



October Board Cycle

Milwaukee County Parks

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Date: September 27, 2019
To: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors
From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks
Subject: **Kletzsch Park Improvements Final Design - ACTION**

Issue

In April of 2019, a Professional Services Agreement for the Fish Passage element of project WP548 – Kletzsch Park Dam Repairs and Improvements was approved by the Board as file 19-335. The approval was contingent that before proceeding with the project Parks must present the proposed final design at another Public Information Meeting and that the proposed final design shall receive County Board approval before construction of any project can proceed. Accordingly, Parks is requesting approval of the proposed improvements including the east abutment dam repairs, public river access, portage and overlook, and the west bank in-river fish passage.

Background

Kletzsch Park is a 118-acre park along the westerly side of the Milwaukee River within the City of Glendale. Park land was first acquired in 1918, and the Kletzsch Park Dam was built in the 1930's. The dam consists of a fixed-crest gravity spillway with timber stop log bypass gates on the east side of the dam to allow draining the impoundment behind the dam. The sinuous spillway is constructed of concrete and masonry and spans 245 feet between the abutments. The timber stop log bypass gates are currently blocked by sediment and vegetation making them non-operational. Overall, the dam is in generally good condition.

Milwaukee County has been awarded several grants to fund improvements that will address several deficiencies at the dam. There are three main components to the project:

1. East abutment dam repairs – repairs to damaged masonry, removal of vegetation, and re-establishing functionality to the timber stop logs at the east abutment.
2. Public river access, portage and overlook – reconstruction of the dam overlook in response to the need for improved overall public access to the river, specifically addressing limited access for physically disabled individuals as well as conditions relating to direct contact with the water by boaters and anglers.
3. West bank in-river fish passage – construction of a fish passage to allow native fish species (targeting northern pike and sturgeon) to migrate upstream during seasonal spawning.

A concept for fish passage and related overlook and water access improvements was presented at a Public Information Meeting (PIM) in January 2019. The concept involved a bypass fish passage channel constructed in the west overbank of the Milwaukee River in Kletzsch Park. Several questions and concerns were raised regarding major changes to the landscape, impacts to the historic parkway, and loss of trees. In April, the County Board passed Amended Resolution 19-335 requiring a second PIM be held to present additional alternatives and to clarify how these alternatives addressed concerns raised at the first PIM. That second PIM was held on



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Tuesday, September 17th, during which the previous design concerns were addressed through a presentation, question and answer period, and topical break-out discussions.

During the course of the project, many concepts were reviewed and tested to ensure that the best possible solution was produced. These alternatives included but were not limited to:

- West bank downstream rock ramp/step-pool fish passage (3 alternatives): REJECTED
 - *Did not meet fish passage performance criteria and FEMA no-rise flood criteria*
- West bank step-pool fish passage with channel & dam modification (3 alternatives): REJECTED
 - *Did not meet fish passage performance criteria and FEMA no-rise flood criteria*
- West bank step-pool bypass fish passage (4 alternatives): REJECTED
 - *Oak tree impact concerns and extensive bank modifications*
- West bank bypass fish passage with culverts: REJECTED
 - *Culvert length would inhibit fish passage and extensive grading required*
- East bank bypass fish passage: REJECTED
 - *Increases FEMA 100-year floodplain elevation and impacts insurable structures on private property*
- West bank in-river fish passage: PREFERRED FINAL CONCEPT

The preferred final concept not only provides a functional passage for fish, but also addresses the public concerns shared during the community engagement process:

Public Input Received	Integration into Final Design Concept
Supportive of having fish passage, research other options.	Fish passage provides access for native species to upstream habitat and improves the overall health of the Milwaukee River. Other options are limited. East bank has limited public property and would cause a rise in floodplain elevation. West bank in-river fish passage meets regulatory requirements and addresses feedback received.
Like improved portage for paddlers, make it shorter.	Portage length dictated by gradient for universal access and by the length of the proposed fish passage.
Like access to the river. Keep overlook near the dam.	Overlooks, upper and lower, to be maintained at similar location as existing overlooks. Universal access to the river will be provided.
Keep street parking.	Parking lane on east side of parkway remains.
No impact to mature oak trees.	Some tree loss (hackberry) but the oaks will remain.
Lots of change to the landscape and historic site.	Changes to upland landscape are limited. Grading is limited to portage and construction access. SHPO approved a previous project alternative. The selected west bank in-river fish passage alternative has been re-submitted for SHPO review. Tribal outreach is also in process.
Why provide universal access at Kletzsch?	New facilities are installed with universal access to accommodate all potential users of this public space.
What parts of the project are required?	Dam repair, clearing of trees/shrubs and reestablishing function of the bypass structure on the east bank.

In terms of context, these improvements at Kletzsch Park will address required east abutment dam repairs, public access, and loss/degradation of fish and wildlife habitat in the park, thereby supporting the improvement of the larger Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern (AOC) within the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Work in the Milwaukee Estuary (which includes the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers and the shoreline of Lake Michigan) addresses specific ecological impairments such as fish tumors, bird and animal deformities, restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, poor water quality, beach closings, and the presence of undesirable algae. Together, these systemic improvements will provide healthier waterways, improve ecological functions, expand public access to recreation opportunities, and generate local and regional economic opportunities.

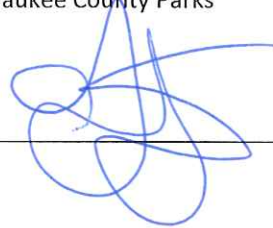
The Kletzsch improvements are supported by a unique partnership opportunity including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA), the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Fund for Lake Michigan, and Milwaukee County, among other partners.

Recommendation

Parks recommends that both the Department of Administrative Services – Facilities as well as the Parks Department be authorized to pursue detailed design and construction of the preferred final concept in accordance with the community feedback and concept development process that has taken place.

Prepared By: Sarah Toomsen, Manager of Planning and Development, Milwaukee County Parks
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Approved By: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks



Attachments

- Fiscal Note
- Resolution
- West bank in-river fish passage final concept renderings

Copy

- Chris Abele, County Executive
- Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, County Executive’s Office
- Jason Haas, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 14
- Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 3
- Marcelia Nicholson, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 5
- Felesia Martin, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 7
- Steven Shea, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 8
- Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
- Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
- Emily Peterson, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
- Mark Yatchak, Fiscal Mgt. Analyst, Admin & Fiscal Affairs, Department of Administrative Services



