

Naturally Connected

Spring/Summer 2026 Issue 5
Charter Township of Highland, Michigan

Preserving
the past

Your
Guide
to life in
Highland

Planting
the future

Native gardens along
Milford and W. Livingston Roads

Photo by: Cassie Blascyk





Scavenger Hunt
Search for monarch butterflies in this issue, count them, and submit your total to the Township Office for a chance to win a prize
Submit to info@highlandtwp.org



Monarch caterpillar on Asclepius
Photo by: Holly Fleischman

Useful Numbers

EMERGENCIES
911

NON EMERGENCY
OAKLAND COUNTY SHERIFF
248-858-4950

NON EMERGENCY
FIRE DEPARTMENT
248-887-8688

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP
248-887-3791

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP
ACTIVITY CENTER
248-887-1707

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC LIBRARY
248-887-2218

HIGHLAND DDA
248-887-7200

WESTERN OAKLAND
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
248-887-4979

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP
POST OFFICE
248-887-4722

Rooted in Community, Celebrating the Season in



The snow is slowly melting away, the birds are filling the air with their cheerful songs, and vibrant colors are beginning to bloom all around us. Spring has officially arrived! With longer days and warmer sunshine, it's the perfect time to step outside, breathe in the fresh air, and enjoy the beauty of nature as we finally shake off the winter chill.

Highland

After months of cozying up indoors, I encourage everyone to get out and experience all that Highland Township has to offer. From walking or biking along our scenic trails to reconnecting with neighbors at the Founders Day Parade & Festival, there are countless opportunities to get active, have fun, and celebrate our community. You can also add or join an activity at the Activity Center, enjoy a rotating exhibit at the Huron Valley Arts, or explore new interests by participating in one of the many engaging classes and programs available at the Library.



Spring is a season of renewal, connection, and community, and I look forward to seeing you around town as we enjoy this wonderful time of year together.



Rick Hamill

Highland Township Supervisor

Naturally Connected

Naturally Connected is a bi-annual magazine produced for the residents and businesses of Highland Township, Michigan by the Charter Township of Highland.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Rick Hamill, *Highland Township Supervisor*

Cassie Blascyk, *Assistant to the Supervisor*

Tina Lloyd, *Communications Specialist*

© 2026 Charter Township of Highland. All rights reserved. No part of this publication shall be duplicated without express written consent.

What's Inside

A word from Rick Hamill.....	3
Highland Township Offices.....	4-13
InnerViews....Fire Chief Nick George	14-15
Fire Department.....	16
Oakland County Sheriff's Dept.....	17
Activity Center.....	18
Highland Township Library.....	19
Downtown Development Authority....	20-21
Historical Society.....	22-23
Garden Club.....	24
Community Spotlight..... Jake Lloyd	25
Friends of Highland Public Library....	26
Huron Valley Arts.....	27
WOTA.....	28-29
Highland White Lake Business Assoc	30
Events, Events, Events!.....	31

Get Your **Spring Yard Waste** ready for pick up

Pickup begins April 1st

Yard waste pickup begins April 1st and may be placed at the curb on your regular collection day. Residents may use brown paper yard waste bags, or existing cans clearly marked with a “yard waste” or “compost” sticker. Additional compost stickers are available at the Township Offices.

There is no limit to the amount of yard waste that may be set out each week.

Yard waste includes the following items:

- Lawn Debris
- Grass Clippings
- Weeds
- Leaves
- Small Twigs
- Prunings
- Shrub Clippings (tied and bundled)
- Tree Branches and Logs (less than 3 inches in diameter and less than 4 feet long)



Priority Waste is the trash, recycling & compost service provider for Highland Township. If you have been missed for service, please contact 586-228-1200



West Nile Virus: Free Supplies to Help Residents Protect Themselves



West Nile virus is spread to people through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which become carriers after feeding on infected birds. Residents can reduce their risk by using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants outdoors, treating clothing with repellents, and eliminating standing water around their homes. Using larvicides in ponds and catch basins also helps prevent mosquito breeding.

Highland Township is participating in the Oakland County West Nile Virus Prevention Program and is offering free insect repellent and larvicide dunks to residents. Limited supplies are available at the Township Offices. Stay protected and help keep the community safe.



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION DAY

FREE ONE DAY DROP OFF

SATURDAY
June 13th
9am to 2pm
 Driver's license or property tax bill showing Highland Township address required

2026 Location: Highland Township Hall

Enter from eastbound West Livingston Road ONLY

Carpooling is encouraged to reduce traffic backups

Household hazardous waste (HHW) are substances in your home that can be harmful to humans and the environment if not disposed of properly. Many household products require special attention in their use, storage and disposal. A product is considered "hazardous" if it is:

- Reactive (products that can explode if exposed to heat, air, water or shock)
- Toxic or Poisonous
- Ignitable/Flammable
- Corrosive

Entry Time by Last Name
 9:00am-10:00am A-E
 10:00am-11:00am F-J
 11:00am-12:00pm K-O
 12:00pm-1:00pm P-T
 1:00pm-2:00pm T-Z

