

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Volunteers help remove invasive species at Summit Park

BLUE ASH

On April 16 at Summit Park in Blue Ash, ten student volunteers from Sycamore High School and Xavier University helped remove invasive plant species from two federally protected wetlands. Removing these types of plants from the site is part of a larger stream restoration project at the park. This project is part of the multi-year Summit Park development plan.

Removing invasive plant species from the landscape is important because they displace native plants by using essential resources the native plants need to survive. Ohio River Foundation is working with the City of Blue Ash to organize volunteer days like this one to involve the public as much as possible in the project's success.

Eliminating an invasive species from an area is no small task. Corey Boothe, a City of Blue Ash Parks and Grounds Specialist, says he "...enjoy (s) working with volunteers because you can cover a big area all at once."

Ella Bjurman, a freshman communication studies major at Xavier University, volunteered with two of her three project partners to learn more about the environment in preparation for their project to raise community awareness in Cincinnati to protect the Ohio River. She says that the recent focus on sustainability on the XU campus inspired them to learn about improving the Ohio River for their project. Although they are young, Ella believes they need to "...think about it like grandparents - what do you want



SHARE/RICH COGEN

Sycamore HS and Xavier U. students and ORF staff posing in front of a pile of invasive plants they removed. From left, front row, Sarah Meadows, Ella Bjurman, Chase Bodkin, Max Chun; back row, Dominic Grisby, Fernando Salinas, Evin James, Julia You, Maggie Bush, Brielle Robbins, Charles Supp, Jacob Truitt.

the next generation to do? Envision what you want the river to look like 70 years from now." Their group is considering slogans like "dreams drive actions", and "restore the Queen City's gem".

The main purpose of the project is to restore a tributary of Sycamore Creek. A result of the project will be that stormwater runoff will be collected from 60 acres of redeveloped onsite park facilities for natural treatment. Two wetlands will be restored from non-native invasive to native wetland plants, and up to 350 species of grasses and trees will be planted on 4 acres of the project site.

Trails and foot bridges over the stream will be installed so that the

estimated 750,000 annual park visitors can enjoy and learn about the newly restored waterway. Public workshops and other outreach activities will be led by Ohio River Foundation, including involving students from the Sycamore School District in the restoration project.

This restoration project is made possible, in part, by support from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. Ohio River Foundation helped secure funding for the City of Blue Ash by obtaining a Clean Water Act section 319 grant from the Ohio EPA. In addition to the public outreach activities, Ohio River Foundation will help manage the project and be involved in different restoration activ-

ities. Envirotech, Inc. will be the primary contractor leading the restoration work.

"This project continues Ohio River Foundation's string of restoration project wins on behalf of client communities in Ohio and Kentucky. These restoration projects have resulted in the reconnection of more than 300 miles of rivers. These projects continue our mission of not just environmental education and advocacy, but also restoring and protecting natural resources to benefit current and future generations. We're proud that our vigilance and success is benefiting the environment, wildlife, and communities," commented Rich Cogen, Executive Director, Ohio River Foundation.

Information: ohioriverfdn.org or blueash.com/departments/parks_and_recreation/submit_park_index.php

Rich Cogen, Ohio River Foundation