

THURSTON POND RESTORATION PROJECT - 2015

Summary

The current Thurston Pond Restoration Project is a continuation of the restoration of Thurston Pond that began in 2005. A 2005 grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), assisted Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) in preparing an engineering plan, obtaining a permit from the MDEQ and doing work to protect the pond and improve the quality of stormwater entering the pond. All work that was in the plan was not completed due to the need for additional funds.

The current work proposed to be done in 2015 is to complete the work started in 2005 and includes some minor modifications to the original MDEQ permit. MDEQ approved the minor modifications March 26, 2014. Under the MDEQ permit all construction must be completed by September 30, 2015. MDEQ has said this permit cannot be renewed.

As this is an ongoing project we are requesting that any reviews needed be accomplished in an expedited effort so that this project can proceed with solicitation of bids, selection of contractors, obtain final approvals from the AAPS Board of Education and construction can be completed by September 30, 2015.

History

The Thurston Pond Restoration Project had its beginnings when the Thurston Pond Restoration Plan was prepared by the Thurston Nature Center Committee in February 2005. JFNew, a consulting firm, assisted the Ann Arbor Public Schools in applying for a grant with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The MDEQ approved a grant for the project and assigned it a MDEQ Tracking Code: 2005-0014. Under this grant the Basis of Design Thurston Restoration Project, was prepared by JFNew. This report was submitted to MDEQ on September 8, 2008.

September 15, 2010, the AAPS applied for a permit from the MDEQ for Thurston Pond outlet modification and berm repair. The State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNRE) issued a Public Notice in response to the AAPS application. The proposal in the Public Notice stated the permit application was "... to drawdown Thurston Pond and dredge a channel and wetland for the purpose of repair and restoration of a berm and adjacent forested areas." The Public Notice was issued October 18, 2010.

Permit 10-81-0062-P was issued January 24, 2011 by the MDNRE. That permit expires January 24, 2016.

All the work described in the permit and approved plans was not completed under the grant from the MDNRE. The grant work did provide new information about the pond and was the basis for revision to the Thurston Pond Restoration Plan prepared in 2005. A new report prepared by the TNCC, titled Restoration of the Thurston Pond Ecosystem, was finished July 12, 2013. This plan supported completing the work originally identified in the MDNRE permit and recommended additional work that would improve the pond ecosystem and its value as an educational resource for the AAPS.

It was recognized that the recommendations in the Restoration of the Thurston Pond Ecosystem would require modifications to the MDNRE permit. AAPS applied February 21, 2014 for a revision to MDEQ Permit 10-81-0062-P. MDEQ approved the minor modifications March 26, 2014.

ECT was contracted by AAPS to prepare the modifications to the original plans for the pond restoration. Revised plans and specifications were completed in February 2015.

The current work that is planned for 2015 are minor modifications of the work started in 2008. The minor modifications include; widening the outlet channel by 4 feet, adding a 50 foot long 16 inch diameter pipe to help with maintenance, identifying the areas of the pond that will be re-contoured, and adding a sedimentation basin to benefit Miller Creek and Huron River with containment of high phosphorous laden sediment.

Additional Information

Additional phases for restoring Thurston Pond are also planned. These phases will restore plant and wildlife habitats, control invasive species and involve AAPS students, teachers and neighbors in expanding the AAPS STEAM program and natural sciences teaching curriculum.

The City of Ann Arbor has been kept aware of the effort to restore Thurston Pond. The City of Ann Arbor received copies of the MDEQ permits, assisted in the installation and maintenance of the swirl concentrators on stormwater inlets to the pond, connected neighborhood Ann Arbor City storm sewers and footing drains to Thurston Pond and is kept informed through the Millers Creek Action Team (MCAT) meetings and informal contacts with the Mayor and council member.