To avoid long wait times follow the above schedule

ACCEPTABLE ITEMS

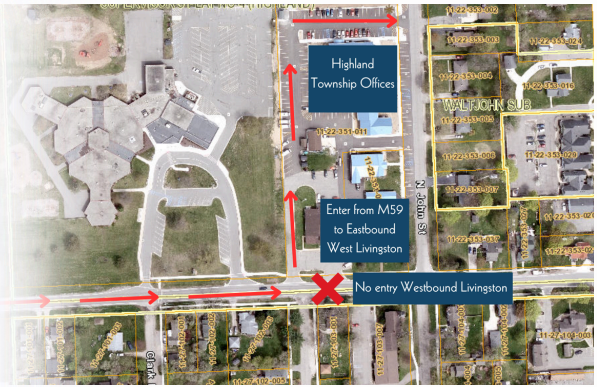
Aerosols Sprays	Fluorescent Lamps	PCB Ballast
Automotive Fluids	Herbicides	Propane Cylinders
Automotive Batteries	Household cleaners & chemicals	Reactive/Oxidizers
Batteries (mixed household)	Miscellaneous Toxics	Small Propane Tanks
BBQ Propane Tanks	Mercury (liquid & devices)	Smoke Detectors
Corrosives	Non-DEA and OTC Medications	Sharps (stored in rigid, puncture resistant containers)
Electronics	Oil Based paint and stains	Solvents/Flammable
Fire Extinguishers	Pesticides	

UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS

- Appliances
- Compressed Gas Cylinders (Including foam insulation cylinders)
- Construction Materials
- Commercial Waste
- Explosive/Ammunitions
- Household Trash
- Latex Paint
- Radioactive Materials (except smoke detectors)
- Shock-Sensitive Materials
- Tires
- Weapons
- Yard Waste

Need to dispose of Latex paint?

Remove the lid add kitty litter, sawdust or waste paint hardener. Once it has dried to a solid you can set the can(s) out, with the lid off, with regular trash.





Assessing Department

The Disabled Veterans Exemption does not require annual filing after January 1, 2025, as long as the exemption is granted prior, it will remain in effect

WCA Assessing will once again have staff conducting property reviews in the field this spring and summer in Highland.

Several factors may trigger a property review, including:

- Additions or removals of structures
- Recent sales
- Verification or updating of records



All workers will display a visible photo ID. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Township.



Have you recently bought a home in Highland?

A heartfelt welcome to you!

Friendly Reminder



Please remember to submit the necessary forms to the Township Offices, which include the Property Transfer Affidavits and Principal Residence Exemption (Homestead) forms.

Many residents overlook filing essential paperwork with the Township and may not realize that if their home is their primary residence, they qualify for the Principal Residence Exemption. This exemption provides a school operating tax reduction on their summer tax bill. (Note: You can only claim one home.)

Additionally, Property Transfer Affidavits should be filed with the Township if there are any ownership changes, such as placing the property into (or out of) a Trust, or adding/removing someone from the Deed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Assessing Department at 248-887-3791 x3.

Planning & Zoning



Do Your Part, Be Septic Smart

As a rural community, we rely on septic systems to protect our health. No one can afford to “flush it and forget it”. How we maintain our systems impacts the health of our watersheds and your property values too. If you need help locating your septic system contact the Oakland County Health Division, 248-858-1280.

Protect It and Inspect It

Have your system inspected (in general) every three years by a licensed contractor and have the tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years.

Think at the Sink

Don't pour cooking grease or oil down the sink or toilet, rinse coffee grounds into the sink, pour household chemicals down the sink or flush them. Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal. Properly dispose of coffee grounds & food. Put grease in a container to harden before discarding in the trash.

Don't Overload the Commode

Do not flush non-degradable products or chemicals, such as feminine hygiene products, condoms, dental floss, diapers, cigarette butts, cat litter, paper towels, pharmaceuticals. Dispose of these items in the trash can!

Shield Your Field

Do not park or drive on your drain field. The weight can damage the drain lines. Do not plant trees or shrubs too close to your drain field, roots can grow into your system and clog it.

Consult a septic service professional to advise you of the proper distance for planting trees and shrubs, depending on your septic tank location.



Photo by: Tina Lloyd



Let's Play

Duck Lake Pines Park

1241 N. Duck Lake Road



Duck Lake Pines Park is home to **6 Free Public** Pickleball Courts

Looking for a place to play pickleball in the area? Duck Lake Pines Park is now offering six dedicated pickleball courts completely free and open to the public!

Whether you're a seasoned player or just picking up a paddle for the first time, the courts are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Set in the scenic surroundings of Duck Lake Pines Park, the courts offer a great place for recreation, exercise, and community connection.

No memberships or fees are required, just bring your gear and enjoy one of the fastest-growing sports in the country. So grab a friend, head to the park, and get in a game (or two)!



Treasurer's Department

Jennifer Frederick, Treasurer
 248-887-3791 x 4
HTtreasurer@HighlandTwp.org



Property Tax Comparisons in Oakland County

Are you curious what the property taxes are in the surrounding communities? We did some research and here is what we found. The average home values for 2023 & now were as follows:

	2023	NOW	INCREASE
Highland	\$356,552.00	\$370,990.00	\$14,438.00
Milford	\$411,736.00	\$461,252.00	\$49,516.00
White Lake	\$362,863.00	\$377,502.00	\$32,345.00
Rose Twp	\$164,000.00	\$158,600.00	(\$14,639.00)
Holly	\$292,364.00	\$301,282.00	\$8,918.00
Village - Holly	\$221,000.00	\$235,000.00	\$14,000.00
South Lyon	\$429,678.00	\$452,946.00	\$23,268.00
Commerce	\$366,990.00	\$389,586.00	\$22,596.00

