



*Notes from*

# *West Creek Conservancy*

*A land trust serving Greater Cleveland*

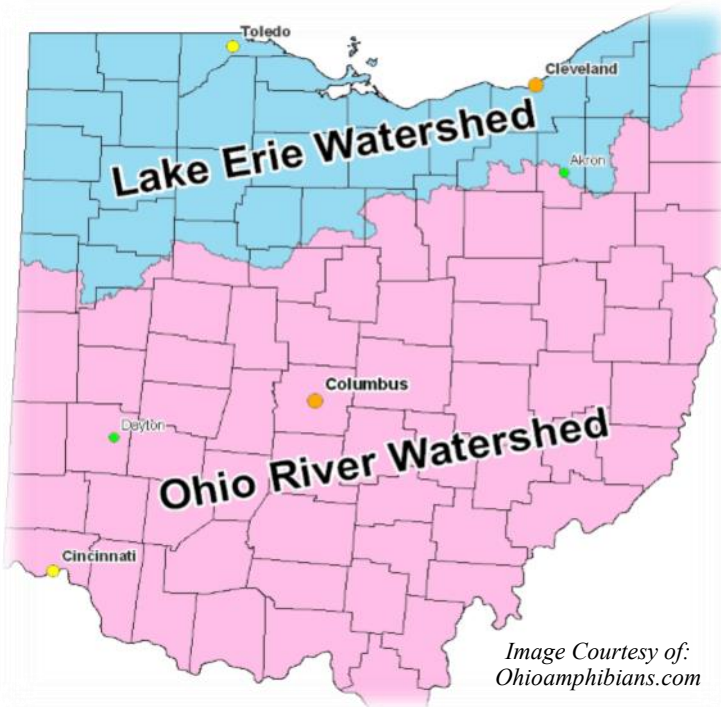
December 2016

## *Lake Erie Starts With Me!*

Odds are good that this title pertains to you. (Check out the watershed map at right to see.) And it means that your daily actions impact the water we drink, wash with, irrigate with, and fish and play in.

To raise awareness of our region's greatest natural resource, a campaign across the Greater Lake Erie region is underway. You may have seen the phrase "Lake Erie Starts Here" or "Lake Erie Starts With Me!" At West Creek Conservancy, we are protecting at home – amongst our houses and neighborhoods - vital stream and wetland systems, forested areas, and open green spaces, all in an effort to improve the health of Lake Erie. In this newsletter, you'll learn more about our actions (made possible with your support), to protect, restore, connect and reclaim important natural areas throughout the Greater Cleveland area!

West Creek Conservancy has protected over 1300 acres in an effort to restore our waterways and drinking water; but we didn't stop there. Preservation is great, but much of our land and waterways need restoration and on-going stewardship. Within our protected



*Image Courtesy of:  
Ohioamphibians.com*

lands, we have implemented large and small scale stream and wetland projects (restoring miles of stream channel - like the West Creek Confluence Project, in Independence), facilitated dozens of stormwater control and green infrastructure projects, and planted thousands of trees. Again, we haven't stopped there. Following restoration, we have the responsibility to maintain these areas, and that could include invasive specie removal/control or additional plantings, among other tactics to help maintain ecological integrity. Last to note is the reclamation of natural areas or areas that were unsustainably developed (like removing a structure in a floodplain or riparian area). Just remember that Lake Erie Starts with Me/You/Us, and consider your daily actions and habits when gulping down a glass of tap water or swimming at our beautiful beaches!

Cheers - Derek Schafer, Executive Director



*Celebrating Lake Erie, Derek Schafer, Executive Director, Jakob Hamlescher, Stewardship Manager and Dawn Petkov, Office Manger*

## Piecing Together Greenspace - West Creek Style

When working in urban land conservation, sometimes the land comes in large chunks, like the original 162 acres that started the West Creek Preserve. Most of the time, however, this is not the case. The West Creek Reservation, for example, includes dozens of parcels linked together like a puzzle totaling to over 300+ acres. The smaller “pieces” obviously add to the larger acreage, but just as important, these are the parcels that help increase access to such larger greenspaces or parks, connecting to neighborhoods, schools, and our regional trail networks.

