



Notes from

Fall-Winter 2014/2015

West Creek Conservancy

A Land Trust Serving Greater Cleveland

Watersheds: a regional approach to healthy water

A watershed:

an area of land that drains into a common body of water (creek, river, lake).

Most of us live within the Lake Erie Watershed, more specifically within the Cuyahoga, Rocky, or Chagrin River Watershed or possibly some other one that drains directly into Lake Erie, like Euclid Creek, Cahoon Creek, or Doan Brook. But whichever it is, we all live in a watershed no matter where we are.

This year we saw Toledo crippled with no drinking water for over 400,000 people. Imagine if that happened here and the entire Cleveland area was stripped of clean drinking water. It's all the same watershed - Lake Erie.



Yes, we have monitoring systems, regulatory entities, and live data at our fingertips, but this does not eliminate the problem. Lake Erie starts at our drains, our lawns, and our driveways. What goes on and in them will find its way to our lake - and into our drinking water. Yes, some sources are larger than others, but we ALL contribute.

It is imperative to realize and then respect the connectivity of our daily actions to Lake Erie. From flushing medication down the toilet, or running a load of laundry during a large rainstorm, to throwing grass clippings into a creek, or applying (usually over applying) fertilizers and pesticides to our lawns - it ALL impacts our local waterways, and in the end - Lake Erie.



West Creek Conservancy is strengthening Greater Cleveland by: protecting and reclaiming floodplains and riparian/natural areas, allowing them to breach their banks naturally; restoring degraded streams to enhance ecological vitality and enable fish passage; and retrofitting the built environment to allow natural functions.

Because what we do on the land determines what we have done to the waters, West Creek Conservancy has taken a land conservation-focus to watershed restoration. This includes not just protecting what greenspace remains, but also reclaiming our waterways from unsustainable development (sadly, a retroactive approach that is often costly).



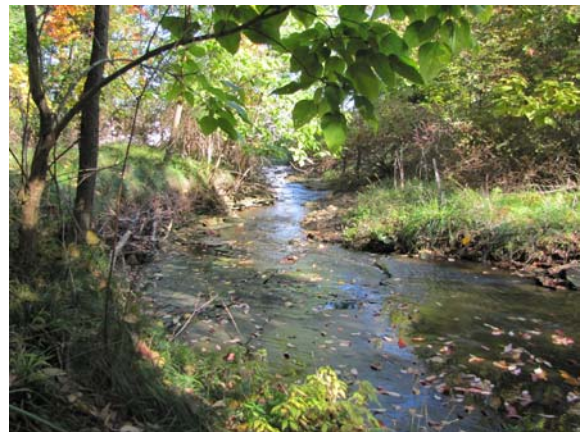
2015 is the Year of Clean Water, so let's not only celebrate the precious resources we have, but let us each do our part to protect our local streams, creeks, woodlands, and other natural areas! Get involved with a local watershed group, join the discussion, and become a part of Lake Erie watershed stewardship!

CONSERVATION



Reclaiming the Cuyahoga River: With generous support provided by the Clean Ohio Greenspace Fund, Cuyahoga County Natural Resources Assistance Council, and the Village of Brooklyn Heights, West Creek Conservancy conserved a 22-acre property, having 1/2 mile frontage along the Cuyahoga River! This acquisition is helping to create a conservation corridor along the Crooked River, a future extension of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation.

Saving Urban Wetlands along Euclid Creek: In partnership with Friends of Euclid Creek, Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (CSWCD), and the City of Highland Heights, West Creek Conservancy protected an beautiful 12-acre property adjacent to Highland Heights Park (off Bishop Road, near Hawthorn Drive). The property is graced with high quality streams and wetlands, as well as a dense stand of woodlands, providing important canopy cover for streams and other habitats and riparian area. Many thanks to the generous support from the Clean Ohio Greenspace Fund, Friends of Euclid Creek, the City of Highland Heights, and CSWCD.



West Creek - Big Creek Greenway Connector: West Creek Conservancy successfully protected a 7-acre property off State Road (near Dentlzer Rd.) in the City of Parma, which will serve as a future connection from West Creek Reservation to Stearns Homestead and the Ridge Road Commercial Corridor. The property contains multiple high quality headwater streams of Big Creek, and a prominent stand of woodlands. Funding for this important acquisition was generously provided by the Clean Ohio Greenspace Fund.

Restoring Baldwin Creek: In partnership with Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District and the City of North Royalton, West Creek Conservancy acquired a small section of Baldwin Creek (a tributary of Rocky River), off Edgerton and Bennett Roads, adjacent to additional protected lands owned by the City. Currently, the site's stream and floodplain are being restored to improve bank stability, reduce erosion, and increase connection of the stream to the floodplain and riparian area. Over 600 plants and trees will also be planted on the site, along with a riparian/floodplain seed mix.



UPDATE

Protecting Baldwin Creek: Thanks to the generous land donation from the Oriold Family, West Creek Conservancy is now protecting a small, but special reach of Baldwin Creek in the City of North Royalton. The property contains a system of braided stream channels creating unique stream-riparian habitat. Due to over-development of the Baldwin Creek watershed, a large investment will be necessary to restore its natural function. These small reaches are footholds that will enable larger preservation initiatives.



