

**COMMISSION FILE NO:** 25-057-5 **DATE INTRODUCED:** May 5, 2025

**INTRODUCED BY:** Executive Director (Signature on File in the Office of the Commission)

**REFERRED BY COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON TO:** Operations Committee

**RELATING TO:** Award of Contract W10004C01, Milwaukee River Habitat Enhancement – Estabrook Falls

**SUMMARY:**

The Commission is requested to award and to direct the Executive Director to execute on behalf of the District Contract W10004C01, Milwaukee River Habitat Enhancement – Estabrook Falls, to Michels Construction, Inc., (Michels) in the amount of \$716,835. Michels was the lowest responsible, responsive bidder among four bids received.

Estabrook Falls is located in the Milwaukee River in the Cities of Glendale and Milwaukee at Estabrook Park. It is not a natural waterfall, but rather a relic of historic bedrock mining in the river. Estabrook Falls is a partial barrier to the migration of many native fish species. When the river is very high, there is no drop in water level over the falls, and many fish can swim past it; however, during more typical flow conditions, there is a water level drop across the falls that most fish cannot pass.

Ensuring that native fish can migrate from Lake Michigan to spawning and juvenile rearing habitats upstream of the Estabrook Falls in the Milwaukee River and its tributaries is a priority for restoring and maintaining the ecological health of the Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan. Improving fish passage at Estabrook Falls is identified as a necessary project to address the Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations Beneficial Use Impairment for the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern (AOC).

The Milwaukee Estuary was designated an AOC in 1987 by the International Joint Commission, because historical modifications and pollutant loads degraded habitat and contributed toxic contaminants to the AOC and Lake Michigan. Removing the Milwaukee Estuary from the list of AOC's will require completion of projects on the Management Action Lists, which includes restoration of native fish passage at Estabrook Falls.

**ATTACHMENTS:** **BACKGROUND** ☐ **KEY ISSUES** ☐ **RESOLUTION** ☒

**FISCAL NOTE** ☒ **S/W/MBE** ☒ **OTHER** ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

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**COMMITTEE ACTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMISSION ACTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **SUMMARY (Cont'd)**

### **Award of Contract W10004C01, Milwaukee River Habitat Enhancement – Estabrook Falls**

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By February 2025, the District and its partners completed the design of the fish passage improvements, received the required regulatory approvals, acquired the temporary easements necessary to construct the project, and received commitments from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to fund construction. The project was advertised for construction bids on March 6, 2025, and the bid opening was on April 8, 2025.

Under this proposed contract, the contractor will:

- Temporarily improve access to the river from the west side;
- Remove bedrock from the river to create routes that are passable by native fish at different river flow rates;
- Extend a portage route to maintain safe passage around the area for paddlers; and
- Restore disturbed ground in the staging and access route areas with native trees, shrubs, and smaller plants.

The design and construction of this project are fully funded by federal grants awarded to WDNR. The District has been and will continue to be reimbursed for all costs associated with this project through an aid agreement with WDNR.

The contract duration is 1,293 days, which includes three years of vegetation maintenance.

## **RESOLUTION**

Award of Contract W10004C01, Milwaukee River Habitat Enhancement – Estabrook Falls

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**RESOLVED**, by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage Commission, that Contract W10004C01, Milwaukee River Habitat Enhancement – Estabrook Falls, is awarded to Michels Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$716,835, and that the Executive Director is directed to execute a contract on behalf of the District.