



Kent Environmental Council

Winter 2009

KEC Annual Meeting to Feature Discussion on Expanding the Council's Ability to Achieve Environmental Goals in Kent

Kent Environmental Council members, friends and other guests are invited to the organization's annual potluck dinner and business meeting followed by a presentation this year on how KEC might continue to expand its influence in achieving environmental goals within the city of Kent and beyond its borders.

The event kicks off at 6 p.m. with a potluck dinner followed by a short business meeting at 6:45 p.m. and the guest speaker at around 7 p.m. in the fellowship hall of the Kent Presbyterian Church, 1456 Summit Street in Kent.

The featured speaker for the evening is Kirk Noden, executive director of the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative, a network of community organizations and faith-based organizations. The organization's aim is to address some of the economic problems in the Mahoning Valley, with campaigns focusing on vacant properties, health care, voter engagement and neighborhood cohesion.

Noden is a 1997 graduate of Kent State University and has spent time organizing grassroots groups in Chicago and in London to address social change and economic development from the ground up. He even worked for the same community organization in Chicago that once engaged a certain recently inaugurated president, Barack Obama. Noden will address ways that KEC can continue to expand its influ-

ence in achieving environmental goals in the city of Kent and in nearby areas by engaging new participants and reenergizing long-time members.

At a planning session in December, the KEC board developed several task forces to work toward engaging more

riety of delectable edibles are available to savor.

The Presbyterian Church has agreed to allow its nursery to be available for small children who come with their parents to attend the meeting. It is anticipated that supervision

will be available, but that has yet to be confirmed. If you think you will need to have child care available so you can attend the meeting, please call Ann at 330-673-9124 in the morning, or contact her through kentenvironment.org, the KEC Web site.

Be sure to mark the date on your calendar to learn how you can have a positive impact on the environment in Kent and surrounding areas. Don't hesitate to offer your ideas on how KEC can broaden

its environmental influence.

**Kent Environmental Council Annual Meeting
and Potluck Dinner**

Monday, February 16, 2009
Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall
1456 E. Summit Street, Kent

6 p.m. - Potluck Dinner
6:45 p.m. - Business Meeting
7 p.m. - Program

Speaker:
Kirk Noden, Executive Director
Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative

Topic:
How KEC can continue to expand its influence in
achieving environmental goals in Kent and beyond

residents in local environmental action.

The business meeting will include the election of a secretary for a two-year term. David Ewbank has consented to have his name placed in nomination. The diligent service of Debrah Butler for the past two years in this role is gratefully acknowledged. A treasurer's report and an update on the creation of funds at the Portage Foundation will be presented.

For the potluck dinner, please bring a dish to share—main course, side or dessert. Typically, a wide va-

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KEC 'Legacy of Learning' Fund Now Accepting Tax-Deductible Contributions

The board of the Kent Environmental Council is pleased to announce that a portion of the funds generously left to KEC by John and Betty Mitchell have been used to seed two funds at the Portage Foundation.

Some of you may recall that a portion of the Mitchell bequest was used last year to fund four educational projects in the city of Kent and in Portage County.

Four grants were made to fund projects with diverse educational goals. The Portage Park District purchased resource material used in their educational programming throughout the county. Two teachers at Stanton Middle School in Kent established an after-school environmental club and purchased the items they needed to start a worm farm. The worm farm helps the students learn about how worms recycle discarded vegetable material into "black gold" to be used as a soil amendment to increase soil productivity in a sustainable way.

The Master Gardeners at the Ohio State University Extension Service created an educational sign to be installed at Chestnut Hills Park in Ravenna, which happens to be the eastern end of The Portage hike-and-bike trail and at the site of a community-built playground. The sign is a planting guide to the rain garden that will be established at the park after drainage issues have been settled.

The fourth grant was made to purchase hand-held water-quality monitoring equipment used by the Environmental Science class (now in

its second year) at Kent Roosevelt High School.

In order to build upon the Mitchells' legacy, the remaining dollars from the bequest were used to establish two funds at the Portage Foundation. An endowment fund will be invested and eventually grow in a sustainable way after the economy recovers. This endowment will be used to fund projects farther in the future. The money in a Legacy of Learning fund will be spent on environmental-education projects on a year-to-year basis.

