

County Administrator's Digest

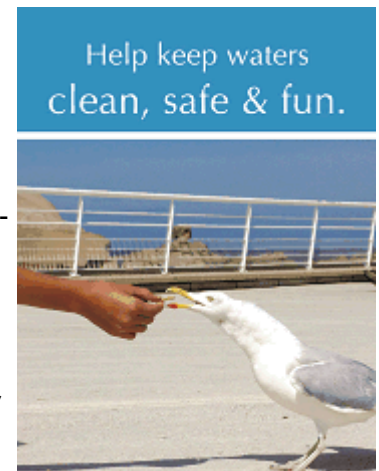
July 1, 2013

Alan G. Vanderberg, County Administrator

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OTTAWA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A HEALTHY SUMMER BREAK (Kristina Wieghmink)

The weather is getting hotter and that means residents will be going to our beautiful County beaches. Natural bodies of water contain microorganisms regardless of how clean or clear the waters look. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, germs that cause Recreational Water Illnesses are spread by swallowing, breathing in the mists or aerosols from, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, hot tubs, interactive fountains, water play areas, lakes, rivers, or oceans. Contaminates include rain and agricultural runoff, animal excrement, and faulty septic systems. The Ottawa County Health Department encourages residents to take preventive steps to minimize health risks and enjoy your summer break.



Help prevent recreational water illnesses:

- **Do not feed the birds.**
- **Keep pets off the beach.**
- **Use the restroom before swimming.**
- **Do not swallow lake water.**
- **Wash your hands with soap and water before eating.**
- **Do not swim in water that smells foul.**
- **Shower when you return home.**
- **Avoid swimming immediately after heavy rainfall.**

The Ottawa County Health Department monitors conditions and tests bacteria levels to study and minimize the risk of recreational water illnesses. Water is tested for E. coli from 16 public beaches throughout the summer and the results are posted on our website at www.miottawa.org/beachwatch and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/miottawabeachwatch.



EPA Employee in County Doing Work Connected to the Safe Drinking Water Act (Keith Van Beek)

County administration received a courtesy visit from an inspector of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notifying us of work he will be doing for the remainder of the year in Ottawa County. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), certain industrial establishments, and especially vehicle repair and oil change facilities, may not discharge oil and other contaminants in a way that would pollute the ground water. The EPA inspector, Robert Julius, will be visiting facilities in Ottawa County to educate on these requirements and necessary steps to correct any deficiencies. It appears the EPA's intent is to visit a majority or all vehicle repair and oil change facilities that are not in sewer district, and a representative sample of those facilities that are within a sewer district. We thought it would be helpful to make our local government partners aware of this activity. Questions can be directed to Robert Julianus at rejulianus@gmail.com.

OCCDA – JULY DISPATCH MEASURES (Tim Smith, Executive Director, OCCDA)

The call volume and incident numbers handled through Central Dispatch for June 2013 were:

Total Incidents – 10,475 down 9.6% over June 2012 and down 2.9% YTD over 2012

Fire Incidents – 1,121 down 8.1% over June 2012 and even YTD over 2012

Law Incidents – 9,354 down 9.7% over June 2012 and down 3.5% YTD over 2012

911 Calls – 9,718 down 8.9% over June 2012 and down 3.5% YTD over 2012

911 Hang Up calls – 944 down 8% over June 2012 and down 11.5% YTD over 2012

Wireless 911 calls – 90.3% of 911 calls for June 2013 and 87.4% of 911 calls YTD 2013

911 calls answered in 10 seconds or less – 90.3% for June 2013 and 93.1% YTD 2013

(NENA recommended standard is 90% within 10 seconds)

LEGISLATIVE FORUM

Last Monday's Legislative Forum was one of the best attended to date with over 65 registered for the event. Sen. Arlen Meekhof, Rep. Amanda Price, and Rep. Roger Victory were present from our legislative delegation in Lansing; Greg Van Woerkum was present from Congressman Huizenga's Office; and Jim Miller from GCSI, the County lobby firm in Lansing.

ROAD COMMISSION AND PUBLIC UTILITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS

The County Board of Commissioners and the Board of County Road Commissioners jointly commissioned two separate studies last year: 1) a study of whether the Public Utilities Department should remain under the management of the Road Commission or whether it should be organized under a different statute that would place it under County Board of Commissioners authority; and 2) a study of whether the County Board of Commissioners should assume the duties of the Board of Road Commissioners per PA 14 & 15 of 2012 which for the first time allowed such action.

