

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF GROWING GREAT PARKS



NEWS RELEASE

Desiree Stanfield
Chief Marketing and Communications
248-705-4108 | stanfielddd@oakgov.com

OCP celebrates revitalized Pontiac Oaks Park with July 12 ribbon cutting

\$3 million investment transforms former Hawthorne Park, expands county parks service

PONTIAC, MI – July 6, 2026 – A major renovation of Pontiac Oaks Park will be celebrated during a public ribbon cutting and community event on Sunday, July 12, from 2-6 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Pontiac Oaks, formerly known as Hawthorne Park, became Oakland County Parks' 15th county park in 2023, when the former city park transitioned to county parks management through a partnership with the City of Pontiac, which continues to own the property.

The project is part of Oakland County Parks' Healthy Communities investment strategy and reflects Mission 26, Oakland County Parks' framework for expanding access to high-quality parks, natural spaces and recreation opportunities across the county.

The free public event will include a DJ, food trucks, disc golf demonstrations, fishing demonstrations and family activities. Michigan fishing licenses are required for anglers ages 17 and older. Oakland County Parks will give away free youth fishing poles to the first 50 children.

Pontiac Oaks represents an anticipated investment of \$3 million, including \$1.3 million from the American Rescue Plan Act and approximately \$1.7 million from Oakland County Parks' capital improvement fund.

"Pontiac Oaks is a tremendous asset for Pontiac and all of Oakland County, offering families more opportunities to get outdoors and connect with nature," Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter said. "We're proud to invest more than \$2 million to enhance this beautiful park and to partner with the city to ensure it remains a welcoming destination for generations to come."

"Pontiac's revitalization is about more than buildings; it's about investing in green space and community connection areas for all to enjoy. The reopening of Pontiac Oaks Park will provide

a much-needed place for friends to gather, families to watch their children play and residents to recharge in nature," said Oakland County Board of Commissioners Chair David T. Woodward (D-Royal Oak). "Pontiac Oaks is an exciting example of the Board's commitment to supporting greater access to parks so more residents have the opportunity to experience the beautiful outdoor spaces our county offers."

"The transformation of Pontiac Oaks has been incredible to watch," said Oakland County Commissioner Angela Powell (D-Pontiac). "A special thank you to the City of Pontiac for this outstanding partnership. Together, we've created something truly special: a beautiful park in the heart of our community and the home of Oakland County government. This park is more than just a destination; it is a place where our community can come together, celebrate, thrive and create lasting memories with family and friends."

"Pontiac residents are loving the new, improved park, and I'm thrilled that so many families have a quality, nearby destination where they can make new recreation memories," Pontiac Mayor Mike McGuinness said. "The City of Pontiac is grateful for the investment, partnership and professionalism of the Oakland County Parks team. Let's go, Pontiac - and let's go, Oakland County!"

"Oakland County Parks plays a vital role in bringing people together, and Pontiac Oaks is a powerful example of our commitment to safe, welcoming and vibrant outdoor spaces," Oakland County Parks Commission Chair Ebony Bagley said. "This investment gives residents a place to connect with nature, enjoy time together and build memories for years to come."

Investments across Oakland County

The Pontiac Oaks ribbon cutting is part of Oakland County Parks' expanded presence in more populated communities across the county, including new and planned county park locations in Pontiac, Southfield, Oak Park, Bloomfield Township, Rochester/Rochester Hills and Troy. At the same time, Oakland County Parks is making multi-million-dollar investments in existing and newly added parks, including major renovations, improved amenities and restoration of natural features at Catalpa Oaks in Southfield, Red Oaks Park in Madison Heights, Southfield Oaks at the former Beech Woods Golf Course and Waterford Oaks in Waterford.

Together, these projects show how local partnerships can grow the county park system, improve existing public land, bring county parks service closer to residents and create welcoming outdoor places that support health, connection and quality of life.

"Pontiac Oaks is part of a larger strategy to grow Oakland County Parks in ways that bring county parks service closer to where people live and create great outdoor spaces residents will want to return to again and again," Oakland County Parks Director Chris Ward said. "We are grateful to the City of Pontiac's leadership and residents for embracing this partnership, and we are excited to celebrate this milestone together. As this phase opens to the public, our focus now shifts to developing a thoughtful plan for the park's expanded acreage and its future role in serving Pontiac and Oakland County."

Park improvements

Pontiac Oaks preserves approximately 122 acres of green space in a lush setting filled with mature trees, natural areas and recreational opportunities. The park features the shorelines of Creger Lake and Upper Silver Lake, with water access for kayaking, canoeing and fishing through a dock and boat launch.

Improvements include:

- Trail improvements with accessible pathways
- Nature play pockets
- New pavilion
- Redesigned 18-hole disc golf course
- Shoreline vegetation management and invasive species removal to open views of Creger Lake and Upper Silver Lake
- Natural area restoration and forest management

Previous improvements completed since 2023 include a larger fishing pier, playground expansion, accessible kayak launch and restroom renovations.

Pontiac Oaks is expanding from its original 77 acres to approximately 122 acres. The expansion includes the former Hawthorne Elementary School site, added through a partnership with the Pontiac School District, as well as additional lakefront and ecological parcels.

Additional Pontiac investment

In addition to the Pontiac Oaks project, the City of Pontiac received a \$100,000 Community Park and Trail grant for improvements at Mattie McKinney Hatchett Park, and a \$500,000 Healthy Communities Plan grant to help reclaim and revitalize Crystal Lake Park so residents can better enjoy its environmental, recreational and historic resources.

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

About Oakland County Parks

Founded in 1966, Oakland County Parks provides more than 7,000 acres of natural areas, parks, trails and recreation destinations that offer year-round opportunities for recreation, wellness and connection to nature.

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