Lake Link Trail: West Creek Conservancy is proud to have a role in the Lake Link Trail, connecting the Towpath Trail to Lake Erie through the Flats of Cleveland. In 2010, West Creek Conservancy worked with an enthusiastic and superbly generous landowner in the Flats to protect a critical parcel of land that will provide the future connectivity of the Scranton Flats Project (a portion of the Towpath), to land that will be incorporated into the Lake Link Trail. This linchpin one acre property with aerial rights connects to LANDstudio property on the adjacent side of a short line rail. In October of 2014, West Creek Conservancy was happy to facilitate adding this property with aerial rights into the trail system, which will be under Cleveland Metroparks management.

Bear Creek Reclamation: In collaboration with Tinkers Creek Watershed Partnership, the County Land Bank and the City of Bedford, West Creek Conservancy successfully protected a 3-acre area along Bear Creek (a heavily developed tributary of Tinkers Creek) in the City of Bedford (off Columbus Road). The site contains healthy and accessible floodplain and riparian area, as well as a 400-foot healthy reach of Bear Creek. Importantly to note, with the generous assistance of the County Land Bank, four dilapidated structures will be removed from the site, two of which are within restorable riparian areas.



Conserving West Creek Headwaters: West Creek Conservancy continues to protect land throughout West Creek's 9-mile corridor, as well as along its many tributaries. Working with a variety of partners, the Conservancy has protected nearly 2000 feet of headwater stream within the watershed. These properties will also allow continuation of the West Creek Greenway and Trail System. We eagerly look forward to expanding of West Creek Reservation, and its trail linkages throughout the Greater Cleveland community!

IN MEMORY OF DAVE LINCHECK



On July 15, 2014, the northeast Ohio environmental community lost a dedicated conservation leader who was one of the founding members of West Creek Conservancy - David M. Lincheck. "Dave's commitment to protecting our natural resources made him extraordinary," said West Creek Conservancy Board Chairman, Jeff Lennartz.

Over the past seventeen years, Dave worked with city leaders, agencies, organizations and citizens. He was Chairman of the Parma Park Advisory Committee, Co-Chair of the Northeast Ohio Watershed Council, and a member of the Friends of Big Creek Advisory Committee. In 2001, Dave was honored by the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District as *Conservationist-of-the-Year* for his passion to conserve natural resources in the West Creek watershed. He served as Assistant Director, Director, and then as Executive Director of West Creek Conservancy.

A small grass-roots group of citizens that included Dave Lincheck recognized the value of preserving treasured greenspaces in Parma, and founded the Conservancy in 1997 when a section of the West Creek Watershed was threatened with development. The expanding conservation group led the drive to protect the original 160 acres of land that became the West Creek Preserve. Other contiguous natural areas were added leading to the creation of the Cleveland Metroparks West Creek Reservation.

Dave pursued the ongoing development of the West Creek Greenway Trail, a network of trails connecting West Creek Reservation with neighborhoods, nearby parks, and ultimately with the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and Cuyahoga Valley National Park. His interest in trails prompted him to join conservationist Bob Gardin of Friends of Big Creek, initiating and co-chairing the Biennial Greater Cleveland Trails and Greenway Conference in 2010, held again in 2012 and more recently in June 2014.

Before the Conservancy had a name, Dave and his wife Pam volunteered their time and efforts, even convening organizational meetings around their dining room table. Dave worked tirelessly to preserve remaining open spaces and woodlands from urban encroachment on critical fresh water resources, contributing to enhanced lives for citizens of many communities. Dave is survived by his wife, and daughter, Theresa.

* * * * *

Memorial Bench - In Dave's memory, West Creek Conservancy is dedicating a memorial bench at West Creek Reservation. Seed money has been provided to cover part of the cost but additional support is needed. If you would like to make a donation, please make your check payable to West Creek Conservancy and write "Bench" in the memo line.

Send to:

West Creek Conservancy, PO Box 347113, Cleveland OH 44134

Contact us if you have any questions at 216-749-3720, ext 10.



Growing on Past Successes: 2014 Greenways Conference

The 3rd Biennial Greater Cleveland Trails & Greenways Conference was held June 12, 2014, in Mayfield Village. First organized and co-sponsored by Friends of Big Creek and West Creek Conservancy in 2010, this year's theme was Pathways to Healthy Communities. It was the third and largest gathering of its kind, drawing some 250 city planners, community activists, foundation officials, trail advocates, and others from around northeast Ohio for a day to share ideas, discover new tools, and set the stage to transform plans and concepts into successfully completed projects.



Keynote Mark Fenton jumpstarts the conference

Positive Outcomes from the Village

Members of the host community of Mayfield Village, led by Mayor Bruce Rinker, were wonderful partners of the Conference. Their collective spirit and energy were integral to the success of the event. The Mayfield Village Hilton Garden Inn also proved to be a fine venue, thanks to owner Nick Mancini. Although it was still under construction during the Conference, the grand opening of Mayfield Village's new trail on Saturday, October 25 speaks to the community's commitment to improving health as well as to providing a beautiful and ecologically sound environment for residents and businesses alike.



Trail advocates at the Trail Awards Show

Developmental Focus

The 2014 Conference focused on financial and ecological challenges, engineering techniques, and the need to incorporate public health into trail and greenway development. The engineers who designed the Mayfield Village trail were on hand to serve as guides while multiple groups of attendees participated in trail walks.



Walking tour session of the Mayfield Village Trail

Raising the Health Profile

In order to attract and inspire attendees, a nationally-recognized health and trail enthusiast was chosen as keynote speaker. Mark Fenton (former US Olympian, and National Walkable Communities expert) energized the attendees and successfully linked positive health outcome data to trail development. His message contained equal parts fact, humor, direction and inspiration.