The reports have been submitted to the Board of Commissioners by the deadline of July 1, 2013. The next step will be to present and discuss the study findings at a joint Work Session between the County Board of Commissioners and Board of County Road Commissioners on July 9, immediately following the County Board of Commissioners regular meeting, which starts at 1:30 PM. Both reports will be post to miOttawa.org with the Work Session Agenda on Tuesday, July 2 no later than 5 PM.

SEAGULLS ON THE BEACH: OTTAWA COUNTY SPENDS \$32,000 ON BIRD STUDY TARGETING MICHIGAN PARKS (M-Live)

This article was published on M-Live on June 28 and covers the recent decision by the Board to help fund the seagull study in North Ottawa. I received a note from Peter Secchia this morning thanking the County for the ongoing effort in this regard.

Seagulls on the beach: Ottawa County spends \$32,000 on bird study targeting Lake Michigan parks



(File art | MLive.com)

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By [Greg Chandler | The Grand Rapids Press](#) The Grand Rapids Press

on June 28, 2013 at 2:02 PM, updated June 28, 2013 at 6:16 PM

OTTAWA COUNTY, MI – Ottawa County officials are giving a funding boost to a research effort that could help limit seagull activity along county beaches.

Commissioners recently approved spending more than \$32,000 to have researchers from Central Michigan University capture and tag ring-neck gulls on county beaches with radio transmitters. The devices would then track the gulls' movements, a move officials say will help them better understand bird habits and as a result, develop better approaches to keeping gulls away.

"It's part of our ongoing effort to make sure we maintain our water quality and beach sand quality to the best standard we can," County Administrator Al Vanderberg said.

Seagulls have been linked to contamination of water and beach sand, including E. coli, according to CMU researchers Elizabeth Alm and Thomas Gehring, who gave an initial presentation of their work at the county's Water Quality Forum late last year.

"Gulls at Great Lakes beaches impair water quality and are an emerging public health and economic issue for coastal communities," the researchers wrote in their report.

The CMU researchers studied four areas along Lake Michigan: Kirk Park and Rosy Mound Natural Area, in Grand Haven Township; Grand Haven Beach Association in the city of Grand Haven and North Beach Park in Ferrysburg. As part of their study, they used border collies to see if they could get the gulls to leave.

Funding from the study will not come from general tax dollars, but from a special environmental projects fund established with proceeds from the sale of red pine trees that had been harvested from county parks, Vanderberg said.

A report on the new study is expected at this year's county Water Quality Forum, Vanderberg said.

MACATAWA GREENSPACE DEDICATED, (John Scholtz, Parks Director)

Macatawa Greenspace, a new 122 acre park and the first county park in the City of Holland, was dedicated on Thursday, June 27 with a group of over 80 in attendance. Speakers included Parks Commission President Bobbi Sabine, who served as master of ceremonies, plus County Board Chair Jim Holtrop, County Administrator Al Vandenberg, Holland Mayor Kurt Dykstra, plus John Scholtz and Curt TerHaar representing park staff.

Site of the former Holland Country Club, the Macatawa Greenspace property was acquired in 2010 as part of Ottawa County's greenway initiative with the support of Macatawa Greenway partners. Since the 2010 purchase, the Macatawa Greenspace site has gone through a dramatic transformation, converting manicured golf greens and fairways to a mosaic of restored wetlands and other types of natural communities plus a variety of park improvements.



County Board Chair Jim Holtrop assists Parks President Bobbi Sabine in cutting the ribbon with greenway partners looking on.

The top goal of habitat restoration has been to implement best practices identified in the Macatawa Watershed Implementation Plan and improve water quality in the Macatawa Watershed. Aided by a \$646,800 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency through their Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, over 62 acres of wetlands have been constructed at the site. Included in the total are 21 acres of wetlands funded and constructed in late 2010 by Request Foods, a private business that acquired a conservation easement from the county for the right to construct a wetland mitigation project on the property. The restored wetlands, combined with stabilization of stream banks within the park, will lower phosphorous levels and reduce overall non-point source pollution in Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan.

Integrated within the restoration areas are recreational uses including three miles of hiking and cross-country ski trails including decks, boardwalks and bridges plus picnic areas and a disc golf course. Future plans for the park call for modern restrooms and a nature play area plus a paved greenway trail linking parks and preserves along the Macatawa River.

Parks Director Scholtz expressed surprise at how quickly the park has been discovered, "We've seen hundreds of users at the park in the few days since the dedication with the majority being hikers and disc golfers. The public has been anxious to see the changes that were made and disc golfers are very appreciative of a new place to enjoy their sport in the local area."

GVMC WEEKLY UPDATE (John Weiss)

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