

RED LOCKS TO PUT ON (E-Y-R)
Top Guns Mini-Storage, 2-Year
Beginning on December 2, 2020
Ending on December 2, 2020
Completed on December 10, 2020 at 09:12 AM

UNIT SIZE RENT NAME PAID TO BALANCE HEIGHT FLOOR W/OUT



Returning a

'standard of excellence'

RILEY MORNINGSTAR | THE JOURNAL

The current Seneca Creek access boat ramp on Lake Hartwell is worn down and dated ahead of planned renovations.

Official says \$2M Seneca Creek project could start by summer

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — A project more than a decade in the making could start to take shape alongside Lake Hartwell by the end of next summer.

The Oconee County Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department is

seeking final approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to begin a two-phase project totaling more than \$2 million at the Seneca Creek access point.

The first phase of the project would include a courtesy dock, concrete boat ramps, erosion control, a paved parking lot and lighting.

Currently, the site sits in “poor condition, at best,” county PRT director Phil Shirley said.

He estimated eight vehicles could probably fit in the current area, if they squeezed in.

“Some of the challenges with

SEE PROJECT, PAGE A5

PROJECT: Area 'a very popular location that's not been very well taken care of over the years'

FROM PAGE A1

this existing site is that it's very secluded," Shirley said.

"Unless you drive into the access area, you really don't know what's back there."

The project would open the entire property up along Seneca Creek Road, along



Shirley

with the creation of 49 boat parking spots and 29 parking spots for cars.

The project has been in the works since 2009, according to Shirley.

THE FUNDING

Phase one of the project will cost roughly \$1,330,000 and would be funded through economic development millage and a separate grant already in hand. Shirley said the county increased the economic development millage from 1 mill per year to 2.3 mills per year two years ago. The addition of 1.3 mills is for capital investment in tourism. About \$1.03 million of the economic development millage collected would go to the first phase of the project.

Planned improvements at Seneca Creek access area

Phase 1	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full site earthwork/grading • Erosion control • Paving prep • Paving entire driveway • Concrete sidewalks • Concrete boat ramps • One courtesy dock • Gravel parking area • Landscape/lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine grading picnic area • Parking lot paving • Second courtesy dock • Floating fishing dock • Floating kayak launch • Picnic area • Restroom • Final landscaping
COST: \$1,292,003	COST: \$732,624

After approval from the USACE, the project will go out to bid and then be brought to county council for a final approval. Shirley said he is hopeful that bid documents can begin being processed in the first quarter of 2021.

THE VISION

Work on boat ramps can't be done from March through June because of spawning season, so Shirley is hopeful

work could begin in July.

The access ramp, located at 280 Seneca Creek Road, is in rough condition — and when lake levels are down, practically unusable. The construction of a new ramp would create a more stable environment and increased access when levels are down.

"Great project for the citizens. I think that's the No. 1 goal, is getting additional lake access — safe access —

and it's a lot easier to launch your boat with the ramps than it is off the dirt," Oconee County Council chairman Julian Davis said at a recent meeting. "I think it is great tourism for Oconee County."

The county currently has a 25-year lease with the USACE that expires in 2042, Shirley said. Visitors have to cross Clemson University land to access the property, so the school has been involved in the planning process.

Work on phase two of the project will depend on what other items will need to be checked off in the PRT department first. Shirley did say he was hopeful that after completion of phase one, the second half of the project would begin within 12-18 months.

"I think the Seneca Creek project provides great enhancement to a very popular location along the Seneca River of Lake Hartwell," Shirley said. "It's a very popular location that's not been very well taken care of over the years, and we hope to get it back up to a standard of excellence for the community."