



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

Raymond G. Arbet, Director
Department of Public Works & Development Services

Matthew Collins, Director
Division of Parks
19600 75th Street, Suite 122-1
Bristol, Wisconsin 53104
(262) 857-1850
Fax: (262) 857-1885

December 6, 2019

News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matthew Collins
262-857-1850
Matthew.Collins@kenoshacounty.org

We Energies Foundation, Swartz Nursery support reforestation project at Fox River Park

SALEM LAKES – A reforestation project in Kenosha County’s Fox River Park was made possible by a donation from the We Energies Foundation and Paul Swartz Nursery, County Executive Jim Kreuser announced today.

Both entities contributed \$2,500 to the project, which will replace some of the trees lost due to the emerald ash borer epidemic. Kenosha County also matched an additional \$2,500, allowing for the planting of 30 trees.

“I’m thankful that a couple of our local and regional partners have stepped up to help us restore some of the natural beauty that was sadly lost when the diseased ash trees were removed,” Kreuser said. “Thanks to the We Energies Foundation and Paul Swartz Nursery for their generosity.”

In February 2016, Kenosha County removed 1,054 ash borer-affected trees from Fox River Park. Since the discovery of the ash borer within Kenosha County, the Division of Parks has planted more than 2,500 replacement trees throughout the parks system.

The new trees in Fox River Park were planted on Friday.

“We are happy to help in this important environmental effort,” said Beth Straka, vice president of the We Energies Foundation and senior vice president of corporate communications and investor relations at WEC Energy Group, the holding company of We Energies. “The We Energies Foundation supports programs like this that guide our communities toward a sustainable and cleaner future.”

For Ross Swartz, president of the Paul Swartz Nursery, Fox River Park is practically a part of the family.

Ross Swartz’s grandfather, Roy Swartz, was a county parks superintendent who lived in the park for many years as a caretaker. Ross’ father, Paul Swartz, grew up in the park before starting the

family nursery nearby and remaining a benefactor to the parks system for decades. The main road through the park was named in Paul Swartz's honor after his death in 2009.

"Every spring, I enjoy looking at the beautiful yellow flowering forsythia that line the road near the entrance that he was involved with planting," Ross Swartz said. "Now, it is our family's honor to partner with the Parks Division and the We Energies Foundation by donating and planting a variety of shade trees to aid in the reforestation of western Kenosha County's first park."

Supervisor Dennis Elverman, chairman of the County Board's Public Works and Facilities Committee, said he is grateful for the Swartz family's support of the parks system.

"The Swartz nursery has been a friend of the county since Paul Swartz's father was a parks superintendent at Fox River Park," Elverman said. "The Swartz Nursery has been a benefactor and has helped us in the past, so it's only fitting that we partner with them as a piece of the park's history."

Kenosha County Parks Director Matthew Collins said care was taken to plant an array of tree species, including maple, locust, elm and spruce. This diversity, part of all of Kenosha County's recent reforestation efforts, is planned with an eye toward minimizing losses of trees in the event of a future infestation of something like the ash borer.

Fox River Park is located at 30255 93rd Street (Highway F) in the Village of Salem Lakes. Located along the meandering banks of the Fox River, the park includes 150 acres of diverse wooded parkland, picnic areas, a playground, a little league ball diamond and a no-fee, 27-hole disc golf course.

See more details the entire Kenosha County Parks system at parks.kenoshacounty.org or www.facebook.com/kenoshacountyparks.

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