.

Three new initiatives across Oakland County because of the millage approval will include:

1. Creation of a Trailways Fund to assist local communities with both pre-development and construction costs for trails projects in Oakland County, including shared use pathways, sidewalk connectors, bike lanes and water trails that focus on connectivity to the larger Oakland County Trails Network.
2. A Community Partnership and Park Development Fund to provide cash assistance to local communities for local park development, including design, engineering, development and construction efforts. This fund will also increase the capacity of the existing Recreation Assistance Partnership Program, boosting recreation outreach, mobile recreation units and local event support.
3. Centralized coordination of the Oakland County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area to support the treatment and eradication of invasive species throughout Oakland County by collaborating countywide on identification, treatment and management to conserve and protect important natural habitats.

“Oakland County Parks will be enhancing regional partnerships countywide in the next several years. We believe it is important for our residents to have access to recreational opportunities,” Stencil said. “We currently focus on outreach, but moving forward it will be brick and mortar projects like trail expansion and shared pathways and assisting local cities, villages and townships with their park development projects. We intend to increase recreation access for all residents by collaborating with local units of government.”

Beginning in 2021, Oakland County Parks and Recreation will:

- **Reinvest in the parks system to update or replace worn-out infrastructure and facilities**
- **Purchase necessary equipment for programming, maintenance and safety**
- **Increase its impact on stewardship of Natural Resources at its 14 parks as well as across the 910 square miles of Oakland County**
- **Collaborate with local municipalities to expand trails and provide grants to support local park development and programming.**



Classes continued outdoors at Red Oaks Nature Center.



A family explores the trail system to which the OCPR Commission dedicated development funding.

Collaboration provides additional park space

Normandy Oaks Park in Royal Oak was the recipient of generous funding from the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) for some key aspects of the park's development. Seeing an opportunity to provide new park amenities for residents in southeast Oakland County, the OCPRC donated more than \$1 million to help fund the development of trails at the park, as well as funds for the nature area and a pedestrian bridge to connect from the Elks Park parking lot into Normandy Oaks.

The City of Royal Oak and OCPR hosted a park preview event in October to give media and residents a glimpse of the 40-acre park that's set to open in Spring 2021. Parks professional staff will also collaborate on plantings for the nature area and interpretive signage.



Long-Awaited Holly Oaks ORV Park Opens



For the team of staff and volunteers who have been working on the planning and development of Holly Oaks ORV Park for the past 7+ years, the highly-anticipated opening of the park was well worth the wait.

The park opened to the public on Sept. 17, 2020, and had a steady crowd of people each day it was open through Thanksgiving. The park will reopen in Spring 2021 for its first full season.

Holly Oaks ORV Park is a joint initiative between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Oakland County Parks and Recreation (OCPR). The DNR owns the land, which was purchased with a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The current park is 106 acres but will grow to 235 acres when all remaining mining is completed. The park is operated by Oakland County Parks and Recreation via a 20-year operating agreement (with options for renewal). Staff from both the DNR and OCPR worked together for several years to determine all aspects of the park, from design and budget to rules and fees.

“It’s been a really rewarding experience to see two large government agencies working on something that will benefit residents both here in Oakland County and across the state,” Dan Stencil, Parks Executive Officer, said.

Residents have been watching closely. A Facebook group with more than 3,000 followers monitored the park’s progress in anticipation of its opening. The prospect of riding opportunities so close to home piqued the interest of many residents in southeast Michigan. For those farther away, it’s another reason to visit the metro Detroit area, or plan a trip to visit Holly Oaks ORV Park, as well as The Mounds in Genesee County, Silver Lake State Park ORV Area in Mears, or one of the private off-road parks in the state.

“Our goal was to contribute both to the local economy here in Groveland and Holly townships, as well as bring people from other areas of the state, or the country, to this beautiful part of Oakland County,” Melissa Prowse, OCPR Supervisor of Planning and Resource Development, said. “This area of the county is chock full of amazing parks – Groveland Oaks Campground is right across the street, and Holly State Recreation Area with its campground, beach and hundreds of acres of trails and managed lands wrap all around the park.”



The top of Mt. Magna has become a popular location for taking photos with riders visiting the park. The feature was built with a generous donation from Magna Powertrain.

