

Dane County: Awards contract for next phase of “Suck the Muck” project, will begin work at Six Mile Creek this spring

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Today, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced that Michels Construction, Inc. will be awarded the contract to begin Dane County’s next phase of “Suck the Muck,” taking place at Six Mile Creek in an area known as Mary Lake later this spring. The contract totals \$981,460 and will further Dane County’s goal of removing algae-making phosphorus from the Yahara Chain of Lakes system. This stretch of stream contains areas of muck removal up to seven feet deep. It is estimated that approximately 25,000 tons (or about 1,800 dump truck loads) of material will be removed from this section of Six Mile Creek, including 60,000 pounds of phosphorus.

“‘Suck the Muck’ is a popular initiative in the community, known for improving the overall health of area lakes and streams, and we are excited to begin this next phase of the project in Six Mile Creek,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “By cleaning up surrounding waterways, we help ensure they can be enjoyed for decades to come. Dane County values its natural resources, and we look forward to enhancing the water quality in Mary Lake through this ongoing initiative.”

“Suck the Muck” is a \$12 million initiative introduced by County Executive Parisi in his 2017 budget and implemented by the Dane County Department of Land and Water Resources that initially prioritized 33 miles of streams countywide for analysis of potential sediment (muck) removal. The sediment found in these streams is estimated to be up to 125 years old and contain 870,000 pounds of phosphorus, which can increase the frequency and extent of hazardous algae

blooms. It is hoped that work from “Suck the Muck” will also improve the natural reproduction and diversity of fish populations. Since the initiative first began, 31,000 tons of sediment containing over 100,000 pounds of phosphorus have been removed.

Dane County previously completed “Suck the Muck” at Dorn Creek and Token Creek. The project at Token Creek, which is a class II trout stream, included many habitat enhancements such as boulders and root wads. Rock deflectors were also added to prevent future erosion. Token Creek is the only cold water stream in northeast Dane County, and these enhancements will have huge benefits for the trout fishery. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 tons (or about 1,500 dump truck loads) of material was removed from this section of Token Creek.

In 2018, Dane County reached completion on its first phase of “Suck the Muck” at Dorn Creek. 11,000 tons of phosphorus-soaked sediment was removed from the site, spanning nearly three miles. The tonnage contained roughly 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, up to twice as much as initially anticipated. The stream was also re-meandered to its historical location and the banks were stabilized to prevent future erosion.