

## Hall, Renee

---

**From:** Ravenscroft, Sue P [ACCT] <sueraven@iastate.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2022 2:26 PM  
**To:** Abraham, Keith  
**Cc:** City Council and Mayor  
**Subject:** Request for Capital Improvement Plan consideration

[External Email]

Dear Mr. Abraham and members of the Parks and Recreation committee:  
CC: Mayor Haila and Members of City Council

I am writing to request that the City of Ames Parks and Recreation Department consider adding an item to its CIP related to recreational facilities - removal of the stone "bridges" in Clear Creek.

Two years ago extensive changes were made to Emma McCarthy Lee park and Munn Woods (hence EML) after years of a no-interference policy, at least in the Munn Woods section of the natural area. The changes were caused by a need to replace and update storm sewers, which was clearly needed. However, the work was not done entirely carefully or thoughtfully and the effects on Clear Creek, which meanders through both areas, were not thoroughly considered.

I am attaching several pictures and will be sending another e-mail with photos to show some of the unintended damage that has been caused by the "bridges" constructed in Clear Creek. One bridge, which I call the "stepping stone bridge" was clearly built for pedestrians to cross over from the west end of Munn Woods into the western end of Emma McCarthy Lee park. That bridge has changed the creek since it was constructed, but particularly dramatically in just the last two months. The pictures below all relate to the Stepping Stone Bridge.

In early July of this year I walked it with a friend, and we both noted how awkward it was on the River right side (assuming I am looking downstream) because of the rocks the city had placed there. The rocks went down the inclined bank to the first big stone comprising the bridge and the big more or less rectangular stones went to the other bank of the creek and allowed for an easy step up to the bank. That was two months ago. Since built two years ago the bridge has been a funnel that caught branches and other things, and when I walked it I often would move branches and smaller stones around to help the water flow freely.

However, just this summer, on River Left a new channel between the last stone and the bank has opened up. That new channel was brought to your attention, and the city has moved stuff around, so the gap the channel created between the last stone and bank is now filled with rocks, mesh, silt, and branches that are very unstable and destined when we get a heavy rain to be moved downstream. In the first two pictures below I am standing where the last stone USED to be on River Left, and probably still is, but has been buried (in only two months) beneath all that detritus. This is not a stable situation; it is dangerous for pedestrians and requires frequent oversight by the city.

The next picture shows the River Right side of the creek immediately downstream of the bridge. You can see how eroded the River Right bank is already with tree roots seriously exposed, as well as the build-up of stones in the creek that serve no useful purpose.

The fourth picture (immediately upstream of the bridge River Right) shows how much foliage gets caught in the bridge. The final picture shows the River Right side of the bridge. The rocks that were on the bank have been completely covered with silt, and the silt deposit has crept over the first stone in the bridge. What has happened very quickly that I could do nothing to ameliorate is a very large silt deposit on River Right just before (upstream of) the bridge.

I have lived in the same house for 24 years and seen that woods and the features in them change over time; and that is part of their fascination for people. But, but they do so gradually (except when there's a derecho). These extreme and very sudden changes I am describing are man-made. The rock bridges have been a failure. The Stepping Stone bridge has a lovely motivation of connecting the parks, but it has caused damage to the creek and is not remotely sustainable. Again, these pictures show the silt deposits form very quickly now.

The bulk of the "bridges" are what I call (for lack of a better term) truck bridges. They are piles of rock that will make it easier for trucks in the future to drive across the creek. I assume that is their purpose. I am sending a second e-mail with photos of one of the truck bridges to show how unstable it is also.

I would propose that the city have all those masses of rocks that interrupt the flow of the creek, which results in erosions of the banks as well as huge silt deposit build-ups within the creek, removed. By their nature, creeks and flowing bodies of water do not remain exactly the same, but the changes will be less extreme and less harmful to flora and fauna if those obstructions to the flow are removed. I would also propose that the city consult a hydrologist who understands woodlands to oversee any work done in this area.

Thank you,

Sue Ravenscroft  
455 Westwood Drive  
Ames IA 50014  
515 268 0294

A Second e-mail forth coming.