ORV Design Consultant Rich Klein sprays high strength concrete (shotcrete) on the side of Mt. Magna while Parks Principal Planner Jon Noyes makes sure the recycled chain link fence is tightly tied together before it is covered in concrete.



Officially opening Holly Oaks ORV Park are (left to right): Parks Commission Vice Chairman J. David VanderVeen; Parks Commissioners Andrea LaFontaine and Robert E. Kostin; former Parks Commissioner Ron Fowkes; Oakland County Board of Commissioner Penny Luebs; Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil; Parks Commission Chairman Gary R. McGillivray; State Senator Ruth Johnson; Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter; Groveland Township Supervisor Bob DePalma; Oakland County Board of Commission Chairman David Woodward; Supervisor Holly State Recreation Area Shawn Speaker; former Parks Commission Chairman Gerry Fisher; Holly Township Supervisor George Kullis; and Parks Commissioner Amanda Herzog.



Since opening in September, the park has been busy. Almost too busy. While the park underwent years of planning and testing to ensure smooth operations, a few unforeseen issues did arise in the first few weeks. The first was dust. The land, being a former sand and gravel mine, kicked up much more dust than was anticipated with 500 vehicles (on sell-out days) driving around at the same time. However, park staff swiftly went to work coming up with different options to keep dust to a minimum.

During the fall season, staff tested multiple types of dust control products, as well as various pieces of equipment for dispersing them. By the spring opening, staff hopes to have formal dust control procedures and equipment in place to start the year off with as little dust as possible.

The second challenge was sound. Sound was tested at the site on many occasions, including at two Dixie Gully Run events held in 2015.

“Part of the park’s popularity has meant figuring out how to bring in as many different types of users as possible to the park, but doing so in a way that still meets the sound requirements set by the state,” Principal Planner Jon Noyes said.

OCPR staff is working with the DNR to utilize consistent sound testing equipment and procedures, and host trainings to create better understanding of different requirements for various vehicle types.

“It’s been a learning experience for sure,” Noyes said, “and we’ve had to ask for patience and forgiveness as we’ve gotten up and running this year, but we’re confident that when we open for 2021 we’ll have a system in place to better monitor and test for sound.”

The online response has been overwhelmingly positive, with park visitors posting hundreds of photos and videos on social media. A popular photo spot in the park is Mt. Magna, created through a generous donation from Magna Powertrain based in Troy, Mich. The feature was built in large part by staff and volunteers by shaping the earth into a “mountain,” lacing it with recycled cyclone fencing, and spraying concrete (called “shotcrete”) onto it to form what looks like a rock formation that could be found in Moab, Utah. The project was led by Rich Klein from Trail Hero, an international consultant on ORV trail and feature development.

