

#### **Motor Vehicle Permits**

Parking fees are collected from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day at the following parks:

- Tunnel Park
- Rosy Mound Natural Area
- Olive Shores
- North Beach Park
- Kirk Park
- Riverside Park (boat launch only)
- Kouw Park
- Windsnest Park

State Recreation Passport is **not valid** at Ottawa **County Parks** 

**Daily Motor Vehicle Fee Annual Permit** 

\$8 per vehicle \$25 per vehicle

- Discounted to \$15 per vehicle for Ottawa County residents (add vehicle for \$5)
- Discounted to \$9 per vehicle for Ottawa County resident seniors age 60+ (add vehicle for \$3)
- Discounted to \$10 for Port Sheldon Township residents and \$4 to Port Sheldon Township Seniors (subsidized by Port Sheldon Township)

**Reminder:** Ottawa County no longer issues a sticker or hangtag. Your new digital permit requires you to register your license plate online or at a park pay station.

Purchase your permit online at ottawacounty.cmrpay.com





## Did you know?

Bridge Card holders in Michigan can receive a free annual motor vehicle permit.

To receive a coupon code, inquire inside the DHHS office or call 616-394-7200 and press "0" to speak with an operator. The Ottawa County Parks fee waiver program is limited to one permit per household.



### Pump House Museum FREE

The Pump House Museum & Learning Center in Holland will be open from June 1 through Labor Day!

The "Sparking Change" exhibit explores innovations in communication, transportation, recreation, and mechanization, which sparked a transformation in many aspects of the American way of life. Visitors will be challenged to send and receive telegraph messages in Morse code.

For museum hours and to learn more, visit historicottawabeachsociety.org





## Check out the results of our strategic planning efforts!

miOttawa.org/strategicplan



## **Pedal the Pigeon**

August 17, 9:30-11:30 am, Pigeon Creek Park A mountain bike race just for kids! Sign up by August 14.

### National Parks & Recreation Month

In collaboration with the National Recreation and Park Association. we'll celebrate parks this July! Join us for a program (page six) or by sharing the positive impact parks have had on your life on social media. Tag us in your photos or use #ottawacountyparks



velo-kids.org/events



## **News & Updates**

## **Ottawa Sands Progress**



#### **Grand River Greenway**

Exciting updates from Ottawa Sands! Anticipated to reopen in late summer 2024, the park is abuzz with new developments. Here are the improvements that are currently underway:

- Development of a day-use area with a parking lot and restroom
- Construction of a paved and accessible pathway around the inland lake
- Installation of updated trail signage
- Completion of the Idema Explorers Camp (IEC)
- Restoration of the inland lake shoreline and establishment of interdunal wetlands. Learn more about the restoration work at gl.audubon.org/news

We are excited to welcome you back to Ottawa Sands later this summer and appreciate your patience during this time. In the meantime, we recommend exploring North Ottawa Dunes, which connects to PJ Hoffmaster, or North Beach Park.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for further updates! Sign up for email updates: *bit.ly/ottawasandsnews* 

Scan the QR code to

Reminder:

Ottawa Sands is

currently closed

to the public.







Construction commenced this spring on the day-use area parking lot and modern restroom.



Approximately six acres of interdunal wetlands will be created which will provide habitat for diverse wildlife and birds.



The IEC will feature three treehouses, five yurts, and ten tent pads. Reservation availability will be announced once an opening date is confirmed.

## **Ecological Enhancement Progress Continues along Grand River Coastal Corridor**

#### **Grand River Greenway**

Current work to create interdunal wetlands at Ottawa Sands grows not only out of the Ottawa Sands Master Plan but also the 2021 Grand River Coastal Corridor (GRCC) Assessment. To continue to implement the recommendations of the GRCC Assessment and to support the Renew Harbor Island process, the OCPRC secured \$275,000 in grant funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Coastal Resilience Program. This funding will support the next phase of ecological planning and analysis at Harbor Island and Ottawa Sands.

