



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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News release

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Kenosha County awarded EPA grant to restore Pike River within Petrifying Springs Park

A restoration of the Pike River in Petrifying Springs Park will begin next year, thanks to a \$500,000 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser announced today.

The project, Phase 1 of a three-phase stream restoration effort, is located on the south branch of the Pike River. It is the most substantial stretch of publically owned river and riparian area within the greater Kenosha area, and thus has been termed a green infrastructure hub in the Pike River Watershed-based Plan. The river eventually flows directly to Lake Michigan in the City of Kenosha.

“We are so thankful that the EPA and other partners see the value in restoring and protecting the Pike River,” Kreuser said. “Doing so will help us to maintain the beauty of Petrifying Springs Park, one of the jewels of Kenosha County. And it will help improve the health of Lake Michigan, which is of obvious importance to our entire region.”

The Pike River restoration project design and engineering was initially funded by a grant from the Fund for Lake Michigan in December 2015.

Over the last year, Kenosha County has worked alongside engineers to create a comprehensive plan to protect Petrifying Springs Park from further erosion along the banks of the Pike River. During this process, potential grant opportunities were identified to obtain funding to begin the needed restoration work.

“We are thrilled to see this important project move forward,” said Vicki Elkin, executive director of the Fund for Lake Michigan. “This large grant from the EPA is the result of Kenosha County’s long-term commitment to continually improve this beautiful park and the Pike River, an effort for which they deserve to be commended.”

The project will improve the water quality, habitat and ecological functioning of the Pike River and its riparian zone within Petrifying Springs Park, as recommended in the EPA-approved Pike River Watershed-Based Plan. This will result in the reduction of elevated total suspended solids and sediment-bound nutrients that are transported to the river mouth and nearshore area of Lake Michigan.

Phase I of the three-phase project will control streambank erosion, improve instream structure and streamflow dynamics, and use native vegetation to stabilize and improve filtration and infiltration of the riparian area.

This project includes an all-inclusive plan so that past work efforts won't be necessary in the future.

Down-cut and eroding portions of the streambank will be graded to a stable incline, stabilized and restored with native vegetation. In portions of the river with changes in flow velocity or direction, stone revetments will be installed and enhanced with native vegetation.

Instream structures will be installed to redirect flows away from sensitive slopes, as well as increase the diversity of aquatic streambed by creating riffles and pools vital for a healthy fishery.

Planting of native vegetation will occur in association with the restoration actions to stabilize banks long-term, as well as to enhance habitat values. In addition, approximately three acres of riparian wetlands will be restored or enhanced in Phase 1 to contribute to hydrological improvements, aesthetics, and wildlife habitat.

The entire three-phase project will address intertwined erosion, water quality and habitat concerns along 8,800 feet of the Pike River within Petrifying Springs Park. This restoration of Phase 1 activities encompasses a 3,100-foot reach. (Phases 2 and 3 will address 2,400 and 3,300 feet, respectively.)

Construction work for Phase 1 is set for spring 2018, and the restoration and seeding of native species will occur in spring 2019.

For more information, please contact Kenosha County Parks at 262-857-1869 or visit parks.kenoshacounty.org.

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