

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: June 18, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director for Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: McKinley Beach and Bender Boat Launch Water Depths

File Type: Informational Report

---

**REQUEST**

Informational report sharing data related to water depths at both McKinley Beach and Bender Boat Launch.

**POLICY**

Per 2025 Budget Amendment 11, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture shall develop a schedule for regular monitoring of the sand and silt at the Bender Park and McKinley Beach Boat Launches and provide an annual report on their condition to the County Board each July.

Specific Adopted Budget:	2025
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	11

**BACKGROUND**

Parks reconstructed McKinley Beach in 2023-24, and design plans called for a goal depth of 2.5' of water between the breakwaters for a protected wading beach. A bathymetric survey was completed in late May of 2025 and found that some sediment loss was experienced, as well as fluctuations in water elevations of Lake Michigan over time. Water depth between the breakwaters after approximately 1-year was 3.5', appropriate for this wading beach.

Depth of the launch at Bender Park was found to be as shallow as 1' during the initial surveying completed for the Bender Dredging project, WP0778. Parks has received funding through the capital budget for this project to remove sediment from Bender Boat Launch through mechanical dredging. Work is currently underway to rebid the design plans in project WP0778 so that dredging may begin in late summer/early fall to restore depth at the launch. The design solutions in the project plans called for a dredge depth of 572', matching the original design of the site. Alternative approaches for the project will be included in the rebid to ensure an actionable solution in 2025, pending bid outcomes. These alternate depths are planned to be 573', 574', and 574.5'. NOAA is currently measuring Lake Michigan water depth at 579.2', meaning approximately 4.7-7.2 feet of water depth will be present at the launch after the dredging project later this

year.

Related File No's:	21-97, 21-227, 22-761, <a href="#">23-308</a> ; <a href="#">22-40</a> , <a href="#">22-391</a> , <a href="#">15-772</a> , <a href="#">15-771</a> , <a href="#">23-789</a> ; 20-413; 24-778
--------------------	---

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability

**FISCAL EFFECT**

None

**TERMS**

None

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Sarah Toomsen, Director of Planning, Milwaukee County Parks

Chris Kubacki, LA-Eng Supervisor, Milwaukee County Parks

**PREPARED BY:**

Sarah Toomsen, Director of Planning, Milwaukee County Parks

**APPROVED BY:**

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks *Guy Smith*

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

CC: David Crowley, County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Sheldon Wasserman, Committee on Parks & Culture Chairperson  
Steve Taylor, Committee on Parks & Culture Vice Chairperson  
Priscilla Coggs-Jones, Committee on Parks & Culture Member  
Jack Eckblad, Committee on Parks & Culture Member  
Felesia Martin, Committee on Parks & Culture Member  
Juan Miguel Martinez, Committee on Parks & Culture Member  
Anne O'Connor, Committee on Parks & Culture Member  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk  
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS  
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS  
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office  
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office  
Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk

Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB  
Sandy Saltzstein, Research and Policy Analyst