

## Annual Report: Jan-Dec 2016

**Overview:** The Watershed Volunteer Program (WVP), offered through the Natural Resources Division of Cleveland Metroparks, is an effort to engage residents in an array of active management projects to improve watershed conditions. The program promotes stewardship through learning opportunities, restoration projects, and monitoring activities.

**Participation:**

Totals since WVP was initiated in Sept 2012: 1147 volunteers contributed 10,410 hours (see Graph 1)

Totals for 2016: 268 volunteers contributed 1511 hours

New Volunteers for 2016: 70 with 20 in Q4

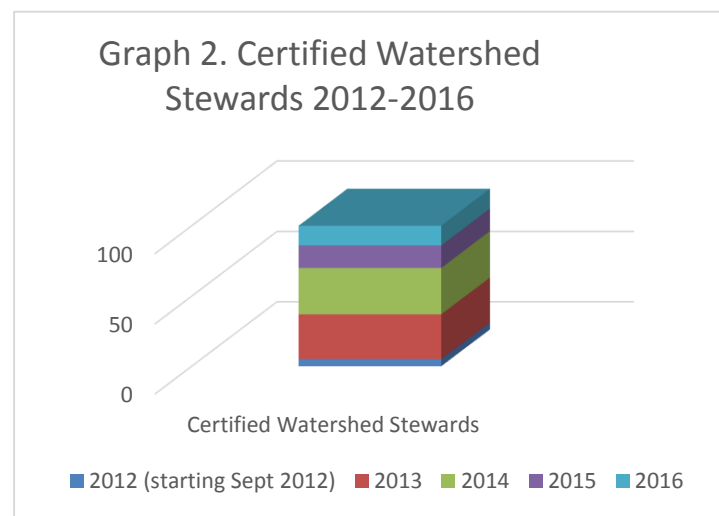
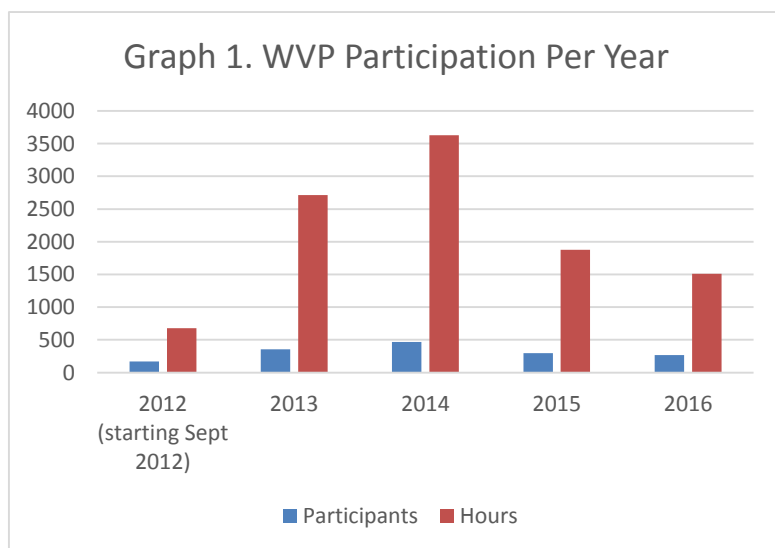
Although 2016 has a slight overall decrease (11%) from 2015, the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2016 shows signs of a trend back up with 142 volunteers contributing 424 hours in 2016 Q4 alone which represents:

- 27% volunteer and 42% hour increase from 2015 Q4
- 53% of total volunteers and 28% of total hours of 2016

**Certified Watershed Stewards:** Volunteers who complete seven modules across three categories (learning, monitoring, and restoration) become certified (see Graph 2).

Total since WVP was initiated in Sept 2012: 100 volunteers have become certified

Total for 2016: 14 certified with five in Q4 (2015 total was 16)



**Program Statistics:**

Events: 77% of yearly hour total (see Graph 3)

- Yearly Total: 46 events, 1168 volunteer hours
  - 19 learning opportunities
  - 16 restoration projects (57% of hours in Q4)
  - 9 monitoring events

Independent Projects: 23% of yearly hour total (see Graph 3)

- Yearly Total: 24 volunteers, 343 hours
- Projects include: water chemistry monitoring, storm water monitoring, stream bank erosion assessments, cross-section survey, invasive plant removal, and community outreach

**Outcome data:**

- 1518 meters of steambank assessed
- 220 trees planted at Acacia with 50 volunteers
- 106 water quality sampling events
- 24 rain gardens maintained
- 10 known WVP volunteers on the board or active volunteers of local watershed groups
- 8 species of native seeds collected
- 3 known WVP volunteers gained new job opportunities as a result of their volunteer experience
- 2 summer interns
- 1 teacher facilitated invasive species removal at Fowles Marsh by Lakewood High School environmental club

**Service Area:** WVP partners with cities and organizations throughout Northeast Ohio for educational programming and projects. The ultimate goal of the program is to improve watersheds regionally by having volunteers share and use their knowledge in their communities. We have participants from various NEO watersheds including: Big Creek, Chagrin River, Chippewa Creek, Cuyahoga River, Doan Brook, Euclid Creek, Mill Creek, Rocky River, Tinker’s Creek, and West Creek (see map and **Table 1**).

