



Kent Environmental Council

Winter 2010

KEC Kicks Off 40th Year with Annual Potluck Dinner, Election of Officers, Program on Local Food Projects

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 local food production and buying goods directly from farmers.

The event on February 22 kicks off at 6:30 p.m. with a potluck dinner followed by a short business meeting (including a treasurer's report and the election of officers) at 7:15 p.m. and the guest speakers at 7:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall of the Kent Presbyterian Church, 1456 Summit Street in Kent.

KEC member Lynn Gregor will give a presentation about her discussions with the Kent City Schools to start a garden at Holden Elementary School in Kent. She is working with a group of young families with an interest in environmental concerns at the local level and want to involve their children in a school-yard gardens project.

Growing food teaches and reinforces in young children a host of skills across the curriculum: science, math, nutrition, project planning and project completion, language and communication skills, and cooperation with others.

Much attention has been focused recently on issues of child nutrition and obesity, which can be addressed by having children grow their own food. The hands-on approach increases the children's interest in eating fresh fruits

and vegetables. The experience also provides exercise and hones critical-thinking skills. The KEC board has agreed to provide some financial support to help get the project at Holden Elementary School started.

KEC is fortunate to have Gregor

is open from June to the end of October. Many KEC members have been spotted shopping at the Farmers Market on Saturday mornings, and KEC has noted the event's growth over the last several years.

The Market provides a way for farmers to sell directly to the customer, answer questions about how plants are grown, and give customers insight into best practices in growing food sustainably. The variety of produce available in the height of the growing season is truly incredible. Seefeldt will share with those present at the annual meeting a brief history of the market, how it has grown as interest in local food production has increased with much attention in the national media on farmers markets and the nutritional value of locally

grown food. Seefeldt also will note that buying locally reduces the carbon foot-

See DINNER, p. 4.

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

Monday, February 22, 2010
Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall
1456 E. Summit Street, Kent

6:30 p.m. - Potluck Dinner
7:15 p.m. - Business Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Program

Speakers:

Lynn Gregor - Project Coordinator, School-Yard Gardens
Fritz Seefeldt - Manager, Haymaker Farmers Market

Topics:

Gardening and School Children
Advantages of Locally Grown Produce

working on this project. Gregor worked for eight years at the Ohio State University Extension Service in Cuyahoga County, where she established community gardens. She and her husband, David Hassler, produced the book, *A Place to Grow: Voices and Images of Urban Gardeners*, which contains stories and photographs of people working in their community gardens and how this activity enriched their lives and the vitality of their neighborhoods.

Also presenting during the program will be Fritz Seefeldt, manager of the Haymaker Farmers Market, which

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KEC Nominating Committee Announces Slate of Officer Nominees for 2010-2011

The Nominating Committee of the KEC Executive Board (Nancy Adams, Deb Butler, Jeff Ingram and Harold Walker) has announced its slate of proposed officers to lead KEC in its 40th year. Here is a brief introduction to each candidate:

- **Chairperson, Charles Frederick**, teaches landscape architecture and site-development courses at the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Kent State University. He is in private practice with a focus on environmental planning and design. Charles was on the city of Kent Environmental Commission (now the Sustainability Commission) for seven years and served as chairperson for three years. He is an enthusiastic pedestrian and appreciates life at three miles per hour. He and his family live in Kent.
- **Vice Chairperson, Craig Lucas**, is an artist, now retired from teaching art at KSU. He has achieved regional and national recognition for

his painting, including exhibiting 11 times at the May Show at the Cleveland Museum of Art and receiving the Painting Award in 1990. He recently displayed his current work with the Cleveland Arts Prize Collaborative. Craig's involvement with KEC began when the Cuyahoga River was rerouted around the historic dam in downtown Kent. He lives and gardens in Kent.

- **Treasurer, Dick Lewis**, is a long-time member of KEC and agreed to become more active as treasurer for the organization. He and his wife Jan have lived in Kent since 1967, when he accepted a job teaching geography at KSU. He retired in 1995. Originally from upstate New York, he and his family take annual trips to the heart of Adirondack Park, where his environmental sensibilities were nurtured. His concern for the built environment, particularly issues involving transportation and making cities more pedestrian friendly, developed in the years he walked from his home to work.

