2013 Annual Report

Enriching the lives of people in Greater Cleveland by:

• Conserving natural habitat
• Restoring the ecological value and sustainability of urban lands
• Expanding neighborhood opportunities to experience nature.
DEAR FRIENDS,

Your support in 2013 enabled West Creek Conservancy to realize yet another successful year in urban conservation. Throughout Greater Cleveland, West Creek Conservancy - your Conservancy - has been collaborating to create parklands and greenway trails that connect all of us to nature - to the fresh air, clean water, and green spaces where people and wildlife find sanctuary.

We are proud to report how West Creek Conservancy continues to put your dollars to work. Since our inception, the ratio of dollars we have outlaid into projects versus the dollars you have contributed to our operations has averaged over 20-to-1, a remarkable return on your investment.

But we trust your greatest satisfaction in supporting West Creek Conservancy comes in knowing that you are making real, positive change - change that is restoring our natural environment, enriching people's lives, and enhancing our neighborhoods and our region.

This report highlights a few of those changes. Each involves transformation - from urban wasteland to urban farm, from abandoned commercial property to priceless wetland and public space, from a 164-year old structure facing certain demise to one poised to showcase our region's heritage and promote healthy lifestyles.

As we celebrate these successes - these transformations - we hope they inspire you the way they inspire us.

West Creek Conservancy is where your dollars make a real difference. We thank you for keeping us strong.

Jeff Lennartz
Chair, Board of Directors

Derek Schaefer
Executive Director

Board of Directors
Jeff Lennartz
- Chair
Michael Baumgartner
- Vice Chair
Barbara Hermes
- Secretary
Andrew Somich
- Treasurer
Jeremy Depinet
- Vice Treasurer
George Cantor
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Terry Greathouse
Dorothy Hazel
Irv Hazel
Irene Toth
Sue Zurovchak

Staff
Derek Schaefer
- Executive Director
Dawn Petkov
- Office Manager

ABOVE: In 2013 some of the hundreds of volunteers for West Creek Conservancy helped remove invasive plants (top), excavate at Henninger Homestead (middle), and clean up our waterways (bottom).

ON THE COVER: The beautifully wooded Pagach property was part of a 10-acre acquisition by West Creek Conservancy in 2013, securing a crucial link along the proposed 20-mile West Creek Greenway.

HOW IS WEST CREEK CONSERVANCY DIFFERENT?
West Creek Conservancy is a catalyst for innovative and collaborative change with its:

- **Urban Focus** - Making a difference right within those urban neighborhoods where a great many people live and work.
- **Opportunistic Stance** - Always alert to quickly seize unexpected opportunities to generate a real public benefit.
- **Effective Partnerships** - Initiating and undertaking the heavy lifting to do what we do best, while readily collaborating to encourage and enable others to do what they can do better.
- **Committed Board** - Board members meet often, volunteering readily for program and project responsibilities; many of those members have served for over a decade.
- **Return on Investment** - Each dollar donated has been leveraged to return on average over $20 to create a Greener Greater Cleveland.

Over 45,000 people live within 1000 feet of a property protected by West Creek Conservancy.
**Protecting** Natural Areas for People & Wildlife

**Challenge:** Almost 160 acres, one of the biggest swaths of undeveloped woodlands, meadows, and streams remaining in Cuyahoga County, faced destruction by development into more cluster homes, another mall, and another golf course.

**Action:** West Creek Conservancy rallied Parma voters and spearheaded the effort to preserve this natural area. In collaboration with the City of Parma and Cleveland Metroparks, the resulting park became West Creek Reservation. In 2013, West Creek Conservancy obtained an adjacent 10-acre woodlot and 32-acre conservation easement for incorporation into the valley’s conservation lands.

**Outcome:** Surrounded by residential neighborhoods, West Creek Reservation today provides a quiet and friendly setting where visitors can escape to unwind, reflect, and perhaps reconnect with our natural environment. Completed and dedicated in June of 2013 in collaboration with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, the Watershed Stewardship Center at West Creek Reservation focuses on water—our freshwater—where it comes from, where it goes, what we do with it along the way, and why it all matters so much. In the second half of 2013, the Center alone welcomed over 33,000 visitors.

