



Clean **Ohio** Fund

2009 Impact Awards



Environmental Stewardship

Winner: City of Columbus, and Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks

Project: Whittier Peninsula

The project at Whittier Peninsula not only eliminated the threats posed by a vacant, contaminated structure, but also led to the creation of green space within an urban area.

Webster's Dictionary defines stewardship as "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to

one's care." According to this definition, there's no greater example of environmental stewardship in Ohio than the City of Columbus and the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks' stewardship of the 160-acre brownfield property at Whittier Peninsula.

The City of Columbus and Metro Parks are the 2009 winners of the Clean Ohio Impact Award for Environmental Stewardship. The award recognizes a grantee for the most significant environmental change or remediation to come about as a result of a completed Clean Ohio Revitalization or Assistance Fund project.

The Whittier Peninsula property has an industrial history dating back to the late 1800s. Prior to the construction of the Lazarus Warehouse in 1946, Franklin Furnace, a steel foundry, and later a sand and gravel mining operation, were located on the property. The unique history of the property has resulted in extensive environmental contamination, including asbestos and lead-

paint materials within the standing structures. Once industrial activities ceased and the property became vacant, the site turned into a well-known haven for illicit activities.

The City and Metro Parks, however, had the foresight to include the property in the 2000 Riverfront Development Plan, which included a commercial/residential component with tangential park development. When geotechnical and environmental impacts prohibited private development in 2005, the City and Metro Parks focused on recreational park development, partnering with Audubon Ohio, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Ohio Department of Development, and other consultants.

Today, with the help of the Clean Ohio Assistance Fund, the site has been transformed into an urban park with wetlands, walking trails, and a new environmental education center. The Whittier partnership is a model of what cooperation and civic determination can do to revitalize a community.