

Black Creek bank work to begin in August

Erosion control measures will be taken along two areas of the waterway in Chili.

By **AMY CAVALIER**

Messenger Post Staff

The 46-mile-long Black Creek winds its way through Chili and onto Dorothy and Harold Borgus' 107-acre property on the Riga-Chili border. In the spring, Dorothy Borgus

said, she watches the water go from a "tranquil stream" to a "raging torrent."

"It always floods," she said. "I can remember seasons it's come over the banks eight times. We have lawn up to the creek bank, so you can imagine the mess it has made."

In an effort to do more than just watch the ebb and flow of the stream in her backyard, Dorothy Borgus joined the Black Creek Watershed Coalition over 10 years ago. The group meets

monthly to discuss issues like pollution and erosion on the stream and to pursue grants to operate the group and for work on the stream banks. Its members serve as watchdogs.

Several years ago, an assessment of the stream bank showed a number of sites in Chili needed to be stabilized to prevent further erosion. Those sites were ranked according to the severity of erosion and its impact on wildlife and plant life, among other criteria.

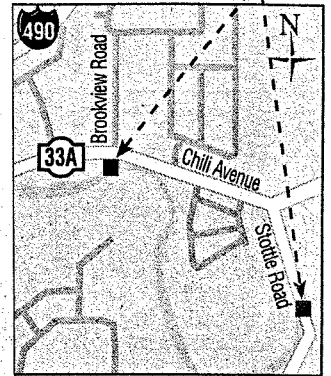
Two locations on Black Creek came out on top — one along Chili Avenue, near Brookview Road, and the other off Stottle Road. Now that the town and coalition have secured a grant from the Great Lakes Basin Program for Sediment and Erosion Control, work will begin this summer, said David Lindsay, commissioner of public works and superintendent of highways in Chili.

The work has to be done during low-flow periods to give crews greater access to

the banks, according to Lindsay. The project is expected to cost \$85,000. The grant covers \$60,000 of that total, and the town will provide \$25,000 of in-kind services. Plans have received approval from the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Lindsay said town crews will excavate the banks to

The town of Chili will begin a bank stabilization project on two areas on along Black Creek in August.



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give them a more natural slope.

"Right now they're pretty vertical," he said.

Then crews will use heavy stone fill to rebuild the banks, and will use native plantings between the rock fill to stabilize them.

"We'd like to do something different to cover up the rocks with natural materials to give it aesthetic value, rather than just a wall of rock," he said.

The bank-stabilization project will take about three weeks, assuming no delays. There are more locations along Black Creek that could use work, he said, but the town has to wait until more funds are available. Lindsay said he'd like to do another stream inventory to determine those priority spots.

The actual watershed covers over 128,000 acres in 14 towns, according to the Black Creek Watershed Coali-

On a side note

Starting June 2, Attridge Road will be closed from Buffalo Road to Chili-Riga Center Road to allow the replacement of the bridge over Black Creek. The road will remain open to local traffic only up to the bridge. Work is expected to last five months.

tion's Web site. About 79 percent of the land in the watershed is being used for agriculture or is idle.

Pollution in Black Creek is another topic of concern for the coalition.

"Black Creek runs through quite a few farms," said Dorothy Borgus. "There's runoff from crops, from fertilizers and phosphates. There are quite a few cattle operations farther on the south end. You have pollution from animal waste."

The group recently received a grant

to maintain its Web site. Members are also working on creating a brochure on the history of Black Creek and getting signs erected along major roadways that run along the waterway to discourage people from littering.

"Whatever you put on the ground might end up in Black Creek — fertilizers, trash, bottles," said Dorothy Borgus.

She thinks the bank-stabilization project shows that the group's hard work is paying off.

"It's tangible evidence that we are moving forward," she said. "It's nice to do some of the things we do on paper, but it's very nice and rewarding to see something concrete being done."

For more information on the Black Creek Watershed Coalition, visit www.blackcreekwatershed.org.

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