

Black Hawk College recently celebrated the completion of a retaining wall and sidewalk built by BHC students at Loud Thunder Forest Preserve.



Three [Highway Construction Careers Training Program](#) classes - a total of 36 students - worked 2,500 hours on the project over three semesters.



The improvements began in Fall 2018 when HCCTP students started working on a below-ground retaining wall to stabilize new concrete slabs at Lake George.



The students also constructed an ADA-accessible concrete sidewalk to replace the gravel at the edge of the lake.

“The gravel made it difficult for people with disabilities to get around,” said Ben Mills, ranger. “Also, every time a heavy rain occurred, we had to purchase tons of gravel to rebuild the shoreline.”

“This changes all of that,” he said.

The Forest Preserve provided the materials for the project while the students provided the labor at no cost as part of their HCCTP training.

“It was a unique project requiring many different skills, so it was a fantastic experience for the students,” said Paul Fessler, HCCTP program manager.

The 13-week, 450-hour HCCTP covers math, job/life skills, blueprint reading, OSHA, stick welding, construction equipment operation, shop time and hands-on projects.

The current class of 12 students will graduate Nov. 8. [Orientation sessions](#) for the Spring 2020 will be in January.

View photos from the event on [Facebook](#).

Media coverage:

WQAD -

- [New accessible boat ramp unveiled at Loud Thunder Forest Preserve](#)
- [Trade students build a new boat ramp at Lake George](#)

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