

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS



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Earth Day 2009 highlights opportunity to protect local parks; UD President Dan Curran to chair campaign

Dayton, OH - Earth Day 2009 celebrations came early for volunteers throughout Montgomery County as they participated in Five Rivers MetroParks' 20th annual Adopt-A-Park event on April 18. Over 2,000 volunteers of all ages helped with the regional cleanup of Five Rivers MetroParks and waterways throughout the county. The result was over 7,000 hours of service dedicated to protecting the natural amenities that sustain our quality of life in the area. A special luncheon was held at Eastwood MetroPark after the clean up where MetroParks officials expressed their appreciation for the volunteers.

To underscore the importance of volunteer support and involvement, MetroParks also used the Adopt-A-Park forum to officially announce that the Five Rivers MetroParks Board of Park Commissioners had voted to place a 1.8 mill replacement levy on the November 3 ballot, to replace an expiring 1.8 mill levy. Just as MetroParks has relied on the dedicated efforts of volunteers to leverage taxpayer dollars, continued volunteer support is vital to the success of the levy, the audience was told. If the issue does not pass before the current levy expires, MetroParks will lose 80% of its revenue. Without this funding, MetroParks would be effectively unable to operate the parks for public access.

Park Board President Irv Bieser praised the park system's volunteers, who donate over 86,000 hours annually, resulting in a cost savings of more than \$1.6 million. "Volunteers are our backbone, allowing us to keep the costs of running the parks significantly lower for taxpayers," he said. "You see today how committed they are and how much value they add."

University of Dayton President Dr. Dan Curran, who is chairing the campaign for the Five Rivers MetroParks replacement issue, also praised the volunteers. "Clearly, this community is passionate about our parks. I am honored to be part of the ongoing effort to keep MetroParks accessible, safe and clean for all of us to enjoy. "

Curran also noted that Five Rivers MetroParks are important to overall community development, helping to attract visitors, new residents and businesses and improving property values. "The parks are also a living nature laboratory for the thousands of school children and university students living in Montgomery County. In our urban and suburban settings, the

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parks often provide the only opportunity children have to explore natural settings, see wildlife and enjoy outdoor recreation.”

Director Charlie Shoemaker said, “The 15,000 acres we manage for public use, the miles of recreation trails, the 25 parks and all the programs and events – right here, close to home – are more important now than ever. Montgomery County families and children need the parks to be here, be accessible, with no admittance fees, so everyone can connect with nature.”

For more information about the MetroParks levy visit www.metroparks2009.org.

Five Rivers MetroParks

Five Rivers MetroParks focuses on three areas - conservation, recreation and education – as part of its role as steward of Greater Dayton’s public lands. Established in 1963 through the efforts of forward-thinking citizens concerned about preserving green space and natural areas, Five Rivers MetroParks has grown to a nationally renowned park system composed of natural area parks, gardens, sensitive river corridors, urban parks, and a network of recreation trails. Educational programs and recreational opportunities are offered year-round for all ages. And, diverse natural habitats are being protected and cared for today to assure their existence in the future.

To learn more about Five Rivers MetroParks, log onto www.metroparks.org or call (937) 275-PARK.

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