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Portion of Proctor Creek flowing at Grove Park in the City of Atlanta

PROCTOR CREEK

GREENSPACE STAKEHOLDER TEAMWORK SPARKLED AT COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

ATLANTA --

Fall rain did not dampen the excitement and carnival-like atmosphere of last Saturday's Proctor Creek Community Showcase at Grove Park. Despite the rain, greenspace development stakeholders -- community, nonprofit, government, and foundation -- bonded together in dialogue and camaraderie.

Some say it was the first time such a diverse gathering for public dialogue and displays for urban community greenspace development has happened in the City. But what really stood out was the sparkling teamwork that got contributed -- and enjoyed.



left to right: Rev. Larry Hill of Northwest Youth Power, Na'Taki Osborne-Jelks of West Atlanta Watershed Alliance(WAWA), Stephen Lackey of Trust for Public Land, and Keith Sharp of Groundwork Atlanta

Ready to take on some Proctor Creek water sampling activity in her red galoshes, Fulton County Health Services' Monica Robinson, known as an Environmental Justice proponent, readied a table full of colorful materials for children and their families with a department team member.



"We like to have diversity in our books for children," shared Robinson's co-worker Pat about the books from the Southwest, "so we can show our young children other cultures."



"Four simple healthy living tips are what we want our Fulton County Proctor Creek residents to know," the two emphasized. Their simple list:

1. Eat healthy foods
2. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables
3. Exercise
4. Decrease sugar intake

The organic community farming potential in greenspace development for Proctor Creek residents is a promising possibility that got discussed with excitement among a cornucopia of Showcase participants. Alongside that promising possibility was discussion about the expanded potential for clean creek water.

[West Atlanta Watershed Alliance](#)(WAWA)'s Darryl Haddock and NaTaki Osborne Jelks and [Eco Action's](#) "Dr. Yomi" Noibi -- all stalwart members of the [Proctor Creek Stewardship Council](#) -- were side by side

with [Chattahoochee Riverkeeper](#), Environmental Protection Agency's [Adopt-A-Stream](#) Initiative, and ecologist [Rena Ann Stricker](#) at the Community Showcase. A focus of discussion: how to build community awareness and how to get funding support.



Atlanta City Council President Ceasar Mitchell discussing access and awareness of OAC, WAWA's Southwest Outdoor Activity Center, the only one of its kind in the City.

Greeting participants throughout the morning and engaging in conversations, Atlanta City Council President Ceasar Mitchell brainstormed with WAWA on how

the OAC could be made more noticeable and access-able through connections with trails being planned through the Beltline. He urged them to consider other plausible initiatives for bike trails relating to the Southwest Connector, including ideas for connection near the Kroger's on Cascade Avenue/I-20 Langhorn Street exit. Mitchell requested that WAWA submit budgets for revitalizing recreational playground equipment for the children WAWA is wanting to reach through their environmental educational programs.



EPA Region IV Water Protection Division Director James Giattina with renown Dr. Yomi Noibi of ECO Action



EPA's Adopt-A-Stream crew pose with Pres. Mitchell and a special frog visitor from Atlanta's Botanical Garden



A vibrant team of the City's Department of Watershed Management, including

Community Relations Coordinator Lisa Baker have fun with Pres.Mitchell and mascots Chatty and Hooch



Reverend Larry Hill, Senior Pastor of the Word of God Ministries, and co-host of the first community Greenspace Development Roundtable for Proctor Creek watershed basin residents, wandered through the exhibits with his shy, turtle-shelled granddaughter. S.E. Region News stopped to ask the Reverend to offer his thoughts on what's opening up for the residents in his neighborhood of Northwest Atlanta.

"I think it's[Proctor Creek] a great opportunity for community to benefit from," commented the past President of the Northwest Atlanta Business Association. "The new Proctor Park that is being developed near the Bankhead MARTA Train Station can be a lighthouse for our community resurgence and revitalization. This project could jumpstart jobs for our residents, as well as new homes."

When asked what actions he thought community would have to take, in order to be included in having the economic revitalization happen, he pointed to one thing: a change in leadership.

"Community leadership is going to have to become involved again -- involved in our NPU's, involved in our neighborhood associations and in our business associations. We are going to have to begin advocating for the projects we want to see happen.

"Right now, there are not enough people who are involved. We're seeing a change in leadership, though, even within our NPU. NPU J Chair Benjamin Dickerson already knows what our community needs are. A change in leadership, that has people be more involved, that's what can have our community be revitalized in the mix of this greenspace development, and the reinvestment in taking care of our community's water and streams."



EPA Region IV Administrator Tami Thomas-Burton and Community Engagement 3-Step Plan Facilitator Al Bartell

"The universe didn't have us have a sunny day today," noted Community Engagement 3-Step Plan Facilitator Al Bartell with a smile on his face. Bartell has been facilitating roundtable discussions and development sessions as a part of a [Community Engagement 3-Step Work Plan](#). The Community Showcase was one of the promised deliverables of the Work Plan, which required weekly planning meetings over the past three months.

"But, what it did provide for us," added Bartell, "was an opportunity to showcase the enormous contribution of all of these greenspace development stakeholders. Without their financial and human resources, this Showcase would

not have been possible. They sponsored this great offering -- they made it possible."



The rain didn't phase jazz artist Ja'Naan either -- nor did it phase The Jazz Collaborative, who performed on the "big stage" provided by the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation.



"We had a blast playing for the Proctor Creek Community Showcase," shared the metro Atlanta replant from New York. Other performers shared the same sentiments. Stormhouse Entertainment's line of community singers brought out a 13-year old aspiring singer, who, without practise, came to the stage and sang a moving rendition of Adele's "Sometimes it lasts in Love, but sometimes it hurts instead". The enthusiastic crowd cheered her on, as the brave, long-braided middle schooler smiled -- and sparkled.

There was a lot of sparkling at the Showcase -- sparkling teamwork and a sparkling sense of true community -- the kind that rain just can't rain out.

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