

Leominster breaks ground on walkway (VIDEO)
By Jack Minch, jminch@sentinelandenterprise.com
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Read more: http://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/news/ci_23590456/leominster-breaks-ground-walkway#ixzz2Y4N6jZwJLEOMINSTER -- The Monoosnoc Brook is an idyllic setting for casual strolls or workday lunches. It could soon become more pedestrian-friendly. Mayor Dean Mazzarella and city officials held a ceremonial groundbreaking Tuesday announcing a \$500,000 grant to start work for the three-phase construction of a walkway along Monoosnoc Brook.

The first phase will go along the brook from Central Street toward Mechanic Street but ending at the parking lot adjacent to J.C. Fenwick's.

Work began last week with clearing of vegetation around that stretch of brook so it is visible to passersby, said Mazzarella.



SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE Conservation Agent Joanne DiNardo looks over the Monoosnoc Brook Greenway during the groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday in Leominster.

Jason Martin, of J. Martin Landscaping in Westminster, was shoring up the bank with rocks as the ceremony took place.

"Obviously, it's important for the downtown area," Mazzarella said. "Having the river is perfect, inviting."

He pictures someday having park benches and street lighting to set the tone for the area, though they are not part of the first phase.

Phase two will go from Central Street to Adams Street and the final phase will build a walkway from Mechanic Street toward the intersection of Water and Whitney streets.

At-large City Councilor Claire Freda is supporting the program as a good tool for revitalizing the downtown,

While working with the Massachusetts Municipal Association she has discussed the
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SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/ JOHN LOVE Leominster held a groundbreaking for the start of the Monoosnoc Brook restoration project on Tuesday.

importance of riverwalks helping.

"Anybody with a river or a brook downtown wants to access that," she said.

The first phase is being funded through a grant from the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs under the Gateway Cities Park program. It is expected to take three months to complete.

R. Bates & Sons Inc. is build the walkway along the side of the brook next to Rollstone Bank & Trust at 24 Monument Square as part of the first phase. Phase 1 also includes refurbishment of a wrought iron fence on the far side of the brook running along Manning Avenue.

It was not clear Tuesday why there is a cement girder running from one bank of the brook to the other but it may have been a bridge or a way of shoring up walls.

The walkway will be made of permeable pavers.

State grants and cooperation from Rollstone Bank & Trust is helping get the project moving, Freda said.

"It's just a great project," she said.

The project will educate the city's youth as well as beautify the area, said Conservation Agent Joanne DiNardo.

The walkway will have professional stenciling of wildlife such as brook trout, frogs and salamanders. There will be explanations on their importance to the environment, as well.

The Police Department plans to take a protective interest in the area to make sure it doesn't become a resting spot for vagrants and drug users, said Lt. Scott Bernier.

"We're going to have a very aggressive approach to keep those people out of here and (Monument Square)," he said. "We're not going to tolerate drinking and littering."

The city cleared silt from the brook near the Leominster Credit Union offices on Adams Street last year. City officials noticed during Monday's heavy rains the improvement paid dividends because the road did not flood, Mazzarella said.

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