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**RACINE COUNTY, DNR and ROOT-PIKE WIN  
TO RESTORE CLIFFSIDE PARK WETLANDS**  
*DNR Grant Will Provide 100% of Restoration Funding*

Caledonia – Racine County and Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) have announced a partnership to restore wetlands inside Cliffside Park to near pre-settlement conditions as part of a DNR grant program. Cliffside Park is a County-owned park with a unique coastal environment located on the shore of Lake Michigan in Caledonia.

Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (Root-Pike WIN) helped secure a DNR grant that provides 100% of the funds necessary to do the wetland restoration. The grant is part of the Wetland In-Lieu Fee (ILF) Program and is funded through the Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust (WWCT). The grant is valued at approximately \$590,000. Research and analysis work will begin this spring and restoration work will begin this fall and into 2019. Mandated maintenance will take place over the next 10 years.

The restoration of this wetland inside Cliffside Park will provide an improved natural area for public recreation, slow soil erosion, remove invasive species, provide habitat for unique species and improve water quality to Lake Michigan.

“It is great to see public-private partnerships like this one working together to advance the environmental needs of our County,” County Executive Jonathan Delagrave said. “The restored wetlands will leave a legacy for residents and visitors to Cliffside Park to enjoy for future generations – and at no cost to Racine County taxpayers.”

The agreement also provides a conservation easement on the 40-acre area so that it will be protected in perpetuity.

The recommendation to restore this area in Cliffside Park is specified in the DNR/EPA-approved Wind Point Plan as “#22” and “Highly Critical”, and the WWCT is identified as the preferred grant. The Village of Caledonia, Village of Wind Point, and Racine County have adopted the Plan.

“It’s great to see the Wind Point Watershed Restoration Plan working and not collecting dust. The Cliffside Park project was deemed ‘highly-critical’ and the WWCT funding recommendation comes specifically out of the plan. It’s unlikely this project would have happened otherwise,” said Dave Giordano, Root-Pike WIN Executive Director.

The Cliffside Park wetland restoration is one of the largest projects recommended in the EPA-approved Wind Point Watershed Restoration Plan and would symbolically mark the start of the cooperative effort to improve this unique part of Racine County.

Root-Pike WIN partnered with Tallgrass Land Conservation, LLC to complete the initial research and compile the grant application. Tallgrass Land Conservation specializes in managing highly-regulated wetland mitigation/restoration projects in the Midwest. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will both regulate the work as the funding must restore the area to the highest standard of restoration possible. The contract to complete the work will be directly with the DNR and Tallgrass Land Conservation.

Racine County officials will be kept informed of the major milestones, potential risks and any other activities that may impact the park experience.

Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit that restores, protects and sustains the Root-Pike basin by building partnerships to advance projects that benefit some of the most degraded watersheds in Wisconsin.

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