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News release

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Pike River Phase II streambank restoration and pedestrian bridge replacement work to begin at Petrifying Springs Park

Construction of the Pike River Phase II Streambank Restoration and Pedestrian Bridge Replacement project in Petrifying Springs Park will begin in late spring, Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser announced today.

This project will be accomplished with the financial support from a \$1 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a \$350,000 grant from the Fund for Lake Michigan, a \$50,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and shared revenue from the Petrifying Springs Biergarten and Boundless Adventures.

The project builds on the Phase I Streambank and Wetland Restoration efforts on the Pike River in Petrifying Springs in 2018. This section of the Pike River is the most substantial stretch of publicly owned river within the greater urban Kenosha area and has been termed a green infrastructure hub in the Pike River Watershed-based Plan.

“This project will restore and preserve the Pike River watershed, which, in turn, will feed cleaner water into Lake Michigan,” Kreuser said. “This is a win-win for our environment and our quality of life, which is enhanced so much by the natural resources around us.”

EPA and Fund for Lake Michigan officials also praised the project.

“Thanks to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the collaborative efforts of our federal, state and local partners, we’re cleaning up and restoring the Pike River watershed,” said acting U.S. EPA Region 5 Administrator Cheryl Newton. “EPA is proud to be able to help improve this area for the Kenosha County community — especially the children who will enjoy the playground.”

“The Pike River has become an inspiring example throughout the Great Lakes of how much we can accomplish when partners rally together to restore our natural resources,” said Vicki Elkin, executive director of the Fund for Lake Michigan. “The restoration work in Petrifying Springs

will not only improve the ecological health of the river, it will make the park — already a cherished gem in the community — a more inviting destination for the public."

This project is the second phase of a multi-phased restoration project that will address a 3,280-linear-foot reach of the Pike River and the planting of native vegetation on 4.83 acres of the riparian habitat within the central section of Petrifying Springs Park.

The project will control erosion by managing streambank erosion, the installation of instream fish habitat and streamflow dynamic structures, and the use of native vegetation to stabilize and improve filtration and infiltration of the riparian area.

In addition, approximately 7,300 square feet of trails will be excavated and restored with river restoration practices.

"The restoration and maintenance of a Pike River hiking trail system will preserve all the work that will be completed along the watershed," said Kenosha County Parks Director Matthew Collins. "The trails will act as a buffer zone to keep pedestrian traffic off naturally sensitive ecosystems while inviting visitors to recreate and fish along the river's edge. Additionally, these renovated trails will provide a natural form of green stormwater infrastructure that can reduce and absorb runoff from the area."

The project also includes the replacement of a pedestrian bridge adjacent to Pavilion #4. The new pedestrian bridge will improve instream flow and increase accessibility to the future location of the playground located adjacent to Pavilion #4.

The future playground will be relocated outside of the floodplain and will remove approximately 86 tons of sand and gravel that is swept into the Pike River during major storm events. The Phase II project will include the removal of the existing playground equipment by Pavilion #4 with the anticipation to relocate the playground in 2022.

Petrifying Springs Park will remain open throughout the summer, though some trails and sections of the park may be closed temporarily during construction.

For more information on the Pike River Phase II Streambank Restoration and Pedestrian Bridge Replacement work, please contact Kenosha County Parks at 262-857-1869 or visit parks.kenoshacounty.org.

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