

Every day in YourTown, we spotlight a different Lorain County community:

- MONDAY:** Avon/Avon Lake
- TUESDAY:** Amherst/Vermilion/South Amherst
- WEDNESDAY:** Wellington/Oberlin
- THURSDAY:** North Ridgeville
- FRIDAY:** Grafton/LaGrange/Columbia
- SATURDAY:** Lorain/Sheffield/Sheffield Lake
- TODAY:** Elyria/Elyria Township

YOURTOWN **ELYRIA** & TOWNSHIP

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Group plants trees at Audubon park

Lisa Roberson

The Chronicle-Telegram

ELYRIA — When the late Jack Smith donated three parcels of land to Elyria seven years ago, he envisioned a park off West Bridge Street that would be a perfect place to sit and appreciate nature.

"This is a small parcel, but it will make a nice little community park by the Black River," Smith said then.

Saturday, a group of volunteers from the Black River Audubon Society, Elyria Sunshine Rotary and Elyria High School's National Honor Society and Key Club did their part to help the more than 7-year-old park further mature into the nature haven Smith imagined. With a grant from the National Audubon Society's Burke Trees for Birds program, the local club planted a dozen trees at the park.

Mayor Holly Brinda was one of the first to turn a shovel of dirt, helping to plant a young

chestnut oak tree.

"I hope my grandchildren can one day come back and see this tree," she said.

Brinda, who also was on hand seven years ago to dedicate the park alongside Smith, who died in 2012 at the age of 85, said the Black River Audubon Park is a perfect addition to the area as it is just a stone's throw from the city's downtown. With the goal of having more people live, work and enjoy the area, Brinda said downtown Elyria has to offer more amenities that speak to quality of life.

"We want spaces like this for folks to come and enjoy," she said.

Jim Jablonski, Black River Audubon Society president, said the club was glad to get the grant, which allowed it to plant native species trees at Black River Audubon Park and West Park, through a donation to Sunrise Rotary.

"I always thought the best

thing to do with this little plot of land was to make it a nature reserve right in the heart of the city," he said. "I think the National Audubon Society thought the same thing, a beautiful park right in an industrial part of the city.

Andy Lance, Black River Audubon Society conservation chairman, said each sapling picked for the area will attract multiple bird species to the park.

"Most have edible berries or nuts for the birds and are long-living native trees to this area," he said.

In addition to a variety of bird-attracting native trees, Black River Audubon Society, which partnered with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, also planted shrubs, milkweed and wildflowers.

"Diversity is good in society and in trees," Jablonski said.

Contact Lisa Roberson at 329-7121 or lroberson@chroniclet.com.



KRISTIN BAUER / CHRONICLE

Elyria High School seniors and Early College Program members Paige Keim, 17, left, and Zoe Gonzalez, 17, help plant trees and shrubbery with the Black River Audubon Society at Black River Audubon Park, 360 West Bridge St., Elyria, on Saturday morning.