



Park district moves forward with lake permit

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It could take more than a year before the Anderson Township Park District can begin developing Johnson Hills Park.

Construction on a proposed lake, parking lot and main access road was supposed to begin this year, but a meeting with Army Corps of Engineers and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency officials [put a snag in the plans](#).

An Ohio EPA stream specialist expressed concerns about the lake construction affecting microorganisms living in the water channels, later classified as streams.

Most of those are ephemeral streams and smaller, dry channels leading toward the planned 4- to 5-acre lake site, said Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner.

“It’s going nowhere because of the streams,” he said of the planned development for Johnson Hills Park, off Bridle and Little Dry Run roads. “We can’t do anything (to the park) unless we want to modify the plan. Either way, we’re going to ... have more out-of-pocket expenses.”

Additional stream studies needed to accompany the permit application for the lake will cost taxpayers around \$50,000, Kushner said. Park commissioners directed staff to move forward with the application process.

Once the permit application is filed, the Ohio EPA and Army Corps of Engineers have up to a year to approve or deny the permit.

“This is craziness. These are ruts caused by erosion and (this process) is not protecting anything,” Park Commissioner Duffy Beischel said. “I don’t understand why we have to go through this to develop a park (that will) protect the environment.”

Park Commission President Nadine Gelter said the regulations have changed since other parks were developed and they can’t dispute these stream classifications until the permit is approved or denied.

Kushner noted that the regulations are more stringent for public entities like the Park District.

Last year, the Park District demolished a former stable and barn on the site and cleared old fencing around the park, which is located on roughly 137 acres of mostly wooded land in northern Anderson Township.



The Anderson Township Park District will move forward with its application to build a lake at Johnson Hills Park, but must study the effect the construction might have on these ephemeral streams, seen above, that run toward the proposed lake.

Other planned park amenities will include trails, a large event shelter, an off-leash dog field, tent camping, gardens and a disc golf course. Complete development is expected to take decades.

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