

Dane County: Executive Parisi announces 11,000 tons of phosphorus-laden sediment removed from nearly three-mile stretch of Dorn Creek

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Contact: Casey Slaughter Becker
608-267-8823

Substantial Completion of "Suck the Muck" Phase 1 Shows Tremendous Promise for Lake Clean Up

MADISON - Dane County has reached substantial completion of the first phase of its "Suck the Muck" initiative, with the removal of 11,000 tons of phosphorus-soaked sediment from a nearly three-mile stretch of Dorn Creek northwest of Lake Mendota, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced today.

The tonnage, nearing the same weight as the steel used to construct the retractable roof at Miller Park, contained 75,000 pounds of phosphorus, a major contributor to algae growth in area lakes. Three to four feet of sediment was removed from the 2.7 mile stretch of Dorn Creek, up to twice as much as initially anticipated.

"Our community has made great strides through critical partnerships to curb phosphorus run-off from rural and urban sources," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "And we now know that we can't achieve our clean lakes goals without also addressing what's already in the water. By removing this sediment, we will see clean lakes in our lifetime."

In addition to blocking phosphorus from leaching into Dane County's chain of lakes, the sediment removal will help restore Dorn Creek's natural habitat. The stream has been re-meandered to its historical location and the banks have been stabilized to prevent future erosion. Dorn Creek was a spawning area for Northern Pike 50 years ago, and officials are hopeful that with recent improvements, the species may be able to return to thrive in the creek once more.

"Suck the Muck" is a \$12 million initiative, introduced by Parisi in his 2017 County Budget and implemented by the County's Department of Land and Water Resources, to clean up 33 total miles of streams that feed into the lakes. The sediment found in these streams is estimated to be at least 125 years old and contain 870,000 pounds of phosphorus, making it a greater contributor to the health of area lakes than originally thought. Without addressing the build-up, it would take another 66 years to achieve the clean water goals laid out in the Yahara Clean Report.

To learn more about the progress of "Suck the Muck", future phases, and the impact the efforts will have on lake health, please visit <https://lwr.dane.gov/legacy-sediment-project>.