



Orion Oaks County Park

2301 Clarkston Road
Orion, MI 48362

Information: 248-625-0877



Park Information

- Orion Oaks County Park's 916 acres feature 10 miles of hiking and mountain bike trails including bridges and boardwalks over wetland areas.
- Oakland County Parks and Recreation's first dog park opened at Orion Oaks in 2000. Ranked third in the top 12 dog parks in Michigan according to Rover.com, the popular dog park features a 24-acre enclosed area for off-leash play and a "dog dock" with water access for dogs-only swimming.
- Lake Sixteen's 91 acres feature canoe and kayak access as well as fishing docks and an accessible fishing pier where anglers can fish in 10 feet of water. The park offers archery deer hunting in season, in designated hunting zones. Winter activities at the park include cross-country skiing, ice fishing and ice skating.

Natural Resources

- Orion Oaks is part of the headwaters of the Clinton River, and Sashabaw Creek (a tributary to the Clinton River) runs through the park.
- Orion Oaks' combination of upland and wetland habitats are crucial for the life cycle of the federally-threatened Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, a reclusive snake that can be found on the property.
- The park land was likely a combination of conifer swamp, oak savannah and emergent marsh prior to the 1800s.
- Some of the natural community types that can currently be identified, and are being restored on the property, include southern hardwood swamps, oak barren remnants, prairie fens and southern wet meadows.
- Grassland restoration at this site increases crucial habitat for grassland birds including northern bobwhite, eastern meadowlark, eastern bluebird, bobolink, American woodcock, dickcissel and grasshopper sparrow.
- There are a handful of vernal pools on the property in forested pockets that are monitored yearly by natural resources staff.

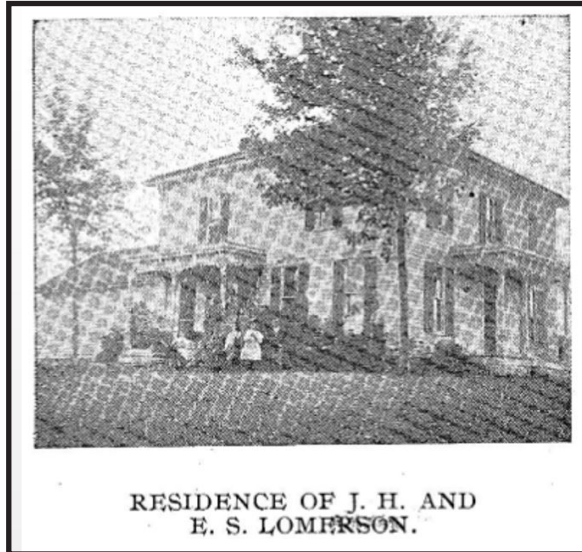
Tree swallow



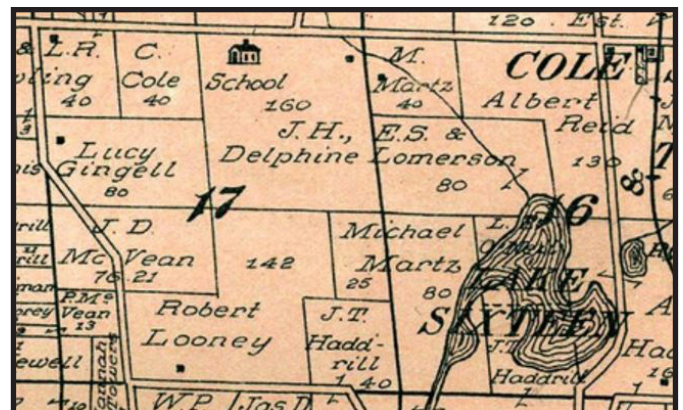
Volunteers remove bittersweet, an invasive species, to restore a natural community at the park

History

- Most of the eastern part of the land that became Orion Oaks was originally the farm of the Cole family which had come to Orion Township from New Jersey in the 1840s. The land remained in the family until the early 1900s. The Cole farmhouse was across Joslyn road from the park but the barn was located in what is now the northeast corner of the park near the dog park. (map to the right)



- Most of the western part of the land that became Orion Oaks was originally the farm of the Lomerson family. Their farmstead was located near Clarkston Road on the north side of the park. It included a large Italianate house, barn, silo, tool shed and a hen house.
- There was once a one-room schoolhouse called Shanghai School just to the west of the land that became the park. It was built sometime between 1860 and 1872 and located on the south side of Clarkston Road near the western border of the park.



1908 Map showing Shanghai School

- Just to the east of the land that became the park, near the corner of Joslyn and Clarkston roads, was a settlement known as Cole or Cole Station. It included a post office and was a flag station on the Pontiac, Oxford & Northern Railroad. It was named after the Cole family who owned the farm on which the station was built. Erastus T. Cole also served as the first postmaster.
- Beginning in 1916, William Scripps, son of the founder of the Detroit News and radio station WWJ, began to purchase farms in Orion Township including the Lomerson and Cole farms, the two original farms on the land that became Orion Oaks. Scripps eventually owned about 3,500 acres of land. He called his estate Wildwood Farm and it included a mansion containing 67 rooms, which is located just southeast of the park.