Here are the approximate taxes you would have paid for 2023 based on a Taxable Value of \$150,000.00 (Home Value \$300,000.00) with 100% P.R.E. Homestead and 2023 & 2024 millage rates without local special assessments:

	2023		2024	
Highland	32.5990 mills	\$4,889.85	32.8548 mills	\$4,928.22
Milford	34.2008 mills	\$5,130.12	34.3551 mills	\$5,153.27
White Lake	34.5001 mills	\$5,175.02	34.7372 mills	\$5,210.58
Commerce	32.7613 mills	\$4,914.20	33.0238 mills	\$4,953.57
Holly	31.3534 mills	\$4,703.01	31.6174 mills	\$4,742.61
South Lyon	41.4939 mills	\$6,224.09	42.3929 mills	\$6,358.90
Rose Twp	29.3716 mills	\$4,405.74	29.6410 mills	\$4,446.15

2026 DOG LICENSES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

[OAKGOV.COM/COMMUNITY/PET-ADOPTION/DOG-LICENSE](https://oakgov.com/community/pet-adoption/dog-license)

OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



- Fast and easy online registration
- Home Safe 24/7 lost pet service included
- Optional designer tags at an additional cost
- Tags mailed directly to your home by Docupet





Tami Flowers, MiPMC
248-887-3791 x 5
HTClerk@HighlandTwp.org

Clerk's Department

ELECTION INFO.

Don't Miss It! **»»» August 4, 2026 (Primary)**
November 3, 2026 (General)

Vote on Election Day: 7a - 8p



RESOURCE FOR VOTING INFO:
mi.gov/vote



VOTER INFORMATION

Clerk's Office
Ballot Drop Box
Polling Location
Registration
Ballot Info



VOTE AT HOME

Absentee ballot
Deadline to apply
Delivery requirements
Election Day emergency
Ballot changes



REGISTER TO VOTE

The process
Update info
Register on Election
Day
Deadline to register
Student voter



VOTE IN PERSON

Polling location
What to expect
ID requirements
Early voting



ACCESSIBLE VOTING

Apply for accessibility
Accessible machine
Equipment use



POLLING LOCATION

Polling Location
Early voting location

OTHER VOTING RESOURCES:

FVAP.gov (for Military & Overseas Citizens)

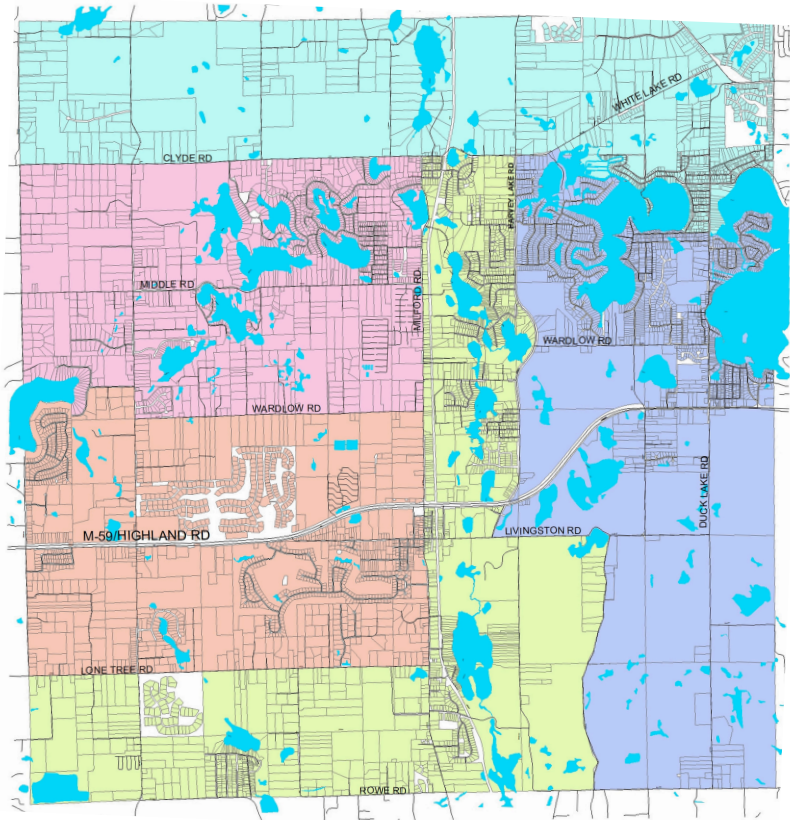
highlandtwp.net (Services - Clerk - Voter/Election)

NOTE:

**ALL PRECINCTS NOW VOTE AT
MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL**
2380 S. Milford Rd. Highland, MI 48357

New Precinct Boundaries

Because many residents are either voting early or by mail these days, the polling locations are now able to serve a bigger area. Highland Township has decided to take the opportunity to reduce the number of precincts and significantly reduce the cost of precinct staffing and equipment by going from 8 precincts down to 5. Voter info cards were sent to every registered voter with their new precinct number. If you haven't received one, contact the Clerk's office. Or you can look up your precinct info at mi.gov/vote.



Precinct 1

Precinct 2

Precinct 3

Precinct 4

Precinct 5

New Polling Location

Another benefit of having fewer precincts is that we can now have all 5 of the precincts vote at Milford High School in the repurposed leisure pool area. Voters will enter through the Pools entrance (follow the signs). You will be directed to the correct check-in station when you arrive. If you have questions or concerns, contact the Clerk's office.



VOTING OPTIONS

Early Voting

Voters have the option to vote early for 9 days at both elections this year. Many voters took advantage of this option in 2024. See the schedule below or visit mi.gov/vote for details.



