TRAILS 10/26/16 L. ERICKSON

River Falls city officials say the dams on the Kinnickinnick (KA-nick-KA-nick) are holding back more than water. Because the city does not have a plan in place for removing the dams, River Falls recently missed out on a grant worth over a million dollars that would have helped connect several walking trails. Lisa Erickson has the story.

MP3 RUNS: 1:25 O/C: …I’m Lisa Erickson

BUDDY LUCERO: IT’S KIND OF A BUNCH OF PEARLS TO SAY, TO CONNECT THEM ALL TOGETHER—AND THIS IS JUST ANOTHER GEM WE WE’RE TRYING TO DO. BUT, I THINK THAT IS JUST AN IDEA OF WHY WE NEED TO HAVE A GOOD PLAN FOR OUR RIVER AND FOR OUR DAMS. IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO LOOK AND PROVIDE FUNDING, BE IT GRANTS OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF ASSISTANCE, IF WE DON’T HAVE A COMPLETE PLAN OF WHERE WE'RE GOING TO GO.

LISA ERICKSON: THAT WAS BUDDY LUCERO. HE IS THE RIVER FALLS COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR. HE SAYS PEOPLE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW THINGS ARE CONNECTED.

BUDDY LUCERO: WE HAD BEEN KIND OF DOING THIS PATCHWORK OVER THE YEARS AND TRYING TO ACQUIRE PROPERTY AND TRYING TO IMPROVE THAT PROPERTY. BECAUSE OUR GOAL IS TO HAVE A RIVER THAT HAS A CORRIDOR THAT ALLOWS THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO ENJOY IT AS MUCH AS THE WILDLIFE AND ALL THE OTHER RECREATIONAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES THAT IT PROVIDES.

LISA ERICKSON: RUTH DANIELSON HAS BEEN A RESIDENT OF RIVER FALLS FOR ABOUT 55 YEARS. SHE WALKS THE PATHS THREE TIMES A DAY WITH HER DOGS AND FEELS THE PATHS ARE ONE OF RIVER FALLS' GREATEST ASSETS. SHE IS ALSO EXCITED THE CITY JUST FINISHED ANOTHER WALKING PATH.

RUTH DANIELSON: OH, ABSOLUTELY, AND THE'RE FINISHING THE OTHER SIDE NOW AND THAT IS FABULOUS. THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR RIVER FALLS. YES, IT REALLY IS.

LISA ERICKSON: THE CDC SAYS THAT HEALTHY COMMUNITIES ARE CAREFULLY DESIGNED IN WAYS THAT MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE HEALTHIER LIVES, SUCH AS HAVING WALKING TRAILS. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M LISA ERICKSON.

River Falls city officials are looking for the public's input. A tentative public meeting is planned for 6:30 p.m. December 8 at the River Falls Public Library.

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