Beginning in 1997, West Creek Conservancy started to ‘piece’ together the preserve and greenway, which will eventually connect to such regional assets as Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Towpath Trail. The West Creek Reservation is essentially the heart of the Greenway, with connections extending in all directions.

In 2015, West Creek Conservancy purchased properties along Coventry Drive in Parma. Each of the properties had houses located within the riparian area, and they were also on top of a stressed and undersized culvert; Therefore, they were located in an unsustainable location, and commonly experienced flooding and stormwater backups. Acquisition provided a two-fold benefit 1) we were able to remove a significant amount of impervious surface from a stream side area and also lessen pressure on the culvert, as well as potentially enable a stream day-lighting project; 2) the properties were located adjacent to Conservancy-protected land, and acquiring these meant extending the West Creek Greenway.

*Funding was provided through the Clean Ohio Greenspace Program, the Ohio Department of Natural Resource Recreational Trail Program and local supporting contributions.*



### Reclaiming Greenspace

In early May this year, West Creek Conservancy was joined by **DiGeronimo Companies** and **CityYear** to deconstruct the houses prior to demolition. The process of deconstruction involved removing anything that could be reused including windows, doors, lighting fixtures, countertops, flooring and vanities from the three homes and donating them to **Habitat for Humanity** to alleviate the impact the homes would have in landfills. “In working with West Creek Conservancy, we were able to repurpose and salvage a significant amount of materials, which will be used to support our Restore Shop. It was a great opportunity to partner and support both organizations’ missions,” said Habitat for Humanity President/CEO, John Habat.



Demolition was started shortly thereafter by Cleveland Demolition. Replanting and restoration efforts are already underway, with a big thanks to **Great Lakes Brewing Company** who lent a hand on a hot July day to plant trees on the site. West Creek Conservancy would also like to give a special thanks to the City of Parma for its support of this project, and to the neighborhood residents for their patience while we deconstructed the sites and reclaimed the greenspace.

## Insights from a Student Intern

West Creek Conservancy is unique. The employees, the board members and the work we do is all unique. However, as an intern the word unique does not do our experience justice. As a college student we are used to having projects to do, and most of us even have more than one going on at a time. Our due dates are important, but if it is missed it is not the end of the world. Teachers are lenient as long as they know the student is working hard. We work to gain an understanding of concepts and to show the professor we learned something from their lectures.

As an intern at West Creek Conservancy, there are projects and due dates, but the projects we help complete actually change people's lives and improve the world around us. If we miss the deadlines, we may lose important opportunities. When my friends ask me what I do here, I always tell them that West Creek Conservancy acquires land and builds trails or parks. Then they all say that's cool and the conversation ends there. Even though our conversation is over my thoughts are still on the work that I do specifically. I know that I am a valuable member of the team, and I know that my opinions matter when we discuss events or projects.

However, what makes the internship so special for all who have been fortunate to do it is the spontaneity. This job has taught me that things do not always go as planned. We must adjust accordingly and still complete the job. This job is not for those who like knowing exactly what they have to do a week in advance. If that is the type of person you are, this could be an opportunity to gain a new perspective.

All that I know is that it has been the most rewarding experience for myself personally. I love walking into the office every day and being told to go to one of the sites. I love knowing that the work I'm doing is benefiting a great community and that I had a part in it!



- Jon Kuss, 2016 West Creek Conservancy Student Intern

### ***Make a Difference! Join West Creek Conservancy or Renew Today!***

***Your 100% Tax Deductible Contribution Stays in Our Community***

Annual Memberships: New ☐ Renewal ☐

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introductory              | \$35     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland Steward          | \$50     |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Leader       | \$2500   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____               | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to volunteer |          |

Let's continue to protect local natural areas, restore our streams, create hiking and bicycling trails and complete the West Creek Greenway. Your participation makes a difference, and membership donations are tax deductible as charitable contributions.