Vote early in person

During the 9 days of early voting, from 8:30a-4:30p except for Thursday, which is 12p-8p

Early voting schedule:

Aug 4 Primary Election:

Sat, July 25 - Sun, Aug 2

Nov 3 General Election:

Sat, Oct 24 - Sun, Nov 1



EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS: Highland Township Offices

205 N. John St., Highland 48357

-or-

Waterford Oaks Activity Center

2800 Watkins Lk Rd., Waterford, 48328



Absentee Voting



Vote by mail

If you are not on one of the permanent lists explained below, visit [Mi.gov/vote](https://mi.gov/vote) to request a ballot be mailed to you for one or all future elections. Return by mail or at a drop box or **in-person voting (early voting or election day precinct)**

PERMANENT BALLOT

Voters who opted to join the Permanent Ballot list will be receiving their ballot automatically (no application required) about a month before each election. If you will be living seasonally in another location, please contact the Clerk's office with the information, so that we can properly address your ballot. ****The USPS will not forward ballots to a forwarding address.**

PERMANENT APPLICATION

Voters who are on the Permanent Application list will be receiving an application about two months before the August election. Please return your application as early as possible, so that your ballot can be sent early enough to allow for a timely return.

For best results, hand deliver ballot to our drop box or office.



OPTIONAL: Bring your ballot to tabulate during EARLY VOTING (Jul 25- Aug 2 / Oct 24 - Nov 1)

OR at the PRECINCT on election day (August 4 / November 3)

Inner VIEWS

Interview with Nick George
Highland Township Fire Chief



What inspired you to become a firefighter, and what led you to become fire chief?

Growing up I was never clear on what I wanted to do for my future. I tried many things and while working full time I became a volunteer firefighter after one of my friends suggested I try it out because they needed people. I was hooked from the start; the family atmosphere and excitement of the calls was all I needed. As my experience and time grew in the fire service I realized I loved passing on the knowledge that has been given to me so I started instructing, during this time my leadership skills improved and I decided that the best way to ensure to have the best impact on the firefighters I worked with and the community I served was to lead by example and lead the way. This led me to the ambition of becoming a fire chief.

What's been the most challenging or meaningful moment of your career so far?

There has been a list of challenging and meaningful moments in my 20+ years of service. I will say that becoming the fire chief has been the most challenging and meaningful of all to date. From the responsibility to ensure the community receives the top care that they deserve while ensuring around 30 employees are safe and protected in this inherently dangerous profession. Mix this with an increasing volume of incidents while trying to maintain the departments high standards in today's world in the fire service.



What are the biggest fire and safety challenges facing our town today?

There are many things this community should always be aware of for safety. In today's world the number of fires is much lower than in the past. Products and homes have more safety and prevention in their manufacturing, but this has resulted in faster burning and hotter fires when they do occur. This means evacuation should happen as soon as possible to prevent injuries and our firefighters must maintain situational awareness at a higher level than in the past. Concerns for our community are vehicle accidents from the busy roadways, train derailment, structure fires, outdoor fires, active violence situations, water rescues, and an aging community.

How has the fire department evolved in recent years, and how has that affected your work as chief?

The fire service is constantly evolving, from quality and safety of equipment, skyrocketing costs, and significant decrease in personnel applying for positions. Our staff must continue to do everything we can to improve the quality and safety of our dangerous careers while keeping the cost as low as possible for the citizens we serve. We always have the citizens we serve in mind with every incident and every purchase we make.

How does the department prepare for large or rare emergencies, and who do you work with during those situations?

The department trains on regular basis on all types of hazards including large and rare emergencies, which we call high risk-low frequency events. The training includes lectures, table-top exercises, review of similar incidents, and mock drills. All these things help us keep up to date with current tactics and education on how to mitigate the emergencies. These types of emergencies always in entail our community and those surrounding us, depending on the nature of the incident and the size it could include the entire county, special teams like Haz-Mat or SSRT, even moving up to the state and federal levels for investigations and aid.



FIREWORKS



As we approach firework season, it's essential to prioritize safety. The sparks, embers, and hot debris generated by fireworks can easily ignite dry vegetation like grass, shrubs, or trees, resulting in the swift spread of fire. To ensure a safe experience, always have a water source, such as a bucket or hose, nearby. Light fireworks one at a time in an open area and never attempt to relight "dud" fireworks. Keep children and pets at a safe distance, wear protective eyewear, and soak used fireworks in water before disposing of them.

OPEN BURNING

Please keep in mind that burning leaves or grass clippings is strictly prohibited. Fires can easily spiral out of control, especially during windy and dry conditions. Always check with the fire department to confirm if a burn ban is in effect before lighting a match at 248-887-8688. Highland Township has implemented a simple flag system to keep residents informed about open burning conditions.

Residents should look for flags displayed at both fire stations and the township offices:

Green Flag – Open burning is permitted.

Red Flag – A burn ban is in effect.

Please check the flags before starting any outdoor burning to ensure you are in compliance with township regulations and to help keep our community safe.

**The Highland Township
Fire Department went
on 9 calls for grass
fires in 2025**

Please be aware the Fire Chief, Fire Marshal and his appointees are authorized to extinguish and fine for the purpose of safety and ordinance compliance with open burning.

