

Grants will help Plant Trees between Glen Echo, Walhalla Ravines

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BY MARK FERENCHIK

With grants from the Columbus Foundation, two groups plan to begin creating an urban arboretum between the Glen Echo and Walhalla ravines that would restore the canopy of foliage that existed before Clintonville and the University District were developed.

That will help to not only beautify the area but also to help reduce the amount of pollutants washing into the Olentangy River.

The goal is to plant 560 native trees, including oaks and hickories, on tree lawns beginning next year. One day, they will tower over the area and help create more of an unbroken canopy of trees.

"Why don't we put back what was once here?" said Peter Kovarik, a Clintonville resident and a United Crestview Area Neighbors board member.

He said perhaps other neighborhoods in Clintonville and elsewhere in the city would be inspired to try to do something similar.

Kovarik's group, along with Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, applied for complementary Columbus Foundation grants totaling \$13,280. The foundation is providing the money through the Jeffrey Fund, aimed at beautifying the city.

The new trees will improve water quality in the Olentangy River by absorbing more rainwater and helping to reduce stormwater runoff, said Laura Fay, vice president of the Olentangy Watershed group.

Stormwater picks up grease and oil and other contaminants, washing them into streams.

The saplings will be between 6- and 12-feet tall when they're planted, said Dan Struve, a Clintonville resident and professor in Ohio State University's Horticulture and Crop Science Department.

There are at least 25 species of trees between the ravines. The project will build on that.

It will take years for the trees to grow to their full height. But 20 years from now, residents and visitors will see a big impact, organizers say.

The city is working out the details with the groups. Columbus is responsible for tree lawns but will work with residents to see if they want the trees, said Alan McKnight, Columbus recreation and parks director.