



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

# **Jacobs, Ryan, Announce Scajaquada Creek Funding**

Senator Jacobs

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(Buffalo, NY) – Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD) and Assemblyman Sean Ryan (149<sup>th</sup> AD) today announced \$600,000 in state funding to support the Scajaquada Creek Restoration project running through Forest Lawn Cemetery in the City of Buffalo.

The \$2.8 million project that was announced a little more than a year ago represents the most comprehensive and impactful environmental cleanup of the creek in decades. Both Jacobs and Ryan were able to secure funding of \$300,000 through their respective houses, providing enough funding to pay for the construction of over 23,000 square feet of wetland area. This wetland will provide sediment storage, reduce flooding and act as a biological filter for storm water entering Scajaquada Creek.

“As part of the Niagara River Watershed, Scajaquada Creek is one of our region’s most important waterways, and also one of our most threatened,” said Senator Jacobs. “The funding secured for this project will help correct years of diminished water quality and damage to the ecosystem caused by land-use development, urban pollution and sewage overflows. This vitally important environmental cleanup will have a transformational effect on Western New York’s waterways.”

"This project is an important step in repairing damage that has been done to Scajaquada Creek," said Assemblyman Sean Ryan. "The creek has long faced significant impacts from a multitude of sources and this funding will help protect a waterway vital to Buffalo's infrastructure. I'm proud of what we've been able to

achieve with this funding, and will continue to be dedicated to cleaning our waterways in Western New York."

Forest Lawn Heritage Foundation and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper have been working for nearly a decade on multiple project components within the cemetery that will result in over 4 acres of floodplain and wetland restoration. Other key partners in the effort include the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Buffalo Sewer Authority, and multiple private funders who are all working in collaboration to restore Scajaquada Creek.

"Scajaquada Creek is one of the most impaired waterways in Western New York, but that is a designation that this community no longer accepts," said Jill Jedlicka, executive director of Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. "Nearly ten years ago, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper made a commitment to restore the health of this creek, and it is because of the partnerships and collaboration like this that our community is now seeing real progress. Senator Jacobs and Assemblyman Ryan have both worked hard in Albany to help secure funds for the restoration efforts in Forest Lawn, and we are thankful for their leadership and support."

The resulting odor, trash accumulation, flooding, and other water quality problems associated with the decline of the creek's ecosystem have diminished the experience of local, national and international visitors to not only Forest Lawn, but also Hoyt Lake, Mirror Lake's Japanese Garden, and the Buffalo History Museum. Eliminating the cause of these conditions will create a more unique and pleasurable experience, adding to the value of these cultural assets.

"This project is a pivotal one for Western New York, demonstrating how the public and private sectors can come together to address a common objective that will benefit the entire community," said Joseph Dispenza, President of Forest Lawn and the Forest Lawn Heritage Foundation. "It's gratifying to be part of a galvanized team of diverse organizations that have rallied around the restoration of Scajaquada Creek, and to have the first steps taken here within the sacred acres of Forest Lawn."

It is anticipated the Scajaquada Creek Restoration project will be completed before the end of 2018.