



Kent Environmental Council

October 2005

Cuyahoga's Friends Oppose Hydropower Plant Proposal

The Friends of the Crooked River and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County, thank KEC for supporting the Friends' opposition to a hydropower plant to be built in the 155-acre Gorge Metro Park. The plant would be built on the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls.

Comments delivered at a public hearing sponsored by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on July 27, indicated strong opposition and strong concern from multiple agencies, government entities, organizations and the public.

Over the last three decades, billions of public and private dollars have been invested in water-quality improvements on the Cuyahoga River. Environmental experts, including the Ohio Environmental Protection

Agency, the Summit County Soil and Water Conservation District, NEFCO, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan, the Cuyahoga American



Heritage River Program, the Ohio Environmental Council, Rivers Unlimited, the Northeast Ohio Watershed Council, the Kent Environmental Council and others, believe that the plan forwarded by Fairlawn, Ohio-based Metro HydroElectric will have a serious impact on water quality in the Cuyahoga River and jeopardize all future efforts to revitalize the river.

The proposal is a breach of the public trust because it comes from a

for-profit company operating on public land a hydropower plant that generates miniscule electrical output. Metro HydroElectric's plan is detrimental both environmentally and economically to the region.

For its part, Metro Parks objects to the proposal because it will lead to the construction of roads in Gorge Metro Park, the destruction of old-growth forests, degradation in water quality, the loss of habitat for many rare and endangered species, and the destruction of park vistas. In addition, Metro Parks notes, the project will use a dam that ceased functioning in 1958 as a component of a hydroelectric station but which continues to negatively affect the river's overall health.

The next stage of the proposal entails negotiation with stakeholders on what studies need to be completed for the site. The Ohio EPA has determined that as the preapplication document stands, the agency will not be able to certify the project because of its impact on water quality. Opponents of the proposal recognize how valuable and important the revitalization and rehabilitation of the Cuyahoga River is to the region. The Friends of the Crooked River encourage continued involve-

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Kent Environmental Council Fall Forum 2005

Energy: Cents and the City

October 24 - 7:30 p.m.

United Church of Christ Annex
1427 Horning Road, Kent

The Kent Environmental Council has devoted a number of meetings to and prepared visual material about ways that individuals can reduce energy consumption. KEC also has worked to pressure utilities to begin the conversion to renewable energy resources. Institutions, however, are major consumers of energy, with public institutions also being major consumers of public money.

To expand on its longtime concern with energy as an environmental and economic matter, KEC has invited representatives of the two largest institutions in Kent—the municipal government and Kent State University—to discuss what they are doing now and what they can do in the future to reduce the consumption and costs of energy. Presenters for the forum are:

- **Dave Ruller, City Manager, Kent:** "Energy Conservation Options Available to a Municipality: What Is Kent Doing and What Can It Do in the Future?"
- **Tom Euclide, Director, Architecture and Engineering, Kent State University:** "Energy Consumption at Kent State University: What Can a Large Public Institution Do to Use Energy More Efficiently (and Save Money)?"
- Panel of respondents

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Kent Environmental Commission's Sustainable Achievement Awards Named in Honor of the Late Doug Shaw; Three Honored

The annual awards from the Kent Environmental Commission are now being given in honor of one of the commission's initial members, Doug Shaw, who died a little more than one year ago. Doug made many contributions to his community as a volunteer member of advisory bodies and as a political activist. As a respected academician, he had a unique ability to build bridges from the "ivory tower" to the "tower of Babel" and make his knowledge and insights



Jim Arthur speaks after receiving, along with wife Nancy, a sustainability award from the Kent Environmental Commission.

available to policy makers and elected officials—sometimes whether they wanted to hear what he had to say or not. He was instrumental in helping to define "sustainability" and generate working concepts incorporated into the city's "Goals for Sustainability." His impact will be lasting, and the Environmental Commission is privileged to be able to honor him with these awards.

