

MILL CREEK ALLIANCE

Mill Creek Alliance Newsletter

October 2018

A Groundwork USA Trust and a Council of Communities



Green Team youth enjoy a day of kayaking June 2018

Thanks to YOU, Green Team was a Huge Success!

The Green Team is an 8-week summer youth employment program of Mill Creek Alliance. Members earn income by the maintaining the Mill Creek Greenway while engaging with the local community

and learning valuable life skills. They travel throughout the region for service learning and professional development in green infrastructure, conservation, environmental justice, restoration, and green careers. Some even travel to National Parks to expand their experience. This year, Mill Creek Alliance had a record number of applicants and, thanks to your support, we were able to accept 12 youth to the program and pay them a competitive wage for their work. The Green Team accomplished an impressive amount of work for the Mill Creek Greenway and local partners and had valuable opportunities to travel, explore, and play in the outdoors. Thank you for being part of cultivating the next generation of conservationists and making the Mill Creek Watershed a vibrant place where thriving people live, work, and play!

Green Team Conserves and Restores the Urban Environment

Through engaging in conservation and restoration projects in their communities, members of the Green Team become advocates on the new frontline of conservation, the Urban Environment. This summer, the Green Team had an impressive list of accomplishments that included the following:

- Maintained and enhanced over 2 miles of the Mill Creek Greenway Trail
- Redefined bio retention and bio swales at Salway Park
- Maintained a reforestation site at Freedom Tree Edible Forest Garden
- Planted over 25 perennials along the Mill Creek Greenway Trail
- Learned about Native & Invasive species through on-the-ground management
- Traveled to sites throughout the region, including South Cumminsville Community Garden & Edge of Appalachia Preserve, for service learning. These trips allowed the Green Team to see how the work they were doing on the Mill Creek Greenway Trail is connected into larger eco-systems as well as green initiatives across the region!



Green Team youth clear
invasive honeysuckle along the
Mill Creek Greenway Trail

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Jaheim Burrell
Green Team 2018

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Jaheim Burrell in Grand Teton National Park July 2018

Green Team Spotlight: Jaheim Burrell

Why did you join Green Team?

I wanted to step out of my comfort zone, which was staying indoors. When I was younger I was afraid to go outside. I was afraid of insects, bugs, getting dirty and touching anything that was in the dirt. But as I grew up I started learning that's the outside is nothing to be afraid of, and there is so much to learn. Mill Creek Alliance was the perfect place for me to have my very first job and to learn new information I never knew about the environment.

What did you like about Green Team?

I'm surrounded by people who want to learn new things, or know something that I don't know and teach me the information. I had never heard of milkweed, an oak tree, or even a maple tree. I had seen them before, but never paid attention to them.

What was your favorite trip this summer?

My favorite trip this summer is when I went to Grand Teton In Jackson, Wyoming with Ms. Katie and two others from the Green Team, Mark and Bien. I learned a lot of information about the wildlife that lives there, and how the park became this huge national park. Words can't described how much I had fun and how beautiful that place is, with all the mountains and wildlife everywhere. I had so much fun that I didn't want to go home.

What were your favorite work projects?

My favorites work project was when we went to Lower Price Hill Historic District with the Community Matters Garden Apprentices. That was my favorite place because the Green Team and I got a taste of what the community was about. We saw how much work they put into the garden and felt the love that they had for their plants.

Jaheim is a sophomore at Withrow High School

West Fork Mill Creek Tributary Riparian Corridor Connection

In Summer 2018 the West Fork Mill Creek Tributary Riparian Corridor Connection project removed invasive bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*) that dominated the understory of a 3.6-acre forest in Woodlawn. The monoculture of shallow-rooted honeysuckle decreased forest biodiversity, discouraged public access, and contributed to erosion of an ephemeral stream in the woods.

In the fall, native trees, shrubs, and woodland wildflowers seed will be planted to create a diverse native plant community that support birds, butterflies, and other beneficial wildlife in a flourishing and healthy forest. In addition, log structures will be hand-placed in the stream, and deep-rooted native vegetation will be planted along the stream to provide high-quality habitat for native aquatic species, and decrease streambed erosion and downstream sedimentation.