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**Please make checks payable to:**

West Creek Conservancy  
PO Box 347113  
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or join online via [www.westcreek.org](http://www.westcreek.org)

***For every \$1 donated, 91 cents goes directly to land and water conservation!***

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#### **Staff**

Derek Schafer, Executive Director  
Dawn Petkov, Office Manager, Jakob Hamlescher, Stewardship Manager, Peter Bode, CLE Project Coordinator



## **Local Conservation Notes**

### **Expanding Valley View Woods Park**

In partnership with the Village of Valley View, West Creek Conservancy was able to leverage over \$1.8 million to expand Valley View Woods Park by nearly 100 acres. The effort also led to the protection of an additional 5 acres of wetland, approximately 2 miles of stream, and a massive stand of mature woodland. Funding was provided by the Clean Ohio Greenspace Program and private contributions.



### **Hawthorne Creek in Warrensville Heights**

Within the City of Warrensville Heights, West Creek Conservancy coordinated efforts to preserve 16 acres along Hawthorne Creek, a tributary of Tinker's Creek, protecting over 500 feet of stream, three acres of wetland, and an impressive tract of forested land. The effort was conducted in partnership with Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners and the City of Warrensville Heights, with funding leveraged from the Clean Ohio Greenspace Program and private donations.

### **Tinker's Creek Headwater Wetlands**

In the far upper reaches of Tinker's Creek, in the City of Aurora (Portage County), West Creek Conservancy protected over 75 acres of greenspace, including over 37 acres of high quality wetlands and integral headwater streams. The property also contains high quality forestland and further buffers the impressive 400-acre Aurora Wetland Project.



### **Expanding Cuyahoga Valley National Park**

West Creek Conservancy worked with the Village of Valley View to preserve 26 acres directly adjacent to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, one of our nation's most visited National Parks. The property contains over 4300 feet of stream channel (direct tributary to the Cuyahoga River) and two acres of forested wetland. Funding for the project was leveraged through the Clean Ohio Greenspace Program and private donations.





## **Mill Creek Restoration at Highland Park Golf Course**

Highland Park Golf Course, located in the village of Highland Hills and owned by the City of Cleveland, has some claim to fame. It hosted the Cleveland Open in the mid 1960s and saw greats like Palmer, Nicholas, and Tony Lema. It is where Cleveland native Bob Hope first played golf. But recently, Highland Park has gotten a different sort of attention.

A large-scale habitat restoration occurred at the golf course throughout 2016. Led by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, The City of Cleveland, the Village of Highland Hills, and the Mill Creek Watershed Partnership, a project to restore a degraded and channelized section of Mill Creek began in March 2016.

Restoration measures included:

- ◆ Removing over 3,000 feet of failing stone and gabion walls
- ◆ Burying and protecting 19 irrigation line crossings under the stream bed
- ◆ Protecting one large water main crossing Mill Creek
- ◆ Removing 80 feet of storm culvert (stream daylighting)
- ◆ Partially removing a dam near the downstream end of the project

Project resulted in:

- ◆ Restoring 4,336 feet of Mill Creek
- ◆ Restoring 180 feet of a small tributaries to Mill Creek
- ◆ Reestablishing a vegetated floodplain and riparian area, which involved:
  - ⇒ Creating 6.6 acres of restored floodplain and 8.4 acres of upland vegetated buffer
  - ⇒ Planting a total of 540 trees, 1,500 shrubs and 960 herbaceous perennial plants

Approximately 4,600 live stakes, including 2,070 tree stakes were also planted along Mill Creek in November 2016.

The project was designed and constructed with grant money from the Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program Funding (\$1.35 Million dollars), \$257,000 from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's Regional Stormwater Management Program, and an additional \$97,400 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant from the US Forest Service for tree and shrub plantings (obtained by West Creek Conservancy).

Along with habitat, aesthetic and water quality benefits provided by this project, modeling with i-Tree software applications indicates that the revegetated floodplain will soak up over 3.2 million gallons of stormwater annually at maturity. Similarly, the hydraulic model suggests that the peak discharge downstream for smaller storm events will be delayed by 17 minutes due to the restored stream and floodplain. These results provide evidence that over time the value of the services provided by the restored stream and floodplain will more than pay for the design and engineering costs on this very large project.



