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OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS AND MSU EXTENSION JOIN FORCES TO DELIVER IMPROVED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC

- *Beginning October 1, Oakland County Parks and MSU Extension will operate under a shared vision and united organizational structure*
- *The partnership will combine the research, education, and outreach strengths of MSU Extension with the public spaces, programs, and community reach of Oakland County Parks*

WATERFORD, Mich. (September 16, 2025) — Oakland County residents will soon have more ways to learn, grow, and connect with nature, thanks to a new partnership between Oakland County Parks and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension.

Established in 1914, MSU Extension brings education to local communities through classes, community events, and online resources provided by hundreds of educators across the state. The new collaboration will combine MSU Extension's century-long legacy of research-based education with Oakland County Parks' 7,000 acres of public spaces, recreation programs, and community reach.

The result? Expanded opportunities for families, youth, and residents of all ages to access trusted expertise on topics ranging from gardening and animal agriculture to invasive species, nutrition, finances, food safety, environmental stewardship, and more. Upcoming events are viewable [here](#).

"MSU Extension brings extraordinary services and resources, along with a track record of positively impacting the lives of county residents for more than 100 years," said Chris Ward, Director of Oakland County Parks. "By joining forces with their incredible team of educators and public servants, we're creating more opportunities to provide high-quality recreation and outdoor experiences for our residents."

How residents will benefit:

- **On-site workshops and classes** through Oakland County Parks covering topics like healthy cooking, backyard gardening, pollinator habitats, outdoor skills, and more.
- **Youth programs** such as 4-H, archery, and nature-based learning offered at park facilities.
- **“Ask an Expert”** opportunities available for residents to get answers about plants, food safety, and natural resources, now promoted through the park system.
- **Volunteer and stewardship opportunities** for residents who want to learn while giving back to their community.

Efforts will begin immediately, with joint programming and co-branded initiatives expected to launch this fall. The partnership is part of the parks’ broader effort to expand access, improve facilities, and provide high-quality experiences for residents across Oakland County.

“Oakland County Parks has done an exceptional job in cultivating vibrant outdoor recreation spaces across the county,” said Kristi Evans, MSU Extension’s District Director. “Together, we’re combining the strengths of both organizations to build on that strong foundation and expand opportunities for fun, learning, and meaningful community engagement.”

County leaders praised the collaboration as a win for the public.

“Parks are where people go to recharge, connect, and grow,” said County Commission Vice Chairperson Marcia Gershenson. “When we add MSU Extension’s great programs to these spaces, we expand opportunities for people to learn, grow, and improve their overall well-being.”

For more information on Oakland County Parks and MSU Extension’s unified efforts, visit oaklandcountyparks.com.

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About Oakland County Parks

For nearly 60 years, Oakland County Parks has provided year-round recreation across 17 locations, including trails, golf courses, waterparks, accessible playscapes, and natural habitats. Committed to inclusion, stewardship, and community, Oakland County Parks brings people together through innovative programs and events. Learn more at OaklandCountyParks.com.

About MSU Extension

Michigan State University Extension (MSU Extension), the outreach arm of MSU’s College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, delivers the university’s research and educational resources directly to communities. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped Michigan residents improve their lives through practical, research-based knowledge in food, health, agriculture, youth development, and natural resources. Learn more at canr.msu.edu/outreach.