The First Annual Doug Shaw Sustainable Achievement Awards were presented on October 1 during a daytime gathering at gathering at Home Savings Plaza in Kent. The awards recognized three individuals: Jim and Nancy Arthur and Councilman Bill Schultz. Together the award recipients represent

two of the many aspects of community sustainability.

The Arthurs were recognized for their work with the restoration and reuse of historic buildings. Jim and Nancy have renovated the historic Silk Mill on River Street in Kent and converted it to apartments and offices. This grand, early 19th century structure has had many commercial uses over the years and has been a landmark in the city for its immense size and its location on the bank of the Cuyahoga River. The community is grateful that the structure will be preserved and become a sustainable asset to the business and historical districts of Kent.

Schultz is one of Kent's sustainability pioneers. He was instrumental in the formation of the city's Environmental Commission and in writing the "Goals for Sustainability," which formed much of the basis of the recently adopted Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan. The theory and values behind sustainability are closely related to environmental protection and conservation. Bill has been a leader in bringing these ideas to practice in municipal policy.



KEC member Walt Adams introduces City Councilman Bill Schultz as the second of two Environmental Commission sustainability award recipients.

functions and essential resources are maintained and preserved for future generations. For the effort to succeed, sustainability principles must be communicated clearly and adopted by not only individuals but also government agencies, businesses and community organizations.

Though they did so in different ways, both the Arthurs and Bill Schultz have contributed significantly to making Kent a sustainable community, one in which ecosystem structures and

Donations to KEC in Memory of Doug Shaw to Support KSU Honors Theses on Sustainability, Environmental Conservation

Many friends of Doug Shaw contributed to a fund in memory of Doug. Over the past year, this fund has grown to \$1,600, and contributions are still being received.

Upon the recommendation of a special committee (Sherry Gedeon, Virginia Shaw, and Ann Ward), the KEC board voted to use the money annually to support honors thesis projects at Kent State University.

Honors College Dean Larry Andrews explained that each scholarship of \$150 supports the research of the student recipient, thus enhancing the ability of the student to gather data and strengthen the work. Each year, the list of potential recipients will be provided to KEC in order to select the student(s) most appropriate to the purpose of the award.

The Honors College at KSU is one of the oldest in the nation, having begun in the early 1930s. Graduates of the honors program regularly go on to important academic and professional careers, so it is particularly fitting that part of the legacy of Doug Shaw should be to help further the careers of young scholars.

Kent Bog Tours Scheduled

The public is invited to take a guided tour of the Kent Bog on Sunday, October 23, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The tours are sponsored by the Friends of the Kent Bog.

Members of the group will be there to point out some of the more colorful plants and trees. A short "Guide to Fall Colors at the Kent Bog" will be available.

The Kent Bog is on Meloy Road just west of S. R. 43. Because parking is extremely limited, carpooling is strongly recommended. For further information, contact Gordon Vars at 330/677-5008 or GVarsNACC@aol.com. Rain date is Sunday, October 30.

Where Do Your Recyclables Go?

More than 40 people saw the answer to that question when they toured the Portage County Recycling Center on September 17, an event cosponsored by the Kent Environmental Council and the Ohio Environmental Council.

Susan Studer King, along with her niece Elisa, represented the Ohio Environmental Council.



Elisa was delighted to have her photo taken for an article that appeared in the *Daily Kent Stater*.

Recycling Center Director Charley Ramer showed everyone the county's state-of-the-art recycling sorting system that uses a monster magnet, a huge vacuum cleaner, a rotating tube and a maze of conveyors to turn mountains of paper and containers into 13 different commodities for resale. The center's 47 workers process 45 tons of recyclables per day, or roughly 13,000 tons per year.



Special thanks to Nancy Adams, Caroline Arnold, Elaine Landry and Ann Ward for refreshments; to Ellen Taylor, for serving as tour guide; and to all of the Recycling Center staff, who unloaded, sorted and baled recyclables for all the visitors to observe.

HYDRO

Continued from p. 1

ment in helping the Cuyahoga's Friends make their case against the project to FERC.