Demand Up, Funding Down for Public Transit

The Ohio Environmental Council reports that despite growing demand for public transportation, declining sales tax revenue is forcing transit agencies in Cleveland, Akron and other cities to slash service and raise fares.

In response to the situation, a statewide coalition is forming to reinvestigate funding. For more information, go to www.policymattersohio.org/SaveTransitNow.htm. The



Ohio Environmental Council, Green City/Blue Lake (Eco-City Cleveland)

and other groups have joined the coalition.

Since 2001, funding for public transit in Ohio has been reduced by 75%. And while the typical state in the nation provides 23% of the funding needed for transit systems, Ohio provides less than 3%.

The Save Transit Now coalition is advocating the following:

- Overturning the state's constitutional prohibition against using gas tax revenues and motor vehicle fees for nonhighway purposes, thereby making available more revenue for public transit
- Using flexible transportation funding sources currently available in Ohio, such as gas taxes collected from owners of off-road vehicles and farming and landscaping equipment and revenue from the sale of vanity license plates, to fund public transit
- Where possible, urging the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study and other metropolitan planning bodies to take advantage of flexible federal highway funds and use them for public transit

KEC Dues Payable at Annual Meeting

Annual dues for 2010 are payable at the annual meeting on February 22. If you are unable to attend, please send your dues to P.O. Box 395, Kent, OH 44240.

Dues to KEC are not tax deductible because the group is incorporated as a 501c(4) organization, which allows for advocacy in the political process, although we do not endorse individual candidates as an organization.

Contributions to KEC's Legacy for Learning Fund are fully tax deductible. Please consider making a separate donation to that fund (see letter page 3). Membership checks need to be made payable to KEC or Kent Environmental Council and contributions to the Legacy for Learning Fund to the Portage Foundation, with Legacy for Learning Working Fund or Endowment Fund on the memo line.

Upcoming Environmental Events

Feb. 16 - "What's On Your Plate", Akron Public Library, first in the film series "Don't Buy Food from Strangers"; sponsor: Countryside Conservancy; information: 330-657-2355.

April 9 - EcoWatch Ohio Green Gala fund-raiser in Cleveland; speaker: Robert F. Kennedy Jr.; tickets \$75; for information and reservations: 216-387-1609

April 10 - Environmental Dinner sponsored by the Portage Parks Foundation

April 24 - "Who's Your Mama" Environmental Film Fest and Street Fair, Kent Stage; information: Jeff Ingram at jingram3@neo.rr.com

May 15 - RiverDay; information: Edith Chase at 330-673-1193

July 3 - Kent Heritage Festival

October - KEC 40th Anniversary Dinner; information: Walter and Nancy Adams at 330-673-6548 or Caroline Arnold at 330-678-6218 or csarnold@neo.rr.com; date to be announced



Live Green . . .
Recycle!

Plans to Restore Plum Creek Under Way

Plans to restore Plum Creek to a free-flowing stream this year are well under way, said Cori Finney, from the city of Kent Engineering Department. All of the paperwork was due to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency by January 28 as well as the paperwork for the federal stimulus funds (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) being used for this project. If all goes well, Finney hopes that work will start this spring.

Kent City Council members voted last fall to approve plans to remove the dam, restore the stream to a more natural condition and replace the culvert. Restoration of the stream will include the addition of walking paths and the retention of a smaller pond deep enough to prohibit algae growth. A small amphitheater, seating about 30 people, will be built with the dam's foundation sandstones.

Recent inspections had shown that both the culvert under Mogadore

Road and the dam needed major repairs. Because of the federal stimulus bill, the city could secure funding to restore habitat and fish passage in Plum Creek and provide the maximum benefit at the least cost to the city and its residents.

Plum Creek is a tributary to the Cuyahoga River, so the city of Kent deserves credit for its stewardship of this American Heritage River. Plum Creek Reservoir, adjacent to Plum Creek Park, was last dredged in 1978. The reservoir has needed another dredging since the 1990s, but no action has been taken. The reservoir is formed by the city-owned Filtration Plant dam, built in 1887. The dam no longer serves its original purpose. The culvert on Mogadore Road, just downstream from the dam's spillway, is inspected yearly and has been found to be in serious condition. By removing the dam and all of the sediment behind it, Plum Creek will become a free-flowing stream.

