



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Bipartisan County Commission vote places Oakland County Parks millage proposal on November ballot**

*New funding will allow for greater investments in the renewal of aging park facilities, enhanced access to outdoor recreational activities and preservation of threatened natural areas*

**OAKLAND COUNTY, MI – July 31, 2024** – In a bipartisan vote at its July 18 meeting, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution placing a millage question on the Nov. 5, 2024 General Election ballot that would provide Oakland County Parks with millions in additional funding for needed investments in improved parks, trails and outdoor recreational activities.

“Great parks build healthy, vibrant and thriving communities. I hope everyone will join me in supporting our county millage proposal this November. It’s a wise investment in the renewal of our parks for future generations, free admission and expanded recreational opportunities for all our residents,” said Board of Commissioners Chairman David Woodward (D-Royal Oak).

“Voters deserve an opportunity to choose if they want to support increased taxes to protect the investments we have made in great parks like Independence, Groveland, Lyon and Catalpa Oaks and support other recreational resources that contribute towards making Oakland County a great place to live, work and raise a family,” said Commissioner Mike Gingell (R-Orion Township).

“Parks and natural spaces played a critical role in sustaining our health and well-being during the pandemic. The increased public enthusiasm for recreational activities we experienced during that period is continuing to grow and gain momentum as people look for new opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and get active,” said Parks Commission Chair Ebony Bagley. “We must continue to invest in our recreational facilities to ensure they are welcoming and accessible for people of all backgrounds and abilities.”

“Oakland County Parks has delivered great recreational experiences and lasting memories for our residents for nearly 60 years. The strong support of voters for our millage throughout those years has made all of our successes possible,” said Parks Director Chris Ward. “Their approval of this proposal will provide the funding we need to renew our parks with much needed improvements, develop new parks and trailways in partnership with local communities, and take a more active role in the preservation of threatened natural areas and green space.”

The ballot proposal would authorize the replacement of Oakland County Parks' current 0.35 millage set to expire in 2029 with a new tax rate of 0.65 millage that would expire in 2043. If approved, the net .30 increased rate will generate approximately \$24 million annually for investment in parks, trails, recreation programs and conservation. The impact of the net rate increase for the owner of a home with the county's average residential taxable value would be \$40 a year.

Oakland County residents will benefit from the millage proposal with:

- **FREE entry** and enjoyment of Oakland County Parks and dog parks (excluding pay to play attractions such as golf courses, waterpark, campground, off-road vehicle activities)
- **\$100 million investment** in major capital improvements to improve enjoyment of parks, trails, recreational attractions and the Oakland County Farmers Market
- New and expanded **regional trailways** and improved maintenance of existing trails
- More opportunities for **recreational enjoyment of major rivers**
- Investment in equipment and facilities designed to be **accessible for all, regardless of age and ability**
- Continued **expansion of the park system** with additional locations near population centers through cost-effective **partnerships with local government**
- Support for greater participation in **school field trips to nature and farm education centers** and expanded enrichment programs for people of all ages
- **Preservation and protection** of sensitive **natural habitats, wetlands, and green spaces**

The Oakland County Parks system began in 1966 with one park of 190 acres. Today, it is a 15-park system with more than 7,000 acres, 80 miles of trails and nearly 2 million annual visitors. Oakland County Parks recently entered into partnerships with local governments that resulted in the addition of Pontiac Oaks County Park and planned new park locations in Southfield and Oak Park. In the past two years, local communities have received more than \$2.5 million in financial support for local park and natural resources stewardship projects from Oakland County Parks. Outreach via the Recreation Assistance Partnership Program (RAPP) served 54 of the county's 62 cities, villages and township and reached 118,000 participants. Its Mobile Recreation Program served 313,450 participants. The voter approved dedicated countywide millage provides 70% of the funds that support the operations and programs of Oakland County Parks and the acquisition, improvement and maintenance of its assets.

For more information about Oakland County Parks, visit [OaklandCountyParks.com](https://OaklandCountyParks.com). Join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).