Lincoln Creek Conversations Summary, Nov 13 - 30th, 2021

Following is a summary of conversations that took place during a November 13th informal walk-and-talk at Havenwoods and recorded Zoom sessions on November 15th and November 30th and a hike on December 11th. A total of 35 people participated representing the following groups:

- Friends of Havenwoods
- Friends of Lincoln Park
- Friends of Estabrook Park
- Interfaith Earth Network
- Sierra Club Great Waters Group
- The Nature Conservancy
- River Revitalization Foundation
- Northwest Side Community Development Corp
- Milwaukee Water Commons
- Milwaukee County Parks
- Milwaukee COunty Board of Supervisors
- Milwaukee Public Schools
- Milwaukee Police Dept, 7th District
- BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin
- Rural/Urban Flow
- Nearby Nature Milwaukee

Nearby Nature Milwaukee convened the sessions and Program Director Steven Hunter moderated the conversations. Here are some of the key takeaways to date:

- Nearby Nature explained that the purpose of the conversation is to hear community voices about issues concerning Lincoln Creek and using the model of the very successful Milwaukee River Greenway, to begin to identify stakeholders and bring them together around common issues.
- The Creek's transformation from historically a concrete lined storm sewer, back to a naturalized and green waterway is seen as a very positive development but with work still to be done. MMSD is credited with much of this effort, and they continue to manage much of the green space.
- Trash dumping was identified as one of the key problems along the creek. Solutions seem to lie in a comprehensive effort involving stewardship, community engagement as well as public policy.

- Youth involvement in issues around the Creek were mentioned as a common theme in the conversations. This means involving schools, youth-serving-agencies, and churches. A youth summer internship program was mentioned
- Land Stewardship was raised as an issue and work will need to identify existing stewards and ways to fund additional land stewards whose work would include land restoration
- Public safety is always a concern. The UEC model was mentioned as one proven example how stewardship and increased use and community involvement in outdoor green space contribute to improved public safety.
- Tree canopy is another issue connected to land rehabilitation and restoration.
- Participants support greater activation of these spaces, such as recreational and social activities, to improve safety, increase sense of ownership and stewardship in green spaces.
- We can look at the Milwaukee River Greenway as a model for how a public greenway has evolved and developed. It is somewhat clear that green spaces in Lincoln Creek neighborhoods do not get the same care and attention as those in white neighborhoods, making this an environmental equity issue.

This is a summary of the conversations. Readers can request access to the full recorded notes and meetings by contacting Leena Le: leena@nearbynaturemke.org. A more detailed recap of the conversations can be found at this link.