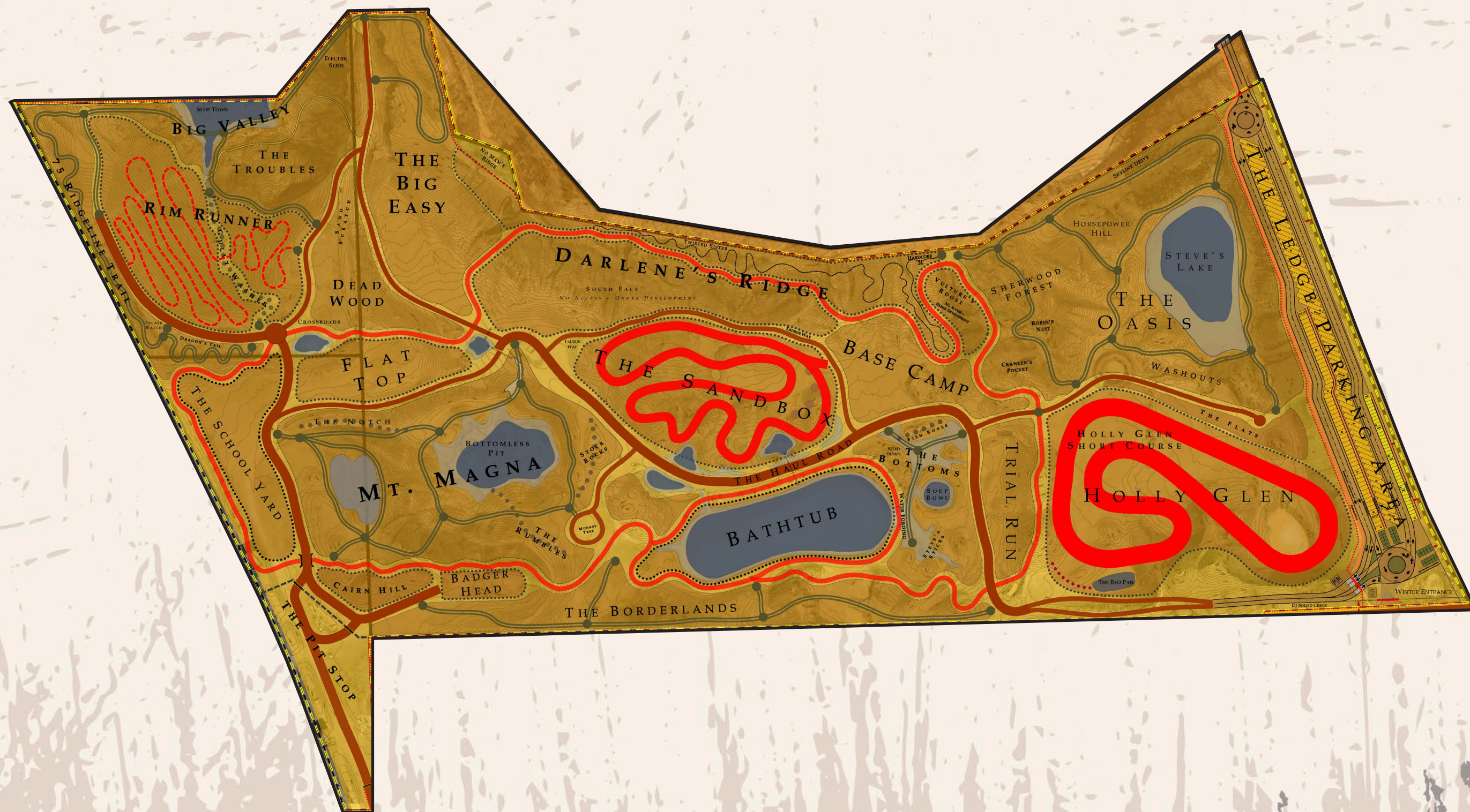
Other popular features include the Endurance Trail (a two-mile loop around the park), The Bathtub (a loop around a large body of water in the middle of the park), The Big Easy (not-so-easy sand climb) and Holly Glen (30-foot-wide short course). The park will continue to develop over the coming years, with more planned within the existing footprint, as well as plans to expand north as the current mining ceases.

“A kid’s track area that we’re calling The Schoolyard is currently under construction for our smallest riders to gain skills and confidence on their bikes and quads,” Noyes said. “ORV-ing really is a family sport and we want to be inclusive of all ages.”

The park is intended to be self-funded, meaning revenue at the park will be returned into future development, including new trails and features. Daily rental fees and corporate rentals will help offset park expenses.

“We’ve seen overwhelming interest in corporate rental of the park this fall,” Prowse said. “Companies are thrilled there is a place so close to their offices where they can do research and development, testing and photography and video production.”

Holly Oaks ORV PARK Interactive Map -
click on each button below to get a preview
of the adventure areas



Natural Resources Management

6

Boat cleaning stations to prevent spread of invasive species

Oakland County is home to thousands of lakes and rivers that residents use for boating and paddling, fishing and hunting. These outdoor activities can unintentionally disperse aquatic invasive species (AIS); non-native plants, animals and other organisms that can harm the local economy, environment and even the health of the county's residents.

“Oakland County Parks and Recreation is dedicated to stewarding its natural resources including 1,200 acres of lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands within the parks system,” Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. “Currently OCPD invests tens of thousands of dollars each year to treat aquatic invaders such as Eurasian water milfoil in our lakes.”

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners and Oakland County Parks and Recreation are working together to prevent the spread of AIS in Oakland County by operating two mobile CD3 decontamination stations. These stations can be used on any watercraft, are waterless, user-operated and completely self-contained. Three hand tools allow for manual removal of non-native plants and animals, and solar panels power a vacuum and air blower that prevent accidental transport of organisms in water left on boats.

“As the home to more inland lakes than any other county in Michigan, Oakland County truly is a water wonderland,” Oakland County Commissioner Kristen Nelson, Chairman of the Special Committee on Invasive Species, which purchased the stations, said.