Attendee Engagement

After Mr. Fenton's dynamic keynote address and the informative plenary session, attendees were able to choose from three concurrent sessions. Mayor Rinker's informative lunch session highlighted his experiences in trail development.

Broader Financial Support

For the first time, grant funding and financial sponsors were obtained to offset the keynote speaker and conference expenses. We sincerely thank The George Gund Foundation, First Energy, and Forest City for their generous support of the Conference.

Post-Game Award Show

Immediately following the formal training sessions in the afternoon, attendees were invited to celebrate at the Second Greater Cleveland Trails & Greenways Awards and Recognition Ceremony at the Mayfield Village Hall. More than 30 trail projects were detailed across several categories and twelve earned recognition as winners. Thanks to the generosity of several food operations and distributors, attendees enjoyed complimentary food and libations, adding to the festive atmosphere.

In Remembrance

Unfortunately, the positive experiences of this year's conference were overshadowed by the loss of our dear friend and founding planning member, Dave Lincheck. His sudden and unexpected passing reminds us of his devotion to the preservation of greenways, his commitment to trail development and his relationships with family and friends. Many of the successes appreciated by our members today would not have been possible without Dave's unwavering dedication. In Dave's memory, the Greater Cleveland Trails & Greenways Planning Committee will contribute to the creation of a scholarship benefitting deserving community members and trail advocates.

West Creek Confluence: A Pictorial History



The West Creek Confluence: where a creek meets a crooked river.

Timeline:

- 2007 West Creek Conservancy acquires the 10-acre property (made possible with support from the Clean Ohio Fund, Ohio EPA, Scenic Byways Program and the City of Independence)
- 2008 West Creek Conservancy demolishes a warehouse, bank, and pole barn, and removes the associated parking lot (made possible with support from The George Gund Foundation and the City of Independence)
- 2009-2012 West Creek Conservancy leverages restoration funding; Design/engineering commenced with the City and NEORSD (funding provided by Ohio EPA WRRSP Program and OEPA 319 Program)
- 2013 Restoration of the 10-acre site begins; over 80000 cubic yards of fill are removed from the site, new stream bed, wetlands, floodplain, and riparian area created; over 10000 plants/trees installed
- 2014 Restoration ends; additional plants/trees installed



Henninger House: Facelift Begins

Henninger House, the 1849 stone structure at Old Rockside and Broadview Roads in Parma, is taking yet another step on its transformative journey from historic landmark to public trailhead on the West Creek Greenway. With MANY thanks to several generous donors, the historic homestead will be getting a facelift. Commencing, Spring 2015 on the north side of the house Jera Construction will be replacing the windows and doors. Those on the west side, facing Broadview Road, will then be replaced, then the remainder.

To ensure the historic integrity of the homestead, both the windows and doors will be replaced in accordance to US Department of Interior historic standards.

We want to especially THANK all who have donated to date. We do apologize for the delay, but we're moving ahead now. Your patience is greatly appreciated! If you have not yet donated, but wish to do so, please visit westcreek.org or call the office: 216-749-3720, ext.10.

There are many ways to direct your contributions, whether you're interested in windows, doors, or future phases of restoration!

Show Your Support with a Commemorative Brick

Available in 4x8" and 8x8"

***Highlight your group or business
Honor friends or family - Celebrate a special occasion***

You can do any of the above *AND* show the community that you support local conservation when you order an engraved commemorative brick from West Creek Conservancy. Your engraved brick will be installed in the attractive plaza surrounding the Ohio Historical Marker and flag at Henninger Homestead in Parma. Contact West Creek Conservancy at 216-749-3720 ext 10 for an order form to select the size of your brick and indicate your wording, or go online at westcreek.org/how-to-help.



2014 Blues for Greens - Another Success!



West Creek Conservancy's conservation gala, *Blues for Greens*, sold out for the 2nd year in a row with a capacity crowd at St. Michael's Woodside on March 8th, 2014. Over 400 friends and supporters of the Conservancy enjoyed the night of celebration at the new venue which featured a delicious buffet dinner, heaps of raffle baskets, and music that was more than infectious. In fact the dance floor could barely contain the merry souls (and soles) moved to boogie to the tenacious beat of Colin Dussault and his Blues Project Band. Musical entertainment began earlier in the evening with performances by Tri-C's Western Campus Chorale and Winds of Change.



Once again MC'd by the inspiring and indefatigable Chuck Germana, Cuyahoga County District 4 Councilman, the event raised vital support for the Conservancy's land conservation programs in Greater Cleveland.

An incredible 30 baskets comprised this year's Chinese Raffle. Sideboards, silent auction, and a photo booth rounded out the options for partygoers throughout the evening. Prizes for the raffles and silent auctions came courtesy of over 150 generous businesses. The event was sponsored in part by one of our tremendous community partners – the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. We also thank the nearly 30 companies and organizations that generously sponsored tables or provided food for the event.



Please join us in recognizing these generous contributors:

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (Event Sponsor), C&K Industrial Services, Chagrin Valley Engineering, Cleveland Crops, CSA Group, Cuyahoga Community College, Environmental Design Group, Enviroscience, Flats Industrial Railroad, Forest City, Gary Sparano, GPD Group, Great Lakes Brewing Company, Hylant Group, Innovative Title & Escrow Services, Kurtz Bros., Mark Haynes Construction, Meaden & Moore, On-Call Waterproofing, Parma Area Chamber of Commerce, River Reach Construction, RiverWorks, Spring Hill Farm, URS Corporation, WalTams Catering and Window Nation.