“West Creek Conservancy continues to be a pivotal force in Greater Cleveland. Extending from their efforts to create West Creek Preserve, now a Cleveland Metroparks jewel, the organization has successfully pursued the conservation of entire corridors, which will connect some of our region’s most treasured assets... They are formidable partners with each municipality, deeply engaged with best management practice, volunteer outreach, restoration initiatives, as well as recreational trail development.”

David Nedrich
President, Parma Area Chamber of Commerce

**Reclaiming** Vacant Urban Land to Strengthen our Neighborhoods

**Challenge:** Cleveland, like other older cities, is embracing urban agriculture as a strategy to reclaim and revitalize abandoned and deteriorating urban neighborhoods. But a major problem to urban farming is land tenure.

**Action:** West Creek Conservancy is helping to remove that barrier. At Cleveland’s Kinsman Farm, the Conservancy undertakes the land tenure and licensing role for each farming entity. One of the largest urban farms in the United States, it enables new farmers to learn and grow their operations before attempting a larger tract of land. Kinsman Farm is a unique partnership between West Creek Conservancy, Ohio State University Extension, the City of Cleveland, and Burten, Bell, Carr Development Corporation.

**Outcome:** The site is now free of debris, renewed with fresh soil amendments, equipped with storage structures and gates, and fenced to prevent future illegal dumping. In 2013 twelve operations were leased at Kinsman Farm. Most grew mixed vegetables, and one began egg production, the first of its kind in the city. Vegetables produced on the Farm are sold in farmers markets and by other direct sales outlets throughout Cleveland.

“The Kinsman Farm highlights the possibilities and opportunities for urban agriculture production and community development when organizations such as West Creek Conservancy are willing to branch out and engage in nontraditional partnerships. The partnership has helped Ohio State University Extension engage in a community endeavor it otherwise could not have.”

Jacqueline Kowalski
Extension Educator, OSU College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences

Kinsman Farm, once a dumping ground that blighted the neighborhood, the project site is helping establish new farmers in Cleveland’s growing local agricultural economy.
Restoring Streams & Habitats to Clean Our Air & Water

West Creek Confluence Site: Taken near the end of earth-moving work in 2013, this view looks upstream from the Cuyahoga River at a newly formed channel and wetland complex along West Creek in Independence. The wetlands will provide critical habitat and capacity to retain stormwater, while offering future public access by boardwalk and trails connecting to nearby parklands.

Challenge: Over many decades, increased commercial and residential development surrounding the headwaters of West Creek steadily replaced natural green areas that once absorbed and filtered upstream stormwater. As a result, downstream flooding, erosion, and pollution had destroyed the commercial value of a 10-acre property at the confluence of West Creek and the Cuyahoga River.

Action: West Creek Conservancy partnered with the City of Independence and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to purchase the flood-prone property with funding from the Clean Ohio Greenspace Fund, Scenic Byway Program, and the Ohio EPA’s Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program. Leveraging an additional $2.4 million through the Ohio EPA’s WRRSP Program and 319 Program, the Conservancy undertook a major transformation. The hardened narrow channel built decades ago in an increasingly futile effort to confine the creek was eliminated in 2013. Over 80,000 cubic yards of fill were also removed to restore a natural meander to over 1000 feet of West Creek forming over six acres of wetland, floodplain, and parkland, with extensive native plantings.

Outcome: The abandoned five-acre warehouse, drive-in bank, four acres of impervious pavement, plus a third structure upstream, are gone—replaced with 10 acres of public parkland that now provide wildlife habitat and the capacity to mitigate over 100 million gallons of floodwater. The new West Creek Confluence site will link West Creek Reservation and nearby neighborhoods to the Towpath Trail and Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Connecting People to Nature by Creating Recreational Trails & Greenways

Challenge: With permits already issued and only hours to spare, the clock on Parma’s oldest home, the historic 1849 Henninger House, was counting down. Built of the same native sandstone that provided a breakwall for the port of Cleveland and locks for the Ohio and Erie Canal, this abandoned but still sturdy structure was slated for demolition.

