

Park adds nature center

By JEM MESEE

By early next year, a third Huron-Clinton Metropark in the county will have a nature center.

Indian Springs Metropark, under development in Springfield and White Lake townships, is the site. It's west of Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area. Stenback Construction Co. of Farmdale has a contract for \$264,500 to build the nature center on a bluff near the Huron River and the Huron Swamp. The swamp is one of the largest undisturbed natural areas remaining in Oakland County.

The project was announced by Charles R. Shafer, Oakland representative on the HCMA board and president of Michigan National Bank-Oakland, based in Southfield.

Fittingly, exhibits will explain the role wetlands and geological features play in our natural environment.

The building will have exhibit space, lecture area, greenhouse, naturalist's office and work space.

Indian Springs Metropark will cover 2,000 acres when all land is acquired. It's so new that it's not even on the 1980-81 metroparks map.

Indian Springs will be about half the size of Kensington and Stony Creek metroparks, two other major HCMA facilities serving Oakland County.

SOME 100 species of birds make Oakland County parks their homes, according to naturalist Kathleen Dougherty.

"When the lakes are free of ice, waterbirds start returning," she said.

Among the earliest migrants are geese, ducks, robins and red-winged blackbirds. Insect-eaters arrive later.

Nearly 150 species have been sighted at Independence Oaks County Park, she

said. That park, near Clarkston, is naturally preserved.

Addison Oaks County Park near Oxford is another popular spot for birds with its plentiful woods and wetlands.

Cold as it may still seem, now is a good time for birdwatching, said Ms. Dougherty. Reason: "It's easier to see birds without leaves on the trees."

She will conduct an early morning bird walk through Independence Oaks sometime in May to discuss bird migration and point out various species.

LIFEGUARDS and swimming instructors will be needed this summer at Michigan's only wave action pool, located at Waterford Oaks County Park, and three county beaches.

Applicants must have a water safety instructor certificate and pass a water test which will be given at the Oakland University Lepley Sports Center near Rochester. Dates for the test are 10-1 on Sunday, April 13 and 10-4 on Sunday, April 27.

To schedule an appointment for the water test, contact Marilyn Baker at 858-0921.

"OUT LIKE A Lamb" is the title of a farewell to March morning walk at the nature center of Stony Creek Metropark near Rochester. It begins at 9 a.m. Sunday.

Naturalist Leslie Sutton will usher in spring with a look for skunk cabbage, pussy willows and early migrant birds. The two-hour program is free, but register in advance by calling the nature

outdoors

center at 781-4621. There is a vehicle admission at the gate.

HARRIET SAPERSTEIN, principal planner for the Detroit Recreation Department, will be the featured speaker at tonight's meeting of the Sierra Club-Detroit group. Ms. Saperstein will discuss plans for the Detroit shoreline.

This meeting, open to the public, will be in Northwest Unitarian Universalist Church, 23225 Northwestern, Southfield, between Nine and 10 Mile roads on the southwest service drive. Meetings begin with conversation and coffee at 7:30 p.m. and the program begins at 8.

Sierra Club meetings are held every fourth Thursday through May.

The state house and senate also agreed to establish a committee to study the Comprehensive Health Planning Council (CHPC) of Southeastern Michigan during the moratorium. CHPC is a private, non-profit group funded by the federal government and mandated by the state to devise a plan to reduce the number of hospital beds in Michigan.

The rules committee also rejected 1980 guidelines and criteria for bedded as proposed by the CHPC. Some observers say that action delayed the bedded plan, at least temporarily. But the effect of that decision is under debate.

"I'm not sure there should be any cheering yet," said Brotherton. "Some say the decision applies only to the coming year so that last year's rules and guidelines are still in effect until new ones are approved."

"And those are the ones that got us in trouble," he added. Brotherton said that the State Health Coordinating Council (SHCC), which is charged with responsibility for overseeing the plans, is expected to ask for a state attorney general's opinion on "what the action really means."

A lobbyist hired by the community hospital association said that the action was required because of a 30-day time limit for approving the guidelines. If the rules committee hadn't acted, the guidelines would automatically have been approved.

"We had to go in and ask for rejection," said Jude Huetteman of the Health Systems Group Inc. "It wasn't an arbitrary move on our part."

She added that the plan is now in a "limbo situation," and that the SHCC may take the issue to court.

Lawmakers move to save beds

By SANDRA ARMBRUSTER

A joint administrative rules committee of the state Legislature on Tuesday called unanimously for a 90-day moratorium on implementing plans to trim hospital beds.

Legislators asked for the moratorium in a resolution, which is not lawfully binding on the planning group. But state Rep. Wilbur Brotherton, R-Farmington, warned that "if it's necessary for the committee to introduce a bill to give it binding effect, we've agreed to do it."

"It's a matter of intent in both houses (of the Legislature)," he added. Brotherton's comment was greeted by cheers at a meeting of the Michigan Association of Community Hospitals and Physicians Tuesday night at St. Mary Hospital in Livonia.

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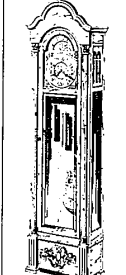
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