OAKLAND COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Highland Substation



After many years, through a long and thorough process, we successfully became the largest police agency in the state of Michigan to achieve state accreditation. Sheriff Bouchard appreciates our team's meticulous efforts in scrutinizing every aspect of our work to ensure best practices. We remain committed to ongoing improvement and excellence. The commission's efforts have been invaluable in raising professional standards across our state.

HARD WORK PAYS OFF



L-R Captain Todd Hill, Sheriff Michael Bouchard, Undersheriff Tim Willis, Sgt. Kevin Hall



I am very proud of the work our men and women do each and every day. Going through this very labor-intensive process served as an outside validation of our agency's best practices. It was a very time-consuming process given the size of our agency and we are now the largest police agency in the state of Michigan to receive this state accreditation.
Sheriff Michael J. Bouchard

The Activity Center is a warm and inviting space for those seeking companionship and a variety of engaging activities. We offer classes, exercise opportunities, movies, lunch, card games, and much more. Our daily programs are tailored for the vintage community, including individuals with special needs

ACTIVITIES

Join us for a variety of activities including outings, bingo, euchre, trivia, hooping, exercise classes, health fairs, and much more! Don't miss out on the best lunch deal in town, available Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.



Stop by and see what we're all about!

VISIT US

We're located at 209 N John Street, Highland MI

Monday- Friday from 9am to 3pm.



is available

HIGHLAND ACTIVITY CENTERS

LUAU FUNDRAISER

Come and enjoy an evening of fun, silent auctions, raffles, music, & tropical flavors!

Friday June 5th
6:00 PM

All money raised goes to support the programming and events at the Highland Activity Center

\$40
Tickets on Sale NOW

209 N. John St.
Highland, MI 48357
248-887-1707




Highland Public Library

Township



COMIC Books!!!

Free Comic Book Day
Saturday, May 2nd 2pm-5pm
Stop by and grab a free comic book and other goodies!

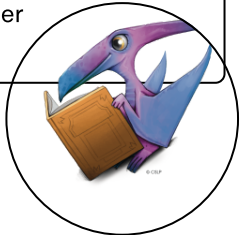


SUMMER Reading

Unearth a Story with **Summer Reading 2026**
All ages welcome to join our Summer Reading programs starting June 1st!

OUTDOOR Play!

Outdoor Drop-In Play Group
Tuesdays and Fridays 10am-12pm May through Sept.
Ages 5 and under with caregiver



*Enrich,
Inspire,
Empower*

MICHIGAN ACTIVITY Pass

Michigan Activity Pass (MAP)
Free or reduced admission prices to Michigan arts, cultural organizations, state parks, museums and Metroparks.



Come Visit us!
444 Beach Farm Circle
Highland, MI
448-887-2218

Hours:
M-Th 10am-8pm
Saturday 10am-5pm

Rooted in Community

Cultivating what matters most

The Highland Farmers' Market has become a beloved hub for our community, offering a space to connect, shop local, and celebrate the spirit of Highland Township. Brought to you by the Highland Downtown Development Authority, the market runs July 11th through October 3rd, from 10am-2pm in front of the

Township Hall (205 N. John Street), the market features fresh produce, local foods, handmade goods, and artisan creations all supporting our local farmers and small businesses.

Beyond shopping, the market comes alive with live music every week, creating a lively, family-friendly atmosphere. Each month also brings special events that celebrate creativity, nature, and community.

Community favorites include the Sidewalk Chalk Contest on July 18th, where artists of all ages transform the sidewalks into colorful works of art, and the Monarch Festival in August, a fun, educational event honoring monarch butterflies and pollinators.



Whether you come for fresh food, live music, or special events, the Highland Farmers Market is a place where we preserve cherished traditions while planting the seeds for a vibrant community future.

Highland Farmers' market
July 11th - October 3rd





26 EVENTS

FEB
1-28

FOOD FIGHT ON MAIN! Pour Wars

Main Street Oakland County Communities
Restaurants face off in a spirited showdown to crown the Pour Champion.

MARCH
18

Volunteer Open House

Wednesday, 6-8pm, Steeple Hall
Connecting our community with volunteer opportunities in Downtown Highland.

APRIL
25

Ladies' Day Out

Saturday, 10am-5pm, Historic Downtown Highland
Grab your girlfriends and join us for a day of food, drinks and shopping.

MAY
16

Founders' Day Parade/Festival

Saturday, 9am-3pm, Veteran's Park
Join us for Highland's annual celebration with a community parade and festival.

JUNE
27

Red, White and Blues Fireworks Festival/Craft Show

Saturday, 5-11pm, John Street Field
Enjoy live music, kid's activities, food trucks, craft show and fireworks at dusk.

JULY
17-18

Summer Sidewalk Sales

Friday, 10-5pm and Saturday, 10-3pm, Historic Downtown Highland
Join the merchants of Downtown Highland for our annual sales event.

OCT
1-31

Haunted Highland

Historic Downtown Highland
Enjoy skeletal selfies spots at Downtown Highland businesses.

NOV
10

Ladies Night Out

Tuesday, 4-8pm, Historic Downtown Highland
Grab your girlfriends and join us for a night of food, drinks and shopping.

NOV
28

Small Business Saturday

Historic Downtown Highland
Support our local, small businesses with special promotions and discounts.

DEC
1-31

Highland's Holiday Tree Lot

Veteran's Park
Enjoy festive holiday trees sponsored and decorated by our community.

DEC
1-31

Holiday Photo Spots

Historic Downtown Highland
Enjoy holiday displays around Downtown Highland for pictures and selfies.

