

Dept. of Natural Resources: To restore wetlands in Mount Pleasant

Posted on Friday, Oct 23, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MOUNT PLEASANT, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) have announced the start of a wetland restoration project in the Village of Mt. Pleasant. The project, located east of Meachem Road and Sanders Park, will restore 60 acres of wetlands to near pre-settlement conditions as part of a DNR grant program.

The restoration of the existing agricultural field will be completed with funds from the Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust (WWCT). The WWCT is a wetland mitigation program administered by the DNR. The WWCT funds wetland restoration projects to offset permitted wetland impacts resulting from development projects.

“It is great to see public-private partnerships like this one working together to advance the environmental needs of our county,” county executive Jonathan Delagrave said. “The restored wetlands will leave a legacy for residents and visitors to the Meachem Road site to enjoy for future generations and at no cost to Racine County taxpayers.”

Site planning began in 2019 and restoration activities are anticipated to begin in October. The agreement also provides a conservation easement on the 60-acre area so that it will remain protected wetland in perpetuity. Long-term management will be funded through an endowment managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

The Meachem Road project will address many of the watershed threats identified in the DNR/Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved Pike River Watershed-Based Plan by increasing flood storage, slowing runoff, improving water quality and creating valuable habitat for native species. Specifically, the project will address the

plan's goals of restoring wetlands to promote storage and infiltration of stormwater and protecting sites such as this one that were identified in the plan as "green infrastructure parcels."

"It's great to see the Pike River Watershed Restoration Plan working and not collecting dust. Wetland restorations such as the Meachem Road wetland were specifically recommended in the Plan," said Dave Giordano, Root-Pike WIN executive director. "We're thrilled that the DNR is restoring wetlands in the watershed where the development impact took place."

The restoration is also located directly across from Sanders Park Hardwoods, which was identified in the Watershed Restoration Plan as a Special Natural Feature. Expanding on existing protected natural areas such as Sanders Park will further improve the health and resiliency of the Pike River watershed. After the site has been restored, it will be open to the public for nature-based outdoor activities such as hiking.

"The WWCT is a great example of private entities and the DNR working together. It's a 'win-win-win' for developers, environmental groups and municipalities because development projects can be implemented while still protecting watersheds," said Josh Brown, DNR wetland in-lieu fee program coordinator.

Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit that restores, protects and sustains the Root-Pike basin by building partnerships to advance projects that benefit some of the most degraded watersheds in Wisconsin.