

Park improvement budget shrinking

By Lem Meese
outdoors writer

The slimmest capital improvement budget in a decade — \$356,800 — has been approved by the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.

"In the past," said system manager R. Eric Reickel, "many of our acquisitions and developments were made possible through federal and state grants, which were matched with local funds derived from the quarter-million property tax and user fees and charges."

With the current elimination of federal land and water funds, major improvements in the foreseeable future will be halted, said Reickel.

An alternative source of funds, he said, will be private gifts and grants and a parks foundation.

The quarter-million-dollar capital budget will be used for:

- Dredging of Stewart Lake at Groveland Oaks, near Holly.
- A new facade for the activities center building at Waterford Oaks, near Pontiac.
- An irrigation pumphouse at Glen Oaks Golf Course, Farmington Hills.
- New restrooms in the Twin Chimneys area of Independence Oaks, near Clarkston.
- Arena fence replacements at the Youth Activities Center of Springfield Oaks, near Davisburg.
- Fencing for the shuffleboard court and improvements to the bike motocross track at Waterford Oaks.

PLEASURE BOATING, a basic classroom course, will be conducted in four two-hour sessions at Stony Creek Metropark northeast of Rochester next month.

Class hours are 7 p.m. March 9-10 and 10-11. Classes meet in the employees room of the park warehouse building, just west of the Visitor Center Building. It is being conducted by the Macomb County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

outdoors

The course covers state watercraft laws and regulations, required equipment, proper balance of boats and motors, navigation aids, safe small-boat handling, water sports and first aid.

The course is free but limited to 40 people aged 12 and older. To register, call Stony Creek Metropark at 781-4242 by March 5.

The course is similar to those taught by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadron. A "boating safety certificate" is awarded.

A 28-INCH northern pike was speared recently at Kent Lake in western Oakland County, the state DNR office reports. Otherwise, ice fishing is slow.

Fair-sized crappie and bluegill are being taken at Maceday, Kent and Walled lakes. Cass Lake has produced walleyes reasonably well this season.

Deep snow has hampered rabbit hunters.

HURON-CLINTON Metroparks have these nature programs coming up this weekend:

- "A Duck's Underwear" at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, at Stony Creek's nature center. Naturalist Bill Thomas will use slides, animal mounts and live animals to show how animals deal with winter cold. Register in advance by calling the park office at 781-4621.
- "Chickadee Feeding Fest," a family program, will be offered twice Sunday, at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m., at the nature center of Kensington Metropark, west of New Hudson. Naturalist Bob Hotelling will conduct the one-hour program on the black-capped chickadee, a bird which will accept sunflower seeds from human hands. Dress warmly, bring your binoculars, and register in advance by calling the park office at 685-1561.

OCC arranges Italian art tour



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A tour entitled "Art and Archaeology in Italy" is being sponsored by Oakland Community College from April 24 to May 4.

Tour director Marilyn Finkel, chairwoman of the Orchard Ridge Fine Arts Department, said the group will visit Rome, Sorrento, Capri, Naples and Pompeii. Participants will tour the Vatican, Sistine Chapel and National Museum of Modern Art, among other famous sites.

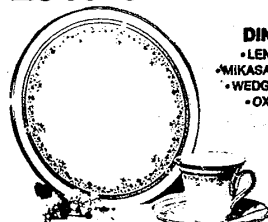
Rates are \$1,695 per person based on double occupancy. The single supplement is \$165. The cost includes round-trip airfare between Detroit and Rome, airport bus transfers, hotel accommodations, transportation between cities in Italy, and various tips, fees, taxes, and service charges.

Deposits are now being taken, and final payment is due by March 10. For registration information, call Finkel at the OCC Orchard Ridge campus, 476-9400.

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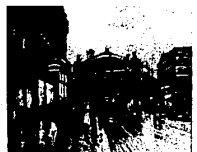
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