*Table 1: WVP Participants Percentages by Watershed*

Watershed	% of Total Volunteers
Cuyahoga River	43
Rocky River	34
Lake Erie Direct Tribs	12
Black River	5
Chagrin River	4
Tuscarawas River	2
Grand River	>1
Vermillion River	>1

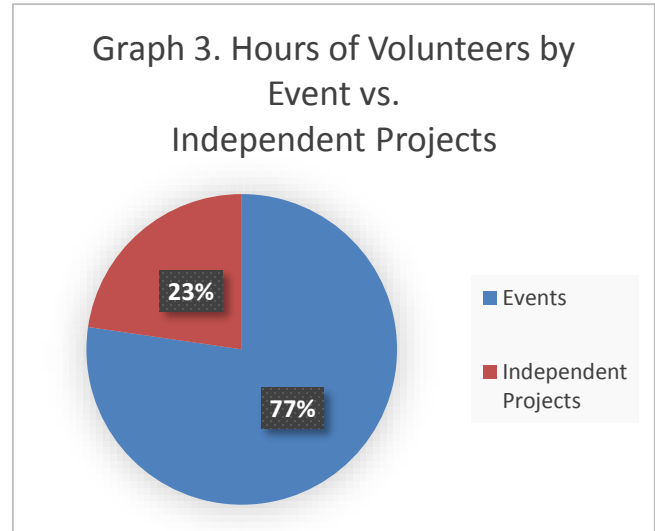
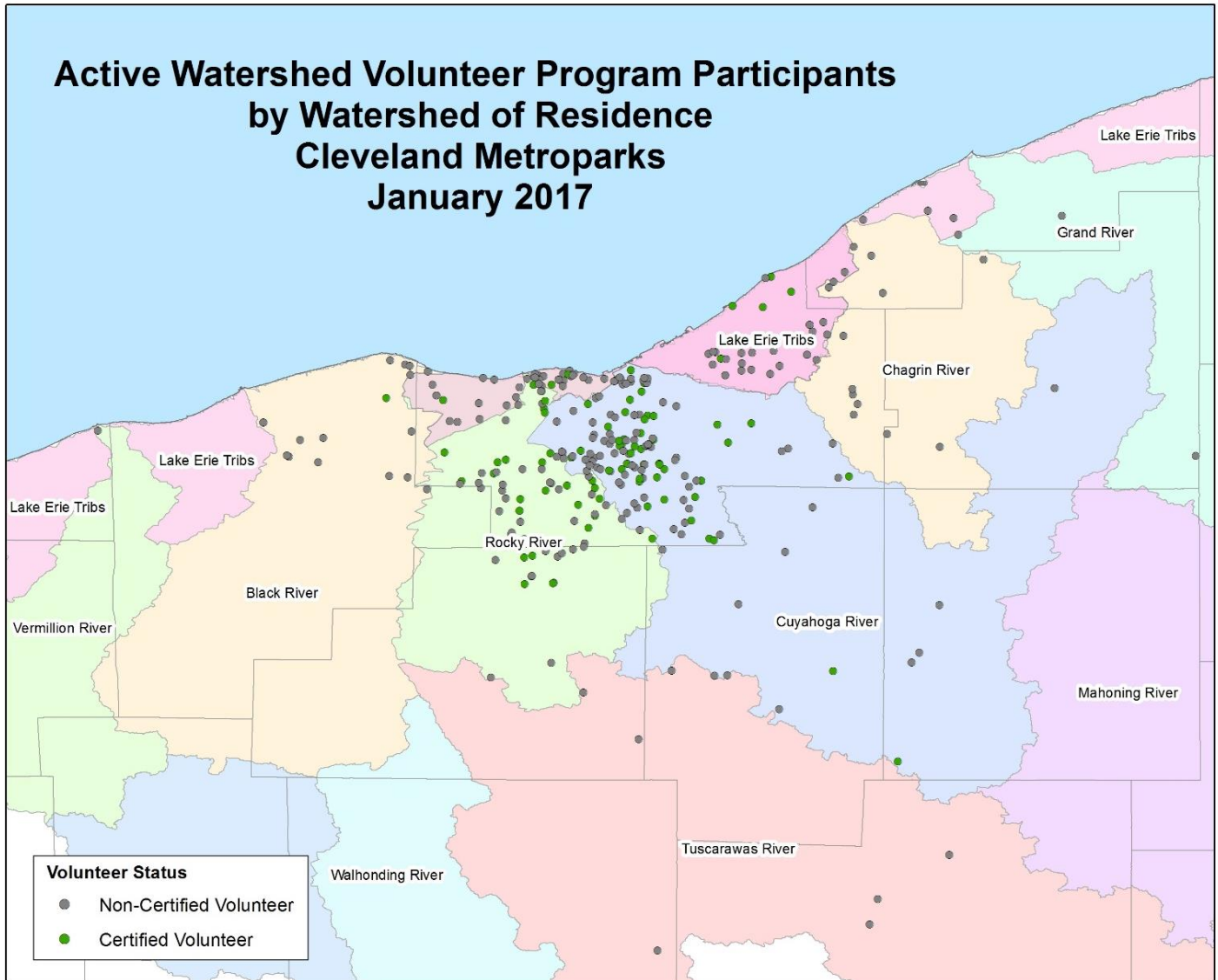