This summer, OCPRC anticipates kicking-off this project which will include natural features assessments and preliminary design for feasible ecological enhancements at Ottawa Sands and Harbor Island.

Learn more at news.miottawa.org/grccdevelopment



Photo of Ottawa Sands & the Sag by Asia Rasch

## Under Construction: Idema Explorers Trail - Stearns Bayou Connector

#### **Grand River Greenway**

Construction on the latest segment of the Idema Explorers Trail, which will finalize the western third of the trail, began this spring. The project involves adding a new pathway lane on the bridge over Stearns Bayou and two "bump-outs." The bridge extension will not only improve safety along this route but also provide better access for fishing and observing wildlife at Stearns Bayou. This project will complete the 24-mile long Grand Crossings loop around the Grand River between the US 31 and M-231 Grand River bridges.

Learn more: news.miottawa.org/stearns-bayou-connector



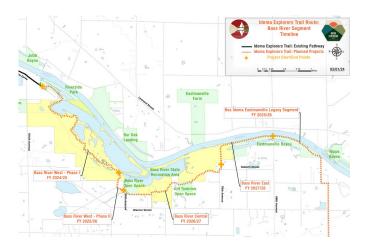
Photo of the Green Street bridge by Prein&Newhof

## Funding Agreement Approved for Bass River Trail Segment

#### **Grand River Greenway**

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners recently approved an agreement to provide \$715,000 in funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for the completion of the Bass River Segment of the Idema Explorers Trail. The Bass River Segment will connect over 7.4 miles and 1,995 acres of land, including a large stretch of the 1,665-acre Bass River State Recreation Area. This section would mark the longest continuous section of the Idema Explorers Trail. Additional funding is anticipated to be received from the Ottawa County Parks Foundation's Grand River Greenway Fund and other grants.

Learn more: news.miottawa.org/bassriversegment



## **Kirk Park Updates & Renovations**

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

#### **Dog Beach Hours**

Exciting news for all dog lovers! This summer, dogs are being welcomed back to the south beach area of Kirk Park to play off-leash during all park hours. The south stairs were reconstructed in late 2023 and access has been restored at the southern entry point. Let the beach adventures begin!

#### Renovations

A Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant spurred exciting renovations at Kirk Park. Pop into Kirk Park on June 27 from 4-6 pm for an open house style event to celebrate the completed renovations. Check out the new playground, go on a scavenger hunt, and enjoy a popsicle!

Learn more at news.miottawa.org/kirkparkupdates

A new playground has been replaced and relocated.



Restroom renovations include an addition of changing rooms and a new roof.

#### **Off-leash Beach Hours**

May 1 - September 30: Dogs are allowed offleash on the south beach area during all hours of park operation. Dogs are not allowed on the north end of the beach.

October 1 - April 30: Dogs are allowed on Kirk Park north and south beach off-leash.

Dogs must be leashed on trails at all times.



Dog enjoying the beach. Photo by Jessica McMahan

## Education & Outreach



## **Tick & Mosquito Surveillance**

The Department of Public Health will be conducting tick and mosquito surveillance through September in county parks. This research involves tick drags, where a tick cloth is dragged along the trail edge, and placing 24-hour mosquito traps at various sites. Identified tick and mosquito pools will be tested for Lyme disease and West Nile virus by the state. These results, along with data from other counties, will be used by the state to produce arbovirus summaries available at *michigan.gov/emergingdiseases* 

If you notice this activity taking place in a park, please allow space for the surveillance to be carried out. For those interested in delving deeper into tick research, learn more during the upcoming Tick Talk event detailed on page six.

Learn more: news.miottawa.org/ticksurveillance



## Help Keep Oak Trees Healthy

Oak wilt is a fungal disease that can kill oak trees, particularly red oak species, within a month of showing symptoms. The fungus is carried by small beetles that feed on sap from fresh tree wounds resulting from storm damage, pruning cuts, or other injuries. The infection can also spread through root connections between similar tree species or through the movement of infected logs and firewood.

