



Kent Environmental Council

June 2007

Portage County Parks Plan for Future, Seek Public Input

Members and friends of the Kent Environmental Council are urged to participate in the Portage County Park District's third planning meeting for the future direction of Portage County parks on June 21 at the Davey Tree Company Institute, 1500 N. Mantua Street (S.R. 43) in Kent. Start time is 7 p.m.

Charles Frederick, an assistant professor in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Kent State University will conduct the meeting.

The June planning session and the two preceding it aim to give residents who have an attachment to the land in Portage County an opportuni-

ty to share their knowledge of the special areas they know and love and which they believe merit protection in advance of continuing pressure from population expansion.

The development of a Parks, Trails and Greenway Plan, said Portage Park District Executive Director Chris Craycroft, is a "collaborative process building on local community plans, needs and initiatives." Having such a plan in place, she added, will provide the park district and local communities with a strategic advantage as continued development takes place in historically rural Portage County and will allow for the cohesive acquisition of key parcels as financial resources become available.

Previous sessions were held in the Portage County communities of Shalersville and Streetsboro, and others will be held at locations throughout the county. The June session aims to attract residents in the Kent, Franklin Township, Brady Lake and Sugar Bush Knolls areas. Additional sessions are planned, so those who cannot attend this meeting will have an opportunity to do so at another time. All county residents are invited as well to offer their input on the park district's Web site, www.portageparkdistrict.org.

Future sessions are scheduled as follows: July 19 (Brimfield and Suf- field), September 26 (Randolph, Rootstown, Ravenna Township and Ravenna City), October 24 (Atwater, Deerfield, Edinburg and Palmyra) and November 28 (Hiram, Nelson, Freedom and Windham).

A countywide draft review of the parks plan is scheduled for both January and February of next year. The plan should be completed in March, at which time posters describing the plan will be distributed.



KEC Hosting Booth at Kent Heritage Festival to Focus on Energy Conservation

Saturday, July 7, 2007
Downtown Kent - All Day

If you want to . . .

**\$AVE Energy . . . \$AVE Money . . . SAFEGUARD Your Health . . .
SUPPORT Local Businesses and Farms . . . PRESERVE Clean Air
and Safe Water . . . PROMOTE Your Community . . .**

Be sure to stop by the KEC booth for displays and activities related to energy conservation and ways to reduce consumption of fossil fuels for folks of all ages, all households and all communities.

If you want to . . .

Help with ideas, planning or fabrication of KEC's Heritage Festival events, contact Caroline Arnold at 330/678-6218 or csarnold@neo.rr.com or come to any of the KEC Friday breakfasts (Diggers, 8 a.m.). Other task force members include Harold Walker and Karl Liske.



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Odor at Procex Remains Troublesome

The Procex plant at 880 Cherry Street continues to be a concern for residents in the Middlebury Road neighborhood. A thick, brown smoke is emitted during the company's rubber removal process, and it has been affecting the health and comfort of the surrounding residents.

Summer heat traps the fumes at ground level at a time when residents need their windows open for fresh air. The plant operates between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., making it difficult to obtain official documentation of these offending incidents.

However, many people in the area have called to complain, and a petition being circulated requests that the city of Kent develop an effective method of response for odor complaints, especially when such emissions occur after normal business hours.

The odor is similar to burning tires, and its toxicity is unclear, but residents have complained of asthma attacks and headaches related to the incidents. Residents with concerns are invited to address Kent City Council at their meeting on June 20.

Conservation Awards Dinner Raises Nearly \$15,000 for Land Conservancy

With approximately 200 people in attendance, the Ninth Annual Portage County Environmental Conservation Awards Benefit Dinner raised nearly \$15,000 for the Western Reserve



Land Conservancy (WRLC), which plans to use the funds for conservation easement projects and other protective projects in

Portage County. The Kent Environmental Council cosponsored the April event.

Charles Ramer, master of ceremonies and director of the Portage County Solid Waste Management District, stressed the significance of the growing involvement of young people in the environmental movement. Awards were given to the Hiram College Student Environmental Action Coalition, the Waterloo High School Committee on Climate Change, and the Kent Roosevelt High School Zoology Club. Each group in its own way has increased interest in environmental issues and involved the group's peers. It is this younger generation that will face the consequences of the population's present behaviors.