Because these two funds have been established at the Portage Foundation, they will be managed there with other community funds. All contributions to either fund will be tax deductible because the Portage Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 organization. Because the Kent Environmental Council's bylaws allow the organization to take stands on political issues (but not candidates), KEC is a 501 (c) 4 organization, which prohibits it from receiving tax-deductible contributions

Contributions of any amount will be most welcome. Checks should be made payable to the Portage Foundation, with a notation on the memo line to read: *KEC Endowment Fund* or *KEC Legacy of Learning Fund*. The Portage Foundation's address is 138 E. Main Street, Kent, OH 44240.

Although the foundation's office is in Kent, projects are funded throughout the county. To learn more about these funded projects, go to www.kentenvironment.org, and click on the Legacy of Learning tab.

Climate Change Evident in Ohio

Ten Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and seven Western states have undertaken regional initiatives to establish cap-and-trade programs to cap global-warming emissions.

In the Midwest, six governors and one Canadian province signed onto the Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord. Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland chose to be an observer rather than a participant in this accord, said Amy Gomber, program director for Environment Ohio in Columbus.

The first mandatory American carbon-emissions market opened in September 2008, according to the National Audubon Society. Ten northeastern states joined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a system that will cap and then gradually cut the electricity sector's carbon emissions 10 percent from current levels by 2018. Fossil-fueled power plants of 25 megawatts or greater must limit their carbon output to 188 million tons in 2009.

Participating states auction carbon dioxide allowances to plants (each allowance permits its holder to emit one ton of the gas). Companies that buy more allowances than they need can sell their excess allowances on the carbon-emissions market. The inaugural auction netted \$38.5 million. States will use the proceeds to fund projects to improve energy efficiency and develop renewable technologies.

With a new administration in Washington, D.C., progress might be made on a national approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Science-based emission caps, applied to the entire economy with the right incentives and penalties should serve as the model for national action.

More than 80 percent of Ohio's electricity is generated from heavily polluting coal, producing lots of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and fly ash. You can help by using compact fluorescent light bulbs to cut electricity usage and asking Gov. Strickland to sign onto the Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord by going to www.EnvironmentOhio.org and clicking on the Global Warming link.

Upcoming Environmental Events

Feb. 13 - Presentation on "Climate Change: Not Just for Tree-Huggers"

Feb. 28 - Romping with Rover: A Healthy Hike

April 3 - Earth Watch Ohio's "Live Green, Give Green"

April 18 - Portage County Environmental Awards and Benefit Dinner

April 25 - "Who's Your Mama?" Environmental Film Fest and Earth Day Event

May 16 - Local RiverDay Events to Commemorate the Year of the River

For more information on these events, go to www.kentenvironment.org.

Prospects for Bike Trail in Kent Look Good

If you have not done so already, check out the recently dedicated segment of The Portage hike-and-bike trail that begins at the northeastern corner of the Crain Avenue bridge and proceeds outward past Towner's Woods park to Ravenna, with promised connections extending to the Pennsylvania state line and beyond.

The trail is great for bicycling, hiking, strolling or rolling in a wheelchair by those with limited mobility. The smooth asphalt paving and charming views of the river and other surroundings on this segment of the trail are truly delightful. If you are locked in with the winter doldrums, imagine what it will be like on a day in spring.

Starting near the Middlebury Road bridge (and ultimately connecting with Tallmadge trail developments along the Freedom Secondary rail right-of-way), the trail is accessible on the river's east side to a point below Kent's wastewater treatment plant. When the weather turns warmer, perhaps in middle or late March, a prefabricated bicycle-pedestrian bridge is ready for installation, with plans for the trail to continue on the west side of the river. A boardwalk has been constructed between the river and the Water Reclamation Facility and is accessible to bicycles and pedestrians. This trail segment was paid for through a grant from federal transportation-enhancement funds administered through the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Next comes the segment of the trail that is intended to extend through Fred Fuller Park, past the Stow Street bridge, past the Main Street bridge and then connect with the completed trail, beginning at the Crain Avenue bridge and extending northeastward.