Photo 1. Acacia Tree Planting, Nov 5



Photo 2. Seed Cleaning Workshop, Dec 21

# Active Watershed Volunteer Program Participants by Watershed of Residence Cleveland Metroparks January 2017



## Highlights:

- In December, WVP stewards and staff gathered to celebrate the fifth year of the program. The Founding Watershed Stewards (those active since Sept 2012) and those most active in 2016 were recognized with awards.
  - Most Hours in 2016: Caroline Kelemen (~100 hours)
  - Most Active New Certified Watershed Steward: Teresa Bollinger
  - Branching Out Award: Patrick Henry and Howard Simon
  - Founding Watershed Stewards: Kathleen Bradley, Ellen Brown-Armstrong, Jim Gazda, Carrie Hansen, Millie Harnocz, Ron Koenig, Christine Krol, Al Markoski, Jonny Molnar, Cheryl Mueller, Dave Sagerser



Photo 2. 2016 Most Active Honorees, Dec 14

- Monday MeetUps launched in September 2016. These monthly gatherings bring together WVP participants, general public, college students, and watershed organization members to visit each watershed and learn about the community organization associated with them. Refreshments and networking time are provided.

Attendance was the following:

- Sept with Tinkers' Creek: 16
- Oct with Cuyahoga River: 15
- Nov with Rocky River: 32
- On average 63% of attendees at each MeetUp expressed interested in receiving direct information from the watershed groups.



Photo 3. Monday MeetUp with Rocky River, Nov 21

- Water stewards are in action helping to identify spills in waterways and sharing their watershed moments beyond their volunteer time.

- Certified Watershed Steward Teresa Bollinger located, reported, and helped clean up 6 garage bags of Styrofoam beads from West Creek in September.
- Certified Watershed Stewards Kelly Butauski, Patrick Henry, and Howard Simon wrote articles that were published in local newspapers.
- Watershed stewardship 2017 resolutions were set and shared at our Dec events.
- A social media effort was started with #NEOWaterSteward. On Facebook alone, 4 individuals and 5 partner organizations have posted. **Search #NEOWaterSteward to see what they are sharing.**

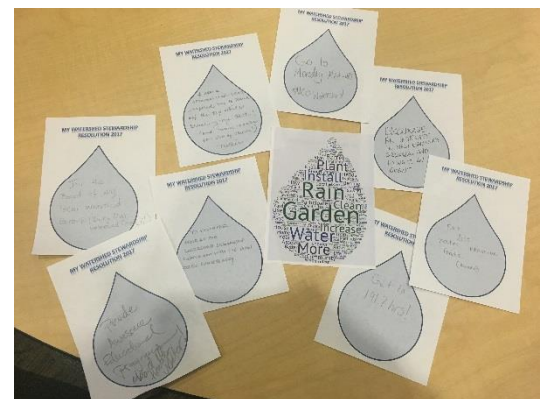


Photo 4. Watershed Stewardship 2017 resolutions, Dec 14

- Day in the Life of Euclid Creek was held in July with 83 attendees exploring life along the creek as well as identifying a grease spill from a nearby restaurant. See more on <https://storify.com/neorsd/all-in-a>. A committee is working on the July 15, 2017 event. Friends of Euclid Creek recognized Cleveland Metroparks with a partnership award for collaboratively hosting this event.

- In addition to Day in the Life of Euclid Creek, WVP was present at several community outreach events including Backyard Biodiversity Bash at the Watershed Stewardship Center, Bioblitz and Lyceum Series at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, NEORS Open House, and Kent State Water Symposium. At these events, WVP staff and volunteers provided information about the program and how to be a NEO Water Steward.

- Lisa Meranti joined the team in June 2016 as the Watershed Volunteer Coordinator after a 7-month vacancy of the position.

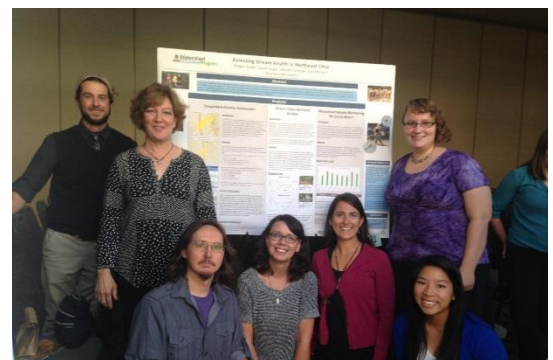


Photo 4. WVP staff and volunteers at Kent State Water Symposium, Oct 6 Monday

*Photos by Cleveland Metroparks  
Update 1.18.17 LMM*