



COUNTY OF KENOSHA COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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News Release

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Kenosha County receives \$234,000 for Petrifying Springs dam removal

Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser is pleased to announce that the county's Division of Parks will receive \$234,000 from the Fund for Lake Michigan to support the Pike River Fish Passage Dam Removal, bridge construction, and stream bed and bank restoration at Petrifying Springs Park.

“We appreciate the Fund for Lake Michigan recognizing the importance of this project to improve the health of the fish, the Pike River and, ultimately, the health of Lake Michigan,” Kreuser said. “This is also an important safety improvement for the families who enjoy the park, as well as a way to mitigate the long-term costs associated with the constant flooding of the bridge and parkland.”

This is the second grant Kenosha County has received from the Fund for Lake Michigan. In 2011, the Fund for Lake Michigan provided a \$102,000 grant for an engineering study for the dam removal project.

The mission of the Fund for Lake Michigan is to support efforts, and in particular those in southeastern Wisconsin, that enhance the health of Lake Michigan, its shoreline and tributary river systems for the benefit of the people, plants and animals that depend upon the system for water, recreation and commerce. The Fund for Lake Michigan is a donor-advised fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation Inc.

The Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network, which is working to improve adjacent Lake Michigan watersheds, has also been a Fund for Lake Michigan grant recipient, as well as an important partner with Kenosha County to clean and restore the Pike. Also involved in clean-up and restoration efforts have been the Kenosha Sport Fishing and Conservation Club and the Hawthorne Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum. Both Carthage College and UW-Parkside have been doing water quality testing in the Pike River.

“These partnerships and community collaborations are critical to make the Pike River clean-up efforts successful for the long haul,” Kreuser said.

The roughly three-month project is expected to begin on or about June 1. The total estimated cost is \$655,000. Kenosha County is expecting to receive another grant to assist in the cost of the project, Kreuser said.

History of the project:

The 360-acre park, located at 761 Green Bay Road, was purchased in 1927 and is comprised of the floodplain of the Pike River, as a lagoon, bluff lands and upland forests surrounding the river corridor. Petrifying Springs Park Golf Course is located to the north of the park.

The earthen dam was built in 1936 when the Work Progress Administration (WPA) constructed the Petrifying Springs Golf Course. The lagoon was deepened and the dam was constructed to create a lake to be used for irrigation water for the golf course. Later, an irrigation system was built for the golf course and it no longer relied on the lagoon.

In its 2010 Pike River Watershed Plan, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources found the Petrifying Springs dam to be illegal and recommended its removal and streambank stabilization to improve fish migration to Lake Michigan. The Petrifying Springs Park dam is the last physical fish passage barrier in the watershed.

After removal, the dam and roadway will be replaced by a vehicular bridge that will allow fish passage. The streambanks, both upstream and downstream, will be stabilized and restored to native vegetation. Invasive reed canary grass upstream of the dam will be removed and replaced with native vegetation to prevent the spread of the invasive vegetation. Steep slopes leading to the floodplain upstream of the dam will be restored for erosion control.

“Petrifying Springs Park is one of the jewels of the county’s park system,” Kreuser said. “This is a critical step toward restoring the park and ensuring it will be available for future generations to enjoy.”

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