Before the end of January, the Kent Parks and Recreation Department intends to submit an application to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for a grant (an estimated

\$150,000) from the Clean Ohio Trail Funds program toward the funding of this segment. The trail will run along the Cuyahoga River in areas below the 100-year floodplain and will have little impact on wetlands of less than one-tenth of an acre.

The proposed project is a 0.6 mile nonmotorized, multipurpose, off-road trail within Kent city limits. The trail would follow the Cuyahoga River in Fred Fuller Park. The project begins at the south end of Fred Fuller Park off of Middlebury Road and follows the old Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad spur toward the Cuyahoga River. The trail then follows the Cuyahoga River upstream through the park to Stow Street near the Redmond bridge that crosses the river to Kramer Fields.

The proposed asphalt trail will be 10 feet wide and is intended to accommodate hiking, biking, inline skating, cross-country skiing and wheelchair usage. The trail allows for the viewing of a variety of natural habitats, including woods and views of the Cuyahoga River. A trailhead will be developed in Fred Fuller Park at the south end of the project. The trail also will permit access to other Fred Fuller Park facilities, including playground equipment and picnic areas.

The trail will connect with an existing trail that extends roughly 1.4 miles along the river to the southwest border of Kent. At this point, the trail will link with the Freedom Secondary Trail that is being designed by Metroparks, Serving Summit County. The Freedom Secondary Trail will connect Kent with the cities of Tallmadge and Akron (downtown). The northern end of the trail at Stow Street will extend in the future toward downtown Kent, which is approximately one-half mile away.

KEC enthusiastically endorses the funding and completion of this segment of The Portage. It will enhance bicycle access to downtown Kent and beyond, while providing recreational, health-maintenance and alternative-transportation opportunities and prospects for economic development.

Work on Haymaker Adopt-a-Spot Continues

Throughout the years that KEC has maintained an Adopt-a-Spot on Haymaker Parkway, weeds have been difficult to manage. In a bit of frustration, KEC last year sought professional help. Landscape designer Helen Green of Burton, Ohio, looked at the plot and provided a year-round plan for dealing with the weeds and improving the garden.

The plan called for early spring physical weeding supplemented with later rounds of tightly focused chemical weeding (no broadcast spraying). She also recommended a schedule of mulching along with the installation of a fabric weed barrier. She made a number of specific plant recommendations with the goal of establishing a plot that was easier to maintain.

A wetter than normal spring made for a late start last year, but by summer the weeding and mulching was being done on a regular basis. About 12 yards of mulch—the most ever spread at the site—had been used by the end of the season. Green worked on the plot six or eight times—often by herself—to weed, spray, plant new plants and move others. By the end of the season, the plot looked better than it had in years. Some of the plants Green added or moved to better locations include Little Bluestem, Wild Blue Indigo, Gaura and Artemesias. She wants to meet with KEC before spring for some late-winter pruning that would include removing some of the dead branches from the crabapple and oak trees, cutting back the smoke trees, and trimming the juniper trees.

Thanks so much to Green for her expertise, her many volunteer hours and the plants she donated from her own garden. She worked well with a crew of volunteers, and she factored in KEC's limited budget in all of her recommendations. To volunteer for maintenance work at KEC's Haymaker plot, contact Bob Wilson at rcwilsonii@juno.com.

ATTENTION KEC MEMBERS!!

We are in the process of transitioning our newsletter delivery mode from paper/postal mail to electronic delivery as much as possible. Please be assured that if you do not want to receive your KEC newsletter electronically, we will continue to send your copy by mail. By being on our electronic mailing list, you also can receive KEC and other environmental news and announcements by e-mail.

To sign up for electronic newsletter delivery and e-mail announcements and news, **send your e-mail address to audck@neo.rr.com**. If we don't hear from you by **March 31**, we will assume that you prefer postal delivery of your newsletter and that you do not want to receive news and announcements between newsletter publications. For each electronically delivered newsletter, you will receive an e-mail message containing a link directly to the newsletter as it appears on the KEC Web site. While you are there, be sure to check out other information on the site.



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