



NEWS RELEASE

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Pritzker Administration Awards \$204,000 in Rebuild Illinois Capital Funding to the Rockford Park District to Address Stormwater Runoff

Illinois EPA Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunity program to fund implementation project

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director John Kim announced the Rockford Park District will receive \$204,000 in Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunity (GIGO) grant funding to implement the Levings Lake Stormwater Treatment Train project. The project made possible through funding from Governor Pritzker's bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan, will install a best management practice treatment train to increase stormwater infiltration to relieve flooding immediately downstream in Levings Lake and the South Fork Kent Creek.

"Protecting Illinois communities and businesses from persistent flooding and water damage is a top priority for my administration which is why the Rebuild Illinois capital plan has funding specifically dedicated to green infrastructure initiatives," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Through the Levings Lake Stormwater Treatment Train project, the residents of Rockford Park District will have increased protection against excess stormwater and peace of mind that their homes and families are safe."

The project, located within Levings Park, is a combination of best management practices that when linked together slow stormwater runoff and allows water to infiltrate into the soil. The project includes installation of two bioswales, retrofit of a 2.4-acre wetland and 'daylighting' of an existing underground pipe. A bioswale is a vegetated channel designed to convey stormwater runoff, while allowing a portion of the water to infiltrate into the ground or be taken up by the plants within the system. Daylighting is the process to restore a creek or stream that has been confined in an underground pipe to more natural conditions. This project will excavate 148 linear feet of underground pipe and regrade the site into a bioswale to allow the water to flow above ground through native vegetation, before it enters Levings Lake.

The project is recommended in the South Fork Kent Creek Watershed Plan (2020) and the Rockford Park District's Concept Plan to Improve Water Quality for Levings Lake (2017). The project site receives stormwater runoff from a 580-acre watershed that has residential, commercial, and industrial land uses along with crop fields and natural areas. The total project budget is \$240,000, with Illinois EPA providing \$204,000 in grant funds and the District providing \$36,000 in matching funds.

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“This project is part of a larger community effort to implement the South Fork Creek Watershed Plan. The bioswales and stream daylighting will help slow the stormwater before it enters Levings Lake, which should help reduce flooding downstream,” **said Director Kim.** “This project is a great example of applying green infrastructure to green space. Even parks present opportunities to do more to protect and improve water quality in Illinois’ lakes and streams.

Investing in Levings Park is a top priority for the Rockford Park District as it’s a regional destination that provides unique recreational experiences, concerts, fishing, and much more. Levings Lake will act as a catalyst for future growth and development at the park which is why we are so thankful to be receiving this grant funding. These dollars will allow us to continue with water quality improvements and address erosion, sedimentation, and flooding which will only improve the recreational use of the lake,” **said Tom Lind, Landscape Architect, Rockford Park District.**

“This is a great investment for the Rockford Park District at Levings Lake,” **said Rep. Maurice West (D-Rockford).** “I remember this being a topic of discussion when I was a member of the Rockford Park District Foundation Board - and now, we are able to take the necessary steps to improve native vegetation in the park and the overall experience for Rockford residents.”

“Investing resources into Levings Park to address these issues is important to the park district and the city of Rockford,” **said Sen. Steve Stadelman (D-Rockford).** “This funding will help the park continue to serve as a great resource for the community.”

The GIGO Grant Program is a competitive financial assistance grant program established to help protect Illinois’ water resources. The GIGO Program is funded through the Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan. The funds are used to implement green infrastructure best management practices to control stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff causes flooding and carries pollutants into waterways such as rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater.

For additional information on Illinois’ Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities Grant Program, please visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/water-quality/surface-water/Pages/green-infrastructure.aspx>.

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