How can you help? The MDNR is urging homeowners not to prune any oak trees during the high-risk period from April 15 to July 15. It is also important to not move infected logs or firewood during the high-risk period. If you suspect oak wilt, call the DNR or the district forester. If you are at a County Park, contact us at ocparks@miottawa.org

Learn more: news.miottawa.org/oak-wilt



## **Friends of Ottawa County Parks**

Friends members are passionate about our Parks and assisting individuals in exploring the wide range of opportunities they offer! Throughout this summer, they will be attending events in different communities to discuss everything from hiking trails and programs to invasive species and volunteer opportunities. Drop by their table to discover more about Parks! Check out some of the locations where you can find them this summer:

- June 13 BPW Safety Fair Holland
- June 15 Juneteenth Holland
- July 13 Macatawa Water Festival Holland 🔒
- September 7 Sportsmen for Youth Muskegon





## **Become a Beach Buddy!**

Help keep our beaches clean this summer by becoming a Beach Buddy! Booths at Tunnel Park, Kirk Park, and North Beach Park will be outfitted with buckets for visitors to participate in the Beach Buddy program. To participate, request a Beach Buddy bucket and pick up any trash you can find on the beach. It's that easy! This program is offered in partnership with the Lakeshore Clean Up Coalition.

Learn more at news.miottawa.org/beach-buddies



LAKESHORE CLEANUP COALITION





### Zee Bus at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave

June 20, 27; July 11, 18, 25; August 1, 8 Thursdays from 11:00 am-1:00 pm

Enjoy some summer reading on the Zee Bus! The Zee Bus is a rolling library that travels around the Zeeland area during the summer. On Thursdays, Ottawa County Parks outdoor educators will provide nature activities at Upper Macatawa Natural Area.

For a full schedule, follow the Zee Bus page @facebook.com/ZeeBus2013



## Connecting with Nature Series

Join the Ottawa County Parks Foundation (OCPF) for their Connecting with Nature series, where they will showcase various activities enjoyed by supporters of our Ottawa County Parks.



During this series, OCPF will be highlighting nature-based activities and encouraging you to explore new recreational opportunities From popular activities like mountain biking,

hiking, skiing, swimming, and fishing to less traditional ones like forest bathing, artistic endeavors, and volunteering – there is something for everyone.

Regardless of the activity, the common thread is the opportunity to immerse oneself in nature, which has been scientifically linked to numerous benefits such as improved attention and reduced stress and anxiety levels.



Find the series in the Ottawa County Parks Foundation's monthly e-newsletter. Scan the QR code to sign up!

ottawacountyparksfoundation.org/newsletter

## **Volunteer Spotlight: White Pines**

We are celebrating our 12<sup>th</sup> year collaborating with White Pines Intermediate School for a week of volunteering. This spring, 450 White Pines students came together to collect 116 55-gallon bags of garlic mustard. This resulted in the removal of around 5,800 lbs of this invasive plant from the ecosystem. White Pines students alone have boosted our annual volunteer hours by nearly 1,000 hours! Their dedication and effort are greatly appreciated.

We have a variety of different volunteer activities for all ages! Learn more and become a volunteer: *miottawa.org/volunteer* 



## **Explore with your Local Libraries**

We are partnering with local libraries to provide several opportunities to get outside this summer! StoryWalks will be posted along a path for you and your family to read together. Stories are self-guided and available during park hours.

You can also pick up a scavenger hunt for some family fun through various Ottawa County Parks. We are hoping to expand to more libraries in the near future.

### **Scavenger Hunts**

Swing by Herrick District Library, Georgetown Township Public Library, or Howard Miller Public Library to pick up a sensory-based scavenger hunt.

Afterward, visit the Nature Center at Hemlock Crossing County Park to tell us about your adventures and pick up a prize!

