

Summary of Presented Projects:  
Central Ohio Greenway & Trail Forum  
November 3, 2005  
North Bank Park

**Holmes County Trail**

Joan Simcak- Rails to Trails Conservancy & Bishop David Kline

The Holmes County Trail is completed and open from Fredericksburg to Millersburg (12 miles). One lane of the trail is paved with asphalt for biking, roller-blading, walking, running, and wheelchairs, while the other lane is paved with "chip and seal" for horse-drawn vehicles (Amish buggy) and horseback riding. <http://www.holmestrail.org/trail.html>

**Madison County Trail: "The last 1,800 feet".**

Bill Reisenweaver- Past Ohio to Erie Trail Board Member

Three years of perseverance- personal contact, face to face meetings, trips to Cincinnati, to get five property owners to lease, donate, or sell the right of way for 1,800 feet of the Ohio to Erie trail in Madison County and inspiring story of patience and dedication. <http://www.ohioerietrail.org/>

**Parade of Projects**

Facilitated by Steve Studenmund- Metro Parks

**Obstacles / Challenges:**

1. Funding
  - a. Continuation / Reauthorization of Clean Ohio
  - b. Land & Water Conservation Fund at Risk
  - c. Local match for federal / state grants
  - d. ODOT grants difficult
2. Public Buy-In. Landowner Opposition / Reluctance: fear of unknown (pre-trail) crime etc.
3. Patience; tracking down landowners and connecting parcels and communities.
4. Built out urban area- many property owners, past encroachment to the creek- takes time and patience.
5. Time & Resources- need community volunteers, too many projects, too few staff.
6. Expertise assistance needed to help build trails
7. Politicians Support
8. Construction and Design Issues- e.g. bridges
9. Coordination among many different departments, organizations.
10. Railroad company cooperation (Camp Chase & Heritage)
11. At-grade road crossings
12. Plan Review – how to ask developers to build trails
13. Need more information about the Economic Impact of Trails & Trailheads
14. Trail access through high security areas e.g. airports
15. Maintaining safety patrol on trails
16. Linking trails east – west
17. Lack of public awareness to how lawmakers and laws affect greenway and trail development.

**Successes:**

1. Politicians Support
2. Private / Public Partnerships
3. State CIP and Clean Ohio Fund
4. Local relationships, personal contact, grassroots support
5. Park Planning & community surveys—trails and connections are consistently shown as #1 priority for communities.
6. Health Link – support from Health Care providers (hospitals etc..)
7. Getting trails built as development occurs (approved trail plan with map)
8. Local support – “Friends” groups
9. Funds received
10. Recreation provided for urban dwellers
11. Access to / increased awareness of waterways

**Summary of Parade of Projects by Ira Weiss****Knox County**

- They purchased land to Centerburg to connect to the Kokosing Gap trail and are working to acquire a route from Mount Vernon to Frederickstown.
- They now have a Knox County Water Trail (more later)

**Licking County**

- They are using land trusts and public/private partnerships
- They are deciding where to put more trails in
- They work with Denison University

**Madison County**

- They have a Friends of Madison County trail

**Franklin County****City of Dublin**

- They have 60 miles of dedicated bike paths
- They did a parks and recreation study
- During planning they faced landowner fears

**Washington Township**

- Heritage Trail – Hilliard toward Plain City and into Columbus
- Mentioned the problem dealing with railroads in acquiring right-of-way

**Upper Arlington**

- Landlocked, but would like to link up between Columbus, Grandview and Dublin

**Grandview Heights**

- Strongly supports bicycling, including bike races
- Looking at internal bikeways
- At crossroads of trails
- Sees problem of how to get to trails

**Grove City**

- Doing a Parks and Recreation master plan
- Working in neighborhoods
- Addressing developer issues – let them know where trails need to be and they will put them in
- Economic impact

**Gahanna**

- Doing a master plan

- Major corridors – Big Walnut and Rocky Fork
- Want to connect to New Albany and Whitehall
- Working with Jefferson Township
- Connect residents to parks
- Challenges – time and resources

**Friends of Alum Creek**

- Working with cities on Alum Creek watershed

**Whitehall**

- Big Walnut Creek owned by city and would do trail to Gahanna

**Franklin Soil and Water Conservancy District**

- Have EPA grant to buy buffers in Hellbranch area

**OSU**

- Bikeway study, including Olentangy bike trail will be on architects office web page
- Funding biggest challenge