In welcoming the guests, KEC member Walt Adams spoke about those "who share a commitment to the environment, to conservation and

the recognition that we are all one on this beleaguered planet." Kent City Council member William Schultz served as honorary chair of the dinner and was praised by Adams for his long public service and devotion to environmental issues and solutions through his role, among others, on city council and the Portage County Solid Waste Policy Committee. Schultz was greeted with a standing ovation.

Several others were honored for their contribution of land and conservation easements, including Robert and George Bissell (Aurora), Glenn and Judith Goodrich (Freedom), George Fadoul (Rootstown), and Ronald and Connie Echelberry and the Sugarbush Farm LLC (Mantua). Their actions help to ensure the retention of natural areas in the face of severe development pressures affecting Portage County.

The evening's speaker was Richard Cochran, president and chief executive officer of the WRLC. He described the vision and methods of sequestering significant parcels of land as anchors and establishing connectors between them to ensure adequate migration of wildlife. The formation of this regional conservation organization has the potential for major impact in preserving natural habitats and green areas in concert with park development and private land conservation efforts.

Portage County Master Gardeners Offer Thursday Night Gardening Series

The Portage County Master Gardeners has announced the schedule for its Thursday Night Gardening Series. All sessions start at 7 p.m. The schedule is as follows:

June 21 - Visit Holly Shaffer's yard and see a working rain garden, designed to slow water down in its race to a river or stream. The Portage County Solid Waste District also will be providing information on the proper disposal of hazardous waste in order to protect the county's waterways.

July 19 - Test for water quality with Jerry Gubanich, Kent's storm-water management consultant, in the Cuyahoga River as it goes through Fred Fuller Park. Portage County's Storm Water Coordinator, Jennifer White, will discuss the importance of maintaining riparian buffers. Dress for getting wet.

August 16 - Tour of the Kent/Brimfield Bog with Emliss Ricks, retired preserve manager for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, with a discussion of a complete and pristine ecosystem vs. a depleted ecosystem.

September 20 - Meet with Dan Hickin, owner of Organic Roots Horticulture, who will explain the benefits of natural lawn care and demonstrate the use of natural products in lawn maintenance. A visit to a local resident's naturally maintained lawn is included.

The workshops are free, but registration is required. They will be held at various locations in Kent. Contact Kelly at the Ohio State University Extension Office, 330/296-6432. Kent residents will find a registration form in the spring issue of the city's newsletter, *Tree City Bulletin*.



City of Kent Outlines Contingency Plans for Mosquito Spraying in Neighborhoods

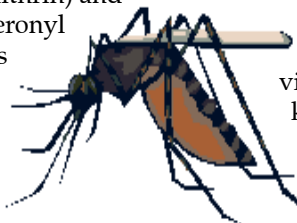
The city of Kent monitors the level of mosquitoes using mosquito traps and will spray pesticide throughout the city if sufficient mosquitoes are detected.

The pesticide currently applied is called ANVIL, which contains a synthetic pyrethroid (Sumithrin) and a toxicity booster (Piperonyl Butoxide). Sumithrin is under investigation as an endocrine disrupter. Piperonyl Butoxide is a possible carcinogen, with toxicity to humans, including reproductive and developmental toxicity and neurotoxicity. It is considered "slightly toxic" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Synthetic pyrethroids are broadly toxic to insects and can also kill honeybees, fireflies and mosquito predators, such as dragonflies.

The Kent Health Department is very aware that these chemicals are acutely toxic to fish and should not be sprayed within 100 feet of lakes, fish ponds or waterways. ANVIL is generally thought to break down within 72 hours, and it is recommended that in-

fants not be placed directly on sprayed areas within that time frame.

Spraying should be avoided where residents are gathered in public spaces, as some people have had severe reactions to ANVIL. The pesticide, however, is considered to be of lower toxicity to humans and animals than traditional pesticides such as malathion. Bacterial larvicides also are used by the city to kill mosquitoes in their larval stage.



Bats and fish are natural controls for mosquitoes. Installing a bat house in your yard can reduce the number of mosquitoes you encounter. If you are sensitive to chemicals, you can call the city's Health Department at 330/678-8109 and request that you be notified by telephone before any spraying is conducted in your area so that you can close your windows and doors or keep your children inside. You also may request that city crews turn off the sprayer when they pass your residence.