Dates	Location	StoryWalk Title
6/17-6/30	Paw Paw Park - West 釓	Go to Sleep, Gecko! A Balinese Folktale
7/1-7/21	Hemlock Crossing	*The Way Champs Play
7/15-7/28	Paw Paw Park - East 釓	The Little Red Fort / El Fuertecito Rojo
7/29-8/18	Pine Bend	Summer Song
8/5-8/25	Connor Bayou 🌑	On a Magical Do Nothing Day
8/5-8/25	Outdoor Discovery Center	*The Hike
8/12-8/25	Paw Paw Park - West 📤	Zap! Clap! Boom! The Story of a Thunderstorm





# Programs & Activities

Unless otherwise noted, registration closes 24 hours prior to the activity.



## Into Nature

#### WILDFLOWER WALK [FREE]



Registration appreciated (ages 12+)

On this casual hike, you'll experience the variety of prairie wildflowers blooming in our parks through the summer.

6/23	2-3 pm	Hemlock Crossing
7/28	2-3 pm	Grand Ravines - North 🌑
8/31	2-3 pm	Upper Macatawa NA - 84th 🤚
9/15	2-3 pm	Hemlock Crossing

#### WILDFLOWER IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Registration required, Res-\$5 / Non-Res-\$6 (ages 12+)

Learn to identify native flowering plants using Newcomb's Wildflower Guide. We'll learn different leaf and flower types, how to count floral parts, and more!

2-4 pm **Hemlock Crossing** 

#### BUTTERFLY WALK FREE



Registration appreciated (ages 12+)

Explore a meadow habitat and the butterflies and wildflowers that grow there. We will attempt to ID them through various means and discuss host plants for different butterfly species. Binoculars and/or cameras are encouraged to help with ID.

7/9	6-7:30 pm	Hemlock Crossing
7/30	6-7:30 pm	Paw Paw Park - East 🕒

#### NATURALLY SPEAKING FREE





Registration appreciated (ages 12+)

This speaker series is designed to address topics related to the natural, cultural, and historical features of Ottawa County Parks.

#### In Tune with Hummingbirds

7/11	7-8:30 pm	Hemlock Crossing
8/15	7-8:30 pm	Grand Ravines - North

#### **Ottawa County Parks Update**

7-8:30 pm Hemlock Crossing

### **DUNE DISCOVERY FREE**



Registration appreciated (ages 12+)

Hike through geological history as you wander the backdune forest of Rosy Mound and out to the shores of Lake Michigan.

7/23	6-7:30 pm	Rosy Mound Natural Area
8/20	6-7:30 pm	Rosy Mound Natural Area

#### **AWARENESS, ART, & ACTION: BUTTERFLIES**

Registration required, Res-\$10 / Non-Res-\$15 (ages 12+)

Explore the wonderful world of butterflies! We'll learn about their habitats, adaptations, and interactions, and what they need to thrive all while creating nature journal entries based on what we see. Then, find out how you can aid and protect these creatures.

8/17 1-3 pm **Hemlock Crossing** 

> **Online registration:** miOttawa.org/OCPevents

#### **EARTH ENCOUNTERS: PETOSKEY STONES**

Registration required, Res-\$5 / Non-Res-\$6 (ages 8+)

Petoskey stones are a familiar rock to most of us. Come and learn the natural and cultural history of our State Stone. Bring your own stone to polish or we'll have some for you to try.

3-4:30 pm **Hemlock Crossing** 

### BIRD WALK FREE



#### Registration appreciated (ages 12+)

Whether you're an avid birder or just desiring to experience birds beyond your backyard, join us as we search for warblers, sparrows and more on these birding walks around the county.

9/4	8-10 am	Ottawa Sands 🌑
9/8	2-4 pm	Hemlock Crossing
9/18	8-10 am	Paw Paw Park - West 실

#### BIRDING FIELD TRIP

Registration required, Res-\$10 / Non-Res-\$15 (ages 12+)

Shorebirds are on their way south for the winter. Intercept and identify a variety of them on these half day field trip options.