A new pilot program will empower boaters and water enthusiasts with a free tool to protect the environment and wildlife. Natural Resources Coordinator Sarah Cook-Maylen operates the unit while Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil demonstrates the ease of using the boat cleaning tools.

Winter forestry mowing helps preserve the parks

During the winter months, the Natural Resources Management (NR) staff uses large equipment to mow trees and shrubs across the parks system. Mowing is one of many management techniques and is very 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.

NR works to steward natural communities by reducing threats such as invasive species, forest pests and disease; reintroducing natural processes such as prescribed fire and canopy thinning; and stimulating native plants through seeding and planting. Diversity of native plants and animals, or biodiversity, is what allows the communities to support life through services such as regulation of water and air quality, pollination and food production and stormwater management. Invasive species aren't part of the interconnected web of species in a specific area and interrupt or prevent native species from providing ecosystem services that support its way of life.

Mowing decreases the number of trees and shrubs that move into open areas, such as wetland buffers or open fields, and sustains specific natural communities where grasses and other unique plants normally thrive. Non-native, invasive shrubs and trees, and occasionally aggressive native shrubs and trees, shade out native plants and reduce the habitat necessary for many species' life cycles. Traditional natural processes (such as fire, flooding, or windthrow) are often controlled in urban or developing landscapes so land managers use other techniques, such as mowing, to replicate the natural processes that maintain natural communities.

Mowing occurs during the winter when the ground is frozen to limit the impact of mowing on plants, animals and soil. Winter mowing also decreases disruptions to the life cycles of native wildlife that give birth and rear young during the growing season. Mowing is part of a larger management program so it is evaluated yearly to determine if additional mowing or other management techniques are necessary to achieve specific restoration goals.



Archery hunting is an important part of ecological management

When the leaves start to turn and the weather gets cold, hundreds of seasonal park patrons are in the parks quietly waiting for white-tailed deer to cross their path. Archery hunting remains a popular fall and winter activity and is a great way to support getting outside, providing food for local families and assisting ecological park management.

Deer populations in Southeast Michigan have exploded over the last few decades and deer need an increasing amount of food. White-tailed deer are herbivores that forage fields and forests looking for nuts, berries, twigs, grasses and sedges. While normally this is a sustainable part of the ecosystem, the overpopulation of deer results in too many plants, including rare and unique plants, being eaten. Deer are especially fond of spring ephemerals, such as trillium and jack in the pulpit, after a long winter. Walking through the parks, it's easy to see the deer browse line, the highest point on trees that deer can reach to eat and the lack of plants and greenery below.

“As land managers, we want to keep our systems in balance. Archery hunting plays an integral role in reducing deer populations to preserve small plants and trees that are working to regenerate forests and improve diversity for other wildlife,” Natural Resources Coordinator Sarah Cook-Maylen said. “Archery hunting is also a great way for families to spend time outdoors, a reliable and tasty food source and a fun way to learn more about nature. Our archery hunters help keep our natural systems in balance and preserve Michigan's heritage.”



New walking path, improved soccer fields dedicated

Stakeholder engagement consistently rates multi-use trails as the highest requested amenity.

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission listened and provided a new walking pathway, and soccer field upgrades at Catalpa Oaks County Park in Southfield that was officially dedicated in October.

Commissioners invested \$702,000 in construction of the .6-mile aggregate perimeter pathway. The trail's crushed stone surface features Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant grades and accessible concrete entry points to allow users of all abilities. The project also included concrete pathways connecting into existing neighborhood sidewalks and the Greenfield Road sidewalk.

With the soccer field work, two of the four fields now have improved drainage and irrigation designed to improve turf quality and increase playability of the fields, which were created prior to Oakland County Parks and Recreation's management. They were built from clay construction material from development of the 1-696 highway. The fields, which host more than 30,000 visitors annually, will open for play in spring 2021.

"Meeting the diverse needs of Oakland County communities and ensuring that everyone is able to enjoy our natural resources remains our top priority," Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil said.

Pictured left to right at Catalpa Oaks County Park are: Oakland County Board of Commission Commissioner Helaine Zack; Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commissioner Amanda Herzog; Southfield City Councilman Jason Hoskins; OCPR Commissioner Andrea LaFontaine; OCPR Commissioner/Water Resource Commissioner Jim Nash; OCPR Commissioner/Road Commission for Oakland County Commissioner Gregory Jamian; Parks Executive Officer Dan Stencil; Oakland County Executive David Coulter; OCPR Vice Chairman J. David VanderVeen; OC BOC Commissioner and Parks Chairman Gary R. McGillvray; OC BOC Commissioner Janet Jackson; and OCPR Commission Secretary Ebony Bagley.



