



Coldstream Park Invasive Plant Management Lexington, KY January 2023 - April 2023

In 2023, EcoGro was hired to remove invasive plants from a 6-acre stream buffer at Coldstream Park. This particular location along a historic tributary to Cane Run creek is the site of one of the first Reforest The Bluegrass events. At these one-day events, hundreds of volunteers show up to plant thousands of seedling trees. With over 20 years of growth taking place since that event, the area has grown up into a closed-canopy forest, providing shade to cool the creek and habitat for wildlife. Unfortunately, negative conditions had also developed. With planting prior to concerns of the emerald ash borer, approximately 20% of the forest was ash trees. Almost all ash trees were dead and many posed safety hazards when the dead trees fall or crush a neighboring tree. The gaps opened by dead canopy provide opportunities for invasive weeds to flourish and spread. Bush honeysuckle and callery pear need no help to grow in the Bluegrass region. They had invaded most of the mid and understory. Beneath that, about 40% of the ground surface was covered in winter creeper.

The backbone of this particular project was a Komatsu excavator equipped with a FECON forestry grinder. This equipment can be a very efficient and effective tool for restoring an ecosystem. Covering anywhere from 3/4 to 1 acre a day, the grinder takes woody material and shreds it into chips. These chips serve as mulch to protect bare soil, suppress weed seeds and reduce erosion. They also improve moisture retention and protect tree roots.

Of course, the grinder can't do all the work alone. The EcoGro crew used hand-held tools to cut around small features and places the excavator couldn't reach. Proper pruning removed hazards and improved tree structure. This work was followed with stewardship visits to ensure weeds don't return. The difference today is like day and night.



www.EcoGro.net
(859) 231-0500

P.O. Box 22273, Lexington, KY 40522