**City of Columbus**

- Have a planner
- Too many projects
- Land acquisition and urban system
- Olentangy Trail nearly done
- How do you keep system under control
- Need to connect to suburban community

**Metro Parks**

- Olentangy, Darby, Heritage
- Alum Creek – Three Creeks Parks design to Livingston Avenue. Link to Sharon Woods. Blacklick Creek done – eight miles head to Pickerington Ponds has two pieces left
- Challenges – funding, time, landowners

**MORPC**

- Combined effort to include waterways with preservation first and trails second, building access

**Rails to Trails Conservancy**

- Field office is becoming regional and will include Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky and Illinois in addition to Ohio
- Problem – funding

**Ohio to Erie Trail**

- Started in 1991
- 14 years later, closing gaps in trail.
- Over half paved, right of way  $\frac{3}{4}$  purchased
- Railroads extremely difficult to deal with
- Next battle – trails on active rail lines
- Minnesota is the leader in trails
- Finish by 2010 and then will be out of business

**Ohio Parks and Recreation**

- Making many different kinds of connections

**ODOT**

- Money since 1984
- Some there think too much money and attention into trails
- Funds outside metro areas, e.g. London, Millersburg, Urbana
- 30 new projects
- Can match ODNR funds

## **ODNR**

- Funding Sources: Natureworks, Capital Improvement Budget, Clean Ohio Fund
- Capital Improvement budget earmarks – work with state reps and senators (**an untapped resource**) e.g., Triangle Trail
- Clean Ohio Trails - \$18M, 130 miles new trail
- Challenges – reauthorization of Clean Ohio Program, 4<sup>th</sup> round of funding another \$6M

## **Ohio League of Conservation Voters**

- Received Gund Foundation grant for focus groups

## **Fairfield County:**

- Successfully working with Lancaster politicians and Fairfield Medical Center and Amanda Council and support from Amanda football coach
- Read the mission from our Web site
- Thanked ODNR and MORPC for their support in Lancaster and Diley Road trail
- Discussed support from the Vandervoorts and Terre's role as City Attorney doing trail
- Mentioned challenges of funding and reluctant landowners
- Mentioned has maps and handouts available

**Working Lunch: discuss challenges and strategize solutions and report back to the group.**

### **Challenge #1: Funding**

Need for new innovative funding (new creative sources- taxes)  
Mitigation opportunities

### **Challenge#2: Public Buy-In**

Use examples of best practices.

Utilize focus groups and polling to demonstrate the need / desire for trails (objective data).

Form community groups ("Friends of the Trail") with articulate leader.

Bring in a trail opposer-turned-supporter after the trail was built to talk to the community.

Educate the public about the personal benefits of trail development

Use pressure from the outside to make connections (joining cities, counties etc.)

Get a government official demonstrating a leadership role in trail development.

### **Challenge#3: Connectivity**

Promote commuter bicycling and advocacy groups and efforts.

### **Challenge #5: Time & Resources: need community volunteers**

Need to change the community culture (volunteerism)

Marketing of Trails and Greenways to elevate their importance and increase interest

### **Challenge #8: Design Issues: Bridges and Erosion & Sediment Control**

Design bridges to have a wider span so that more of the corridor is preserved.

Put erosion and sediment control as a priority up front in the bid to avoid erosion and sedimentation to the stream.

Poor workmanship is unacceptable (cracks etc.), may be due to designed short cuts to save money. ODOT has guidance available online at [www.dot.state.oh.us/local](http://www.dot.state.oh.us/local) .

### **Challenge #11: At-grade Road Crossings**

Use innovative traffic calming measures vs. culverts, tunnels, bridges: e.g. inlaid pavers, landscaping, lighting, banners (North Bank Park example across Spring & Long Streets)

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### **“How to build community support for greenways and trails”**

Michael Hooper –Westerville Department of Parks & Recreation.

The City of Westerville developed Pros2000 Plan: community involvement, target markets, through surveys they found trails and connections were key for the community. They needed to figure out a way to pay for development and maintenance of the greenway trails. Their City Manager saw the communities vision and spread that vision to City Council, City Council shared the vision with the developers and the developers shared the benefits to the buyers. The City has successfully tied in health issues and developed a FitQuest program to facilitate this (30,000 web hits): physical fitness test before then after exercising regime. Ammo they use for Trails: Economy: Health insurance costs are on a rise, need to manage own individual health and get fit. Tourism: Ohio to Erie Trail tie-in. Real Estate: increase of property values. For some resistant neighborhoods the City has offered to do the project short term and if in 10 years the community doesn't like it, then they will undo it (e.g. wetland creation) – never had to undo a project. All development plans go through the Planning & Development Dept. (they know the Pros2000 Plan) to the Parks & Recreation Dept for review: they get obligation from developers to implement the Pros2000 Plan in advance of plan approval. For the “fear of increased crime” argument, the City assures the community that by increasing use of the trails, there is more visibility and less crime. They have had success in partnerships: e.g. City of Columbus on the Alum Creek Greenway Trail.