DEC
07

Kris Kringle Market & Tree Lighting

Monday, 5-9pm, Veteran's Park Area
Join us for caroling and pictures with Santa, plus shop our Kris Kringle Market.

Weekly Events | THIS SUMMER

JULY OCT
11-3

Highland Farmers' Market

Every Saturday, 10am-2pm, Highland Township Office
A weekly gathering featuring fresh food, local makers, and community spirit.

JULY AUG
7-18

Sounds Like Summer Concert Series

Every Tuesday, 7-9pm, Veteran's Park
Enjoy LIVE music in the park with a new band each week!

For additional event details, visit us online | highlanddda.com

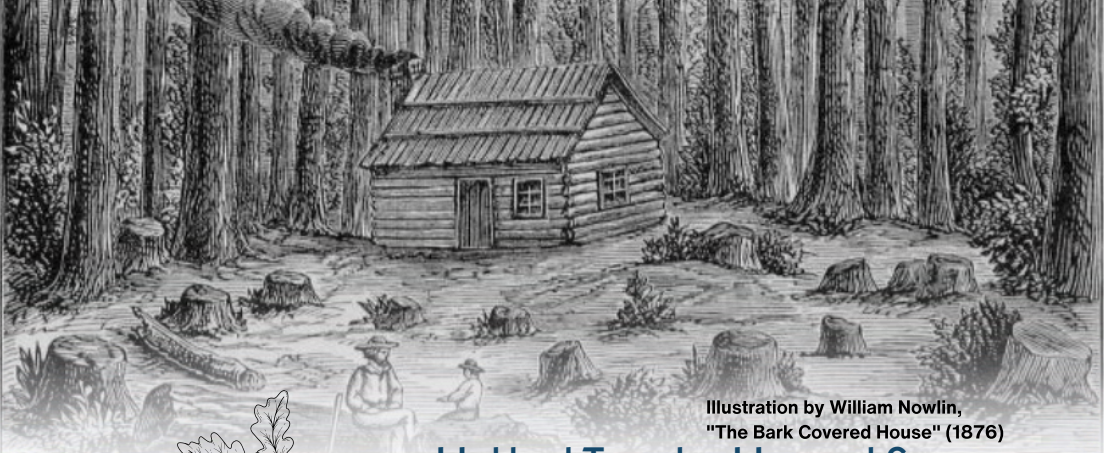


Illustration by William Nowlin,
"The Bark Covered House" (1876)



Highland Township Historical Society *Highland's Pioneer Landscape*

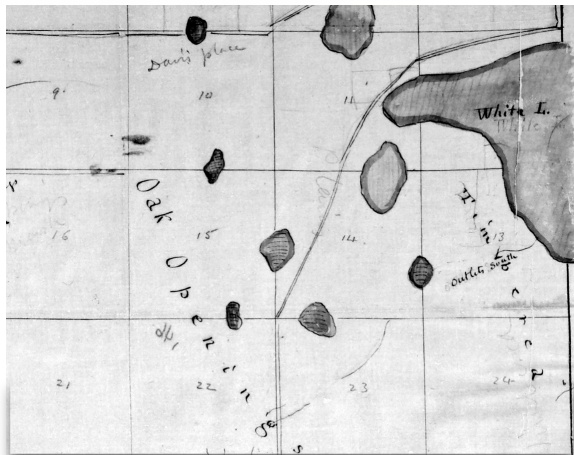
Oakland County was named for the white and black oaks which once dominated the landscape, forming what are called "oak openings" or "oak savannas." As such trees grew taller, their upper branches or "canopy" would block sunlight from reaching the ground, shading out seedlings and brush. Aided by occasional ground fires (both natural and set by Native peoples), this produced a clear, park-like forest floor that was home to wildflowers and grasses on which deer and other wildlife could feed.



Old surveys and maps show that Highland had several such oak openings, including a large one in the central part of the township. Other "openings" were found in the southwest corner of Highland and north of Clyde Road; including a "Burr Oak Opening" west of Hickory Ridge Road.

The early settlers valued such openings for several reasons. The tall, straight trunks of mature oaks could easily be hewed into logs for cabins and the abundant acorns which littered the forest floor served as "mast" (feed) for free-range swine. Best of all, such trees did not need to be completely cleared

before planting a crop. It was enough to kill them by girdling their trunks with an axe, allowing sunlight to filter through the now-dead canopy. Since the mature trees were often spaced 20 or more feet apart, there was likewise ample room to plough the ground between them and plant in the soil enriched by decades of composting leaves, flowers and grasses.

