

eye on the eastside

Park district to start lake this spring

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The Anderson Township Park District has narrowed its focus for Johnson Hills Park. The lake, main access road and park core will be the top three priorities for the next two years.

Engineers are working on plans for the five-acre lake on the eastern half of the park, Executive Director Ken Kushner said at last night's Board of Park Commissioners meeting. The concept may change slightly with topography to capitalize on natural springs in the area, he said.

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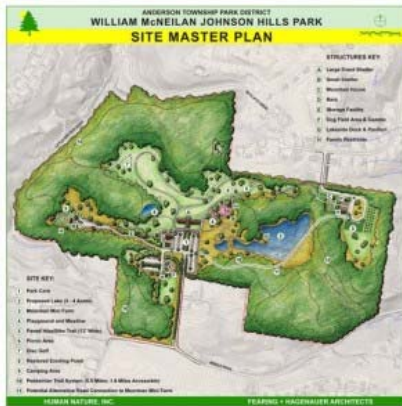
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This is the site plan for the Johnson Hills Park development. (Provided)

Park Commissioner Duffy Beischel asked if there were concerns about possible leaks in the lake, but Kushner said the earthen dam, which will be roughly 40 feet tall and close to 400 feet thick, should protect against leaks.

Kushner added that they will construct bioswales between the parking area and the lake to further aid in water collection.

Bioswales are shallow, trough-like drainage courses with gently sloped sides filled with vegetation. Bioswales help absorb silt and other pollutants from surface runoff water by maximizing the amount of time the water stays in the drainage course.

Eventually there will be trail access over the dam, but it will not be a through road to the back of the park. Kushner said he's also asked the engineers to add more parking spaces to the park core area.

The road leading into the park, off Bridle Road, will be moved further west toward Little Dry Run Road to allow better sight distance. Park Commissioner Nadine Gelter said that is a much-needed change because it is difficult to see from the current access road.

Kushner said the access road will not change until the lake is complete, likely next year. Work on these projects is scheduled to begin this spring.

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

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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