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NEW LOOK FOR THE CASS: After 12 years of planning and approximately three months of in-water work, the Cass River Fish Passage Project is complete. Above is a News photo snapped Monday afternoon, complete with new trees in the foreground. Please see the story below.

Ribbon-cutting ceremony set for new-look Cass River fish passage

For more than three months, the Cass River Dam became a focal point for area residents and guests as they viewed its transformation into a fish passage and rock ramp.

People gathered on a daily basis, watching as the large rocks were strategically placed in the river, the existing dam was whittled away and tons and tons of stones were installed to reinforce the river banks and halt erosion.

The in-water work is done, the orange construction fencing is pulled up and light punch list work is being completed. The large rock quarry, once located behind the Frankenmuth Waste Water Treatment Plant, is now barren and back to normal.

Following a dozen years of planning, the Frankenmuth Fish Passage Project is complete and ready for the return of game fishing.

First, however, in Frankenmuth fashion, a celebration will take place this month. The City of Frankenmuth, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is organizing a ribbon-cutting ceremony and luncheon.

The event is scheduled, rain or shine, on Tuesday, October 27, beginning at 11am, on the north bank of the Cass River, along the Gunzenhausen Street Walkway. Gunzenhausen Street will be closed to vehicular traffic that morning. The ceremony is free and open to the public.

Following the ribbon cutting, a noon luncheon will be held at Zehnder's of Frankenmuth, 730 South Main Street.

As a ticketed event, everyone is encouraged and welcome to join in the

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festivities to celebrate the completion of this momentous project," Frankenmuth Downtown Development Authority Director Sheila Stamiris said. Stamiris was the spokesperson and project manager for the project.

The menu will feature walleye and Zehnder's chicken served family style. Tickets are \$20 if pre-purchased or \$25 at the door, on the day of the event. Tickets are available through the Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce. Please visit frankenmuthchamber.org and follow the links to [chamber-of-commerce/upcoming-chamber-events](#).

During the luncheon, the Frankenmuth Historical Association will premiere the locally-produced video about the Cass River, the dam and the fish passage project. The video chronicles the history of the Cass River and the fish passage project.

Larry Selzer, CEO of the Conservation Fund, will be the luncheon's keynote speaker. The Conservation Fund is one of the nation's top-ranked environmental, non-profit organizations, based in Arlington, Virginia.

"The only environmental group in the country chartered for both conservation and economic development, the Fund has protected more than seven million acres since 1985," Stamiris pointed out. "In Michigan, the Conservation Fund works in partnership with communities to preserve land, establish parks, finance land acquisition projects and support natural resource-based businesses."

Locally, the Fund administers the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) which provided early financial support to the Frankenmuth Fish Passage.

The original dam was built out of wood, two years after Frankenmuth's founding, in 1847. In July 1925, the dam was covered in cement, with wheelbarrows used to transport the concrete.

The project reconnects the fish of Saginaw Bay to more than 73 miles of historically significant spawning areas. The project is a constructed rapids, built at the dam, creating weirs above, on and below the dam.

"While the focus of the project is on fish passage, the project maximizes opportunities to benefit Frankenmuth's local economy and infrastructure - keeping the river profile as it was before the construction and adding opportunities for recreation and sustaining the tourism industry and employment center through eco-tourism," Stamiris said.

"Regionally, the project benefits the Saginaw Bay Watershed, the designated Saginaw River Area of Concern and the Great Lakes Bay region, supporting local and regional efforts to improve the premier water resource, creating a desirable recreation center, and successful and sustainable tourism destination," Stamiris added.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the project manager, the City of Frankenmuth the project sponsors and CTI and Associates of Wixom is the project contractor.

A live web cam is still up on the city's web page. Please visit www.frankenmuthcity.com and follow the link to damproject.

For more information about the project, ribbon cutting or luncheon, contact Sheila Stamiris at 652-3430, extension 120 or use her email address, sstamiris@frankenmuthcity.com

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The advertisement features two stylized human figures, one black and one blue, standing side-by-side. The figure on the left is labeled "Air Advantage". To the right of the figures, the text reads: "Super fast wireless internet access is now available from Air Advantage and Zimco!". Below this, a red link says "Click for more information".

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