2009 Annual report of the UT Presidents Commission on the River

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2009 Annual Report
President’s Commission on the River

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Introduction

• This report highlights the ongoing work of the President’s Commission on the River as follow-up to the 2006 Report of the Commission and subsequent activities and projects.

• The focus of the Commission continues to be in the areas of environmental improvements, beautification, education, public awareness, student involvement and community engagement.

• More information on the Commission can be found at:

http://www.utoledo.edu/commissions/river/
River Flooding Events

• During 2009 two weather events resulted in high water levels in the river on main campus:
  – February 10/11
  – March 25/26

• Heavy rainfall and frozen/saturated soils contributed to increased runoff into the river.

• Subsequent flooding occurred in parking lots next to the river and along the banks in the areas of the “flats” and Carlson Library.
A public meeting was hosted by the Commission on March 19th, 2010 to discuss the history of the Contact Advisory posted for the Ottawa River in 1990 – including on the UT Mains campus.

Aim was to consider prospects for the reassessment of the continued need for the postings given more recent monitoring data and potential water quality improvements.

Over 20 people attended including representation from Ohio EPA and state/local health departments.

Discussions are continuing with the regulatory agencies regarding future monitoring and assessment needs for the contact advisory postings.
EC\textsuperscript{3} Education and Environmental Restoration Project

- A $60,000 grant (2009-2012) was awarded to the Commission by the Stranahan Foundation to undertake an education and stream restoration project for a section of the Ottawa River on the UT campus.

- This project will involve the participation of science teachers and students from the TPS Early College High School Program.

- Work will begin with education initiatives in 2010 and lead to the design and construction of a stream restoration project by 2012.
Celebrate Our River Week

• A series of public and community events were held on campus during the 2009 Celebrate Our River week from September 8-12\textsuperscript{th}, 2009.

• A display was placed in the Carlson Library of the planning concepts for the Student River Plaza project.

• A team from the University of Michigan Arts & Earth program exhibited their video/music presentation on the Clinton River.

• UT served as a kickoff location for the 2009 Clean Your Streams Event.

(see next page)
2009 Clean Your Streams

• On Saturday September 12th, 2009 a total of 236 volunteers registered at the UT site for this event.

• Representatives participated from 15 UT student organizations.

• Over 100 large bags and several oversize items were removed from the river on and near campus.
Temporary Student Parking Lot issue

• Commission members actively participated in discussions and several meetings to address various concerns with the establishment of a temporary parking lot in the tagging area located next to the Stream Plant.

• Issues raised included public safety and the precedence of locating a temporary parking lot in an area intended for future green space.
On October 15th, 2009 over 40 students from a joint UT/BGSU planning design class participated in a planning charrette.

The aim was to develop and share various design concepts for the river in the area of the Carlson Library and Student Union.

Numerous ideas were proposed and draft materials developments to be shared with the Commission to assist in further future project planning.
Fund Raising*

- Total income = $79,250.08
  - Grant $60,000 (for 2009-2012)
  - Gifts $12,445
  - New Pledges $5,560
  - Ongoing Pledges $1,245.08

- Total Expenses = $13,536.37

- Net Balance = $65,713.71

- Cash on Hand = $1,693.12**

* all values refer to FY 2009: July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

** other funds are committed to projects or pledges
Education & Outreach

• Featured article on the Ottawa River and work of the Commission in the Fall 2009 issue of the UT Alumina magazine.

• UT Matters internet and T.V. media theme for November 2009 on Sustainability highlighted the Ottawa River and related projects.

• Also mentioned in articles in UT News and the Independent Collegian during 2009.
Other Events & Business

• Posters of the Commission were part of the 2009 Earth Day event at UT.

• Formal dedication of our two rain gardens:
  – May Sue Cave Honors Rain Garden
  – Carolyn Edwards Memorial Rain Garden

• Commission has developed a standard format for informational signage for river projects (first one to be installed at the Edwards Rain Garden near lot 10 parking lot).

• Commission members participated in numerous public events and meetings regarding the Ottawa River.
Commission Members (2009)

- Dr. Patrick Lawrence, UT (chair)
- Page Armstrong, UT
- Mike Cassidy, Community
- Doug Collins, UT
- Don Curtis, UT
- Dick Eastop, UT
- Kurt Erichsen, TMACOG
- Dr. Hans Gottgens, UT
- Ellen Ingram, UT
- Dr. Steve LeBlanc, UT
- Chuck Lehnert, UT
- Dick Meyers, Toledo Design Center
- Heather Slough, UT
- Dr. Carol Stepien, UT
- Arjun Sabarwal, UT Library
- Jay Brewster, Blanchard
- Katie Swartz, American Rivers
- Nicholas Wittenberg
2010 Priorities

• Implementation of year one activities (Education) for EC3 Project with ECHS program.

• Continued support for annual Celebrate Our River week and Clean Your Streams Event (September 2010).

• Participate in ongoing site design for the ARS building.

• Development Informational Signage project and seek funding support.

• Promote continued development of the Student River Plaza project, including working with library on join funding raising effort.

• Advocate for the consideration of the Ottawa River during main campus facility planning and development.
Acknowledgements

• The work of the Commission in 2009 was supported and assisted by many groups and individuals whom we would like to recognize for their efforts:

  – Chuck Lehnert, Vice President Facilities & Construction
  – Vern Snyder, Vice President Institutional Advancement
  – Doug Collins, Manager, Parking and Grounds
  – President’s Office, University of Toledo
  – UT Institutional Advancement
  – UT Foundation
  – Duane Stranahan Sr. Charitable Fund
  – American Rivers
  – Toledo Rain Garden Initiative
  – Stranahan Foundation
  – UT Campus Beautification Committee
  – Blanchard
  – Ohio EPA
  – Partners for Clean Streams
  – UT Department of Geography & Planning
  – UT Honors Program
For more Information

Please refer to our website at

www.utoledo.edu/commissions/river/