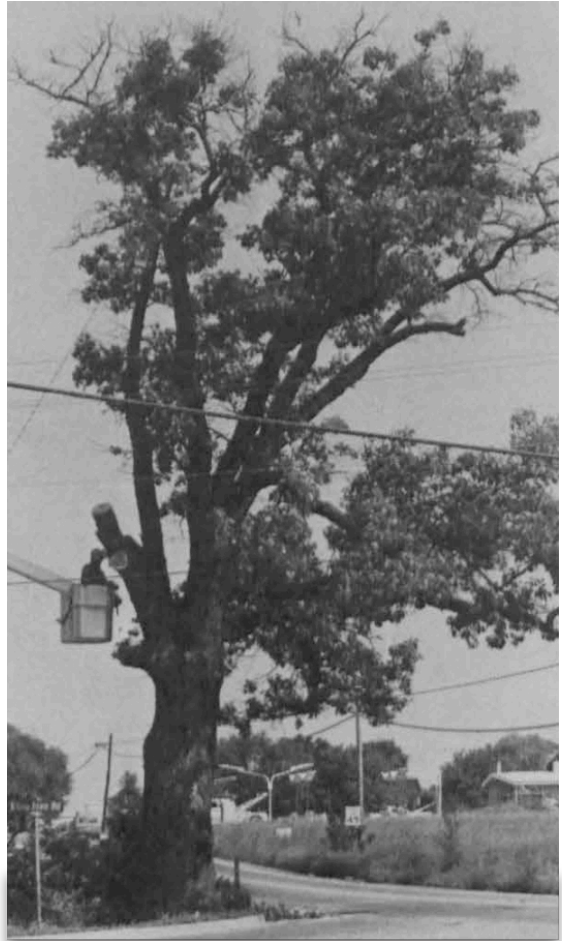


Portion of an 1838 Map of Highland showing a large oak opening west of White Lake

While pines and other conifers are a common sight around Highland today, they were comparatively rare in the early days. The most important of these were larch a/k/a tamarack trees; a deciduous conifer which grows in wet soils around lakes and marshes. Due to its high resin content, the wood resists rotting so the trunks of larch trees were often used to build so-called "corduroy roads" across swampy areas. For example, the portion of East Livingston Road just east of Harvey Lake Road was built on a floating "mat" of larch poles covered with dirt and gravel.

As more and more settlers arrived most of Highland's native oaks gave way to open fields, leaving only scattered examples which marked property lines or that otherwise served as local "landmarks." Among these was the well-known "Lone Tree" for which Lone Tree Road was named. Standing on the northwest corner of Lone Tree and Milford Roads, this massive white oak was estimated to be 250 years or more old when, for safety reasons, it was finally cut down in September of 1983.

Ironically, there is arguably more tree cover in Highland today than 100 years ago. Fallow fields have been reclaimed by "pioneer" species such as aspens, birches and pines, while many residential developments set aside dedicated natural areas. The township's various state, county and municipal parks likewise host a mix of different tree species, although whether these woodlands will eventually mature into true oak openings remains to be seen.



The "Lone Tree" being taken down in September, 1983



Highland Garden Club



The Highland Garden Club collaborates with Highland Township, the Highland DDA, Community Sharing, and the Highland Twp. Library on various gardening initiatives throughout the community. Additionally, the Club hosts guest speakers and sponsors a free seed library located at the Highland Library. This seed library is indeed FREE and well-stocked, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Angela Ireland. Thank you, Angela!

Spring brings our much-anticipated plant sale, featuring hundreds of plants sourced from the gardens of our Club members. You definitely won't want to miss this event! Be sure to mark your calendars for Saturday, May 16th at Veterans Park.



Thank you



667 volunteer hours in 2025!

Events at The Highland Township Library



Monday, April 27th, 6pm ~ Fungi of Michigan



Monday, October 12th, 6pm ~ Benefits of a Native Plant Rain Garden
Jim Nash, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner

Details at: <https://highlandlibrary.info>

Saturday, May 16th ~ Annual Plant Sale at Veterans Park. The sale is from 9am until noon. Come early to get the best selection!



Native Plants

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS

Native plants form the foundation of our local ecosystems, providing critical food and habitat for all forms of wildlife. Native plants are typically considered those plant species that are indigenous to an area, meaning that they were not introduced from outside of the region or from across the globe.



Why is this important? Native plants have coevolved with local wildlife and in many cases, have special relationships with local species of animals. An example is the Monarch Butterfly and species of Milkweed plants (species of the *Asclepias* genera). A landscape that lacks native plants is in many ways a food desert for local wildlife, especially those that travel little distances to forage. From a management standpoint, native plants are uniquely adapted to the local climate and soil types of an area, requiring little to no outside inputs to maintain their health and vigor.

The fact that native plants have only recently gained attention has less to do with their suitability in home landscapes and more to do with the familiarity of common garden plants handed down through human generations, commercial plant breeding, and the widespread availability of common garden plants at local nurseries. However, this is changing rapidly, and many native plant growers are helping to make these unique species widely available again. Look for native plant sales in your area come May or June. The best part of buying native plants is the free advice that the growers are happy to share!

Many gardeners might be familiar with black-eyed Susans, purple coneflowers, columbine, spiderwort, beebalm, and other native flowering plants that are sometimes incorporated into landscapes. These are great generalist plants that appeal to a wide range of native pollinators, so keeping and expanding the use of these plants is highly encouraged. Even the native trees in your yard can play a critical role in supporting and sustaining local wildlife. Oak trees for instance, play a crucial role as host plants for over 400 species of butterflies and moths.

The take-away is that homeowners can play a big role in the preservation of local wildlife simply by maintaining and encouraging their existing trees, shrubs, and flowers.

ARTICLE BY JAKE LLOYD



NATIVE GARDENS IN
DOWNTOWN HIGHLAND

Spring/Summer 2026

Naturally Connected

25

FRIENDS of Highland Twp Public Library

FRIENDS of Highland Twp Public Library is a non-profit, all volunteer organization that supports our public library's special programs such as the children's summer reading program, teen activities and adult events. They have 13 regular volunteers and another 30 that assist with special events.

It is the charter of FRIENDS to raise money through semi-annual used book sales (April and October), through memberships (students/seniors \$5/yr and individuals \$10/yr) and through a used book store (lower level at the library). Volunteers accept 8,000 to 10,000 donated books every year, assess each book, research for vintage classification, and prepare for each sale as well as stock the book store.

