

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### Third phase of Fabyan Bridge and Island improvements near completion

GENEVA, IL — It's been years in the making, but the improvement project at Fabyan Forest Preserve in Geneva is nearly complete.

A pedestrian bridge was replaced and opened for public use, Nov. 1. As the next phase of the project, crews will begin removing the causeway, Nov. 8. The entire project is expected to be complete, Nov. 15.



Photo by Landscape Architect Zach Tegge

The new pedestrian bridge straddles the Fox River between the west side of Fabyan Forest Preserve and the Fabyan island. The structure replaces an old concrete foot bridge that had been closed in 2012 and later removed, due to its poor condition. The newly-installed, Corten-steel bridge will not only last for decades, but will allow for District and emergency vehicles to cross between Fabyan West and the island.

Crews began setting the bridge at the end of October. It was a long time coming. The Forest Preserve District of Kane County first hired a firm to evaluate the former concrete foot bridge in 2014. The bridge was removed when it was determined to be in such poor condition that it could not be repaired. An engineer was then hired to develop a plan for bridge removal while staff prepared a plan for future preserve improvements, including a total renovation of the Fabyan Lighthouse, evaluation of the bridge abutments on an additional bridge connecting the Fabyan Island to the east side of the preserve, and addressing the causeway, culverts under which had failed.

— MORE —

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With the help of a Grand Victoria Riverboat Grant, the District budgeted for construction of a new Fabyan pedestrian bridge. The project also includes concrete bridge supports, pathway connection, engineering, bid documents, removal of the former bridge, and abutment repair of the east bridge.

The Lighthouse restoration began in March 2016 and was completed in October 2018. Engineering for the bridge replacement began in March 2016 and was completed in December 2018. Construction of the new bridge began in June 2019, with installation complete on Nov. 1. In May of 2018, the District received plan approval for removal of the causeway from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

"We're elated to have the bridge part of the project completed, and the causeway removal about to get underway," said Chief of Planning & Operations Ken Anderson of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. "Trails are the most-widely used amenity in the forest preserves. Any time we can restore or improve trails, connections or crossings, it's a good thing, both for us and the public. Additionally, we're happy to have the added benefit of our own vehicles as well as emergency vehicles being able to use the bridge when necessary," he said.

With the assistance of IDNR, the causeway structure, which links the west side of the preserve and the Fabyan Island, is scheduled for demolition, Nov. 8. There is no need for the causeway structure, now that the steel bridge is in place. Culverts underneath the causeway structure have failed, preventing water flow on the west side of the island. IDNR is fully funding the causeway removal.

"By removing the causeway, water will flow once again," Anderson said. "Removing this barrier will allow these animals to freely move, and improve the river's overall health in the process," he said.

Fabyan Forest Preserve falls within Forest Preserve Commissioner John Martin's district. "I'm pleased on behalf of the entire Forest Preserve and my District that the bridge not only enhances access and use of this grand public space, but also returns the beautiful Fox River to its historic open status. This project and the other improvements to Fabyan are clear proof of the District staff's continuing energetic and wise stewardship of our public treasures," Martin said.

The Forest Preserve District has posted photos and a video of the bridge being set on our website at [www.kaneforest.com](http://www.kaneforest.com). Additionally, you'll find them on Facebook; search @forestpreserve.