Mill Creek Watershed Partnership

A program of West Creek Conservancy

www.millcreekpartnership.org
Conservation work rightly focuses on the ecological details. The abundance and distribution of plant and animal species, the sinuosity of streams, the diversity of wetlands, the extent of the tree canopy - conservation saves all of it. The reality, though, is that conservation saves people. Given enough time, the earth would heal itself from our misdeeds, but we need nature now and will need abundant access to it in the future.

Nowhere is this more true than in our inner city. Here where residents are surrounded by the noise, pollution, and hardscapes of urban life; it’s here where nature makes a deep and lasting impact to reduce stress and crime, improve health, and restore real estate value. West Creek Conservancy has been a crucial partner to one such project and, as a recipient of the organization’s expertise and good will, we have to extend our sincere thanks.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland serves the most vulnerable youth in Cleveland, empowering them to reach their full potential. We serve 1,000 young people each day at 13 locations in our community’s most distressed neighborhoods. Our members find not only a safe place, but also access to a range of programs that lead to academic success, healthier lifestyles, and character development. Club members dance, read, create art, play sports, grow food, visit museums, play math games, volunteer in the community, and hang out with good friends and great mentors. The clubs are where great futures start, for the kids and for our community.

Our flagship club and administrative center located in Cleveland’s Slavic Village neighborhood sits on land once occupied by the sprawling Worsted Mills manufacturing facility. The massive complex employed thousands in its heyday, but, nearly abandoned by the early 1990’s, the complex was heavily damaged by arson and was demolished. A portion
of the land was repurposed to our facility which includes an urban farm, pollinator garden, plus sports fields in addition to our 16,000 square foot club space. Other land became a new elementary school and then a 4.5 acre parcel was left to revert to nature.

This parcel, nestled between our site and the school alongside the Morgana Run Bike Trail, is now in play to become a high quality wetland because of the support we received from West Creel Conservancy, whose efforts helped us secure two grants, the first from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District Green Infrastructure program and the second from the Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation Fund.

Our members find not only a safe place, but also access to a range of programs that lead to academic success, healthier lifestyles, and character development.

Site improvements will include ADA accessible trails, an enhanced wetland, and substantial invasive species removal. This preserve, open to public at its completion in October 2019, will become a primary learning and recreation tool for the 125 kids who come to our adjacent club. With our members and the population of nearby schools, the neighborhood sees 1,700 students daily. They will now have a high quality nature preserve within walking distance, right in the heart of one of Cleveland’s most struggling neighborhoods. This preserve is for them.

Your support has made this possible. West Creek Conservancy accomplishes projects like this every day - projects that make nature accessible to people. And, in the process, makes all our lives healthier, happier, and more prosperous.
The Mill Creek Watershed

Mill Creek is one of the 37 subwatersheds that make up the Cuyahoga River watershed. The Cuyahoga River feeds into Lake Erie's Central Basin, and in turn is part of the Great Lakes watershed.

The 5 tributaries that join to the Mill Creek mainstem are: Busby Brook, Wolf Creek, Johnson Run, and Warner Rd / Mapletown Creek.

Drainage: Approximately 19 square miles
Length: 12.2 miles
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 lineal feet of Mill Creek
- Restoring 180 lineal feet of a small tributaries to Mill Creek
- Reestablishing a vegetated floodplain and riparian area, which involved:
  - Creating 6.6 acres of restored floodplain

*After restoration work*
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 planted along Mill Creek in November 2016.

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 project.

The project was designed and constructed with grant money from the Ohio EPA’s Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program Funding, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District’s Regional Stormwater Management Program, and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant from the US Forest Service.

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 project.

We recently received a grant through the EPA to continue this work downstream to improve water quality and restore natural habitat.
Mill Creek Watershed Partnership

Mill Creek Watershed Partnership is a community based organization of citizens, businesses, governments, agencies, and community groups, dedicated to working together for the improvement of the Mill Creek watershed.

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
Cuyahoga County Planning Commission
Cuyahoga River Restoration
Village of Cuyahoga Heights
Village of Valley View
City of Garfield Heights
City of Cleveland
City of Warrensville Heights
City of Maple Heights
Village of North Randall
Village of Highland Hills
City of Beachwood
City of Shaker Heights
Harvard Community Services Center
Union Miles Development Corporation
Slavic Village Development

Services we offer

- Restoration Projects
- Stormwater Consultations
- Volunteer Events
- Workshops
- Land Acquisition
- Trail Development
- Reclamation and Preservation

Connect with us!

www.millcreekpartnership.org
216-749-3720