9/7	7:30-11:30 am	Off Site Activity
9/7	1-5 pm	Off Site Activity

#### MONARCH TAGGING FREE



Registration appreciated (ages 12+)

During this hands-on experience, we'll venture to a popular monarch migration site and learn how to carefully net and tag monarch butterflies with Monarch Watch tags.

Paw Paw Park - East (4)

## ecial Events

### TICK TALK FREE

Join Dr. Will Miller, a wildlife biologist from Calvin University, to learn about the spread and tracking of ticks in West Michigan. He will also discuss what you can do to minimize tick exposure!

**Hemlock Crossing** 6/29

#### ASTRONOMY PROGRAMS FREE



Join the Shoreline Amateur Astronomical Association for an astronomy program at Hemlock Crossing (weather permitting). Visit *holland-saaa.org* for details.

7/13	9-11pm	Public Observing
8/10	9-11pm	Public Observing
9/14	8-9 pm	Astronomy in Art

#### MACATAWA WATER FESTIVAL FREE



Attend the Macatawa Water Festival for a family fun day of learning the importance of the Macatawa Watershed.

9 am-1 pm Windmill Island Gardens

#### PEDAL THE PIGEON WITH VELO KIDS

Join Velo Kids for a kids mountain bike race at Pigeon Creek! Registration is required by August 14 at velo-kids.org/events

9:30-11:30 am Pigeon Creek Park

### **Contact us with questions:**

(616) 786-4847 naturecenter@miottawa.org



The Idema Explorers Trail connects parks along the Grand River Greenway.



The Macatawa River Greenway connects parks along the Macatawa River.

## Recreation & Health

#### **NATURE JOURNALING**

Registration required, Res-\$5 / Non-Res-\$6 (ages 18+)

Gather to learn new drawing and writing techniques specific to a theme while enjoying community connection. Journals are not provided. \*Introduction program geared towards beginners

7/6*	10-11:30 am	Hemlock Crossing
7/27	10-11:30 am	Hemlock Crossing
8/17	10-11:30 am	Paw Paw Park - East 실
9/14	10-11:30 am	Ottawa Sands 🌑

#### YOGA AT THE NATURE CENTER

Registration required, Res-\$10 / Non-Res-\$15 (18+)

Come practice yoga at the Nature Center with a certified yoga instructor! Yoga mats are not provided.

7/7	3-4 pm	Hemlock Crossing
8/11	3-4 pm	Hemlock Crossing
9/15	3-4 pm	Hemlock Crossing

#### WILDFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY

Registration required, Res-\$5 / Non-Res-\$6 (ages 18+)

Summer is the season of meadow flowers! Grab a camera and come walk through a meadow in search of summer wildflowers.

7/10	6-7:30 pm	Paw Paw Park - East 📤
8/12	6-7:30 pm	Grand Ravines - North 🌑

#### **PADDLE THE PIGEON**



Registration required, Res-\$25 / Non-Res-\$30 (ages 12+) Join us on a leisurely guided kayak trip down the Pigeon River through Hemlock Crossing and Pine Bend. Kayak included.

1-5 pm	Hemlock Crossing
1-5 pm	Hemlock Crossing
9 am-1 pm	Hemlock Crossing
1-5 pm	Hemlock Crossing
	1-5 pm 9 am-1 pm

#### PADDLEBOARD THE MACATAWA RIVER

Registration required, Res-\$50 / Non-Res-\$60 (ages 12+) Join us for a paddleboard trip on the Macatawa River. As we travel, we will look for flora and fauna. Paddleboard included.

7/20	9:30 am-1 pm	Paw Paw Park - West 🔔
8/18	12:30-4 pm	Paw Paw Park - West 🔔

#### MOONLIGHT KAYAK TRIP

8:30-10:30 pm



Hemlock Crossing

**Registration required, Res-\$25 / Non-Res-\$30 (ages 12+)**Join us on a guided nighttime kayak trip down the Pigeon River,

enjoying the evening sky and moonlit sounds as you paddle. Kayaking experience is required. Kayak included.

