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## **Community collaboration produces major enhancements at Ford Lake site, along with new home for EMU rowing team and Saline High School Rowing Club**

YPSILANTI, Mich. -- A collaboration between Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti Township, with generous support from the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County and the Saline Rowing Club, has resulted in a series of improvements at Lakeside Park on Ford Lake along with a new home for the EMU rowing team and the Saline High School Rowing Club.

The township-owned park, located at 10049 Textile Road, on the south side of Ford Lake, includes a new boathouse, an outdoor pavilion overlooking the lake that serves as a public classroom/picnic area, boat and fishing docks, pathways and ample parking.

The park renovation includes an extension of the trail network that connects it to regional trails. The newly added fishing docks are ADA compliant and handicap accessible.

The overall project, which cost approximately \$1.35 million, drew on funds from EMU, which contributed \$550,000, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation (\$250,000), the Saline High Rowing Program (\$50,000) and a \$500,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources secured by Ypsilanti Township. The facility was formally opened in a ceremony Thursday, May 14.

"This has been a first-rate collaboration that's resulted in an attractive, highly usable lakefront facility for the public, in addition to the athletics benefits," said Brenda Stumbo, Ypsilanti Township Supervisor. "This project came about through the extensive cooperative efforts of the township, the University, Washtenaw County and the Saline Rowing Club. The park and its features are a testament to the benefits of working together on projects that enhance the community's quality of life."

Chris Frick is president of the Saline Rowing Club and father of Saline High School sophomore rower Emma Frick. Frick said, "Having a permanent boathouse to call home has been a dream of the Saline crew team since its inception in 2004. We are excited to finally be in our new home with the Eastern Michigan team. The boathouse will allow our rowers additional rowing time and will act as a great recruiting tool to grow our program."

Kemp Savage, head rowing coach at Eastern, said, "The new boathouse will be a great home for EMU rowing and the local rowing community. Ford Lake is an exceptional rowing venue, and having a permanent home on the lake will allow rowing to grow in the Ypsilanti community. We look forward to the gains that a great facility will offer us in terms of recruiting, practice time and speed."

The EMU rowing team has 30 members and is an affiliate member of the Colonial Athletic Association, competing in various regattas along with the NCAA championships. The team previously practiced at nearby Ford Lake Park and stored its boats on a trailer. EMU and Saline have been using the new facility throughout this spring.

The boathouse, which cost about \$550,000 to design and build, is approximately 5,200 square feet and will be used to store the large boats used by the EMU rowing team and the Saline Crew Club. The boathouse includes public restrooms and a warm-up room for rowers.

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