Water quality improved at Springfield Oaks

The water tower at Springfield Oaks County Park was built in 1971 and designed for fire suppression for the activity center. It also provided a potable water source for facilities throughout the park. During the past few decades, the park has experienced steadily increasing building and park usage with the Oakland County Fair and private events at the historic Ellis Barn. Engineering reviews revealed that the most efficient solution for addressing water quality issues was to install a water circulation system.

Installation of an unchlorinated three-inch High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) looped water circulation system now allows for more closed-off sections of the water system for seasonal use; limits the frequency of testing by the Oakland County Health Division (OCHD); and utilizes the water tower for fire suppression only. The new system meets all Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and OCHD requirements for water quality.

With the new system, well water is pumped to a new water distribution building, where hydro-pneumatic tanks store it to meet site demand and stabilize water pressure. Special valves regulate water pressure to the main line, which supplies water for public use at the activity center, administration building, livestock barn, restrooms and four campground areas.



A fresh water supply is important for the many visitors and livestock that visit Springfield Oaks County Park for the annual Oakland County Fair, weddings at the Ellis Barn, annual craft shows, athletic competitions, family campouts, 4-H programs and other events.



"The Oakland County Parks system and its local recreational programs are vital to our quality of life today and environmental stewardship for future generations. Whether you are riding a horse, walking a trail, swinging a golf club, swimming, camping, taking a class or having an off-road adventure there are incredible opportunities for all. Find it here, Oakland County!"

**Oakland County Executive
Dave Coulter**



2020 will be remembered as the year of COVID-19. For the commissioners and staff of Oakland County Parks and Recreation, we will recall it as the year that we provided an essential service. During this extraordinary time, our parks, programs and services provided respite in nature; a sense of normalcy; a chance to reconnect with family; and a moment to forget about the stress of the world.

To feel truly grateful, it may only take a patch of green grass and hula hoops...and the spark of joy is there again.

Parks and Recreation
– We are Essential.

2020 Awards and Accolades



Robert Lissner, Jr., mParks Park Resources Leadership Award



mParks Marketing Award for Graphic Design Piece for Park and Trail Signage (at Addison Oaks County Park)