#### RIDE THROUGH ROBINSON HISTORY

Registration required, Res-\$10 / Non-Res-\$15 (ages 18+)

Come pedal through history with us on the Idema Explorers and Spoonville trails. On this 12-mile slow roll bike ride we will stop to learn about interesting events and places from the past.

9/21 1-4 pm Riverside Park

## Kids & Families

#### **FAMILY CAMPFIRE**

Registration required, Res-\$5 / Non-Res-\$6 (all ages)

As evening falls upon the woods, gather around the campfire to make S'mores and engage in various campfire activities.

6/21	8-9:30 pm	Pigeon Creek Park
7/26	8-9:30 pm	Pigeon Creek Park
8/30	8-9:30 pm	Pigeon Creek Park
9/27	8-9:30 pm	Pigeon Creek Park

#### FAMILY NATURE DAY FREE





Registration appreciated (all ages)

Bring the whole family and explore nature with activities, a craft, and more! Each adventure has a unique theme and location.

7/20	10 am-4 pm	Wild Prairies! at Hemlock Crossing
8/10	10 am-4 pm	Explore the Grand! at Grand River Park ¶
9/21	10 am-4 pm	Rendezvous! at Connor Bayou 🌑

#### **TUNED INTO NATURE**

Registration required, Res-\$5 / Non-Res-\$6 (ages 2-4)

Kids ages 2-4 can bring their favorite grown up to sing songs, dance, and learn about nature together. We'll spend time making and moving to music based on a nature theme and go outside for a walk to explore it outdoors.

9/18 9:30-10:30 am Hemlock Crossing

#### STORYWALKS FREE

Pages from a featured book will be posted along a path for your family to read together. StoryWalks are self-guided and available during park hours. Find a full schedule on page 5.

news.miottawa.org/storywalks





For specific dates, themes, & to sign up, visit: bit.ly/OCPcamps

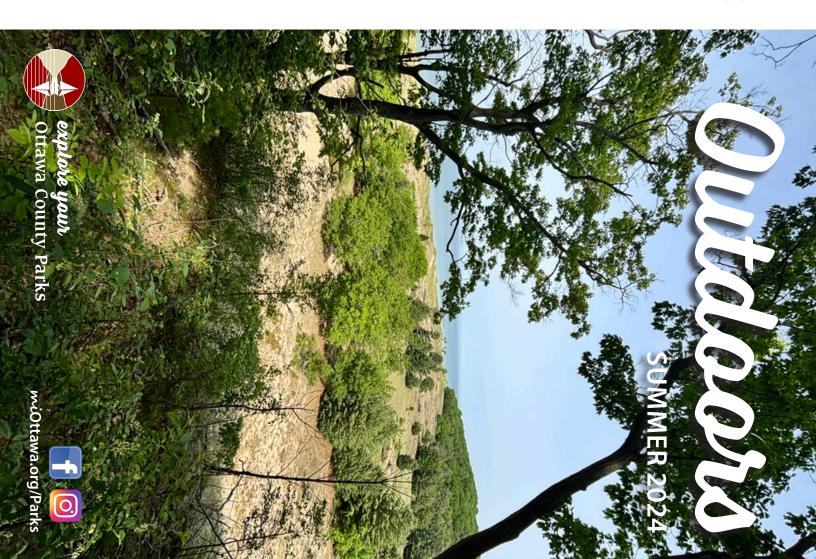
EARLY SPROUTS - AGES 4-5 (w/caregiver) 9:30-11 am • Hemlock Crossing / Hager Park

Registration required, Res-\$10 / Non-Res-\$15 Each week, we will explore a different natural theme through music, games, books, outdoor exploration, and crafts. A caregiver must remain with the child.

#### NATURE BUDS - AGES 6-8

9:30-11:30 am • Hemlock Crossing / Hager Park

Registration required, Res-\$10 / Non-Res-\$15 Nature Buds will explore and engage with nature through activities that may include using dip nets in the wetland, catching insects, and searching for salamanders!





This newsletter is printed on 10% post-consumer waste recycled paper