

MILL CREEK ALLIANCE

July 2020
NEWSLETTER



#MILLCREEK recreation

Recent Accomplishments:

- Bike/Paddle Loop Testing
- Live Stake Harvesting & Planting
- 1st One Day Mill Creek 28 mi Paddle
- June 20th Urban Stream Adventure
- Mill Creek Birds Bioblitz



Mill Creek Resurgence

Together with our volunteers, partners, and funders, MCA staff work tirelessly to champion the resurgence of the Mill Creek as an economic and community asset of the 37 jurisdictions who call the watershed home.

Thanks for your continued support!



#MILLCREEK education

Recent Accomplishments:

- State of the Mill Creek Address
- WQM Volunteer Training
- OEPA QDC Level II Chemistry Training
- MCA Café Video Series

#MILLCREEK restoration

Recent Accomplishments:

- Rain Garden Install at Deer Park
- East Fork HUC12 Plan Approved
- Sharonville Tributary Project Completed
- 319 Project Grant Applications Awarded:
 - Twin Creeks Wetland
 - Low-Head Dam River Mile 12.2



CREATIVE PADDLE LOOPS

NEED SOME TIME IN NATURE DURING THIS TIME OF SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Paddling is a great way to get exercise, reduce stress, and connect with nature while maintaining social distance. Mill Creek Alliance veteran paddlers have designed a few bike-boat paddle loops in the Mill Creek Watershed. Traditional one-way creek paddling requires a shuttle. A shuttle is the process of using vehicles to get to the start of a paddling journey and back from the end of the trip. But how do you accomplish this without riding in a vehicle with someone not in your “social distancing unit”? Paddle loops address this challenge.

Suggested Paddle Loop #1: Mill Creek Greenway Trail along the Mill Creek in Northside and South Cumminsville. A pleasant 1.5 mile beginner trip suitable for both kayaks and canoes. The bike trail is all off road with just one street crossing. Both bike and paddle trips feature a view of the Salway Riffle, a low head dam mitigation project accomplished by MCA. Opportunities on this section of the creek include a small rapids, flat pools for easy paddling, and possible sightings of kingfisher, black crowned night heron, geese, ducks, beaver, turtles, carp and small mouth bass. Read below to get an idea how a paddle loop works. Should you decide to try it out, please keep safety in mind and use a bike helmet, PPE, and a personal flotation device.

- Start by driving with your bike and boat to the Salway parking lot at the Mill Creek Greenway Trailhead. Unload and lock your boat and paddle to the bike rack.
- Drive to the Yellow Bridge and park at the pull off on the north side of Mill Creek Road. Prep your bike, don your helmet and PFD, and ride the Greenway Trail up to Salway Recreation area.
- When you reach Salway, unlock your boat, lock your bike, and carry your boat to the creek. The paddle starts with an essentially flat pool formed by the Salway riffle, followed by a small rapid. The flow of the rapid depends on the water level.*
- Just before passing under the Yellow Bridge, the West Fork Mill Creek tributary comes in from river right. Depending on the water level, take a side trip up the creek by boat or on foot.
- The takeout for this section is just past the Yellow Bridge on river right. Carry your boat in the upstream direction under the Yellow Bridge and then up to the road. The upper part of the path is steep so be sure to watch your step. Drive back to Salway Park and pick up your bike.



* The water level can be found on the USGS web site for “Mill Creek at Carthage” at: <https://on.doi.gov/2N7hhpR>. If the river flow is less than ~100 cfs (cubic feet per second) you may have to get out of your boat and walk through the riffle; between ~140 and ~200 cfs you’ll just zip and bump through the riffle; over 200 cfs may not be for beginners.

Salway Recreation area is managed by the Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC). The Greenway Trail south of Salway, and both access spots, are owned by the Millcreek Valley Conservancy District (MVCD). The MVCD provides flood control for the Mill Creek watershed and allows their land to be used for recreation.

For more information, comments, or questions about MCA recreation programs contact Linda Keller, lkeller@themillcreekalliance.org

MAKING A DONATION TODAY TO MCA helps bring recreational program like Creative Paddle Loops to the public.

See the results of the Birding Bioblitz that was held in May on iNaturalist: <https://bit.ly/MCAbirds>

Looking for activities to do in the great outdoors while practicing COVID19 safety guidelines? Want information about additional bike-boat paddle loops? View our Guide to Recreation in the Mill Creek Watershed online at themillcreekalliance.org/recreationguide

#MILLCREEK education

WATER QUALITY IS AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO!

