



A PUBLICATION OF THE RICHLAND CREEK WATERSHED ALLIANCE | NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

## Hats off to redevelopment projects that put streams first!

By Monette Rebecca

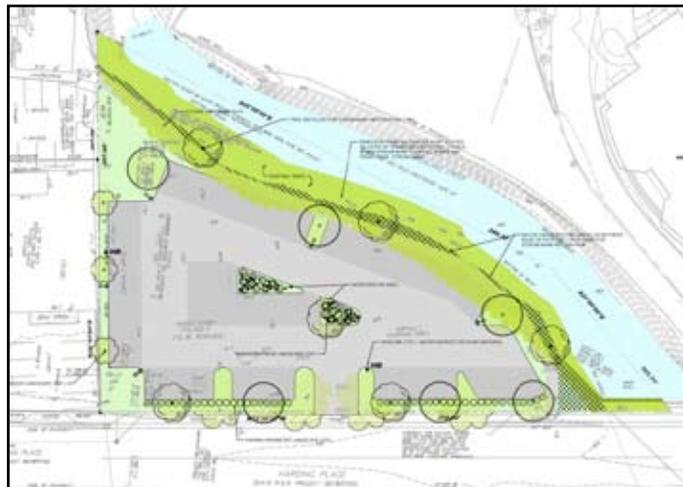
In 2008, I saw a sign on Harding Place in Belle Meade at the site of the former animal shelter announcing the construction of a five-story luxury condominium. It appeared that the new building would have been located in the creek floodway. Concerned about the water quality and flooding issues, Richland Creek Watershed Alliance contacted the district's council representative, Emily Evans, about the proposal. Two years later, we can proudly write a story about a stream friendly development plan that was substituted for one which had significant environmental risk.

Councilwoman Emily Evans recalls that it was the economy that prompted the downsizing of this high-density project saying, "This is a case where we had a permitted use for luxury condos (a million dollar plus) but no market for them, so the property remained undeveloped and Harding Academy became very interested in buying it." Once the zoning request was approved to SP (Specific Plan), the Academy hired Barge Cauthen Associates to design a sustainable surface parking area next to their school.

Belle Meade's Harding Academy headmaster, Ian Craig, recalled, "We bought the parcel from the former owner, Coda Development, when the opportunity arose because the school needed more visitors' parking."

Councilwoman Evans kept us informed about the parcel's future and invited RCWA to the community meeting she hosted for the project. After reviewing the plans, RCWA applauds the project and the individuals who brought it to fruition. This is a design plan our watershed group can stand behind because the intention and scope of the design improves water quality, restores riparian habitat, mitigates storm water and significantly reduces the damage the proposed condo project was likely to have done to Richland Creek.

Dan Barge explained the attributes of his company's project design at the November community meeting. "We will preserve the existing cottonwood trees, remove invasive species along the creek and replace them with native grasses and willows, remove a fence and clean up



*Barge Cauthen Associates' greener design for a surface parking area along Richland Creek.*

the debris left from the May flood, all of which are aimed at reclamation of the creek's buffer." The sustainable engineering controls proposed by the firm include pervious concrete for all sixty parking stalls and a bioretention area to mitigate stormwater runoff from the required impervious portion. Mr. Barge estimated the percentage of area improved by his design to be, "Overall, about 60% of the parcel will either be vegetated or engineered to filter stormwater pollution."

For this CreekVoice story, all project proponents (Evans, Craig and Barge) were asked what advice they would offer others who might want to improve their redevelopment project designs that are streamside.

Mr. Barge answered with a smile coming from great childhood memories of play on Richland Creek, "I think the fallacy is in assuming that it costs more to do sustainable design when it really doesn't because these projects, which use bio-swales, bio retention and native vegetation, are cost efficient if you have the space. Environmentally sustainable projects are good for everyone."

*Continued on pg 2*



On October 22nd, RCWA members met for a picnic dinner at Warner Parks. Board Member Michele Webber is shown here lighting the way for the picnic festivities. Michele did much of the party organization and set up—thanks Michele!

### *Hats off from pg 1*

“Don’t assume that you must sacrifice use and aesthetics in an environmentally friendly design. If you are thoughtful in your planning, you can have it all,” Mr. Craig advises. Harding Academy, a member of the Green Schools Alliance that promotes environmental awareness, he adds, and, “Wants to be a role model to our students and we appreciate everything RCWA does in helping us towards those goals.”

