

## **Coming Soon: A New Lake Michigan Park at Olive Shores**

At its December 1 meeting, the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission received exciting news that the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) selected the Olive Shores Improvement Project to be on the list of projects recommended for funding in the current grant cycle. The MNRTF recommendations will be presented to the state legislature in early 2011 for inclusion in an appropriation bill. If funds are successfully appropriated, the grant funds will likely be made available later in 2011 with park improvements scheduled for completion in 2012.

Olive Shores is a new 20 acre county park with 738 feet of Lake Michigan frontage located in Port Sheldon Township. Land acquisition for the park was completed in 2009. One of the parcels is the filming site for scenes from the movie *Road to Perdition* starring Tom Hanks. A master plan was developed through a public master planning process in the fall of 2009 with assistance from a grant through the State's Coastal Management Program. The Parks Commission submitted the grant proposal to the MNRTF in the spring of 2010.

The \$365,000 grant will be matched with county park millage funds to undertake park improvements estimated to cost \$730,000. Park improvements will include a 50 car parking lot, barrier free trails through the backdune forest, and a main trail with a stairway leading park visitors over a large dune known as Mt. Olive and to the beach on Lake Michigan. The design of all park facilities will emphasize preservation of the site's unique natural features.

Other park improvements will include modern restrooms, interpretive signs, barrier free picnic sites, viewing areas on the dune top, and a boardwalk along the dune ridge providing scenic views of Lake Michigan. A separate pedestrian and bike access trail will provide access from Olive Shores Drive.

Ottawa County Parks is working to establish greenways along the Lake Michigan coast and the county's three major river corridors. The Olive Shores project will provide much needed additional access to Lake Michigan. Funding for the greenway initiatives comes from the county parks millage, a ten year tax levy that was renewed by voters in 2006.