At the heart of everything we do at Mill Creek Alliance, is water quality. Recreation on the stream requires safe water quality. Restoration projects improve stream function for citizen safety, including water quality. Education programs help learners of all ages understand the issues facing the Mill Creek, including water quality. As a result, analyzing water quality is critical to our vision of making the Mill Creek Watershed a healthy ecosystem where people and communities can thrive.

Each year, nearly 100 volunteers participate in our Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) program. One group of volunteers collects water samples in the field, a second group conducts testing in the lab, and a third group analyses the data for presentation to the public. (Volunteers are **also** at the heart of what we do!)

During the spring, training is provided to all three of these groups of volunteers. This year, 54 volunteers, including 10 new volunteers, were trained (or retrained) as citizen scientists to travel to 53 different sites throughout the watershed and collect water samples one Saturday a month. This includes important safety training as well as some specific procedures to assure quality water samples are collected. Several of these volunteers have a history of working with us in this program since its beginning in 2013. Another 8 citizen scientists attended a 15 hour training course to become Ohio EPA Level 2 Qualified Data Collectors (QDC's) certified in Water Chemistry. Three Blue Team interns compiled water quality findings, shared results online, and were engaged in data analysis. Finally, our star volunteer, Dr. Mike Miller, presented the analysis of all of last year's data during the annual "State of the Mill Creek Address". We are grateful for all the funders, volunteers, interns, and partners who contribute to this program.

So, like every year, 2020 MCA WQM program started off with a bang in March. Then came COVID19! After two months on hold due to the safety concerns of the pandemic, MCA volunteers were back in the lab in June to continue the sampling season. This year we are looking forward to expanding the sampling locations to include more sites in Lower Price Hill, South Cumminsville, Northside, and Spring Grove Village.

New volunteers are always welcome. Contact Anne Lyon, if you want to get involved in WQM or other MCA education programs.

Supplies for each water sample tested cost roughly \$50. YOUR DONATION HELPS SUPPORT WATER QUALITY MONITORING.



Welcome Anne Lyon, our new Education & WQM Director. Connect with Anne at: ***alyon@themillcreekalliance.org***

Are you a teacher or student interested in learning more about water quality? Interested in viewing our MCA Café educational videos? Visit our website for more information about our education programs. ***themillcreekalliance.org/education-programs***

The Wildlife of the Mill Creek art was created by students at Sts. Peter and Paul Academy in Reading.



#MILLCREEK
restoration

Sharonville Tributary PROJECT



HOW ONE RESTORATION PROJECT REPAIRED A STREAM CHANNEL

The Mill Creek Alliance just completed the Sharonville Tributary project. Located at the intersection of Kemper and Mosteller Roads in Sharonville, Ohio, the site contained an open water basin, which was actually an over-widened stream channel. The over-widening impaired the habitat, hydraulics, and sediment transport functions of the stream. Stantec designed the project to repair the channel, which included rock toe to armor the edge of the reshaped stream banks, riffles and pools to dissipate the energy of floodwaters and create valuable in-stream habitat for small fish and macroinvertebrates, and enhancement of the adjacent wet meadow floodplain. Environmental Remediation Contractors (ERC) accomplished the stream channel and streambank construction. ERC brought in large wooded railroad ties so their earth moving equipment did not sink into the mucky stream channel soaked by a rainy April 2020. Cardno installed the landscaping quickly to assure two seemingly contradictory goals: willow live stakes were planted during their dormant period, but wetland plugs were installed during their growing period. MCA will install an explanatory sign during the summer to cap off the project. The repaired stream channel was put to the test during the historic May 18, 2020 downpours. The project is on track to be well under the nearly \$400,000 in combined Clean Ohio Funds and Sharonville 25% matching funds.

YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF MILL CREEK ALLIANCE makes restoration projects possible.

Contact our Project Director, Bennett Kottler, about MCA restoration projects, bkottler@themillcreekalliance.org

COMING SOON

Wildflowers of the Mill Creek BioBlitz - July • Ohio River Paddlefest - Paddle for a Purpose • MCYC Urban Stream Adventure - August 22 • 8th Annual Upper Mill Creek Cleanup - September 19 • 2nd Annual Run the Riffles - September 26

Find details on our website or Facebook page

**Become a Donor
Invest in Your Local Water.**

DONATE NOW

Mill Creek Alliance • 1662 Blue Rock Street • Cincinnati, OH 45223 • 513.563.8800
www.themillcreekalliance.org • info@themillcreekalliance.org • [f](https://www.facebook.com/MillCreekAlliance) [ig](https://www.instagram.com/MillCreekAlliance) @MillCreekAlliance