



Kent Environmental Council

July 2006

KEC Connects with the Cuyahoga River

The Kent Environmental Council has made a number of significant contributions to the quality of the air, water and lands in the Kent area since its founding in January 1970. A group of like-minded individuals banded together in response to the fire on the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland on June 22, 1969.

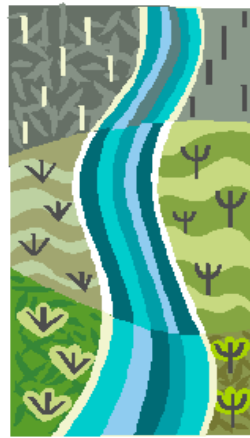
KEC friends and volunteers, however, started in their own backyard, cleaning up the bank of the Cuyahoga River in Kent over the next several years. They also developed Franklin Mills Riveredge Park, which was dedicated in 1976 to Ernie Miller.

Next, KEC members turned their attention to the John Brown tannery area of the river bank which, at that time, was an automobile junkyard centered around a derelict structure. The city of Kent, after prodding from KEC and friends, purchased the site for park use. By then, it was too late to save the building, which was razed in 1976. Pieces of slate were saved as mementos. Some of the boards from the building were used to build the Tannery Park gazebo. KEC also played a key role in spearheading the creation of Plum Creak Park and, in 1993, completed the landscaping of Haymaker Parkway as a memorial-garden project.

KEC began to celebrate Cuyahoga River Day in Kent in 1993, as part of the Friends of the Crooked River's watershedwide effort to increase public involvement and awareness. KEC and the Friends of the Crooked River worked with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency on plans to clean up the Cuyahoga River

in this area, working with many local organizations to hold public meetings on both historical and environmental issues.

The Federal Clean Water Act, passed in 1972, included a process called Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to address pollution from nonpoint sources, such as agricultural runoff, air deposition or hydromodifications (such as man-made structures and dams), which would prevent attainment of water-quality standards.



The Ohio EPA's first TMDL report was for the Middle Cuyahoga River—defined as the section of the river from Lake Rockwell to Waterworks Park in Cuyahoga Falls. Although municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants significantly improved their discharges over the past three decades, most of the Middle Cuyahoga River did not meet water-quality standards.

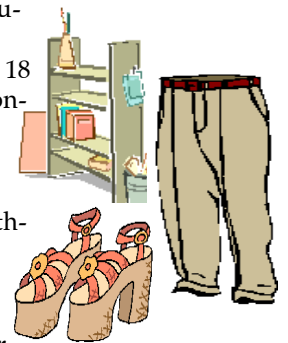
The city of Kent initiated a study called the "Kent Dam Pool Water Quality Improvement Project" in March 2000. This included creation of the Kent Dam Advisory Committee, which consisted of a 19-member panel of interested area parties, including

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Recycling News: 'Throw-N-Go'

The Kent State University residence hall recycling program, "Throw-N-Go" has set a new record in its third year of operation.

During the last week of the school year, student residents moving out of 18 dormitories contributed more than 70,000 pounds (that's 35 tons) of clothing, food and furniture to the county clothing center and Kent Social Services' food pantry.



In addition, the clothing center was able to collect beds, desks and dressers from the demolition of Terrace Hall, thus removing even more material otherwise destined for a landfill while providing sturdy furniture to needy clients of Family and Community Services.

Last year, more than 28 tons of goods were collected from campus residence halls, when KSU expanded its efforts from two halls to eight additional ones and increased the amount collected by 26 tons.

Volunteers from several organizations, including KEC, student leaders, KSU administration, Family and Community Services, and the Portage County Recycling Center, worked closely together to reach the 2006 milestone. On behalf of the environment and the citizens of Portage County, many thanks to all who helped.

Portage Hike, Bike Trail Receives \$732,000 Federal Earmark Grant

The city of Kent was awarded an earmark grant for The Portage Hike and Bike Trail through Kent in the amount of \$732,000. The Kent Parks and Recreation Department will provide matching funds in the amount of approximately \$300,000.

GDP Group of Akron has been hired to perform the design services necessary for this project. It is estimated that design work will be completed by January 2007 and that construction will begin in July 2007. Trail construction will begin on the south side of the Cuyahoga River at the bridge on Middlebury Road, and will terminate at the John Brown Tannery Park on Stow Street.

Generally the trail will be located on the south side of the Cuyahoga River adjacent to Tompkins Industrial Area (1,200 feet) on a 25-foot-wide ease-



ment that will be fenced. The trail then will travel along the old Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal towpath (2,400 feet), passing the historic Plum Creek Aqueduct to a proposed bridge across the Cuyahoga River.

The trail next travels along the north side of the river within the floodplain (300 feet), crossing a small wetland with a boardwalk and passing alongside the Kent Wastewater Treatment Plant through an area that will require screening and a cantilevered boardwalk. The trail continues on an existing trail along the river in Fred Fuller Park that will be paved with asphalt. The next section of the trail continues along the river to John Brown Tannery Park (900 feet) where the existing trail will be moved "up the bank" to get as much of the trail as possible above the 100-year floodplain.



Thanks to the cooperative efforts among Kent State University, the cities of Kent and Ravenna, the Portage County commissioners, Ravenna and Franklin townships, and the Portage Park District, the trail will serve as a key east-west link between major hike and bike trails in Summit and Trumbull counties. Phase One of the trail is nearly 13 miles long. The trail is open year-round.

Sources: Kent Parks and Recreation 2006 Summer & Fall Program Guide and eInside, October 17, 2005, Kent State University.

Riparian Enhancements Set for Fish Creek

The lands around Fish Creek are scheduled for enhancements that will improve the area's habitat and stream-buffering abilities. A riparian plan calls for a three-acre wetland restoration in the disconnected portion of the floodplain tributary to Fish Creek at the southern border of the soccer fields parking lot at Al Lease Park. A range of wetland vegetation species will be planted to encourage the development of a diverse habitat in that area.

Wetland enhancements elsewhere will feature advancing lower-quality

wetlands. Invasive species will be removed and managed, and trees and shrubs will be introduced.

It is anticipated that the eventual development of an overhanging canopy in these areas will cause the existing lower-quality wetlands to improve to the point where a forested wetland can develop, stream-water temperatures can cool and aquatic-habitat goals are advanced.

Source: Kent Parks and Recreation 2006 Summer & Fall Program Guide.

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two KEC members. After extensive discussions with the city administration and its consultant, plus several public meetings to address both historical and environmental concerns, the Advisory Committee presented a preferred project alternative to Kent City Council in June 2002.

City Council then approved the plan to create a bypass channel that permitted the river to flow around the east end of the Kent Dam. This would meet all goals of the federal Clean Water Act. For history's sake, the Kent Dam would remain intact, with a recirculating waterfall that pumped water from the river into a small trough located around the lip of the dam. Other historical elements of the plan included partial restoration of a canal-lock wall and installation of 11 interpretive signs. The land directly behind the Kent Dam was transformed into Heritage Park, which was dedicated on May 20, 2005, followed by River Day on May 21. River Day 2006 was held on May 19 and 20, celebrating the continued connection of KEC and the city of Kent with the Cuyahoga River.

Sources: "Portage Pathways," Roger DiPaolo, October 15, 1995, and The Cuyahoga River, Robert Brown, 2006.

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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.