

Fellows Riverside Gardens Youngstown, Ohio

Fellows Riverside Gardens occupies 12 acres of land overlooking Lake Glacier at one end and the city of Youngstown at the other.



The Olmsted Brothers provided some very early development documents, but landscape architect John Paolano ultimately designed the grounds and gardens that are still present today. Terra Design Studios added its insight and experience to this vision, creating a new master plan document in 2006.

Honoring the Garden's history is a major theme of the interpretive plan, as is the juxtaposition caused by the Gardens' location between the urban grit of Youngstown and quiet countryside of Mill Creek Park. Patios and overlooks offer stunning views of both, though until now, they have not been called out.

In 2012, The Acorn Group worked with staff and volunteers of Fellows Riverside, Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens, and Mill Creek MetroParks to develop an interpretive plan. Our tasks included facilitating a planning charrette, creating a hierarchy of messages that capture the essence of the Gardens, conducting a visitor survey, and identifying interpretive media for both the Gardens and the D.D. Davis Education Center.

At Fellows Riverside Gardens, interpretive planning meant stepping back to look at the "big picture," understanding the Gardens in relation to Mill Creek Park and Youngstown, celebrating the Gardens' legacy stories, and developing recommendations that are realistic, purposeful, creative, and respectful of the landscape.



Development of the interpretive plan and visitor survey at Fellows coincided with development of conceptual design documents for the Garden's Northwest quadrant, including the Family Garden, by Terra Design Studios.



Throughout the six-month process, The Acorn Group and Terra Design Studios worked closely, reviewing each other's documents, lending insight from our respective disciplines, and engaging in collaborative dialogue.