# Up! A Creek 2016

West Creek Conservancy's annual conservation gala, *Up! A Creek*, sold out for the 5th year in a row with a capacity crowd at West Creek Reservation on July 9, 2016. We brought the event home this year to the park we helped to create in order to appropriately kick off our 20th year of conservation. Almost 500 friends and supporters enjoyed a tremendous night of celebration featuring a delicious dinner, heaps of amazing raffle baskets, live auctions, plentiful local brew and spirits, and the vivacious music of K Street Band.

Once again MC'd by the inspiring and indefatigable Chuck Germana, Cuyahoga County Councilman, the event raised vital support for West Creek Conservancy's land and water conservation programs throughout Greater Cleveland.

An incredible five live auction prizes and 25 baskets comprised this year's raffle items. Sideboards, a way-too-popular wine toss, and a roving photographer rounded out the options for partygoers throughout the evening. Prizes for the raffles and live auctions were donated by over 150 generous businesses. The celebration was sponsored, in part, by one of our tremendous community partners - Kurtz Bros. We also thank each of the nearly 30 companies and organizations that also generously sponsored the event.

And of course we thank our Event Committee headed by Dawn Petkov and Barbara Hermes for pulling it all together. Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation to Cleveland Metroparks and the folks at the Watershed Stewardship Center. We could not have pulled off the event without your ongoing partnership!

Thanks to everyone for making *Up! A Creek* a success! Your support is appreciated and essential to keeping West Creek Conservancy strong and creating a Greener Greater Cleveland.

See you at *Up! A Creek in 2017*! And if you're itching to get involved, drop us a line!

With shared missions centered on making our good earth better and conserving nature, Kurtz Bros., Inc. has been a proud supporter of the West Creek Conservancy for years. Through their dedication to protection and enhancement of our neighborhoods, the team at West Creek Conservancy has truly helped transform the Greater Cleveland area into a vibrant city! We are honored to have helped along the way and will continue to lend our support for years to come.

- John Kurtz



*Honorary Up! A Creek  
Chair John Kurtz with his lovely  
wife Laura*





## Up! A Creek 2016



A gala supporting local conservation... the many friends of West Creek Conservancy













*Please join us in recognizing these  
Up! A Creek 2016 Friends and  
Generous Contributors*







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## *Up! A Creek 2016 - Prizes & Auction Items Courtesy of:*

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- Augies
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- Beck Center for the Arts
- Behnke Landscape Architecture
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- Great Lakes Brewing Company
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- Watershed Distillery
- Western Reserve Historical Society
- Western Reserve Rowing Association
- Wexler's Tavern and Eatery
- Yard House
- Zoup!



## Tails for Trails 2016

Thank you to ALL who helped make this a great event!

- ◇ OnCall Waterproofing
- ◇ Renewal by Andersen
- ◇ Hersh PR & Marketing
- ◇ McDonald's - Parma Heights
  - ◇ Tekro, LLC
  - ◇ Dogtropolis
- ◇ United Swiss Society of Cleveland
  - ◇ Advance Auto Parts
  - ◇ Krispy Kreme
  - ◇ Tarboosh Eatery
  - ◇ Mr. Chicken



Though a cool and brisk October 9, and at the tail end of a Browns game, over 175 people and paws joined West Creek Conservancy and the Parma Animal Shelter for a dog walk through West Creek Reservation that highlighted an on and off-road route through the original Gannett Woods - the 2nd property protected by West Creek Conservancy!

Due to the generosity of attendees and the above-mentioned sponsors, the evening featured food, refreshments, face painting, pumpkin decorating, games, music, local craft vendors - and the ever popular pet costume parade!

Thanks again for all who supported and attended the event!



## Henninger House FINALLY Gets New Windows and Doors

As of October 2016, all 27 of the Historic Henninger Homestead's windows and doors have been restored and replaced marking a significant phase in its restoration! And on October 22, guests and supporters were invited to view the new installation, as well as take a sneak peak inside the home.