Action: West Creek Conservancy envisioned the Henninger House as a visitor center, trailhead, and picnic area for the 20-mile West Creek Greenway. Forming a partnership with the City of Parma, the Trust for Public Land, the Henninger Task Force, and Parma Historical Society, the Conservancy raised a total of $470,000 to purchase and begin restoration of the homestead. The property is now owned by the City of Parma with a conservation/historic easement held by West Creek Conservancy.

“On behalf of the entire Henninger family, we thank West Creek Conservancy sincerely for the vision and hard work that led to the dedication. It was a blessing and a privilege to be a part of it.”
- Kris Wilkinson
Outcome: With restoration of the Henninger House well underway, West Creek Conservancy purchased nearly one mile of connecting property extending the Greenway Trail north to Brooklyn Heights Park. In 2013 the Conservancy hosted a public dedication recognizing the Henninger Homestead with a newly installed Ohio Historical Marker and inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter, an early booster of the campaign to preserve the Henninger House, noted the key role it will play in his city:

"Henninger Homestead will help tell the rich story of our past. As part of the West Creek Greenway, it will be a vital part of our community and this region for generations to come."

Mayor Tim DeGeeter
City of Parma

As of 2013 West Creek Conservancy has secured over 90% of the 20-mile corridor needed for the West Creek Greenway.

FINANCIAL POSITION
Fiscal year ending December 31, 2013. Accrual basis.

2013 Revenues

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non Gov. Grants</td>
<td>$43,927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dues</td>
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<td>Fee Services</td>
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<td>Special Events</td>
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<td>Non Gov. Grants</td>
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<tr>
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2013 Expenses

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<td>Consultant Fees</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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September 2013 dedication of the Henninger Homestead Ohio Historical Marker: (Top) Flanked by family members Lenore Henninger (left) and Kris Wilkinson (right), Janice Sheets Henninger, who was born in the house in 1922, recounted her life growing up in the house. (Middle) Attendees listen to the dedication speeches. (Bottom) Among those speaking were (from l to r) Cuyahoga County Councilman Chuck Germana, WCC Executive Director Derek Schaefer, Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter, WCC Founder Dave Vassarhelyi.
WEST CREEK CONSERVANCY DONORS

YOU - our donors - make it all possible. Thanks to your generosity, West Creek Conservancy was able to expand its important conservation work in 2013, protecting hundreds of properties and over 800 acres throughout Greater Cleveland. We gratefully acknowledge the individuals, corporations, foundations, and organizations who together contributed funds in support of urban conservation. The following is a list of those who made contributions between January 1 and December 31, 2013.