JOIN US IN 2015!

WHEN: Saturday, February 28, 2015

WHERE: St. Michael's Woodside, 5025 E. Mill Rd.
Broadview Heights, OH 44147

TICKETS: \$60 per person
\$75 per person for premium ticket

\$5 OFF per ticket if purchased before February 1st

Tickets can be purchased at

www.2015bluesforgreens.eventbrite.com

Proudly Sponsored in Part by:



**Northeast Ohio
Regional Sewer District**

FOREST CITY

**ON-CALL
waterproofing**

**INNOVATIVE
Title & Escrow Services LLC**



2014 Tails for Trails



West Creek Conservancy thanks everyone who made our 3rd annual Tails for Trails on August 17, 2014 a huge success! Over 100 people and their best friends shared a beautiful Sunday afternoon at West Creek Reservation for a trail walk to raise funds for West Creek Conservancy's conservation and trail work. Attendees enjoyed a cookout, dog demonstration, shopping with vendors and crafters, photo booth, kids crafts, and raffles. Thank you to everyone that participated, volunteered, sponsored, donated, and exhibited at the event. A special thanks to Chris at Woof Wise for the dog trick demonstration.

Sponsors

Cuyahoga Community College
Forest City
Good Nature Organic Lawn Care
Heart to Heart Pet Grooming
Hersh PR & Marketing
Hummingbird Pointe Apartments
Midtown Towers Apartments
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
On Call Waterproofing
The DePiero Family
Vince Hrobat Insurance Agency

Donors

Mr. Chicken
Aladdin's Eatery

Vendors

Citizens Committee for the Lakewood Animal Shelter
Cleveland APL
Cleveland Dog Walk
Costco Wholesale
Cuyahoga Community College
D's Decadence
Good Nature Organic Lawn Care
Heart to Heart Pet Grooming
On Call Waterproofing
Parma Animal Shelter
Pawsitively Savvy Grooming & Petsitting
Scanlan Woodworking
Thirty One Gifts - Megan Archibald
Three Sisters Urban Garden
Tupperware – Virginia Oravis



Regional Stormwater Program Update

Improving the quality of our waterways, and ultimately Lake Erie is a monumental undertaking, that will be accomplished only through a regional approach. The **Regional Stormwater Management Program** of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS D) is designed to implement projects that reduce or mitigate the runoff from our streets, rooftops, parking lots, and roadways. Stormwater is not only a major source of flooding, but it's also a high contributor to the pollution of our drinking and recreational waters.

In September 2013, the Ohio Eighth District Court of Appeals ruled against the NEORS D in finding that, among other things, the NEORS D does not have the authority under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119 or its Charter to enact and implement the Regional Stormwater Management Program under Title V, or to collect its stormwater fee.

NEORS D appealed the ruling to the Ohio Supreme Court, arguing that it had the authority to manage stormwater and under that authority can charge a fee for such services. That appeal was accepted in February and NEORS D presented oral arguments before the Supreme Court on September 9, 2014. NEORS D is now awaiting a final ruling.

For additional information, please see:

Court rules against #StormwaterProgram, environment and customers will remain the focus of our next steps
<http://neorsd.blogspot.com/2013/09/breaking-court-rules-against.html>

Regional #StormwaterProgram headed to Ohio Supreme Court
<http://neorsd.blogspot.com/2014/02/breaking-regional-stormwaterprogram.html>

Supreme Court sets September 9 date to hear #StormwaterProgram case
<http://neorsd.blogspot.com/2014/07/breaking-supreme-court-sets-september-9.html>



Catching Stormwater so Lake Erie Doesn't Have to!

The municipalities of Brooklyn Heights and Independence have taken proactive measures to reduce stormwater runoff from local roadways and parking lots, which would otherwise drain to the Cuyahoga River. With support from the OEPA 319 Program, Ohio EPA Surface Water Improvement Program, and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, permeable pavement raingardens and bioretention cells have been installed at Dalepoint Cul-de-sac, Brooklyn Heights City Hall, and Village Park.

Together, the installations treat over 40,000 square feet of pervious surface.

A huge THANK YOU to Watershed Volunteer Program folks for helping with the planting!!!



Watershed Stewardship Center Corner:

A Work in Progress: If you have visited the Watershed Stewardship Center at West Creek Reservation lately you may have noticed some active construction. Currently the bioretention cell in the main center parking area is being overhauled to improve function and appearance. Bioretention cells treat stormwater runoff through interaction with a plant and soil system that allows natural processes to remove pollutants and slow runoff. The original bioretention cell was too shallow to provide effective treatment of the parking lot runoff. The re-design has a much deeper soil profile and is consistent with current State of Ohio guidance. The bioretention area will be planted with sedges and shrubs which are more deer-resistant and easier to maintain than the original plantings. Look for additional improvements around the center as we continue to learn from and improve the function of the stormwater practices.



