

Plum Creek Corridor Restoration Projects List

Oberlin College Day of Service

9/2/2005



Each year Oberlin College's Center for Service and Learning organizes a day of community service for all interested incoming freshman. This year 400 students took part in the Day of Service. Nathan Brewer—the student coordinator of the Day of Service—contacted the City of Oberlin Public Works director, Jeff Baumann, about potential service projects. Brewer was subsequently put in contact with Bruce Comings and the Plum Creek Riparian Corridor Restoration Project. A projects list was put together by Comings, and Brewer assigned 25 students to work with the Riparian Corridor site.

It was a service day of considerable accomplishment. The work projects that the student volunteers helped with were: 1.) a creek clean-up; 2.) tree planting along

the creek by Park St.; and 3.) removing Japanese Knotweed from an area along the Park St. road crossing, to become an invasive plant control methods test site. It worked out well, with three projects going on simultaneously, that there were three Oberlin College Bonner Scholars assigned as site coordinators for the 25 student volunteers. One Bonner Scholar took charge of each project and Comings rotated between the groups to make sure the volunteers had the tools they needed, were working safely with the tools, and that they understood the proper methods of performing each task. This proved to be a useful arrangement.



The outcome of this volunteer service was a very productive work day. The student volunteers completed a creek clean-up from Morgan St. to Park St.; they planted 10 native trees (red maple, tulip tree, american basswood, ash species., oak species., birch species) along the creek buffer on the southwest

side of the Park St. bridge crossing; and they cleared a large area of Japanese Knotweed along the southeast side of the Park St. bridge crossing. The students engaged themselves in the experience, worked well together, and even seemed satisfied with their accomplishments throughout the course of the day.

The Day of Service began with an introduction to the Plum Creek Riparian Corridor Project given by Bruce Comings, as well as an introduction to Oberlin in general, and other community service opportunities in Oberlin. The Bonner Scholars ended the Day of Service by leading the student volunteers in a reflection session and wrap-up.



It was, without a doubt, a great help to have almost thirty people doing what would otherwise be done by the Riparian Corridor coordinator alone. It would, therefore, be beneficial to keep in contact with the Oberlin College Center for Service and Learning about on-going opportunities for student volunteer service.

10/10/2005

Further tree planting took place at the Park St. restoration site on the south side of Plum Creek, on the east side of Park St. Another 10 trees were planted along the corridor here (red maple, ash species, american basswood, birch species) by Plum Creek Riparian Corridor Restoration Project coordinator, Bruce Comings.

Twice in the late summer and early fall Comings cut back the Japanese Knotweed growth to continue the Knotweed suppression experimentation on this site. Continued suppression of the Japanese Knotweed will help these and future native plantings establish themselves on a site currently dominated by the Knotweed.

12/2005

More native plant, shrub and tree plantings were carried out during the month of December by Project coordinator Bruce Comings. There were three sites identified for this phase of plantings: the test site located at the Park St. bridge; a riparian site where a storm sewer outlet into Plum Creek was replaced at Shipherd Circle; and a site between the southeast corner of the Splash Zone property and the Mini-Storage facility where an

overflow swale for Evans Ditch was re-routed. The Park St. site was chosen because it will serve as a test site for controlling invasive species, like Japanese Knotweed, and replanting the area with native species. The other two sites were chosen because they are both areas where the ground has recently been disturbed and erosion control measures are necessary.

A list of appropriate plant species native to the riparian environments of this region of the country were selected and ordered from Ernst Conservation Seeds based in Meadville, PA. The species selected are:

- 1.) A seed mix of native grasses and wildflowers. This mix includes 18 different plant species.
- 2.) Bush and shrub species—Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus solonifera*), Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomun*), and Arrow wood (*Viburnum dentatum*).
- 3.) Tree species—Black Willow (*Salix nigra*), Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), White Swamp Oak (*Quercus bicolor*), Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*), Speckled Alder (*Alnus incana*) and Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*).

Listed below are the quantities of each species planted at each of the three planting sites.

Park St. Bridge: Buttonbush (15); Arrow wood (15); Red Osier Dogwood (25); Silky Dogwood (15); Speckled Alder (8); Pin Oak (8); Swamp White Oak (8); Black Willow (7).

Shiphherd Circle: Buttonbush (8); Arrow wood (4); Silky Dogwood (10); Speckled Alder (7); Black Gum (3); Green Ash (3); Black Willow (3); Pin Oak (3).

Splash Zone/Mini-Storage: Buttonbush (18); Arrow wood (21); Red Osier Dogwood (15); Black Willow (20); Swamp White Oak (10); Black Gum (10); Green Ash (10).

Of the saplings planted, considerable deer browsing damage has been discovered at this site. Some replanting was done, while other damaged rootstock has been left in place to see if it will recover.

January/2006

The extended January thaw allowed for further planting. Additional trees were planted at the Splash Zone Evans ditch re-route. At the Splash Zone site and the Shiphherd Circle site, the native grasses and wildflower seed mix was sown on all areas of exposed soil.



Planting at the Splash Zone Evans Ditch Re-route

Spring/2006

Storm Sewer Stenciling Program