To volunteer your time or to suggest other environmental groups that would want to write letters of concern or opposition to the project, contact Judy Hanna at 330/668-0056 or judyanthoshanna@yahoo.com. For more information about the proposal, go to www.metroparks.org.

Munroe Falls . . . Rediscovered!

The restored Cuyahoga River is now running freely around the Kent dam and rolling along toward the dam in Munroe Falls. Plans to lower the Munroe Falls dam from 12 feet to 6 feet were on again, off again for several years. Final agreements were signed this summer between Munroe Falls, Summit County and the contractors. Work on the project has started.

Suddenly the **real** Munroe Falls were discovered: a bedrock ledge and a natural waterfall that had been hidden beneath the old dam; however, the contracts for reconstruction had to be changed to include removal of the entire dam and revelation of the natu-

ral falls. Changing these contracts on an emergency basis required five of seven votes on the Munroe Falls City Council, and this was achieved on September 27.

The free-flowing Cuyahoga River will eliminate the stagnant 5-mile-long Munroe Falls dam pool, improve the water's flow, and increase dissolved oxygen and fish and water insect populations. The riparian area along the riverbanks will be revegetated into a lovely natural area similar to the area below the Kent dam. Congratulations to Munroe Falls officials and citizens for enhancing their riverfront park with a new natural treasure!

Ohio State Parks, Lake Erie Possible Sites for Drilling for Natural Gas

Gas drilling. It's a possible scenario in Ohio, though hurdles await those who would like to drill for natural gas in the state—not the least of which is an Ohio law that makes such activity in state parks illegal. Federal law prohibits drilling under Lake Erie.

Prompting the renewed look at drilling for natural gas in Ohio is the prediction that heating bills will rise significantly during the winter season. But drilling in such sensitive areas raises environmental concerns. Drilling, for example, removes vast quantities of ground water that can contain minerals that are harmful to the environment.

The *Record-Courier* recently published an article dealing with the controversy over drilling for natural gas in Ohio's state parks and under Lake Erie because of high prices and damage from Hurricane Katrina to gas-production facilities in the Gulf of Mexico (October 3, 2005, p. A5).

If you feel strongly about drilling, please contact the following legislators and state officials:

- **Tim Ryan**
U.S. Representative, 17th District
222 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
800/856-4152

- **Kathleen Chandler**
State Representative, 68th District
775 High Street, 10th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6111
614/466-6111
district68@ohr.state.oh.us
- **Kimberly A. Zurz**
State Representative, 28th District
Senate Building, Room 057,
Ground Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
614/466-7041
maild.sen.state.oh.us
- **Jack Shaner**
Ohio Environmental Council
1207 Grandview Ave., Suite 101
Columbus, OH 43212-3449
OEC@theOEC.org
- **Sam Speck**
Director
Ohio Department
of Natural Resources
614/265-6875



New Trail Opens in Northwest Sector of Franklin Township

Bikers and hikers—and folks just out for an autumn stroll—will find a treasure in the newest segment of the regional bike/hike trail network. The trailhead begins at the intersection of Hudson and Judson roads in northwest Franklin Township and connects with the Akron Metro Parks trail, where it leads to the Cuyahoga Valley.

Several KEC members were part of an enthusiastic ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 7, where Portage Park District Executive Director Chris Craycroft and others described the progress the trail represents and the prospects for further trail development.

Eestablishment of the new trail was made possible through the cooperative efforts of the Portage Park District, the Akron Metro Parks, Franklin Township trustees, Portage County commissioners, the Kent Parks and Recreation Department, Kent State University, and others. U.S. Representative Tim Ryan (who has supported the allocation of funds for such projects) also was present. Recognition was given to Ginny Shaw, Rick Hawksley and others whose dedicated energies initiated this process in the early 1990s.

Prospects for further trail development, including a network of trails that will connect the new trail with the Town-er's Woods Trail, look hopeful. In the meantime, take a hike on the new trail before the snow of winter begins to fall.



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; Student, \$10.**

If you see OK on your label, you 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.

Kent Environmental Council

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Membership:

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