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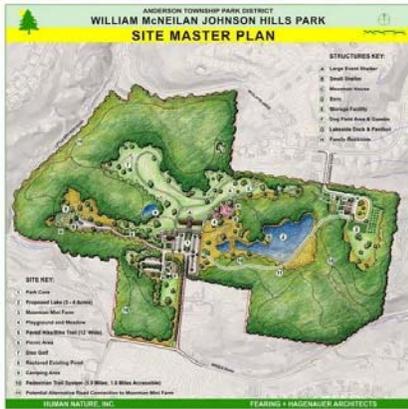
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Anderson Twp. park development delayed

By Lisa Wakeland



It could be two years before the Anderson Township Park District can move forward with plans for a fishing lake.

It's one of the main features for the redevelopment of Johnson Hills Park, near Little Dry Run and Bridle roads, but the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency expressed concerns earlier this year about the lake's location.

Park commissioners recently agreed to hire Oxbow River and Stream Restoration Inc. to conduct the required studies associated with the initial phase of the lake permit process.

The initial phase is estimated to cost taxpayers \$32,270 and take 18 to 24 months to complete, said Ken Kushner, park district executive director.

This is the master plan for the Johnson Hills Park development.

Construction on the lake, main access road and parking lot was supposed to begin this year, but the meeting with the Ohio EPA and Army Corps of

Engineers put the plan on hold.

An Ohio EPA stream specialist expressed her concerns about the lake construction affecting habitats for small organisms such as running buffalo clover and the Indiana bat – both species are on the endangered species list – and other microorganisms living in the water channels, later defined as streams.

The studies conducted by Oxbow will accompany the permit applications and the Ohio EPA permit will require an additional \$5,000 fee, according to a Park District memo.

Park District officials selected the lake's location because of the natural springs and storm water run-off that could fill the lake.

The 4- to 5-acre lake is an integral component for the rest of the park core, and Park District staff planned to use dirt from digging the lake to build a new entrance and driveway.

Additional funding will be required for subsequent stages of the permit process including mitigation plans, alternative concepts and assistance with the public meeting stage, Kushner wrote in the memo.

Oxbow helped the Park District with the Little Miami River bank restoration at Riverside Park on Round Bottom Road.

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