West Milton Dam Removal Begins Stillwater River Restoration!

After 4 years of permit applications, agency reviews, and delays, this complex project began with deconstruction of the dam on October 27. Removal now enables West Milton to move forward, avoiding $250K in dam repair costs and any potential liability for recreation injuries associated with the dam. With the artificial lake environment upstream of the dam now gone, the river will once again flow freely through a natural river habitat.

ORF Staff Engage in Mussel Rescue as Dam is Removed

More than 20 people from several agencies and project leader Stantec, Inc. were involved in rescuing freshwater mussels from areas that were exposed as the water level dropped in the 1.5 mile stretch behind the dam. ORF’s team of 10 workers saved several hundred animals, including federally endangered Snuffbox freshwater mussels.

WEEKLY UPDATES (including photos and videos) can be viewed at www.ohioriverfdn.org
Habitat restoration project development is an unmet need in the Ohio River Watershed. Identifying situations where public health risks exist in connection with ecosystem health enables ORF to identify projects that can meet the needs of stakeholders. As was the case with the West Milton Dam removal, the city wanted to remove the liability associated with recreation and future repair costs. We were able to successfully identify and secure 100% of the funding for removal and the associated river restoration work. Thus, we met the needs of the city and the many agencies and citizens who sought to return the river to its natural condition.

Importantly, after removal of the West Milton dam, restoration work has now begun in earnest. Riffles, deep pools, and toe wood structures are being constructed to create and stabilize habitats to encourage the establishment of a vibrant river fishery. A riffle is a shallow and coarse-bedded (rocks and large stones) length of stream over which the water flows at higher turbulence than a pool. A Toe Wood Structure is comprised of native woody material placed into a submerged undercut bank to replicate a natural streambank.

Aquatic species formerly upstream and downstream of the dam and impoundment will, after 100 years, be able to once again colonize this stretch of river.

The West Milton Dam Removal and Stillwater River Restoration project illustrates a watershed event for ORF where we have proven our ability to facilitate complex projects and engage the public and natural resource agencies in activities to further their respective goals. It is through this approach that we will continue to be successful in the area of resource conservation and restoration.

From the river,
Rich
More students than ever participated in River Explorer this year, with 4,039 students participating from 43 schools as junior scientists for a day. Demand from teachers to have a fall River Explorer field trip was so high that by July we had sold out capacity for the fall trip season. To meet this growing program demand we need to expand our capacity by offering more than one trip per day at different sites. **We need additional funding to meet this demand.**

If you, or your company, are interested in helping offer River Explorer to more students contact us at:

513-460-3365
or
orf@ohioriverfdn.org.

Thank you to our major funders: Toyota Motors Engineering and Manufacturing, Ashland, Inc., The Jergens Foundation, Sunny D Beverages Company, and The Charles Dater Foundation.

**Schools participating in 2014:**

Beechwood HS  
Bright Elem  
Villa Madonna Academy  
Our Lady of Victory  
St Michael  
Highlands HS  
CPS-Cheviot Elem  
St Gabriel  
Nativity School  
Lakota East HS Mercy HS  
Locust Corner Elem  
Bishop Brossart  
Kings JH  
Central Elem  
St Peter in Chains  
Glen Este MS  
EH Greene  
St John the Baptist  
All Saints  
CPS-Gamble Montessori HS  
Princeton HS  
St Henry  
Bethel Tate HS  
Diamond Oaks Mason MS  
St Joseph  
St Peter in Chains  
St James  
New Richmond  
Cardinal Pacelli  
Madeira HS  
St Antoninus  
Monroe Elem  
Batavia MS  
Brookwood Elem  
Nagel MS  
Monroe Elem  
Sixth District Elem  
Beechgrove Elem  
Glen Este MS  
Clermont Northeastern MS  
New Richmond Elem  
Boone County HS  
The Good Shepherd Montessori
In just three weeks, the Kenton County Youth Conservation Team, comprised of Stella Childress (Cooper HS), Natalie Woodward (Cooper HS), Crystal Nichols (S. Dearborn HS), Matt Harris (Beechwood HS), Jared Neiser (Campbell Cnty. HS), Cooper Hayes (Mariemont HS), successfully completed 14 habitat conservation projects on Kenton County Conservation District property at the Morning View Heritage Area (KY).

Throughout the property, invasive plants crowd out native trees and other plants. The removal of these aggressive non-native plants allows sunlight to reach the forest floor so young native trees can grow. The YCT removed several hundred invasive Japanese honeysuckle, invasive grapevines, hemlock, multiflora rose, garlic mustard, and autumn olive, all covering about 12,000 square feet.

