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Town of Bluffton Begins Bulkhead Construction at Wright Family Park

The first phase of the multi-year, multi-faceted construction of the Wright Family Park began this week as contractors stage equipment and install fencing in preparation for the bulkhead construction. The park is located at 111 Calhoun Street across from the Church of the Cross.

The 223-foot timber bulkhead is a retaining wall between the park and the May River shoreline. The bulkhead will prevent further erosion along the shoreline and stabilize the existing embankment adjacent to the proposed park. The bulkhead design includes preserving three large, mature Live Oak trees that overhang the river's edge.

"This is a special piece of property and Wright Family Park will become the Town's second public park with access to the May River," Town Manager Marc Orlando said. "The Town is building this park so more people can experience the May River in the middle of Bluffton's Historic District."

The Town awarded the \$293,105.00 bulkhead construction contract to Hilton Head Island-based Nix Construction Company, Inc. The project, scheduled to be complete by the end of August 2019, is comprised of debris removal, grading and construction of a timber bulkhead.

"Each new construction project provides an opportunity to enhance environmental protections and the bulkhead will allow us to clean debris from the existing shoreline and prevent further erosion of the bluff," Bryan McIlwee, the Town's director of engineering, said.

The Town of Bluffton and the Beaufort County Open Land Trust purchased the Wright Family property in 2017 to preserve open space, provide additional access to the May River and to create a passive park for the community. The master plan for the Wright Family Park includes a large central lawn, walkways, parking, landscaping, site furnishings, lighting, fencing, and an adaptive reuse of an existing garage building for public restrooms, storage and a small warming kitchen. The

Historic Squire Pope Carriage House, also located within the park, will also be rehabilitated as part of a future project.

The South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) has committed \$300,000 for the bulkhead and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) has committed \$2,000 plus labor to install a living shoreline stabilization project once the bulkhead is complete.

During construction, access to the bluff and shoreline at Wright Family Park will be prohibited. The contractor will install barricades to ensure public safety. In addition, the Town has contracted with Nix Construction and Whitaker Labs to install seismic equipment during pile installation operations to determine that vibration levels are at acceptable levels to prevent any damage to any nearby historic structures.

If you have any questions about this project, please call the Town's Director of Engineering Bryan McIlwee at (email) [bmcilwee@townofbluffton.com](mailto:bmcilwee@townofbluffton.com) or (office) 843-706-7824.

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