### **Greenways & Trails Fundraising Session**

Moderated by Rhonda Border-Boose- Ohio Rails to Trails Conservancy

- **Mary Fitch- ODNR Clean Ohio (state \$) and Recreational Trail Fund (federal \$).** Clean Ohio requires 25% local match, State Bonds- Issue 1; funded for four rounds, Round 4 proposals due by Feb 1 2006. Can request up to \$500,000 and preference is given to building long trails that connect communities. Non-profit organizations and political subdivisions can apply. The RTF requires a 20% local match (in-kind services count). State, political subdivisions, non-profit orgs can apply. Eligible projects include: purchasing equipment, trail maintenance, buying corridor for trail development, building trails (including water trails), 30% of the funds are allocated towards motorized trails. Funding for this program will likely increase due to passage of “SAFETEA-LU”.  
[www.dnr.state.oh.us/grants.htm](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/grants.htm)
- **Bill Demora – OLCV Clean Ohio Reauthorization.** Clean Ohio looks good for round 4 to occur in 2006, reauthorization is more grim... if Issue 1 passes (Nov '05 election), then the bond capacity for the state is at its limit. If it fails, then in 2006, Jobs & Environment proposed for ballot to fund infrastructure and Clean Ohio. Also worries with TABOR estimated for 2006 ballot- if passed would greatly reduce state budget.

- **Bernice Cage – MORPC “SAFETEA-LU”**. The federal funds may be in jeopardy due to the recent hurricanes. SAFETEA-LU stands for Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users. Goals are to improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, improve efficiency in freight movement, increase intermodal connectivity, protect the environment, address future challenges. It is principally for transportation (point A to point B- no loops), to be considered for funding it has to be included in MORPC’s Regional Bikeway Plan and follow the ODOT Project Development Process. <http://transportation.morpc.org>

### **Kokosing Water Trail**

Doug McClarnan– Knox County Park District

The beauty of water trails is they are free- they were the first transportation corridors – used by Native Americans. ODNR program, Division of Watercraft is the lead. Need to provide public access to the waterway, provide a map, it has to be a navigatable waterway, information must be provided to trail users on low-impact ethics, needs to be managed/maintained by local agency / organization. Kokosing Water Trail runs from Mount Vernon (Knox County) to Twp Road 432 (Coshocton County). Paddle/Petal option, combine paddling down Kokosing River with bicycling on Kokosing Gap Trail. First step is to organize the community, know the leaders... hone in on a threat to influence a reaction.

### **Raccoon Creek Greenway**

Don Wiper - Licking County Land Trust

LLT is a group of volunteers and has been in formation for 16 years, they have 700 acres in easements or outright ownership. LLT studied the Raccoon Valley and recommended protection of the greenway corridor and of the aquifer. The Valley is 21 miles long and land uses include: forest, agriculture, and wetlands. Licking County developed a master plan and zoning to protect the Valley. Regarding trails in Licking County, the TJ Evans Fdn (Gib Reese) funded bikeways and trails in the County and Gib Reese knows how to work with railroad companies.

### **Rollout of COG, the Central Ohio Greenways’ United Identity.**

Kelly Kolar, Kolar Design & Design Team Members: Erin Miller, MORPC and Brad Westall, Columbus Recreation & Parks

The purpose is to develop a brand / an identity for collaboratively and collectively marketing greenway trails in Central Ohio. Designs for logo, signage, map and website were presented. Next steps for implementation include MORPC hosting the COG website to be launched soon and Columbus Recreation & Parks implementing a 1 mile section of signage to test the effectiveness of the system.

### **Next Steps:**

February 16th @ Cedar Ridge Lodge, Battelle Darby Metro Park (**NOTE change of date!**). Topic determined by group:

1. Guides for Zoning for Stream Setbacks and Land Acquisition.
2. Operations & Long-Term Maintenance / Security of Greenways & Trails.