The YCT also:

- Planted 23 endangered Shorts Goldenrod (Solidago shortii) plants
- Installed rain gauge and flags for Shorts Goldenrod monitoring project
- Transported 65 gallons of water for new plants
- Installed two 21’x21’ study plots in invasive removal sites
- Removed 900 lbs. of trash and debris

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To enrich the YCT experience, one day per week students worked with college professors to explore the connections between the work they were doing and watershed ecology.

At the UC Center for Field Studies, with professor emeritus Mike Miller, University of Cincinnati, they learned about watersheds and riparian zones, different soil types and qualities, how to use a compass and create a field study plot, and what affects rates of light absorption in water, nutrients in water, runoff, and absorption rates of different surfaces and soil types.

The students also took a trip to the Thomas More Field Station on the Ohio River to see professor Chris Lorentz, where they learned about types of pollution, mussel life cycle and ongoing mussel research, riparian trees on an interpretive hike, went electrofishing, and got to participate in a Bluntnose Minnow study.

Thanks to everyone who made the 2014 Youth Conservation Team program a resounding success!! Program Funding and Support Provided By: Ashland, Inc., University of Cincinnati – Center for Biological Field Studies, Thomas More College – Center for Ohio River Research and Education.
New Trustees Join Ohio River Foundation Board in 2014

Ohio River Foundation (ORF) is pleased to announce that Amy Lutmerding Tressler and Mary Alice Koch were elected to the non-profit’s Board of Trustees in 2014.

Amy is Guest Experience Educator at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, and a past Director of Glen Helen Outdoor Education Center in Yellow Spring’s, OH. She also managed numerous educational programs in Hilton Head Island, SC. Her background in education, conservation, and leadership will be a great asset to ORF as programming expands into Central Ohio.

Mary Alice Koch is ORF’s newest trustee. She is a PNC Bank Foundation Administrator for the Charitable and Endowment Services Division. She provides support to private and family foundation trustees in their grant making endeavors, and works closely with nonprofit organizations within the Greater Cincinnati area in fundraising efforts.

Rich Cogen, Executive Director of Ohio River Foundation commented, “We’re excited to welcome both Amy and Mary Alice to the ORF team. They both bring a wealth of experience as we look to grow and expand the foundation’s programs.”

Welcome Amy and Mary Alice!

MillerCoors Helps ORF on Great Miami River Restoration

On the warm afternoon of Wednesday, September 24th, about twenty-five employees from MillerCoors Trenton Brewery came out to Rentschler Forest MetroPark ready for some hard work. The eager volunteers partnered with the Ohio River Foundation to aid Butler County Metroparks with important ecological restoration along the Great Miami River. The twenty-seven volunteers planted a large butterfly garden using native plant species, watered the new plants with buckets of water from the river, and cleared out a large stand of invasive honeysuckle bushes along the riverbank.

The hardworking MillerCoors volunteers collaborate annually with ORF. “Water is not just the main ingredient in our quality beers – clean water is vital for Butler County and the folks who live here,” shares Denise Quinn, MillerCoors Trenton Brewery plant manager. “We enjoyed the opportunity to partner with Ohio River Foundation to remove harmful, invasive plant species from the riverbank and plant a garden to attract native butterflies.”
On the bright morning of Tuesday, September 30th, twenty employees from Sunny Delight Beverages Company manually chopped and hauled away huge limbs of invasive honeysuckle from a drainage ditch along Reed Hartman Highway and helped plant a variety of oak trees.

The project was facilitated by ORF. The Blue Ash Parks Maintenance department was on hand to provide tools and guidance for the volunteers. “The employees at the Sunny Delight Beverages Co. thoroughly enjoyed getting out on a beautiful fall day to help clean up a little corner of Blue Ash,” remarked Debbie Lemmink, of Sunny Delight.

On October 20th, our first large-scale Kentucky project began with demolition of Apple Lane where it crossed Beaver Creek near State Route 62. The Beaver Creek Watershed is a sub-watershed of the Licking River and prized for its rich diversity of aquatic species. This project will entirely remove the road and install a 200-foot long bridge over the creek. Ohio River Foundation facilitated this project by assisting Harrison County in procuring the necessary grant funds.

Support our water quality protection work with an on-line donation at www.ohioriverfdn.org
Banklick Creek Cleanup – Saturday, October 11
On Saturday, October 11, staff from Ohio River Foundation and Kenton County Parks led a cleanup of Banklick Creek at Pioneer Park in Covington, KY. A Brownie troop and students from Scotts High School Kiwanis and Highlands High School all pitched in to remove several hundred pounds of trash from the creek.

Pioneer Park is a frequently used site for our popular River Explorer education program. It’s nice to give back to the creek that helps us educate hundreds of students every year with a memorable and inspiring experience.