Watershed Volunteer Program: The Watershed Volunteer Program (WVP) has had over 780 people participate in respective events since the fall of 2012, with 29 people becoming newly certified Watershed Stewards in 2014 for a total of 66 Watershed Stewards since 2012. This year the WVP has had 72 events to date including learning modules, restoration events, and monitoring programs. Recently, a US Geologic Survey representative came to talk about USGS data and demonstrated how the West Creek gauge at West Ridgewood Drive operates. The WVP is increasing its reach having more events on the eastside including restoration tours, plantings, trainings, seed collecting, and lectures. A hallmark event this fall was A Day in the Life of Euclid Creek in which volunteers and partner organizations (Friends of Euclid Creek, NEORSD and Sierra Club) helped take a snapshot of Euclid Creek through water quality monitoring. Residents are encouraged to explore these other watersheds to learn more about watershed projects and challenges.

Project, Programs, and People Served: It's been an amazing year at the Watershed Stewardship Center, and with the leadership of Cleveland Metroparks and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, it's poised to grow even greater!

Within the last 10 months, there have been over 44,000 people through the doors of the Center! Over 20,000 of those were directly involved in a program, hike, tour, or other related activity (plant or wildlife study, stormwater control tour, etc.). The Center has also played host to a number of professional development sessions and trainings: BMP/Stormwater control practice installation, operation, and maintenance; stream mechanics and hydrology; credible water quality data collection; biodiversity and research symposiums, among others.

Additionally....we hope you've been able to enjoy the larger public events at the Center. More recently, we enjoyed World Water Day and the Backyard Biodiversity Bash. We're looking forward to 2015 special events, so keep your eyes open and make sure you're on the email/mailling lists. We all look forward to your next visit!

**Many thanks to the Cleveland Metroparks and NEORSD personnel
who make this Center a regional resource!**

Volunteering for Conservation!

May 10, 2014: *RiverSweep* at West Creek brought out over 250 volunteers from the community! Students from Normandy High School, local Girl and Boy Scouts, Northeast Ohio Chapter of Hazardous Materials Managers, Tri-C students, First Energy and General Motors employees, church groups and a strong contingent of West Creek Conservancy members all joined together for a blitz of activities. While some cleared the stream and woodland corridor of trash, others removed a couple acres of invasive species, cleared a trail section, and planted willow stakes along a restoration project! It was a hugely productive day that brought out some of the most enthusiastic supporters!



A special THANKS to Normandy High School students/faculty; General Motors, First Energy, Giant Eagle, and Marcos Pizza for helping to make it a great event!

October 11, 2014: Over 40 volunteers came together at the recently protected Redstone Reserve in Highland Heights. Over 400 plants were installed on the property to increase biodiversity, enhance riparian habitat, and stabilize areas that were otherwise devoid of vegetation; a hefty amount of debris was also removed!. Volunteers included those from the neighborhood, local National Honor Society Students, West Creek Conservancy, Friends of Euclid Creek, and a local Girl Scout troop.



A special THANKS to: the City of Highland Heights, Friends of Euclid Creek, Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District and our outstanding volunteer: Joe Phillips, with Hollyscapes!

October 18, 2014: Approximately 35 volunteers came out to assist the Cuyahoga ReLeaf Program, in planting trees to stabilize the banks of Mill Creek, within the City of Highland Hills; this is near the creek's headwaters. The volunteers began by digging large holes and loosening up the roots of the oak trees to prepare them for planting. Before inserting the trees the surrounding soil was mixed with compost to establish a fertile growing medium for the young trees. The trunks were encased in plastic tubing and mulch was applied to prevent weeds from establishing next to the growing trees. In all, volunteers ended up planting over 100 trees!



A special THANKS to ACTrees, CSX, Kurtz Bros, and all the volunteers!

Images of an Urban Watershed

What does an urban watershed look like to you?

We're putting the call out for photos - YOUR photos of our urban watersheds!

We'll be collecting these images, as many as are submitted, from December 2014 to December 2015; capturing all seasons and Cleveland weather conditions. Images will then be on display for all to see and will additionally be highlighted at the Watershed Stewardship Center, other local venues, as well as West Creek Conservancy's 2016 Annual Meeting

Submissions can be sent to info@westcreek.org

Questions welcomed via this address as well.

Looking forward to seeing what *an urban watershed means to you...*



West Creek Conservancy

Membership Referral Program



For a
Greener
Greater Cleveland

MEMBERSHIP REFERRAL PROGRAM

Welcome to West Creek Conservancy's Membership Referral Program! No one is better qualified to spread the word about West Creek Conservancy than our valued members. This program gives you the opportunity to refer family, friends, co-workers and neighbors to West Creek Conservancy! With each new membership from your referral, your name will be entered into our quarterly drawing for great prizes. Got your name on the form on page 19, and pass it along!

- You must be an active member to participate. Please contact Dawn Petkov at 216-749-3720 ext. 10 or dpetkov@westcreek.org to verify.
- "New" member refers to someone that has never been a member or someone who has not been an active member for the past 24 months.
- Membership ***must be received by:***

| <u>Quarter</u> | <u>Referral Due Date</u> | <u>Drawing Date</u> |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Jan-March</i> | <i>April 10th</i> | <i>April 15th</i> |
| <i>April-June</i> | <i>July 10th</i> | <i>July 15th</i> |
| <i>July-Sept.</i> | <i>Oct. 10th</i> | <i>Oct. 15th</i> |
| <i>Oct.-Dec.</i> | <i>Jan. 10th</i> | <i>Jan. 15th</i> |

Need a Speaker for Your Group in 2015?
Would you like to tour a restoration project?
Looking for a company/group volunteer day?

Does your club, business, civic group, library, church, or school need a speaker? West Creek Conservancy offers informative presentations that give the latest news on conservation projects.

