

New metropark to open in '81; features wetland, wood stove heat

By LEM MESSEE
Outdoors writer

Indian Springs will be a different kind of metropark, focusing on energy and a natural wetland. "This never was intended to be a Kensington or a Metropolitan Beach," said David M. Laidlaw, director of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. "It's intended as a nature area with associated uses — picnics, nature trails and bike trails." Thomas H. Smith, chief of interpretive services for the five-county parks authority, said the authority's 11th metropark will have a primitive backpacking camp, the site of an old logging camp and — some day — a planetarium. Its chief feature is a wetland on the headwaters of the Huron River.

INDIAN SPRINGS is north of the present Pontiac State Recreation Area in Oakland County's Springfield and White Lake townships. When it's open to the public late in 1981, the 2,000-acre park can be reached by two basic routes: I-75 to the Clarkston exit, White Lake Road to Crosby Lake Road, or US-10 to Andersonville Road to Crosby Lake Road. It's about seven miles north of West Bloomfield Township and a dozen miles northwest of Bloomfield Township. If and when M-275 freeway is built, it will pass just west of Indian Springs. By that time (10 years), the freeway will have an exit on White Lake Road, where the new park entrance will be.

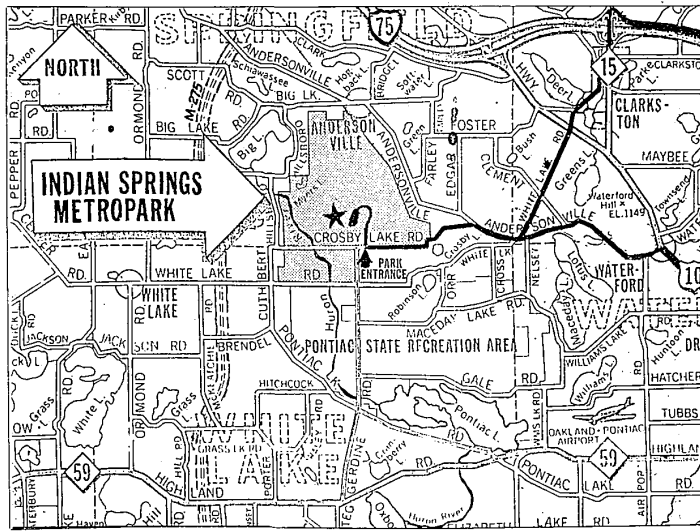
Last week HCMA, state and Oakland County officials held a ceremony to mark beginning of construction of the solar- and wood-heated nature center. It, along with the parking lot and entrance road, will cost \$312,000, according to HCMA board member Charles T. Shafer, president of Michigan National Bank-Oakland.

NATURALIST Smith becomes enthusiastic as he pores over aerial photos of the 2,000-acre site, half of which is known as the "Andersonville Swamp." "We have no plan to dam or drain it — absolutely not," said Smith. In contrast, HCMA filled in a swamp for some of Metro Beach and Kensington metroparks in the 1940s and '50s. Besides the nature center, key features at Indian Springs will be three nature trails — a half-mile, a mile and two miles in length. The trails follow ridges, and there will be footbridges between ridges across wet spots.

"Our trails will skirt the edge. We're not going to go into the swamp."

"These trails will appeal to the hiker, the artist, the photographer, the cross-country skier and the snowshoer," he said.

The first trail will touch an area where wild orchids are visible. A limited access trail will go to a small lake with pitcher plants on its shore, Smith said.



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Oakland schools fill vacancy

Angus McPherson, 61, was recently appointed to fill a vacancy on the Oakland Intermediate Board of Education.

A long-time Berkeley Board of Education member, McPherson replaces LaVerne DeWaard, who resigned from the intermediate board last month for "personal reasons."

McPherson, who was appointed by intermediate board members, will serve until June, 1982. Representatives of the 28 local school boards which

comprise the intermediate district will elect a board member for a six-year term at that time.

A machinist with an Oak Park company, McPherson was supported for the vacant seat by board members David Sparrow, Betty Campton and board president Dorothy Beardmore. Board member Dorothy Eicker abstained.

McPherson is expected to join the board Sept. 23.

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