FRIENDS strive to keep our community's public library vibrant and exciting for children, teens and all community members, helping everyone read more with the hope of increasing the literacy rate of Oakland County. Community members can get involved by becoming a member, volunteering, donating books (puzzles and small vintage items too) and/or attending the semi-annual used book and bake sales. Questions? Email: friendsofhighlandtwplibrary@gmail.com

2026 Book Sale

April 16th 2pm-7pm
April 17th 10am-4pm
April 18th 10am-4pm



Membership Link

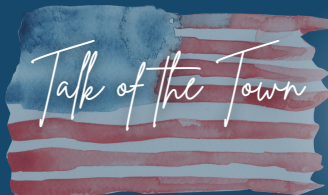


Talk of the Town is a quarterly program designed to give residents the opportunity to learn more about Township operations and important local topics. Come ask questions, share ideas, and stay up to date on everything happening in Highland Township!

Our featured presenter for this session will be Highland Township Clerk Tami Flowers, who will be discussing new changes to elections for Highland Township.

Submit questions prior to info@highlandtwp.org

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP PRESENTS



VOTE
Learn about current election information in Highland Township

FEATURING
TOWNSHIP CLERK
TAMI FLOWERS

APRIL 21ST 6:00 PM HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP AUDITORIUM
205 N. JOHN STREET



WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS COMMUNITY



HURON VALLEY ARTS IS HIGHLAND'S CREATIVE GATHERING PLACE FOR EVERYONE.

Come make something. Come meet someone.
Come be part of something great in our community.

Stop In. Stay Awhile. Belong Here.

huronvalleyarts.org

248-889-8660

205 W. Livingston Rd Highland MI 48357



WOTA

**WOTA
is here to
get you
there.**

Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA) is a door-to-door, demand response public transportation service for residents 18 and older with priority given to seniors age 55+, disabled adults age 18+ and veterans of our service area. Regardless of your mobility, WOTA can take you where you need to go as all of our vehicles are lift-equipped. WOTA is funded by the Oakland County Transit Millage passed by voters in November, 2022.



New Ride Reminder Calls and Texts

We now have the ability to send phone calls or text messages to help remind you about your ride.

Those that opt-in will receive:

- A reminder before your appointment
- A message about 15 minutes before your driver arrives
- A notice of closures

In order to participate, you must "opt-in" giving your permission for a message via phone call or text. Please let your dispatcher know when you schedule your ride if you would like to participate.

Messaging and data rates may apply. If you have questions contact our office.

Hours of Operation

Scheduling Hours: 8:00 am - 3:45 pm

Dispatcher: 8:00 am - 9:00 pm

Driving Hours:

Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Sunday 7:30 am - 3:30 pm





**GET
CONNECTED
AND JOIN THE
HIGHLAND
WHITE LAKE
BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION!**

Enjoy all these great benefits!

- Access to a variety of networking events including coffees, lunches and social events.
- Free advertising in our newsletter & reasonable rates to advertise to our database.
- Community events and fundraisers to help support local charities.
- Multiple educational events with content developed for businesses.
- Variety of sponsorship opportunities to help promote your business.

**Not located in Highland or White Lake? No problem.
Businesses from surrounding areas are welcome and can
enjoy all the benefits of membership.**

Save the date for Summer
Networking Coffees:
May 8th, June 12th, July 10th
and August 14th



Join Today!
Email Ann at
info@hwlba.com

Email info@hwlba.com for more information.



Harvest Dance
November 2026!
Stay tuned for more details!



SCAN ME!



DOWNTOWN HIGHLAND FOUNDERS' DAY

PARADE
& FESTIVAL

FREE FAMILY FUN!
Parade • Craft & Vendor Market
Plant Sale • Car Show • Food Trucks
Kids' Zone! Includes Bounce Houses, Pony Rides,
Petting Zoo, Train Rides & Face Painting



Saturday, May 16th
9 am - 3 pm • Veteran's Park

WILL RUN FOR PICKLES!

5k run/walk

May 16th 2026
Start Time: 8am
Location: Steeple Hall
205 W Livingston Rd.
Highland, MI 48357
Entry fee: \$35



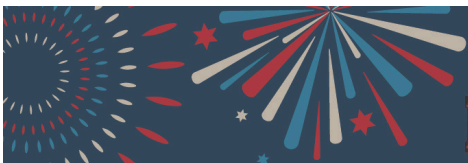
Cash prizes!
Family fun!
Timed race!



SCAN ME!



Registration deadline April 24th



FREE FAMILY FUN!

Craft & Vendor Market
Live Music • Food Trucks • Kids' Zone
Includes Bounce Houses, Pony Rides, Petting Zoo,
Rock Climbing Walls, Firetruck Hose Spray & Face Painting
Spectacular Fireworks Display at Dusk!

RED WHITE BLUES

festival + fireworks



SCAN ME!



Saturday, June 27th
5-11 pm • John Street Field

Charter Township of Highland
205 N. John Street
Highland, MI 48357

NATURALLY CONNECTED

SPRING/SUMMER
2026
ISSUE 5

Our Bi-Annual magazine combines publications from Highland Township, The Highland Activity Center, The Highland Downtown Development Authority, The Highland Township Public Library, The Highland Township Fire Department, The Oakland County Sheriff-Highland Substation, The Highland White Lake Business Association, The Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce, The Huron Valley Council for the Arts and The Western Oakland Transportation Authority.



Photographer: Tina Lloyd
Highland Farmers Market