Give us a call at 216-749-3720 ext 10

Hemlock Creek Trail: A Project History

Timeline:

- 1997 West Creek Conservancy starts coordinating efforts to develop an approximately 21-mile recreational trail system, including the West Creek Greenway Trail that extends through the communities of Brooklyn Heights, Independence, Parma and Seven Hills and connects with Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP). The West Creek Greenway will join the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail at two points. It is also envisioned to connect neighborhoods, business districts, historical landmarks and other public parks and recreational amenities such as CVNP, the City of Independence's Elmwood Park, West Creek Reservation, Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation, Brooklyn Heights Park and Henninger House.
- 2005 In coordination with West Creek Conservancy during the development of the West Creek Greenway Trail Master Plan, the City of Independence obtains project funding for the Hemlock Trail Segment as a City of Independence High Priority Project in the 2006 SAFETEA-LU Transportation Bill as Congressional Earmark No. 490 for \$2.0 million.
- 2006 Cleveland Metroparks is awarded Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative grant from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency to study and recommend the most feasible and effective trail route for those areas of the Greenway Trail. This results in the completion of the *West Creek Greenway Trail Master Plan*
- 2007 West Creek Greenway Trail Master Plan is finalized and identifies a series of trails that interconnect the four communities of Brooklyn Heights, Parma, Seven Hills, and Independence. The Master Plan defines a trail and greenway system that forms a continuous 19-mile loop connecting to the Towpath Trail. The Master Plan identified the 1.7-mile long Hemlock Trail which connects the City of Independence's Elmwood Park across the Cuyahoga River to the Towpath Trail in the Village of Valley View.
- 2014 The Environmental Document required by Federal Highway Administration and ODOT for final engineering design is approved by ODOT and FHWA. The City of Independence commences with design/engineering of the Hemlock Creek Trail connector, which will be one of CVNP's largest community connectors!!!

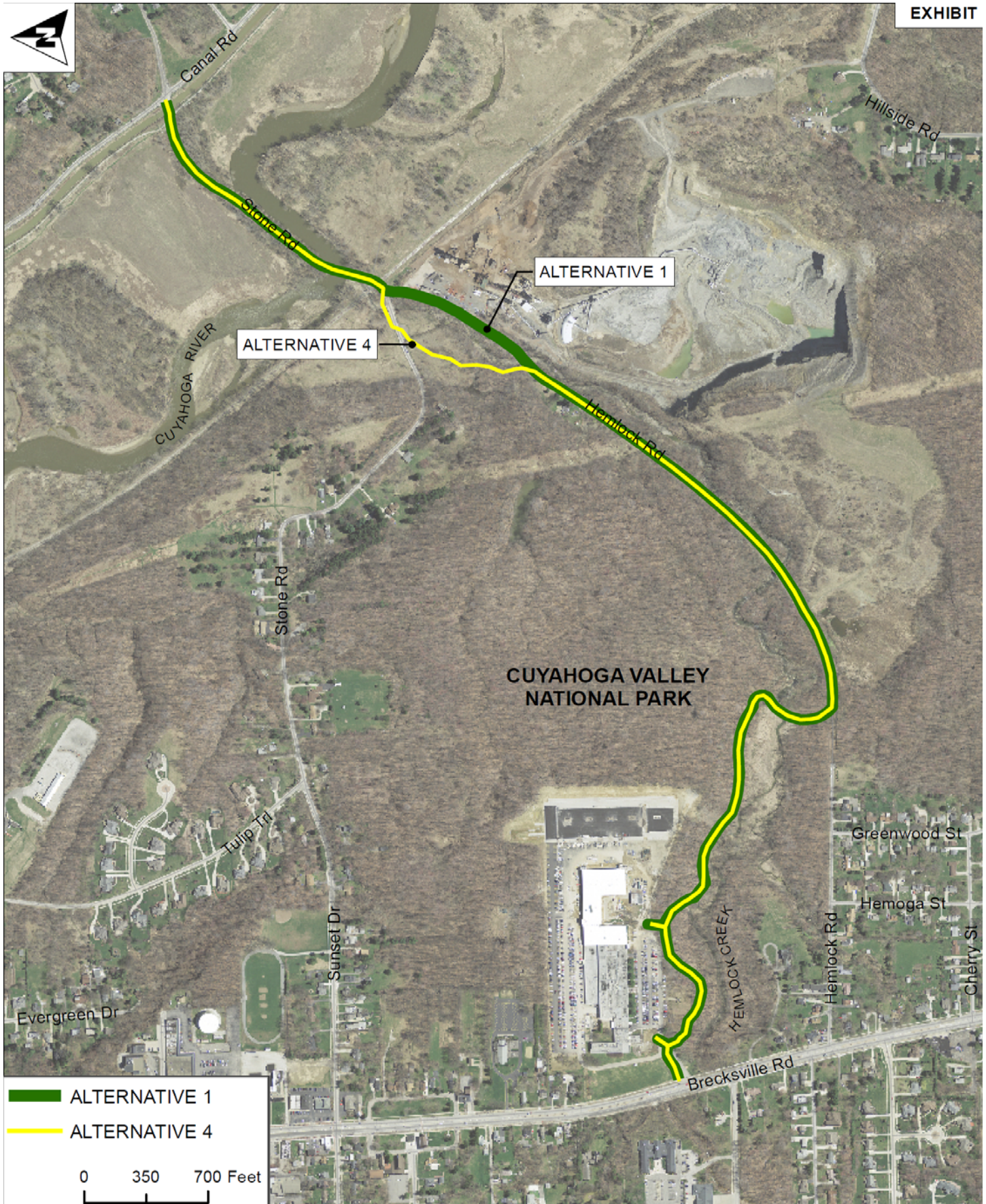
Project Benefits:

