

KENOSHA NEWS

[Print](#) | [Close](#)

Landscape work aims to improve water quality at Eichelman Park

BY DENEEN SMITH

dsmith@kenoshanews.com

A project underway at Kenosha's Eichelman Park aims to improve water quality off the beach.

Crews are bringing in sand and rebuilding the breakwater at the beach, the first phase of a multi-year \$760,000 project designed to reduce runoff and pollution issues that have led to frequent beach closings at the park.

City Engineer Shelly Billingsley said the first phase of the project includes bringing in sand to restore more natural dunes and rebuilding the breakwater, along with adding native beach plantings.

Approved by the City Council last year, the project is being partly funded by two grants secured with the help of Racine Health Department Lab Director and Research Scientist Julie Kinzelman.

Using grant funding and a partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Kinzelman studied water quality issues at 10 southeastern Wisconsin beaches. She targeted four, including Eichelman and Simmons Island, for improvements aimed at reducing pollution.

Racine has had success with similar projects at North Beach and Zoo Beach, where water quality closures were reduced dramatically after beach reconstruction.

Kinzelman said taking a regional approach helped secure grant money aimed at improving water quality in the Great Lakes. "It's part of a statewide effort to try to improve coastal water quality in Wisconsin," she said.

About \$240,000 in grant funding is going specifically toward improvements at Simmons Island and Eichelman. "The engineering redesign plans are targeted at the pollution sources at each site," she said.

At Eichelman, pollution problems are worsened by the lack of water circulation in the bay, and by the vegetation-free beach that tends to attract large flocks of seagulls and geese, Kinzelman said. The project will raise the height of the breakwater to improve circulation, and restore plantings on the beach to discourage flocks of birds and to filter runoff.

"It's a project that we can get done early so the beach will be ready," said Ald. Scott Gordon, chairman of the park commission.

© Copyright Kenosha News.