



Fairview community collaboration leads to Coe Creek restoration project

Beth Mlady, Special to the Sun News By Beth Mlady, Special to the Sun News

Email the author

on October 23, 2014 at 5:30 PM, updated October 23, 2014 at 6:06 PM

FAIRVIEW PARK, Ohio – As it flows through Fairview Park, there is more happening in Coe Creek than one might imagine.

What can't be seen are the ongoing efforts of several project partners working to restore the waterway to its most productive and healthy state.

The Coe Creek Streambank Restoration Project, fully financed by an **Ohio EPA Surface Water Improvement Fund** grant, resulted from collaboration between the city, Cuyahoga County Soil and Water District, **Rocky River Watershed Council**, Fairview Park Green Team and the 13-member Fairview High School environmental science class "Stream Team."



Rocky River Watershed Coordinator Jared Bartley explains to Fairview residents how plans are in place to restore Coe Creek to a healthier state.

Beth Mlady, Special to Sun News

"This project began as an educational exercise," said Matt Hrubey, grant writer, **Green Team** member and Fairview Park's development administrator. "I asked what the city can do generally to improve the ecosystem and the environment here. From the city's perspective, it's really about balancing and maintaining a natural environment that is healthy and provides functional recreational space."

During Rocky River Watershed Council's Oct. 22 quarterly meeting at Bain Park, Coe Creek project participants provided an update. The project's aim is to repair 170 feet of streambank erosion, reconnect 125 feet of floodplain to enhance water storage and also to plant 200 native trees and shrubs to broaden green areas bordering the creek. Coe Creek begins in North Olmsted and eventually drains into the Rocky River.

"We want to create better floodplain access for Coe Creek," explained Jared Bartley, Rocky River Watershed coordinator. "That way the energy concentrated in the channel can dissipate a little more during high water events. We'll widen the area of the streamside forest ... because we get a lot of benefits from that."

Fairview High School environmental science teacher Colleen Sliwinski and her students conducted water chemistry and streambank erosion tests. In their search for living things in the creek, they collected macroinvertebrates, mainly leeches.

"The creek can sustain life obviously," Sliwinski told the audience. "But we're seeing mostly pollution tolerant species. The pH level is a little higher than it should be, and the species we found are not as much as we'd expect to see in a healthy creek."

The Ohio EPA considers the Coe Creek initiative to be a demonstration project, with required educational components. It will be used as an example for future watershed improvements. High school graphic design and art students will make interpretive signs about the project, which will be erected at Bain Park in the spring.

"When people come to visit the park, they can see that this is the Coe Creek Restoration Project and this is how and why it was done," Sliwinski explained. "It will give any visitor a brief but visual overview of the project."

For more information, go to **MyRockyRiver.org** or contact Jared Bartley at 216-524-6580, ext. 14.

© 2015 cleveland.com. All rights reserved.



Fairview High School teacher Colleen Sliwinski stands alongside environmental science students who are participating in the Coe Creek restoration project.

Beth Mlady, Special to Sun News