Sources: Pesticide Action Network database, Kent City Health Department.

Turnout for May Bog Walk Tops 60

Sixty-one people—some from as far away as California and Oklahoma—took advantage of a gorgeous Saturday to visit the Kent Bog.

Guy Denny, former chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, came up from Fredericktown to photograph some of the bog's plant life. Black huckleberry shrubs were sporting their red flowers, adding to the whites of the highbush blueberry, chokeberry and dogwood.

Many thanks to greeters Betsy Brown, Beth Schoonover, Sandy Hughes, Fred Skok, Jim Geisey, Garnet Byrne and Karl Liske. Special thanks to Portage Park District Executive Director Chris Craycroft, who "rescued" our tables after we abandoned them in our hasty late afternoon departure to avoid the rain.

In a brief ceremony, David Fielder from Akron was awarded the little cloth lamb, his prize for winning the shadbrush contest. Stay tuned for future bog-related quizzes. Things are developing fast these days, so there is something different to see and hear every time you come. Please visit often, and bring your friends and neighbors.

Technical Seminars, Tours to Be Part of National Solar Conference in Cleveland

Mark your calendars for the largest annual renewable energy event held in the United States—the National Solar Conference, which convenes in Cleveland July 7-12 at the Cleveland Convention Center. The theme this year is "Sustainable Energy Puts America to Work."

Hundreds of national experts will be on hand to explore the economic opportunities available with the growth of renewable energy sources. The main conference program is scheduled for July 9 through 12 and will feature sessions for energy professionals, policymakers and educators. A day for the public is set for July 8 with free access to the exhibit hall and consumer-oriented ed-

ucational programming from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

In addition, several tours will be available, including trips to Amish country, where families and businesses are adopting solar technology; energy production and space propulsion at the NASA Glenn Research Center; the photovoltaic labs at the University of Toledo; and a cruise on Lake Erie.

To register and for updates and additional information, go to www.solar2007.org or contact Christina Panoska at Christina@GreenEnergyOhio.org. The Kent Environmental Council is a member organization of one of the local Ohio sponsors of this conference, Green Energy Ohio.

Check It Out . . .

The *Wilson Quarterly* (Spring 2007) features a cover story titled "The Climate Engineers." Author James Fleming writes that some scientists and engineers warn that agreeing on reducing carbon emissions will prove too politically divisive, so they are working on new technological solutions.

In *Scientific American* (June 2007), "Restoring America's Big, Wild Animals" by C. Josh Donlan discusses the radical proposal of placing African megafauna species on large tracts of the American plains where farming/ranching are having diminishing economic returns. This idea has been kicking around for a while and still seems astoundingly farfetched.

KEC Announces RFP for Projects in Five Categories

The Executive Board of the Kent Environmental Council invites proposals requesting funding for small and medium-sized projects and programs pertaining to five specific program areas: environmental education, park and/or trail development, clean/renewable energy development, public policy, and a category for "other" to be specified by the applicant.

Funds are available from bequests and donations that the Executive Board wants to apply to furthering the goal of a livable, sustainable environment through education, advocacy of environmentally sound public policies and networking with other groups sharing a similar goal.

Five to 10 small grants (\$500-\$1,900) and two to five medium-size grants (\$2,000-\$5,000) will be awarded. Grant duration will be negotiated with the recipients. A one-page report will be due at the negotiated end of the grant period. To receive an application, go to kentenvironment.org or send an e-mail to annhward@gmail.com.



KEC Membership Reminder . . .

Please take the time and energy to check your mailing label for the current status of your KEC membership.

If you see **REN** above your name and address, KEC is reminding you that it is time to **RENEW** your membership. A return-addressed envelope will be attached to the newsletter for your convenience. You can indicate your support of KEC at the following membership levels:

**Sustaining, \$45; Family, \$35; Individual, \$25;
Golden Buckeye, \$15; Golden Buckeye Family
or Couple, \$25; Student, \$10**

If you see OK on your label, you are a **member in good standing**. Thank you for your trust and support!

The letters **CC** mean that KEC has sent you a **complimentary copy** this month. Please consider joining KEC at any membership level you find appropriate. Make your check payable to Kent Environmental Council, and mail it to: Kent Environmental Council, P.O. Box 395, Kent, OH 44240.

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Kent Environmental Council . . . on the Web at www.kentenvironment.org