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Bee Branch Creek Floating Island System Installation and Lunch-and-Learn

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The City of Dubuque is installing a floating island system in the Bee Branch Creek between E. 16th St. and the U.S. HWY 151/61 overpass as a natural way to target excess nutrients in the water and increase biodiversity. The islands will be assembled, planted, and launched on-site the week of July 31.

The project consists of 14 floating islands of various sizes with a total combined area of 2,674 sq. ft. The two largest islands will be 44-feet long by 17-feet wide. They are made from a 100% recycled BPA-free PET plastic raft structure planted with aquatic vegetation such as Sedges, Wild Rye, Blue Flag Iris, New England Aster, Marsh Marigold, Swamp Milkweed, and Cardinal Flowers. The islands will be anchored to the bottom of the creek so they can adjust to the changing water level.

The plastic raft material and suspended root systems create an ideal growing surface for biofilm and microbes to break down pollutants such as phosphorus and nitrogen that cause odor and algae issues. “The City is excited to use this green infrastructure tool to improve water quality without chemicals,” says Deron Muehring, civil engineer with the City of Dubuque. “This is a more natural way to deal with the nutrient buildup and it also provides habitat.”

The public is invited to attend a lunch-and-learn about the floating island system on Thursday, August 3, at 12:15 p.m. at the Bee Branch Creek, at 1020 E. 16th St. south of 16th St. and east of Sycamore St. Representatives working on the floating island project will explain the wetland system and answer questions. Parking will be available on-street and in the small parking lot next to the 16th St. Basin Overlook. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunch. Food and refreshments will not be provided. For more information, contact the City of Dubuque at (563) 690-6068.

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