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

Watershed Patrons

$1,000 - $2,499

William & Joanna Grady

Greenway Champions

$500 - $999

Bill & Dona Brooks

Maeve T. DeGrace

Terry Greenhouse

Ina & Donald Hard

Barbara & Donald Levine

Linda Kimmel

Jeff & Judith Lomartir

Herbert Mansour

Carole Baller

Kathleen Schlemmer

Terry Stasiuk

Ina & Bucky Younis

Vincent J. Volmont

George Zgobien

River Guardians

$250 - $499

Annette Zink

George & Sylvia Cantor

Susan & Robert Choppe

Cheek & Anne Germano

Joe Germania

Ma. & Mrs. Joseph Golinar

Ellen & Morris H. Heringer

Fred Hopp

Barbara Hreitiska

Timothy Kalin DDS

John Kurtz

Charles McGill

Larry Napoli

Margaret Rein

Enka Wagner

Sara Baranczak

Trail Builders

$100 - $249

Anonymous

Barbara & Cheryl Anderson

Arthur Basso

Michael & Carrie Baumgartner

Christopher & Bob Beaudoin

Nicholas Caruso

Maria Czepitelli & Robert Chabik

Holly Chenn

David Dumas

Richard DeLantis

Jill Dower

Janine & Lucien Drexler

Robert Gardin

Jeff & Linda Gattler

Jaimie Gau

Catherine Hooper

William & Mary Kay Hertel

Joe & Suzanne Hollo

Don & Nancy Howell

Loisett Jolin

Uryia Zenic

Kent S. Laranol DDS

Frank Lessa

Gary & Thorne Masters

Arthur & Caroleine Meier

Suzanne Mooney

Laura Pecorel

Tatiana & Jim Radke

Donovan & Erica Ramirez

Bridgette Garden Club of Parma

Jeanne Roberts

Richard & Dori Robinson

Cheristie A. Kool & David A. Sprouse

Karen Smedmo

Kate Russell & Andrea Sheftel

Jose & Irma Scherschel

Barry Shevrin

Don & Ron Simms

Kent & Dominique Starr

Jasmin Stawicki

Karen Stockman-Vine

Beverly Swider

James & Beth Tang

Mike Sipchak

Peter Theodore

Over 400 friends helped to support urban conservation and enjoy a festive night out at West Creek Conservancy’s 2013 Blues for Greens gala.
We apologize for any mistakes or omissions. We have made every effort to prepare these donor lists accurately. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this list, please contact Dawn Petkov at 216.749.3720 or dpetakov@westcreek.org.
ABOUT WEST CREEK CONSERVANCY

Yesterday - West Creek Conservancy was born in 1997 when plans to build a second public golf course, cluster housing, another shopping center, and a movie theater threatened the Parma creek and woodlands where Dave Varsahely had played as a child. A grass-roots group joined with him to mount a successful initiative petition, receiving 72% voter support to permanently protect the 160-acre public site. This group – which became West Creek Conservancy - then solicited funding and negotiated with landowners to purchase additional properties and conservation easements to expand the preserve to over 320 acres and to assemble a greenway for trail connections to the Towpath Trail at Cleveland Metroparks Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation and Cuyahoga Valley National Park. In 2006 West Creek Conservancy partnered with the City of Parma and Cleveland Metroparks to create West Creek Reservation.

Today - Because people living in urban neighborhoods have dwindling opportunities to experience those natural environments that have been their heritage, West Creek Conservancy has expanded its vision to include urban communities throughout Greater Cleveland. Their volunteer efforts now spearhead dozens of partnerships in the region. Projects in 2013 included:

• Expanding Brooklyn Heights Park and incorporating it into the proposed 20-mile long West Creek Greenway Trail
• Securing a Cleveland property on the Scranton Peninsula to join the 110-mile Towpath Trail to the Lake Link Trail and Cleveland’s lakeshore in partnership with LANDstudio and Cleveland Metroparks
• Leveraging support from multiple partners to complete the Mill Creek Watershed Action Plan and form the Mill Creek Partnership for restoration of a major Cuyahoga River tributary extending through nine communities from Cuyahoga Heights to Beachwood
• Partnering with Friends of Euclid Creek and Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District to create the nine-acre Redstone Run Highland Reserve in Richmond Heights
• Assisting Cleveland Metroparks by working with landowners to expand the 88-acre Heron Rookery Wetland property in North Royalton, part of the Rocky River Watershed

Tomorrow - Opportunities to initiate partnerships for projects that protect natural areas for people and wildlife, reclaim vacant urban land to strengthen our neighborhoods, restore streams and habitats to clean our air and water, and connect people to nature by creating recreational trails and greenways are constrained only by the amount of funding available to us.

In the absence of direct tax support for the public services we have been providing since 1997, West Creek Conservancy is totally dependent upon voluntary donations from those who find that our record of accomplishments has earned their ongoing support.

Yesterday and Today are now history . . . but you can help us with Tomorrow!

www.westcreek.org • 216-749-3720

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