



CITY OF PORT WASHINGTON | DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Rob Vanden Noven P.E., Director of Public Works

Press Contact:

Rob Vanden Noven P.E., Director of Public Works, rvandenoven@portwashingtonwi.gov; 262-268-4267

PORT WASHINGTON RECEIVES \$1,045,000 IN GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION AND THE US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FOR ENHANCING ADAPTABILITY OF HABITATS TO SUSTAIN MIGRATORY BIRDS, BATS, AND POLLINATORS AND CREATING A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE VALLEY CREEK CORRIDOR

PORT WASHINGTON, WI – (December 12, 2023) - The City of Port Washington and local partners are working to transform the Valley Creek corridor using nature-based solutions to mitigate unstable and eroding banks, improve water quality, restore aquatic habitat, restore natural plant communities, and engage diverse community members in the process. To support this transformative project, the City secured grant funding in the amount of \$130,000 from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to remove invasive species and enhance native plant communities at Birchwood Hills Nature Preserve and Upper Lake Park. The City also secured \$915,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support the stream restoration design phase for the entire length of Valley Creek.

Valley Creek suffers from severe erosion (30 ft. eroded banks), stream channel downcutting, flashy hydrology, loss of floodplain connectivity, degraded aquatic habitat, and fish passage obstructions; and the public parklands are being impacted by invasive species, canopy loss and erosion from the creek. Collectively, these projects will 1) reduce future cost to protect and mitigate risks to critical infrastructure (roads, trails, utilities); 2) reduce flooding risk and associated costs for emergency repairs; 3) reduce health, safety and property loss from eroding and downcutting stream banks, and steep/unstable slopes; 4) improve public access and enjoyment of the creek and riparian areas; 5) improve fish passage by removing barriers; 6) improve stream and Lake Michigan water quality and aquatic habitats, by addressing sources of erosion; 7) enhance 1.8 miles of aquatic and riparian habitat through restoration of in-stream habitat and enhancement of riparian communities; and 8) engage the public in the planning process.

Restoration at Birchwood Hills Nature Preserve and Upper Lake Park will start in December 2023 and continue through the 2024 and 2025 growing seasons. The City plans to remove invasive shrubs in Birchwood Hills through hand and mechanical clearing methods, conduct herbaceous and woody invasive species treatments, and plant native shrub and tree species throughout the park. In Upper Lake Park, the City plans to permanently convert approximately 1 acre of turfgrass to a species-rich pollinator meadow, located at the northwest corner of the park. Activities will consist of site preparation, native seed mix and plug installation, and follow up management of the prairie. Stream restoration design will begin in spring 2024. The City will seek additional grant funds to support stream construction, with the timeline depending on securing sufficient funds to construct this transformative project.