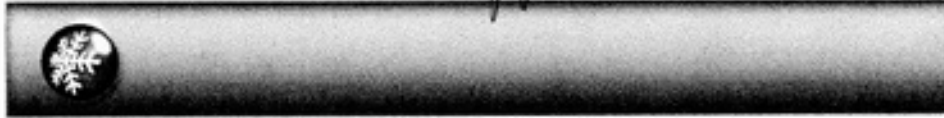


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Scio gets park money

Twsp. to buy acres along Mill Creek

Monday, December 06, 2008

The Ann Arbor News

Scio Township has been awarded \$1.4 million by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to buy 67 acres along Mill Creek for a park.

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The land is located on the west side of Baker Road about a half-mile south of Shield Road just southwest of the village of Dexter. Mill Creek forms the western boundary of the land.

The park would include wetlands, wooded areas and walking trails as well as a picnic shelter, playground and athletic fields, according to the grant application submitted to the state. Native habitat restoration and access to the creek for fishing, wading, canoeing and kayaking are also envisioned in the application.

The township still must get an appraisal of the land and negotiate with the owners for a purchase price, township Supervisor Spaulding Clark said. The application for the grant required only an estimate of the purchase price, Clark said.

If it is successful in buying the land, the township would use its land preservation fund to provide a 25 percent match for the state grant, he said.

The money from the state is coming from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

The township also would have to decide how to fund development and maintenance of the park, Clark said.

"Nowhere has there been an identification of where that money would come from," said Clark, a former supervisor who was defeated for re-election four years ago and elected again in November.

Former Trustee Charles Ream, who left office in November, was a strong proponent of finding land for the park, which would be the first one owned by the township.

"We should have just an exquisite ... multi-purpose park," Ream said. "This will be our first township park, and it will be a breakthrough."

The township also is home to Dohi Metropark, the 137-acre DeVine Preserve on Liberty Road and the 29-acre Burns-Stokes Preserve on Zeeb Road, all open to the public. The two preserves are owned by Washtenaw County.

Barry Lonik, land preservation consultant for Scio Township, said the new park would help preserve the Mill Creek corridor and could eventually have a trail connection to a park the village of Dexter is building along Mill Creek.

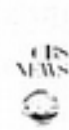
"This is a very welcome announcement, but there still is a lot of work to do," Lonik said.

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