

# DNR: Portage Canal Restoration, Revitalization Nears Completion

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**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the City of Portage, and Columbia County, celebrated today the culmination of a decades-long vision to clean up and restore the [Portage Canal](#), revitalizing this community asset.

Restoring the canal, which is the closest point in the state between the Fox River and the Wisconsin River, has been a multi-decade and multi-phase project. The project also exemplifies how various levels of government can work together as partners to accomplish a unified goal.

“This impressive collection of local, state, and federal governments coming together to address a long-standing legacy contaminate, with the shared goals of remediation, restoration, and recreation, is nothing but exceptional,” said DNR Secretary Preston D. Cole.

In 2020 and 2021, the DNR, in collaboration with the City of Portage, began cleanup of the Portage Canal by removing 30,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment. Years of heavy industrial use resulted in primarily heavy metals being deposited into the canal.

“The City of Portage is grateful for cooperative efforts of the federal government, State of Wisconsin, Columbia County, as well as past and present members of the Ad Hoc Canal Committee, City Staff and Common Council in pulling together a 5-year planning process and restoring a long-neglected stretch of the Portage Canal for the enjoyment of residents and visitors,” said Portage Mayor Mitch Craig.

As part of the remediation, 1.3 million gallons of contaminated water were treated,

seven storm sewers were extended to maintain the City's stormwater management, and 40,000 tons of material was placed to construct the base for the foundation of an Ice Age Trail addition.

The Ice Age Trail addition will attract visitors and contribute to the outdoor recreation economy. Building this section of trail was a long-time vision for the City of Portage, which is excited to be a part of the 1,000-plus miles of this winding heirloom trail.

More information about the Portage Canal project can be found on the [DNR's website](#).

A video of the project is also available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/A2zckfUaWYc>