

Removal of dam draws protest

Written by MARK JAEGER

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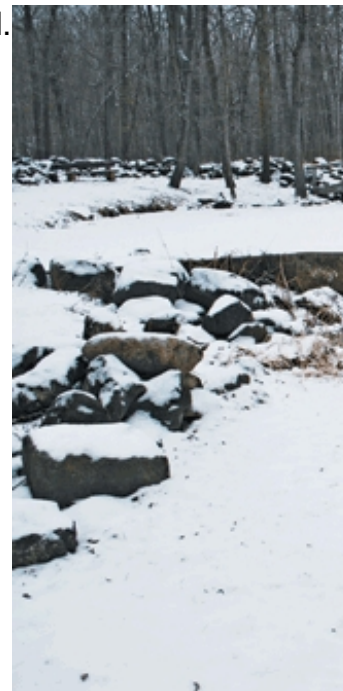
Longtime resident says Waubedonia pond was once a popular attraction

As a frequent visitor to Waubedonia Park during most of his 88 years, Fredonia resident Norman Jagow probably knows the park along the banks of the Milwaukee River as well as anybody.

Jagow, who has lived in the area since 1933, has become fond of the towering trees, intimate green spaces and the remnants of artifacts from decades past.

That is why he is objecting to a county plan to remove a small dam that has created a quarter-acre pond once considered the focal point of a charming setting.

“I want to protest the ridiculous waste of money to remove the dam,” Jagow said.



The county’s Planning and Parks Department is pursuing funding for removing the two-foot-tall, 33-foot-wide stone and cement dam that environmentalists feel is impeding fish passage from the river to seasonally flooded spawning grounds in the park and wetlands to the north.

Andrew Struck, director of Ozaukee County’s Planning and Parks Department, said the dam removal is part of a more comprehensive Ozaukee Fish Passage Program that is part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

“The program reconnects naturally occurring high-quality habitats in the Milwaukee River watershed by modifying or removing obstructions and impediments to fish and aquatic life passage,” Struck said.

Tapping federal and state funding, he said the effort has identified and removed more than 175

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waterway impediments on the river and 24 tributaries, opening more than 100 miles of streams to fish passage.

That work has been covered by \$5.2 million from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and \$2 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The county contends the source for the Waubedonia Park pond is Crystal Springs Creek, which connects to nine acres of wetlands deemed suitable for northern pike spawning north of Highway A.

Jagow contends the water that fills the pond comes from an artesian well located about 100 yards north of the dam.

When Crystal Springs Lake overflows during the spring melt, the resulting runoff follows the same creek bed.

"I walk the park every day and have never seen fish in that stream," he said.

What Jagow has seen, he said, are laughing children who enjoy the pond, playing with the polliwogs and frogs that live in the pool safely removed from the river.

The 40-acre park property was purchased by the county in 1926 from Peter Jung for \$300.

Although details are sketchy, Jagow said the pond dates to the 1930s, when it was part of an idyllic setting that included a small stone windmill and archway.

He said those quaint structures were demolished by rambunctious teenagers in the 1970s.

The DNR contends the dam is starting to show signs of deterioration, and must be repaired or removed.

Struck said the county's plan is to remove the dam, rebuild the natural creek channel and restore the pond area. In all, four separate restoration projects are planned for the Crystal Springs Creek waterway.

Jagow will take his protest to the county's Natural Resources Committee, which meets at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 7, in the Administration Center in Port Washington.

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SNOW COVERS THE small dam in Waubedonia Park which is scheduled to be removed to open the area for native fish and aquatic life.