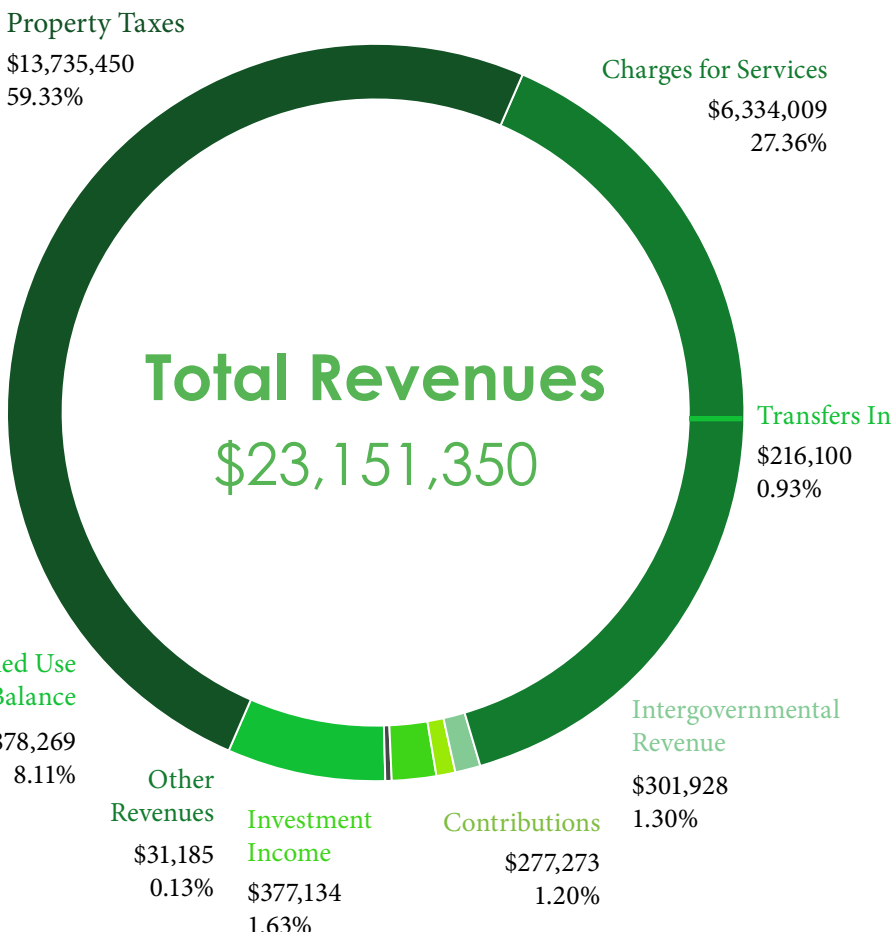
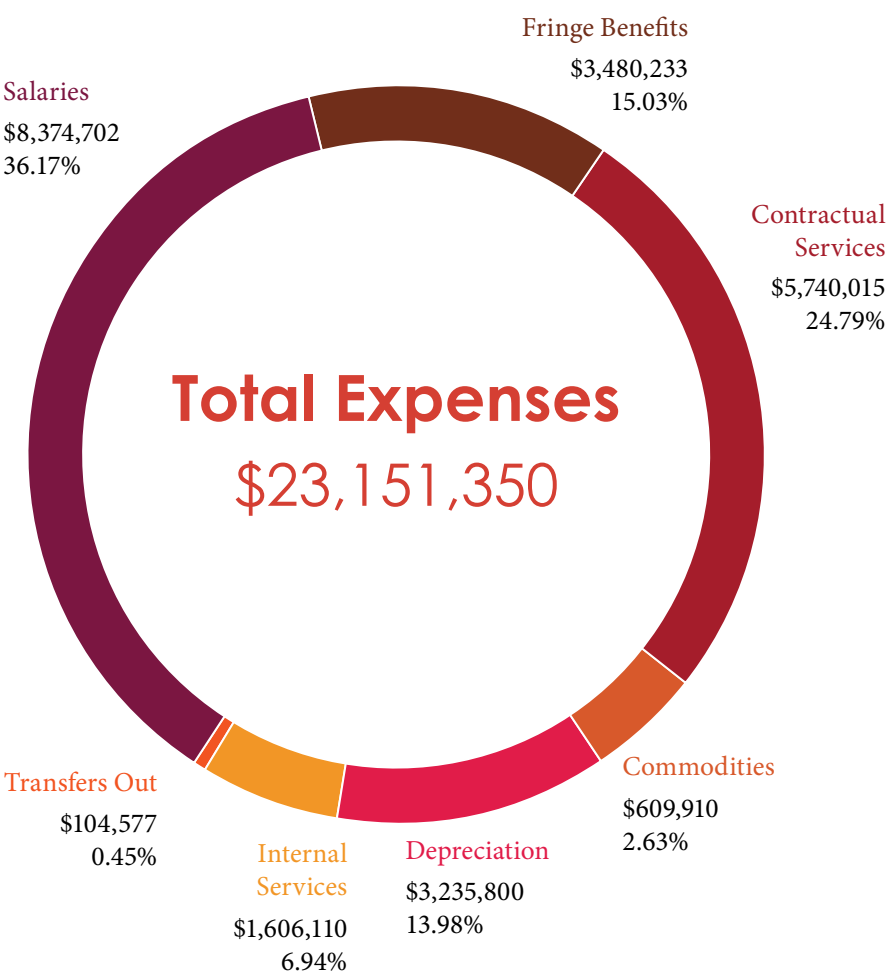


mParks Golden Wrench Award for a Gas Powered Dock Cleaning Tool, Orion Oaks County Park



National Association of Counties Storybook Trail at Red Oaks Nature Center

FY 2020 Financial Data



Editor: Desiree Stanfield

Graphic Design: Garrett Ebbeling

Writers:
Carol Bacak-Egbo
Sarah Cook-Maylen
Stephanie Mackey
Jane Peterson
Melissa Prowse
Desiree Stanfield
Mary Zednik

Photography:
Jeremy Brown
Diana Casetti
Vaughn Gurganian
Rajeane Heiser
Katie Stiefel
Mary Zednik