



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRANTS BOOST FAYETTE COUNTY PARK

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County’s Jacobs Creek Park in Bullskin Township will continue receiving major upgrades, thanks to two state grants.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) awarded the park \$76,800 for Phase II of the Great Swamp Camp Playground at Greenlick Run Lake.

The 2,500-square-foot play area will include a space for children ages two to five called Braddock’s Barracks; complete with required safety surfacing, Americans with Disabilities Act access, landscaping, signage and more.

Phase II also calls for the design and installation of an access road and pedestrian walkway to adjoin the park’s existing parking lots, allowing for closure of one park entrance and enhancing overall security.

Fayette County Community Development Specialist Sue Martin of the Planning, Zoning and Community Development Office said the grant will allow county officials to expand upon the previously successful efforts from Phase I of the project, known as the Jacobs Creek Park Master Site Development Plan and Trail Feasibility Study.

“Jacobs Creek Park has a historical connection to General Edward Braddock’s Military Road. His 14th encampment on July 1, 1755 was on the site and called the Great Swamp Camp because the army halted here a day while the swamp was bridged,” Martin said. “Our projects will connect the site of the monument erected in the park to the main recreation areas. Plans are to restore and enhance the monument in future phases of the plan.”

Martin said streamlining the park’s entrances will allow the state Fish and Boat Commission officer who staffs the park to crack down on vandalism and other illicit activity which has previously occurred in the upper parking lot.

The playground expansion was the result of an “urgent need for smaller children to have their own play space,” Martin added.

“We installed Phase I for older children in fall 2019,” she said. “The downsized playground equipment is more to their ability and will allow them to play safely, rather than trying to use the more action-packed equipment.”

Fayette County budgeted \$50,000 in its 2020 general fund budget for the access road, which was used as a match to leverage Phase II of the playground.

The second grant, awarded by the state Department of Community and Economic Development CFA Greenways Rails and Recreation Program, totals \$143,054. It will be used toward Phase I of the Jacobs Creek Walking/Biking Trail Project.

The funding will allow for the design and construction of a bituminous section of the trail measuring approximately 3,100 lineal feet in length by 8 feet wide, with an additional 150 feet of elevated boardwalk over a marshy area in the park. When finished, the trail will encircle Greenlick Run Lake and connect with Westmoreland County's Coal and Coke Trail.

Martin said the walking/biking trail will increase nearby property values, boost spending at local businesses and make our community a more attractive place to live.

"It will influence business location and relocation decisions and reduce medical costs by encouraging exercise and outdoor recreation," she said. "Bringing jobs and families to Fayette County to live and work is a high priority and having a nearby walking/biking trail will help do this."

Receipt of grant funding will allow for trail design to begin in January 2021; construction in June; and completion by that September.

Development plans for the park were adopted in 2019 to provide guidance for county officials to make Jacobs Creek Park meet the wants and needs of citizens. The plans were paid for in part by a DCNR grant, in partnership with the Jacobs Creek Watershed Association.

"After thorough public input as to what the community wants, we now have a wonderful plan to follow; phased to allow us to thoughtfully develop our park," Martin said. "Its completion will be a great addition to Fayette County's outdoor recreation assets that will help support the health and wellbeing of our citizens while encouraging their interaction with nature."

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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