BEFORE: A dense, inaccessible forest



AFTER: An open forest understory ready for planting native plants to support birds and other beneficial wildlife

Tanner Yess Receives Murie Spirit of Conservation award as a Rising Leader

On August 14, 2018, Mill Creek Alliance Deputy Director Tanner Yess received the prestigious Murie Spirit of Conservation Award at the Murie Ranch in Grand Teton National Park. The Murie Ranch of Teton Science Schools awards this honor to individuals who have demonstrated conservation leadership and an exemplary commitment to the protection of wildlife and wild places, conservation, civility and community.

Tanner received the award for his tireless work engaging urban youth in the progressive conservation movement through the Green Team and Green Corps programs and innovative sustainability projects. His vision, passion, compassion, and tireless work demonstrate his commitment to conservation and environmental justice. Every day, he engages the community, partners, staff, and youth in making the Mill Creek Watershed a better place to live, work, and play.

Congratulations, Tanner!



Tanner Yess and 2018 Murie Award Recipient for Lifetime Achievement, Bert Raynes

Green Team Travels to Grand Teton and Yellowstone



Groundwork Trust Green Teams From Across the Country in Yellowstone National Park August 2018

Their work included trail building and maintenance, historic preservation, and campground construction. They also had time to hike, play, and sightsee in some of the most breathtaking places in the country. These trips are opportunities for youth, many of whom have never travelled outside Cincinnati, to interact with youth from across the country, explore and experience the National Parks, and contribute to the continued enhancement of these national treasures.

This year, as a part of Groundwork USA and in partnership with the National Park Service, youth and youth leaders from Mill Creek Alliance travelled to Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park.



Green Team youth construct a wood shed at Yellowstone National Park August 2018

Upcoming Events

Contact us for more information!

October 18th, 5pm-8pm – Benchmark Outdoor Outfitters Pint Night
9525 Kenwood Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45242

October 20th, 9am-2pm – Urban Stream Adventure with the Mill Creek Yacht Club

Salway Park 4520 Spring Grove Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45232

Register Online

November 9th, 5pm-8pm – Blues, Brews, and Barbecue Fundraiser
Urban Artifact 1660 Blue Rock St, Cincinnati, OH 45223

Contact Us

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Facebook at fb.me/MillCreekAlliance

6th Annual Upper Mill Creek Cleanup

On Saturday, September 15, 2018, a group of 85 volunteers gathered on a warm, humid morning for the 6th Annual Upper Mill Creek Cleanup at the Twin Creek Preserve in Sharonville. The Mill Creek Yacht Club hosted the Cleanup by Canoe along the Mill Creek where they collected tires, shopping carts, bowling balls, and all kinds of trash. Some of these trash carts had been buried deeply in the stream for years and took quite a bit of effort to remove. Meanwhile, a large group of Cleanup by



Mill Creek Yacht Club members haul trash out of the creek

Land volunteers, led by the Mill Creek Alliance Green Corps, were also tackling trash pickup and invasive species removal at the Preserve itself. The focus was on the removal of both Bush Honeysuckle and Bradford Pears as these two species choke out native plants and do not provide the same beneficial habitat as native species. Volunteers were joined by three Osprey, native Ohio birds that are at the top of the aquatic food web, thrive near bodies of water rich in food sources, and who are often regarded as indicators of a healthy, productive ecosystem!



A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers, partners, and staff



A volunteer traveled from Groundwork Richmond, Virginia to support the cleanup effort

The Twin Creek Preserve project began in 2007 with a partnership among the MCA, the Butler County Water & Sewer Department, the Greater Cincinnati MSD, and The City of Sharonville. They had a vision for transforming a disused industrial parcel at the confluence of the Mill Creek main stem and the East Fork Mill Creek into an 8.3-acre wetland and nature preserve. Over the next several years, project partners worked together and the Twin Creek Preserve was born. This \$2 million project naturalized the channels, restored the floodplain, re-established native riparian plants, and installed recreational elements in hopes of bringing life back to the stream and its riparian zone. Now, in 2018, the Twin Creek Preserve has a beautiful walking trail through a heavily vegetated wetland and is full of aquatic life and terrestrial

habitat. It is home to both humans and wildlife. Seeing the Osprey during the volunteer cleanup was an excellent indicator of this project's success and demonstrates how the strategies of the Mill Creek Alliance are working in support of the Mill Creek Watershed and the people that call it home.



The beautiful Mill Creek at Twin Creek Preserve