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### **Partnership, state grant result in 36-acre expansion of Pontiac Oaks County Park**

*Minimal land acquisition costs for taxpayers thanks to support of Pontiac Schools and Ducks Unlimited*

**PONTIAC, MI – March 13, 2025** – A major expansion is on tap for Pontiac Oaks County Park (formerly Hawthorne Park) thanks to a new partnership agreement between Oakland County Parks (OCP) and the Pontiac School District and acquisition of land through a grant funded by Ducks Unlimited. With the addition of the former Hawthorne Elementary School site and the newly acquired lakefront property on Walton Boulevard, the existing 77-acre park will be expanded to 113 acres.

“An extraordinary transformation is underway at Pontiac Oaks that will result in a revitalized and expanded park with an abundance of family-friendly recreational activities for the community to enjoy,” Parks Director Chris Ward said. “Oakland County Parks is proud of the role we are playing in giving this gem of an outdoor space a much-needed new lease on life. We are grateful to the elected officials who supported this important new partnership and for the infusion of grant funds from Ducks Unlimited that have made this exciting next chapter for Pontiac Oaks possible.”

“Having access to high-quality recreational, green space is a proven benefit for mental and physical health,” Pontiac School Board President Dr. Anisha Hannah said. “We are fortunate to live, work and learn in a city that is also rich with natural beauty. Pontiac School District is excited to be part of this partnership and is looking forward to the new interactive educational opportunities this expansion will bring for our students and community, as well as the countless hours of enjoyment our families and neighbors will experience there for years to come.”

“I am so excited about this new partnership between Oakland County Parks and the Pontiac School District - it is great to see everyone working together to provide the better recreational opportunities that we need and deserve in Pontiac,” Oakland County Commissioner Angela Powell said. “Expanding Pontiac Oaks will give residents access to trails and waterfront where they can get out, get active and enjoy this beautiful natural space in our community.”

OCP staff has worked hard over the past 18 months to make improvements at Pontiac Oaks while planning for bigger projects that will come to fruition over the next few years. In 2024,

as part of its Healthy Communities Park and Outdoor Recreation Investment Plan, OCP refurbished the playground at the park, added new play equipment, fully renovated and re-opened restrooms, replaced a deteriorating dock with an accessible fishing pier, and worked to remove invasive species and improve the overall park experience for visitors. This summer, OCP will be installing a new trail loop with play elements along the lake, as well as continuing the work to clear invasive species to open viewsheds from the trail. There are also plans to install a new pavilion for picnics and gatherings in the park.

“We wanted everyone using the park to be able to experience the views of this beautiful lake,” Ward said. “Access to water is something we hear our residents want to see more of – this newly opened shoreline will provide beautiful views from the trail as well as restored habitat for native fish and wildlife.”

With the addition of the Pontiac Schools and Walton Boulevard properties, OCP is planning for the next phase of development at Pontiac Oaks. Initial concepts include a trail and/or boardwalk around the lake, and new, kid-centric park amenities such as a water feature, additional “discovery” and sensory trails, micro- or demonstration forests and other nature-based play and learning amenities. Planning for these new amenities will take place this year, with development anticipated in 2026.

“It’s been great to work with the local residents and community leaders on planning for this park,” OCP Chief of Planning Donna Folland said. “Everyone has brought us such great ideas and important feedback that we’ll continue to incorporate into these next phases of park development.”

Pontiac Oaks County Park is located at 1400 Telegraph Road in Pontiac. Park entry is free. Hours are 8 a.m.-dusk.

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