Councilwoman Evans comments, “I think I would suggest that you look at the plan and ask what things can I do to help support the creek and when an opportunity arrives, like the pavement disappears after a flood, ask what options there are that will benefit the creek. Good development projects like this one develop in sensitive areas because educated and open-minded people seek solutions that work, because the government is flexible and because the community is willing to accept alternatives.” Recognizing we should rethink any outdated practices, the councilwoman explains that, “Small changes help too. Instead of putting those landscape islands we see in parking areas, push all vegetation to the streamside, where it will thrive and help.”

Hats off from this watershed alliance.

## New RCWA Board Members

By Steve Swartz

Two new members joined the RCWA Board of Directors at the November 2010 meeting increasing the number of directors to five—all women. The new additions are Catherine Hayden, who is an advanced practice nurse, and retired psychologist, Carroll Young. The addition of a practicing physician’s assistant is a most welcome addition but one veteran board member quipped that the board’s need for a psychologist is exceeded only by its need for a few good men. If you are a good man, your RCWA Board needs you now.

## RCWA to implement stream monitoring program

By Monette Rebecca

Assistance provided by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and the World Wildlife Fund has enabled the Richland Creek Watershed Alliance to implement a stream monitoring program on Richland Creek this year.

With further support from the community and volunteers, the watershed program can conduct monthly sampling on ten stream locations in the lower and upper reaches of Richland Creek. Two objectives for the monitoring project are to contribute data to the wildlife agency’s instream flow study and to expand baseline water quality data.

Training sessions will be conducted by RCWA to prepare volunteers for monitoring in the coming spring. If you would like to participate in this important project, contact us at [rcwa@comcast.net](mailto:rcwa@comcast.net) saying, I want to be on the volunteer monitoring training schedule.

You can also support RCWA with your tax-deductible donation. To donate send a check to RCWA, P.O. Box 92016, Nashville, TN 37209, or use your credit card from our website at [www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org](http://www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org). Just click “how you can help.”

We look forward to hearing from volunteers and supporters who will further facilitate our stream monitoring program’s success.

*The Richland Creek Watershed Alliance is appreciative for the assistance provided by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and the World Wildlife Fund.*





*Seasons Greetings from The Richland Creek Watershed Alliance*

*This picture post card of red honeysuckle berries in the sunshine on the banks of Richland Creek in Sylvan Park, West Nashville, represents our wish that your holidays are as warm and inviting as this picture. We hope that each of our readers will consider joining RCWA for 2011. Your \$15 membership fee will be well spent in helping preserve scenes like this in our Nashville legacy. Mail Checks and the form below to: P.O. Box 92016 Nashville, TN 37209 or submit online at our web site: [www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org](http://www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org).*

Date	Signature		
Print Name		Email	
Address (please include zip code)		Phone	
Name of stream near your home or business:			
Neighborhood Association:		Are you a member of your neighborhood association? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
What specific concern(s) do you have about our streams?			

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## RCWA needs your help to support our work!

*Thank you for your support of RCWA; Richland Creek is the fortunate beneficiary of your gifts. However, our creek "rescues" need your further support. We are particularly anxious to receive "unrestricted funds" to be used for general operations. The bulk of recent assistance we have received is tied to specific expenditures, for instance laboratory analyses. Now that the IRS recognizes RCWA as a 501 c 3 tax-exempt organization, we hope you will consider RCWA when you write your charitable contribution checks for 2010. Checks may be mailed to: PO Box 92016, Nashville, TN 37209.*

*Stephanie Swartz, Treasurer*

## CREEKVOICE VOLUNTEER STAFF

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## RCWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Monette Rebecca - President  
Michele Webber - Vice President  
Stephanie Swartz - Treasurer  
Catherine Hayden - Secretary  
Carroll Young

*RCWA is grateful to our Board Member's service and welcomes our new members, Catherine and Carroll! The Richland Creek Watershed Alliance mission is to educate, advocate and participate in activities and scientific research that improves, protects and will enhance the environmental sustainability of the Richland Creek watershed.*

## JOIN RCWA - TO SHARE & LEARN MORE

Submit your annual membership of \$15 by snail mail or via PayPal from our website at [www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org](http://www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org)

Submit questions or concerns to [rcwa@comcast.net](mailto:rcwa@comcast.net).

For more details, photos or to comment, please visit our blog at [rcwa.blogspot.com](http://rcwa.blogspot.com).

**The Richland Creek Watershed Alliance is a tax-exempt, 501c3 non-profit organization (public charity).**



## Richland Creek Watershed Alliance

PO Box 92016 Nashville, TN 37209

*A community-supported volunteer organization promoting environmental sustainability for the Richland Creek Watershed.*

[www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org](http://www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org)

*Our watershed is rich with stakeholders who share their gifts.*