The Henninger Homestead is envisioned to serve as a trailhead along the proposed West Creek Greenway, a 20-mile network of new trails and conservation lands connecting the Towpath Trail to several communities in south-central Cuyahoga County. To maintain landmark status, all the new windows and doors at the Homestead met historic requirements.



Our sincere appreciation is extended to the City of Parma and Mayor DeGeeter whose partnership enabled this important phase of restoration! Through our coordinated partnership with the City, West Creek Conservancy obtained funding through the Ohio History Connection; generous local donations were used as match to leverage the grant. Thank you to ALL of our window and door sponsors:

Robert & Lynn Kindel  
Frank, Candy & Family  
Stephen & Tanya Kindel  
Terry Greathouse  
Joe & Suzanne Hollo  
Ohio Savings Bank

Bill & Holly Brooks  
Glenn & Barbara Kindel  
Emil - Erika Wagner & Family  
Dr. Vincent J. Vohnout  
Chuck & Anne Germana  
Clayton & Bobbie Buckland  
Mayor Tim DeGeeter, Pam, Jack, & Molly

Eric & Theresa Kindel  
Rudi - Barbara Hermes & Family  
Mr. Van M. Vohnout  
Barbara Hrdlicka & Family  
Lucien & Janine Dreckman  
G. Scott & Lenore Henninger

In Memory of Karen L. Lahl  
In Memory of Dr. C. Sherlock McGill

But...our job is NOT done yet - and if you'd like to be a part of this historic project, West Creek Conservancy is looking to complete the window and door restoration on the barn.

**- The goal is \$7,500, and to date, we've leveraged \$1,800. ONLY \$5,700 to go!**

Or, if you'd like sponsor a brick on the plaza that encompasses the Historic Landmark sign, there are several left. For either opportunity, please visit: <http://westcreek.org/product/henninger-house/>  
Or call Dawn at 216-749-3720 ext 10



Continued from front page....for every \$20.00 donation towards West Creek Conservancy's Stewardship Fund, you get a *Lake Erie Starts With Me* t-shirt!  
Get yours today - be a champion for Lake Erie!



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Medium	
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Size	Quantity
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Size	Quantity
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Size	Quantity
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Size	Quantity
Small	
Medium	
Large	
X-Large	

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Shipping (\$5 fee) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Item can be shipped (in 5-7 business days) for \$5 *or* picked up at the West Creek Conservancy office by contacting Dawn Petkov at 216-749-3720 ext.10 to arrange pick up.

\*\* Your donation goes directly to the preservation and restoration of vital urban greenspace in the West Creek watershed and the Greater Cleveland area.

Please make checks payable to **West Creek Conservancy** and mail order form and payment to:

West Creek Conservancy  
P.O. Box 347113  
Cleveland, OH 44134

For federal income tax purposes, you can deduct as a charitable contribution your donation, less its fair market value of the T-shirt.  
The estimated fair market value of each shirt is \$10.

## *Notes from West Creek Conservancy*

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### **Why Volunteer?**



I think everyone should volunteer. Somewhere. Anywhere. Whatever your passion is, there is a group out there that shares your philosophy and enthusiasm. My passion is conservation. What draws me to West Creek Conservancy is the daily positive effects volunteer and staff efforts have on the community, the magnitude of progress that's made on a yearly basis, and the love of the land that everyone seems to have. It impresses me. Having two young children, time is limited and attention spans are short. The opportunities that West Creek Conservancy has allowed us to volunteer as a family for 30-40 minutes and still make an impact. We choose to be part of the solution and teach our children that even volunteering in short increments does matter. They can see and feel the immediate gratification of having picked up litter from an empty lot or pulling invasive plants from a patch of dirt. For kids, that's important. As parents we are setting the foundation of service-minded and earth-conscious children.

– Diane Ward, volunteer extraordinaire



*West Creek Conservancy asks that when you are finished with this newsletter either pass it on to someone else, or recycle it.*