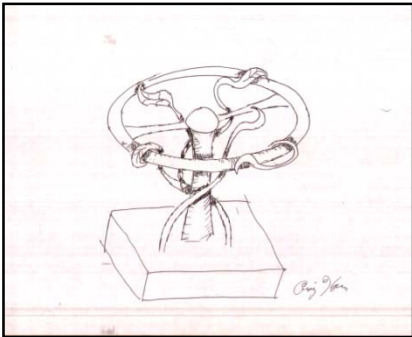


The First Annual “Steering the Future Course of the Beargrass Creek Award”

To be Presented 10:30 am Sunday, April 26 at the
Louisville’s Celebration of Earth Day
At the Louisville Zoo



For Immediate Release: April 13, 2009

Contact: Dr. David Wicks: dwick@south.net or 502-671-3595

Louisville, KY – Beargrass Creek, an urban stream located in a 39,000-acre watershed in the center of Louisville Metro is comprised of three forks - the South, the Middle fork, and the Muddy Forks. For generations, it has been actively used, but mostly abused, and ignored by urban development. The creek flows through many of Louisville’s major parks. It was used as a transportation system and a source of drinking water at one time, but more recently it has been used receptacle for storm water and sewage.

Over the years, there have been several task force groups that have worked to monitor the water quality, the storm water, and improve access to the creek through plans, sponsored activities, and clean sweeps. Their work has resulted in increased riparian buffers, reduced invasive plants, and habitat corridors for wildlife. As a result of an EPA Consent Decree, the community is going to expend significant funds on water quality initiatives that will improve the creek’s water quality.

In 2008, after a Courier-Journal series of articles, www.courier-journal.com/beargrass, the community learned about an old VW bug dumped in the creek for over 30 years. The junked car had been the symbol of the years of neglect felt by the creek. MSD hired a contractor to use an industrial crane to lift the rusting VW bug out of its’ watery grave. “The steering wheel had witnessed the floods, debris, and pollutants for an entire generation, possibly used as a scratching post for raccoons or habitat for the Louisville crayfish. Now it’s a one-of-a-kind piece of art and award that will be used to remind us as a community how important it is to care for our waterways.” said David Wicks.

The old steering wheel and the turning signal switch mounted on the steering column were removed and given to local artist, Craig Kaviar www.craigkaviar.com/. Kaviar creates unique, one-of-a-kind hand forge iron and bronze furniture, sculpture, and architectural elements. Using donated funds, coordinated by the Salt River Watershed Watch kywater.org/watch/salt/ and the Kentucky Waterways Alliance www.kwalliance.org, Kaviar turned the steering wheel into a unique and beautiful award. (An artist’s rendering of the piece is pictured above.)

The “Steering the Future Course of The Beargrass Creek Award” will be presented annually to an individual and or group that provides the vision, time, and work to ensure that Beargrass Creek becomes a destination for recreation, relaxation, and reflection. Recipients are chosen based on activities that help restore the creek’s natural systems and improve the aquatic and terrestrial habitat. The goal of the award is to reflect the notion that the quality of the water that flows through our community is equal to

the quality of life in our community. Award recipients are chosen by a steering committee comprised of: Dr. David Wicks, a concerned citizen, Kandris Goodwin, MSD, Martha Neal Cooke, Eyedia, Russell Barnet, Salt River Watershed Watch, and Judith Petersen, Kentucky Waterways Alliance.

To learn more about Beargrass Creek visit:

Courier-Journal investigative report, www.courier-journal.com/beargrass

2005 report card on Beargrass; www.beargrasswatershed.org/pdfs/BCW_State_of_the_Streams2005.pdf

KWA's Beargrass Creek page; <http://www.kwalliance.org/CleanWaterActIssues/BeargrassCreek/tabid/306/Default.aspx>

Salt River Watershed Watch's report on monitoring the creek for 10 years

<http://kywater.org/watch/salt/report.pdf>

For more information on the award contact: Dr. Wicks: dwicks@bellsouth.net or 502-671-3595