Snow Puzzles at Kent Bog Explained

On January 21, 2010, the following memo was sent to all members of Friends of the Kent Bog, an interest group of more than 600 members affiliated with the Kent Environmental Council, about snow puzzles at the bog. The memo stated: "Sunlight on snow creates picturesque panoramas but also peculiar pits. Can you explain how? Look closely at the dead weeds at the entrance. One with a stem no bigger than 1/8 inch in diameter may be surrounded by a hollow in the snow four or five inches in diameter and perfectly round. Some weeds that bend over have odd shapes hollowed out where their tops touch the snow. Send in your explanation, and we will publish the ones that seem to make the most sense."

Here are the results of the seven people who responded. Most people had the right idea about the weed stem. Julie Swango was first to respond, saying that energy from sunlight is absorbed by the weed stem,

then radiated out in all directions to make the round pit in the surrounding snow. John Kerstetter, Caroline Arnold, Dick Abbot and Lisa Regula Meyer had similar explanations; however, Meyer added that living cells also create heat. So do microbes living in or on the plant. Kerstetter and Arnold attributed the irregular snow pits at the tips of bent-over stems to the wind or to birds harvesting weed seeds.

By now the deep snow has melted or been washed away by rain, but bright sunny days can create additional nature puzzles. Dress for the weather and come out to the bog and take a look. Snap a picture or write a description of your "stumper," and send it to Gordon Vars at GVarsNACC@sbcglobal.net.

Bog trail guides for winter 2009-2010 are still available in the kiosk at Kent's state nature preserve. Pick one up, and enjoy a leisurely stroll around the half-mile boardwalk.

See *BOG*, p. 4.

Dear Friends of KEC:

The Kent Environmental Council was founded 40 years ago this year as a positive local response to the degradation of our environment, particularly the appalling condition of the Cuyahoga River, which had caught fire in Cleveland.

In 1970, KEC members joined in cleaning up the Cuyahoga River and providing public access where it courses through downtown Kent. The following year, KEC started a recycling program both to reduce the waste stream and fund the river cleanup.

Fast forward to 2010. We now have a network of local hike-and-bike trails, new county parks, countywide recycling, and a clean, freely flowing Cuyahoga River where blue herons can be seen nailing their lunch in the water, and people flock to Heritage Park in downtown Kent, with the river rerouted around the historic Kent dam while preserving the dam as an historic structure. KEC as an organization and its members were involved at many levels during the endless meetings, public hearings and public discussions necessary to achieve these outcomes.

In 2006, KEC members John and Betty Mitchell generously remembered KEC in a bequest that KEC, with the Portage Foundation, has made into a Legacy for Learning Fund that has supported educational materials for the Portage Park District, a worm-farm project for students at Stanton Middle School, water monitoring devices for the environmental science class at Kent Roosevelt High School and a number of other student environmental projects.

In honor of KEC's 40th year, the board has voted to launch a fund-raising campaign to replenish the Legacy for Learning Fund to continue this small local grant program and help to carry a strong environmental ethic into the future. We invite our friends and supporters to consider a contribution of any amount to this fund.

Checks may be made out to "Portage Foundation" with a notation for "Legacy for Learning" in the memo line (to the endowment fund or the working fund). A preaddressed envelope is provided for your convenience. Thank for your support—past, present and future.

BOG

Continued from p. 3

In any season, there is something interesting to see.

The Tom S. Cooperrider Kent Bog State Nature Preserve is in south Kent on Meloy Road, just west of S.R. 43. For further information, contact Gordon Vars at 330-677-5008 or GVarsNACC@sbcglobal.net.

DINNER

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print because produce grown in other parts of the country does not have to be shipped to the local area. He then will give an update on plans for the 2010 market season, including a proposed mural on the overpass near the market to call attention to the site during the off-season.

Please plan on attending KEC's annual dinner and think ahead to the return of spring, gardens, and the Haymaker Farmers Market.

KEC Annual Meeting Notice — Baby-Sitting Available

The Presbyterian Church is making its nursery for children of KEC Annual Meeting attendees. If babysitting would be helpful, call Ann Ward at 330-285-0899 and leave a voice message.



**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 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.

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