

The Highland Conservancy - September E-Newsletter

Highland's Greenway Plan

The Greenway plan for Highland is reaching fruition after key stakeholders from Highland met several times to create and then revise this important plan. The Highland Conservancy, Highland Equestrian Conservancy, Oakland Land Conservancy, Oakland County Planning Department members, township officials and Highland Business Community members poured over maps and discussed ideas to create a vision to protect Highland's natural beauty and resources. This process began in 2004 when the Natural Area advisory group formed to share and coordinate conservation interests. Highland is part of the larger green infrastructure plan for Oakland County (and surrounding counties) led by this advisory group that is working hard to create partnerships and generate a roadmap for our future.

Why do we need a Greenway plan? As Highland gradually becomes more developed, by planning for a solid infrastructure of green, interconnected natural areas, we can encourage the protection of habitat for a wide diversity of plants and animals and preserve wildlife corridors. To keep animals from being trapped in fragmented areas, it is crucial to have connected open spaces in as many forms as possible. Even hedgerows and forested areas in subdivisions are important connections to less developed areas like Highland State Rec or nearby fields, lakes and rivers. Surprisingly, the benefits of this green space plan come free of charge: it provides natural water filtration and water recharge areas, storm water control, scenic areas, higher property values, attracts business, counters habitat fragmentation, and provides outdoor recreation opportunities.

Now that the plan is in place, we are currently working on determining the best land management tools for Highland by reviewing our master plan, ordinances and related planning documents. Some ordinances may need revision. In other cases, tools such as the site plan review process can be used. This will be followed by laying out conservation goals, looking at our funding needs and options and finally tracking our progress towards those goals.

Highland has been working closely with the Oakland County Economic Planning and Development department, Oakland Land Conservancy and other groups to mesh our vision with the broader picture and coordinate with nearby communities. Both Macomb and Livingston County are now working on green infrastructure planning and our goal is to link up to protect other areas of Michigan and work together to achieve the same thing.

Highland Township is a community dedicated to the idea of open space development, wetlands protection, use of native landscaping, land donation and parks acquisition, lake and stream buffers, and trail links. We encourage and welcome your help in this ongoing process.

For more information on greenway planning and infrastructure, visit this website:
www.oakgov.com/es

Highland Oaks: The Highland Conservancy along with the Highland Equestrian Conservancy worked hard to get grant funding to acquire the new 260-acre park for Highland called Highland Oaks. This is a beautiful nature area in the northwest portion of Highland adjacent to Rose Township, which we hope may eventually connect to Addison Oaks. Possible uses for this park may include biking, hiking and equestrian trails, and protected natural areas and wetlands. It is an area of stunning beauty and we are eager for the last steps to be finalized hopefully by this fall.

Hazardous Waste Day: Highland is having a Hazardous Waste day this Saturday, September 30th. Please bring your environmentally hazardous items to 305 N. John Street between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Do your part in getting rid of those old cans of paint, batteries, or other items that should not go out in the regular trash. Please note there is one trip per household and there will be a \$2.00 per tire. For more information, please call 248-887-3791, ext. 138. A valid driver's license or property tax bill must be shown to verify residency. Visit the township website for further information at: www.highlandtwp.com

Highland Conservancy Meetings: Our meetings are open to the public. We meet the first Tuesday of every month at the Huron Valley Council of the Arts building (the old library) beginning at 7:00 p.m. Please join us! For more information, please call Katheryn Krupa at 248-887-4643.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.HighlandConservancy.org

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