NEWS RELEASE

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Lake Belleview

FISH STOCKING NEXT ON RESTORATION AGENDA

BELLEVILLE – Work continues on a lake rehabilitation project here which aims to restore both the aquatic environment and fishery of reconfigured Lake Belle View.

To that end, and a critical component of the project, is establishing a diverse warm water fishery by transferring native fish species from the Sugar River to Lake Belle View.

Already, a berm has been constructed to separate the lake from the Sugar River with the earthen structure also serving as a recreational corridor connecting this village of 2385 residents to lake and river.

"To our knowledge, there's no other project like this in Wisconsin, especially the establishment of an off-channel ecosystem with native plants and fish. It's a great living outdoor laboratory. We believe that by creating a unique recreation area people from all over the region will come here to enjoy fishing, canoeing, bird watching and bicycling," noted village president Howard Ward.

"We are the little village that could," he added.

The original 94-acre shallow impoundment of the Sugar River was drawn down in conjunction with the berm construction so it could be dredged, sediment removed from the lake bottom and invasive carp eradicated.

Due to the berm, "an estimated 99 percent of the phosphorus and sediment (carried by the Sugar River) will bypass the lake, an important factor for sustaining the lake for decades to come," said one of the project's environmental consultants, Dave Marshall.

The lake re-filled through groundwater seepage, which will also maintain water in the newly reconfigured 40-acre lake.

The Sugar River has now been separated from most of the lake but still flows through a small impoundment and over the dam which created the former Belleville Millpond in 1920.

Fish species will be collected beginning this week by state Department of Natural Resources biologists and environmental consultants using electro-shocking gear in sections of the Sugar River. They will be transported in aerated coolers from river to lake immediately after collection and stocked by volunteers, including local high school students.

Species expected to be stocked includebluegills, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, green sunfish, black crappies, bluntnose minnows, flathead minnows, golden shiners and johnny darters. All of these fish are compatible with the new lake environment and are considered common to abundant in the Sugar River.

“The game fish (augmented with hatchery stocking) will provide recreational fishing while the diverse non-game fish will support the game fish population (as prey species) and attract birds and other wildlife as well,” noted Mr. Marshall.

The project also calls for creating wetlands and floodplain forest by redistributing dredged lake sediment conducive to wetland plants. Trees, grasses and other plants will be established by planting and seeding.

Native aquatic plant species are already being introduced in the lake. These include Water shield, Coontail, American lotus, Yellow and White water-lily, Large-leaved, Illinois and Longleaf pondweed, and Wild Celery.

“We hope that Lake Belle View will ultimately mimic a natural river floodplain lake that harbors many native fishes, including largemouth bass and bluegills,” added Mr. Marshall.

For more information visit: www.lakebelleview.com or http://www.badger-trail.com/

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