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**PARK DISTRICT COMPLETES FINAL PHASE OF THREE-YEAR, \$4.6-M
PROJECT TO RESTORE, PROTECT SAND RUN METRO PARK**
Project demonstrates sustainable and innovative conservation practices

Members of the media are invited to witness Summit Metro Parks crews and contractors take the final steps in a three-year effort to reduce stormwater damage, protect critical infrastructure and remove wildlife barriers within Sand Run Metro Park. Begun in summer 2020, these improvements were made possible with \$4.6 million in state and federal grant funding.

“As our oldest and most-visited location, Sand Run Metro Park has faced ecological challenges due to nearly a century of human impacts,” said SMP Executive Director Lisa M. King. “Over the past three years, we have utilized innovative and conservation-forward techniques to ensure this park is here for visitors to enjoy for many years to come.”

Because Sand Run stream flows through an area that has been highly developed with homes, shopping centers and roads, stormwater runoff has created significant erosion in the park, destabilizing the stream’s banks. Additionally, infrastructure such as roads, culverts and pipelines have been built as the surrounding communities were developed, creating migration barriers that make it extremely difficult for fish to travel freely throughout the waterway. The project has been completed in three phases:

- **Phase I:** Summit Metro Parks utilized [Clean Ohio grant funding](#) to remove a bridge in need of repairs replace it with a culvert running under Sand Run Parkway, creating a more sustainable long-term solution while also allowing fish and other critters to travel more freely.
- **Phase IIa:** The park district undertook several projects to control erosion throughout the park and made additional in-stream habitat improvements.
- **Phase IIb:** Summit Metro Parks is reinforcing streambanks and removing two fish barriers. Work is expected to conclude in July 2023.

The Sand Run Metro Park restoration project incorporated the following key elements:

- **Repurposed trees:** As part of the effort to remove the Gorge Dam, trees were removed from the Chuckery Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park in preparation for the future sediment disposal. Root wads, or the lower portions of trees and their roots, have been buried in the streambank, providing immediate stabilization, protection at the slope base and optimal fish habitat.
- **Natural channel design:** This approach involves reshaping the stream channel, utilizing rocks and logs to create meandering features, pools and shallow areas, allowing for a more diverse and dynamic habitat.
- **Use of native plantings:** Native vegetation plays a crucial role in the restoration process. These plantings will help stabilize the soil, prevent erosion, improve water quality and provide valuable habitat for wildlife.
- **Deliberate stone placement:** Fishways, also known as fish ladders or fish passes, are structures designed to help fish navigate barriers, which can obstruct migration. Incorporating stones into fishways design mimics the natural environment of the waterway, providing a more seamless passage for fish.
- **Sediment trapping logs:** Sediment trapping logs play a vital role in stream restoration by effectively capturing sediment and facilitating the restoration of natural stream processes.

The utilization of natural materials in the stream restoration is a sustainable practice that reduces environmental impact, enhances the ecological functions of the stream ecosystem, maintains a more natural and scenic aesthetic, and contributes to water quality improvement.

During the current and final stage of work, Sand Run Parkway is closed Monday-Thursday from Sand Run Road to the Shadowfield Area parking lot. Shady Hollow Lodge will be accessible for rental events and parking lots are open at both ends of the parkway to access the Jogging Trail. The roadway is now open on weekends. For more information on this project, visit our [blog posts](#) and [video summary](#).

Editor's note: Additional photos and video of this work are available upon request.

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In 2023, Summit Metro Parks is celebrating the benefits of native plants through Wild Back Yards. The park district manages more than 15,000 acres throughout 16 parks, three nature centers and over 150 miles of trails, including 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance is approximately 5.5 million visits. Find us online at summitmetroparks.org.



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