- ◆ Connects the City of Independence directly to the Towpath Trail and 110 miles of heritage greenway extending from Lake Erie to Zanesville, Ohio now identified as the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway
- ◆ Provides additional access to green space, through the development of connector trails, particularly those identified in the West Creek Greenway Trail Master Plan, integrating the Hemlock Trail into regional bicycle network/plan, which will provide bicycle connectivity throughout Greater Cleveland, strengthening the connections between communities
- ◆ Supports City of Independence businesses and neighborhood by providing multi-modal access which will introduce new visitors to the city center and downtown neighborhoods, surrounding the trail

WE NEED YOUR HELP

In order to complete the Hemlock Creek Trail, we need your help. We need to raise an additional \$25,000 to fill a funding gap for construction. If you would like to help make this trail a reality, please email dschafer@westcreek.org or simply put HEMLOCK in the memo line of your check!

Hemlock Creek PROPOSED Trail Route



Trail route shown is PROPOSED, and subject to final engineering/design and regulatory approval

Urban Farmer Entrepreneurs

Let's shine the spotlight on a few farmers who worked Kinsman Farm during 2014. The Farm is a 6-acre urban agriculture business incubator, off E. 82/Kinsman in the City of Cleveland. It is a joint partnership between West Creek Conservancy and OSU-Extension.

Alex Restaino - Amalfi Gardens LLC

"We specialize in growing Italian heirloom varieties of veggies. We grow 7 varieties of garlic and many varieties of carrots, beets, tomatoes, peppers, kale, onions, lettuce, potatoes, and many others. We sell at the wonderful Lakewood Farmers Market on Saturday mornings throughout the summer. Our produce is distributed locally in the Kinsman neighborhood and a few area eateries. Our ultimate goal with the farm is to help spread awareness of organic agriculture and provide our community, family, and friends with the best tasting responsibly grown veggies around." Contact Alex at: <http://www.amalfigardens.com/> or at abrestaino@gmail.com

Lynn Rodemann - Cleveland Urban Egg

Cleveland Urban Egg specializes in pasture raised chickens. Some of these urban chickens are raised for meat, others for eggs. Lynn Rodemann originally raised these chickens at her home before moving them to Kinsman Farms in November 2013. If you are interested in her operations or purchasing any of her produce, please visit her website at www.clevelandurbanegg.com, find her Cleveland Urban Egg page on Facebook or email her at clevelandurbanegg@gmail.com.

Joe Zastawny - Harvest In Christ

Harvest In Christ's mission is to engage in for-profit production of produce grown according to organic/sustainable methods in order to increase the accessibility of affordable, local, and healthful food. The main drive of Harvest In Christ is the fact that by working in harmony with nature, which includes sustainability and holistic health, we have success in prevention and reversal of afflictions that conventional medicine has not solved. The produce available includes a wide variety of vegetables including salad greens, carrots, summer squash, potatoes, onions, green beans, broccoli, husk cherries, and heirloom tomatoes. For more information, please visit www.HarvestInChrist.com or email Joe at: harvestinchrist1@yahoo.com



Alex Restaino and his helping hands



Garlic field at Kinsman Farm



2014 Kinsman Farm Open House



A sampling of Kinsman Farm lettuce varieties



Stearns Farm - Cleveland Crops A Growing Partnership

On July 30, 2014, Cleveland Crops, in partnership with the City of Parma, the Parma Area Historical Society, and West Creek Conservancy, officially dedicated and held a grand opening for Parma's largest and newest farm, a 17-acre plot on the 48-acre Stearns Homestead.

West Creek Conservancy is proud of its strong and growing partnership with Cleveland Crops and appreciates the City's support and partnership in helping to get this great project off the ground!

Our Interns: Conservationists in Training

This summer West Creek Conservancy welcomed two new interns: Maria Curcio and Jakob Hamlescher. They began working at West Creek Conservancy in May and June respectively. Both have assisted with Kinsman Farm, fundraisers/events, raingarden maintenance/land stewardship and other outreach initiatives.

Maria, a senior at Baldwin Wallace University, chose West Creek Conservancy because, "It would be interesting working on an urban farm, as well as learning how a non-profit functions." Maria studies both Accounting and Sustainability at BW. She hopes to pursue a career in non-profit accounting. When asked about her experience this summer Maria responded, "I really enjoyed working within an organization that works to help the local community. I learned how to effectively communicate, not only with organizations, but also with community leaders in Greater Cleveland." Maria enjoys a good book, the Greater Cleveland scene, and volunteering.

Jakob is a junior in the Civil Engineering program at Cleveland State University. One day, he hopes to work in the field as an Environmental Engineer. Jakob shared, "I chose West Creek Conservancy because I wanted to get a closer look into watershed conservancy and preservation as well as learn how an urban farm operated. I enjoyed not being stuck behind a computer doing repetitive tasks everyday. I was able to go out and work on the farm one day and then work an event the next. Everyday was a different story". Jakob enjoys the Cleveland Browns, a good comedy, and hiking.

Both interns have appreciated the opportunity to work with West Creek Conservancy and extend a special thanks to staff members Derek and Dawn for believing in them. Likewise, West Creek Conservancy has valued their contributions toward our mission and wish them much success as they pursue their goals.

