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(Pictures available [in Dropbox](#))

## **GREAT PARKS, CINCINNATI PARKS TAKE FIRST STEPS ON BIOCHAR PARTNERSHIP**

Great Parks has started construction of a new composting facility in Winton Woods that will play a key role in a collaboration with Cincinnati Parks toward the creation of biochar, a special carbon-capturing charcoal that has multiple environmental benefits. This joint effort will also be one of the first in the United States for the commercial production of biochar, making use of plentifully available raw materials from parks to create and use biochar for carbon storage and soil improvement.

“Great Parks is proud to partner with Cincinnati Parks on this pioneering conservation project,” said Todd Palmetter, Great Parks CEO. “Conservation leadership is at the core of what we do. This is an exciting opportunity for us to strengthen the local tree canopy and our planting projects throughout Great Parks by repurposing naturally available materials from Winton Woods.”

The biochar process will involve several steps, with [Great Parks](#) and Cincinnati Parks both contributing. Great Parks currently pays to dispose of tons of manure every year at the Winton Woods Farm & Equestrian Center. This new facility will allow Great Parks to compost some of the manure instead.

Separately, Cincinnati Parks will construct their biochar production facility that will heat wood debris, which it has in abundance, to become biochar through a process called pyrolysis. Biochar will then be added to the manure from Great Parks to supercharge the biochar’s capabilities and assist in speeding the process of composting manure. The Cincinnati Parks biochar facility is targeted to break ground later this year.

“It’s exciting to be leading the way locally on this game changing technology. We are so grateful to have Great Parks partner on this project with us, which will improve the environment; plant healthier, faster growing trees; and ultimately help boost a whole new industry in Cincinnati,” said Jason Barron, Cincinnati Parks director.

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Biochar combats climate change by storing carbon in the soil, potentially for thousands of years, keeping it out of the atmosphere. This project aims to capture hundreds of tons of carbon dioxide per year. Biochar also strengthens and improves soil and promotes healthier and faster growing trees with a better root system and canopy. It is ideal for landscaping, water filtration and stormwater management. In our urban community, biochar-strengthened trees will counteract heat islands.

Significantly, the collaboration also aims to produce and market hundreds of tons of biochar annually. Being among the first to market with biochar will help as the partnership aims to sell carbon credits and sell the biochar itself on the market.

Contributors to this project include Great Parks, Cincinnati Parks, Carbon Harvest, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the City of Cincinnati's Office of Environment and Sustainability.

Great Parks contributed \$300,000 to support biochar production equipment and site improvements at the Cincinnati Parks Sinton East Operation Center in Eden Park. Great Parks will designate a representative to serve as project manager for its portion of the project. Cincinnati Parks received a competitive and prestigious \$400,000 Bloomberg Philanthropies grant to fund the start of the project. Great Parks has funded more than \$600,000 for the construction of the composting facility in Winton Woods, with funds coming from the 0.95-mill levy passed by Hamilton County voters in 2021 for critical infrastructure needs and park improvement projects. The Great Parks composting facility is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in spring 2026.

Worldwide, Cincinnati is one of only seven other cities, including Stockholm, Sweden; Helsinki, Finland; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Minneapolis; to have received Bloomberg funding to start the process and create a biochar market.

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