

Waterway trail plans get a boost

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Ten Mile Creek may soon be a popular place for kayakers and canoeists.

Plans to create a waterway trail on the Ten Mile from the dam in West Waynesburg to the Monongahela River in Millsboro received a boost last week with the awarding of a state grant to construct two boat launches at the creek.

The Jefferson-Morgan Regional Council of Governments received a \$126,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to construct launches for canoes and kayaks in Morgan Township and Franklin Township.

The council of governments is formed by Jefferson and Morgan Townships and Clarksville and Jefferson Boroughs.

Because the segment of the creek for the trail also passes through Franklin and East Bethlehem townships and Waynesburg Borough, those municipalities participated as associate members of the council for purposes of the grant application.

The plan is to develop a 26-mile waterway trail from the dam in West Waynesburg all the way to Monongahela River, said Mike Dufalla of Mackin Engineering Co., who spearheaded the plan and prepared the grant application. The trail would eventually have five or six launches, he said.

"It would be excellent for tourism and excellent for families," Dufalla said. By having launches every three to five miles, the trail would be attractive to families with young children who might not be able to travel the trail's whole length, he said.

The matching grant will pay for materials for the two launches. One, the Cyprus Boat Launch, will be constructed at the soccer field on Route 188 in Franklin Township and the

other, the Mather Boat Launch, either near the Mather reservoir or the Morgan Township Building.

The match will be made by the municipalities which will provide equipment and labor for construction of the launches.

"It will be very nice when it becomes a reality," said Reed Kiger, Franklin Township supervisor, who spoke about the need for recreational facilities throughout the county.

"I really didn't realize it but there are quite a few people who like to take kayaks and canoes up and the down the creek," said Shirl Barnhart, Morgan Township supervisor and president of the council of governments.

The trail could encourage the sport, help attract people to the area and provide access for people who might like to use the creek for fishing, he said.

When the water levels in the creek are high enough, kayakers and canoeists also should be able to travel the entire length of the trail, Barnhart said.

The water flow in Ten Mile Creek from about Clarksville downstream to the river is sufficient almost year-round for canoeing or kayaking, Dufalla said. Farther upstream, near Waynesburg, the flow may only be sufficient for boating for eight or nine months a year, he said.

Dufalla said as part of the trail project, a flow study will be conducted and maps developed to help promote the trail as well as to provide information to those who use it.

The council also had applied for another grant from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for two additional launches, one at Crawford Field in Franklin Township and the other near Chartiers in Morgan Township.

That grant was not approved, though the fish and boat commission asked the council to re-apply later, Dufalla said.

If everything goes as planned, he said, work could begin on the first two boat launches sometime in the spring or summer.