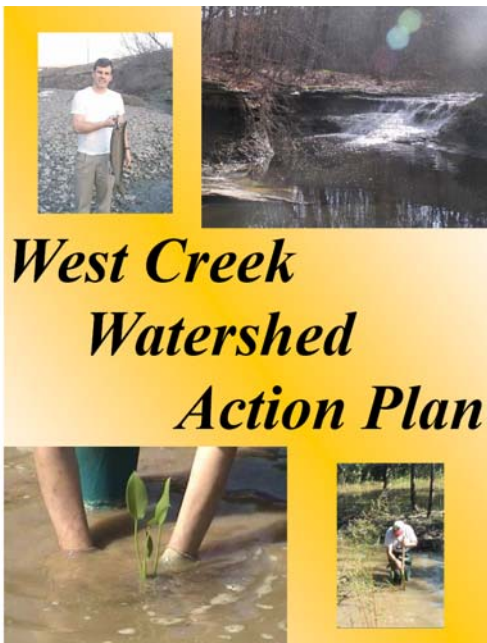


Interns: Jakob Hamlescher (center) and Maria Curcio (right)

West Creek Watershed Action Plan

What is watershed action planning?

It is a process for coordinating, implementing, documenting, and tracking strategies and activities to protect and improve water quality.



The West Creek Watershed Action Plan was endorsed by the State of Ohio in 2009. It details land conservation priorities, policy recommendations, restoration needs (priorities), an ecological inventory of the watershed, and associated tracking mechanisms for water quality improvement.

West Creek Conservancy is proud to say that most of the major priority projects originally laid out in the plan have been implemented or are in the process of being completed. These include the development of West Creek Reservation and the West Creek Confluence Project.

Watersheds are dynamic and complicated. As a result Watershed Action Plans are intended to be living documents - updated and revised as needed.

With generous support from The Cleveland Foundation, West Creek Conservancy will be updating the West Creek Action Plan over the course of 2015. Input from the community and its stakeholders will be sought. Watershed health will be reevaluated and new projects and priorities related to water quality will be itemized.

New Board Members Welcomed

West Creek Conservancy welcomed three new directors to the board in 2014:



Mike Craig is an intellectual property attorney at Brouse McDowell in Akron and a past environmental consultant, working with wetlands projects and environmental remediation. Mike enjoys fishing, is an avid outdoorsman, and is active in youth baseball, the Boy Scouts, the Ohio Irish community, and the Conservancy for CVNP. He has joined the WCC Land and Trails Committee and the Development Committee. A former Cleveland westsider, Mike now lives in Medina.



Jeremy Depinet is a senior manager at Meaden & Moore in Cleveland. He enjoys traveling, watching football, and is active with the Conservancy for CVNP. Jeremy is now serving as WCC Treasure and Chairs the Finance Committee. Jeremy lives in Broadview Heights.



Rich Weiser, is Vice President of CSA Group, located in Independence; a core value of the CSA Group is Sustainability so Rich sees a good fit with WCC and looks forward to serving on the Board. He enjoys softball and long walks with his wife and Labrador retriever. Rich currently co-chairs the Donor Development Committee. Rich lives in North Royalton.

In addition, three board members were re-elected to new terms this year: **George Cantor**, **Terry Greathouse**, and **Dorothy Hazel**. George, Terry, and Dorothy respectively chair the Land & Trails Committee, Stewardship Committee, and Policies & Practices Committee. We thank them for their ongoing commitment!

We also extend our sincere gratitude to outgoing board members **Bob Gardin** and **Andrew Somich** for their years of service to West Creek Conservancy. Andrew served as Treasurer for the past 3 years. In addition to being a liaison with Friends of Big Creek, Bob participated on the Development Committee and applied his carpentry skills to restoring the porches at Henninger House.

Our Mission

The mission of West Creek Conservancy is to enrich the lives of people in Greater Cleveland by conserving natural habitats, restoring the ecological value and sustainability of urban lands, and expanding neighborhood opportunities to experience nature.

Notes from

West Creek Conservancy is published by West Creek Conservancy, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.

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Matching Gift Program

Matching Gifts are a great, easy way to double or even triple your donation to West Creek Conservancy. Many companies offer matching programs and will match any charitable contributions made by their employees/retirees and some will provide matching funds to support volunteer hours. By taking advantage of your corporate matching gift program, you can maximize the value of your gift at no additional cost.

Please contact your HR Department to find out if your gift or volunteer hours can be matched!

For more information visit www.westcreek.org/doubleyourimpact

Help create a Greener Greater Cleveland **Give the Gift of Conservation**

Membership in West Creek Conservancy – great for any season!

Celebrate nature with a gift West Creek Conservancy membership this season. Your generous gift helps support the conservation work of West Creek Conservancy right here in your home community.
Your gift membership is also tax deductible.

Consider giving the gift of conservation and support West Creek Conservancy.
Use this form or go online at www.westcreek.org

Make a Difference! Join West Creek Conservancy or Renew Today

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- | | |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introductory | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland Steward | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Builder | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Guardian | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenway Champion | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Patron | \$1000 |
| <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 neighborhood greenways. Your participation makes a difference, and membership donations are tax deductible as charitable contributions.

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Notes from West Creek Conservancy

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West Creek Conservancy has some absolutely fantastic volunteers and we can't thank them enough!

It is these volunteers who help make all our projects a success!

THANK YOU from ALL of us at West Creek Conservancy

