



# COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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

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

October 11, 2021

News release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Matthew Collins  
262-857-1850  
[Matthew.Collins@kenoshacounty.org](mailto:Matthew.Collins@kenoshacounty.org)

## **Ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate completion of Pike River Phase II Restoration Project**

SOMERS — The completion of the Pike River Phase II restoration project in Kenosha County's Petrifying Springs Park will be celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, Oct. 15, County Executive Jim Kreuser announced today.

Members of the public are invited to this event, which will begin at 1 p.m. in Area No. 4 in Petrifying Springs Park, 5555 Seventh St. (Highway A).

"We invite everyone in the community to come out and celebrate this significant environmental improvement," Kreuser said. "This project — which has been years in the making — will benefit the health of the entire Pike River system in Kenosha and Racine counties, as well of the quality of the water that ultimately flows into Lake Michigan."

The ceremony will include a program of speakers from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Fund for Lake Michigan, and other local stakeholders. Attendees will also get the opportunity to go on a tour of the newly restored site.

This year's Pike River Phase II Streambank Restoration project builds upon Phase I work completed in 2018.

Phase II encompassed a 3,280-linear-foot reach of the Pike River and included the planting of native vegetation on 4.83 acres of the riparian habitat within the central section of Petrifying Springs Park.

In addition, approximately .75 miles of new trails were developed to allow for the general public to gain recreational access to the Pike River corridor within this area, including for fishing and use of nonmotorized watercraft. The playground in Area No. 4 is proposed to be reallocated as part of the county executive's 2022 budget to a new spot west of the river, outside of the floodplain.

This restoration will aid in improving the water quality, habitat and ecological functioning of the Pike River and its riparian zone within and beyond Petrifying Springs Park, project supporters said.

This project was funded with the generous support from numerous stakeholders including a \$1 million U.S. Environmental Protection Agency EPA/Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant, a \$350,000 Fund for Lake Michigan grant, a \$50,000 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources River Protection grant, and revenue from the Petrifying Springs Biergarten and Boundless Adventures.

“The Pike River has had more restoration work completed per mile than any other major river in Wisconsin and the heart of that massive effort is right here in Petrifying Springs Park,” said Vicki Elkin Executive Director for the Fund for Lake Michigan. “This project has had a huge positive impact on water quality and aquatic species upstream and downstream on the river.

“We applaud Kenosha County's commitment to being great stewards of Wisconsin's natural resources.”

Phase II restoration completion comes as Kenosha County is exploring another major Pike River improvement project: The restoration of the South Branch of the river, which begins as a drainageway near Highway 50 on the west side of Kenosha and flows northward where it joins the main branch of the river in Petrifying Springs Park.

The South Branch’s current state, which was affected by agricultural ditching in the early 1900s, is a high contributing factor for flooding that affects the entire Pike River system and diminishes the potential for economic development in the area, Kreuser noted in his 2022 budget address to the County Board last week.

Kreuser’s budget plan, which will undergo County Board review in the coming weeks, proposes contributing local funds to a \$10 million award from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fund a full-scale restoration of the South Branch.

“The South Branch restoration would have a tremendous positive effect on the immediate area around it, and it would continue the momentum of improving the entire Pike system, as we’ve seen with the Phase I and II projects in Petrifying Springs and earlier projects upstream in Racine County,” Kreuser said. “I ask that the County Board give it strong consideration.”

###