



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Olentangy Parklands Revitalization Project

(Worthington, Ohio) – Changes are underway at the Olentangy Parklands in the City of Worthington that will benefit residents and improve the natural setting of the bikeway and park along the river. The Olentangy Parklands is a vital and active park in the Worthington Park System. Many visitors use this park each and every day for its recreational and wildlife value. The bikeway is connected to many miles of trails that run throughout central Ohio and other communities, bringing many nonresident users to our park. Our goal is to enhance the park for both use patterns and aesthetics in Worthington’s section of the trail. This will be achieved by offering a different look through woodchip paths and low maintenance meadow areas that promote bird and other wildlife habitat. The following projects are currently underway:

- **American Elm Restoration**

Tree planting in conjunction with the United States Forest Service to repopulate disease resistant American Elm trees. Tree planting recently took place at the Whitney Park area adjacent to the bike path.

- **Olentangy Reforestation Plan**

The planting of native hardwood seedlings from the Worthington Tree Nursery in areas where honeysuckle and dead pioneer species trees have been removed, as well as establishing fields of prairie and other native grasses mixed with groves of trees. This will reduce mowing but also will provide habitat for birds and wildlife. Areas will be mowed once a year to control succession of woody plants. The work will also be promoted with signage.

(more)

- **Wood Chip Paths**

Due to the increasing conflict between walkers and bikers, we are connecting the woodchip paths that run throughout the park thus giving walkers another option for their use. Woodchip paths will run through the woods and in grass areas using woodchips that we generate thru our normal tree maintenance activities. The trail will run from the skate park to the bridge at Tucker drive entrance. The woodchips used for the path were generated from the trees downed during the Hurricane Ike windstorm.

- **Donated Benches**

In an area where a old bench was broken by a fallen tree from the hurricane a gentlemen who is a regular visitor to the bike trail donated two benches that will be installed over a brick paver pad with a vista cut in the brush to offer a better view of the river.

- **New Bikeway Signage**

In conjunction with the Central Ohio Regional Planning Commission new signage on our section of the bike trail will be installed that will be uniform with all of central Ohio.

- **Visibility Improvements**

There are areas of the bike path where the honeysuckle have grown up and are creating visibility problems. We plan to remove the honeysuckle and introduce plant material that will stay low and choke out the honeysuckle. Honeysuckle removal will take place in partnership with the Green Columbus Earth Day 2009 Picture This event. Volunteers will work removing Honeysuckle at the Parklands on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> as one of over 60 worksites throughout central Ohio.

- **Playground Renovations**

Both the Highgate and Whitney playground sites are presently in the design phase of renovation.

- **Tennis Court Resurfacing**

The tennis courts at the fishing access end of the park are scheduled for repairs and recolor coating

A number of other initiatives are also being considered. Residents and visitors are encouraged to visit the Olentangy Parklands in Worthington to experience all the improvements first hand.

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