

## 2021 Q1 & Q2 Report (January – June)

### Overview:

Initiated in September 2012, the Watershed Volunteer Program (WVP) is offered through Cleveland Metroparks Natural Resources division with support from Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS). The program engages community members in stewardship through learning opportunities, restoration projects, monitoring activities, and outreach events to improve and protect NEO watersheds.

### Highlights:

- Virtual sessions over the winter months primed stewards to be involved with aquatic ecology monitoring and management, forest health surveys and restoration, invasive plant management, and stream restoration with safety and sustainability in mind. Recordings can be found on the [WVP YouTube playlist](#).
- With funding from Cleveland Water Alliance, WVP hosted EnviroScience’s Senior Scientist Paul Anderson for a four-part Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI) training. It enabled 16 participants to be an eligible Ohio EPA qualified data collector. Participants included WVP volunteers, Cleveland Metroparks staff, and various NEO watershed coordinators. At this time, four have received approval from Ohio EPA.
- In collaboration with Cleveland Water Alliance and Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (CSWCD), we started two pilot monitoring efforts 1) monitoring macroinvertebrates within Rocky River watershed and 2) HAB toxins at Euclid Beach, Edgewater Beach, and Hinckley Lake.
- A new model of recruitment and onboarding brought together folks to learn about WVP in February and July at the LinkUp Orientation. This allowed for more personalized and casual interaction between staff and prospective stewards before making the commitment to volunteer.

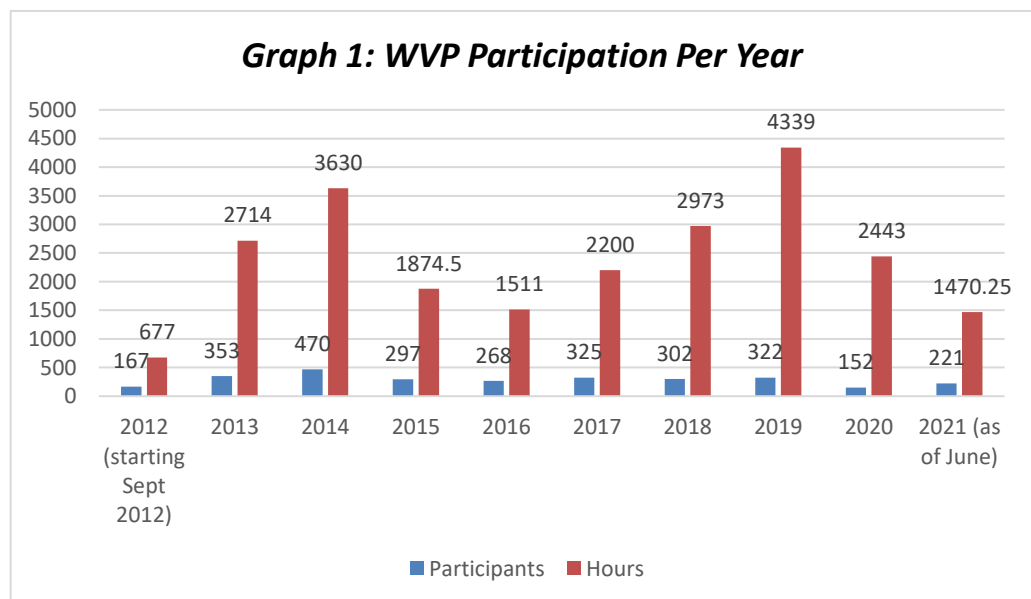
### Participation:

Total for Q1: 125 unique participants contributed 592.25 hours. See Graph 1 for comparisons.

- 26 new volunteers registered

Total for Q2: 96 unique participants contributed 878 hours. See Graph 1 for comparisons.

- 17 new volunteers registered

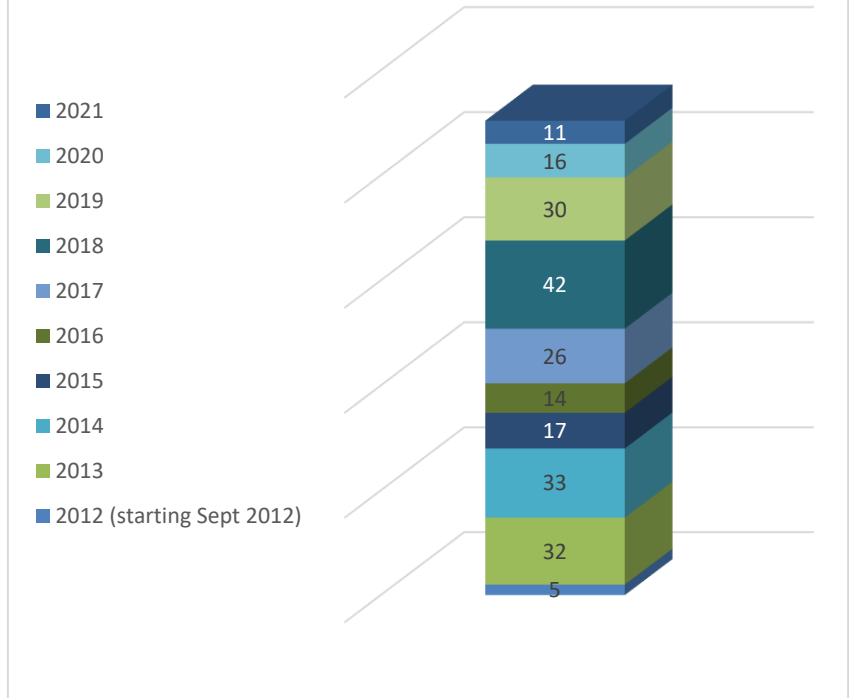


**Certified Watershed Stewards:**

Registered WVP Volunteers who contribute 10 hours in the learning, monitoring and restoration categories with WVP staff become certified. See Graph 2.

- Total since WVP start: 226 volunteers certified
- Total for 2021: 11

**Graph 2: Certified Watershed Stewards 2012-2021**



**Program Statistics:**

Independent Projects: Volunteers work on their own with an assigned project.

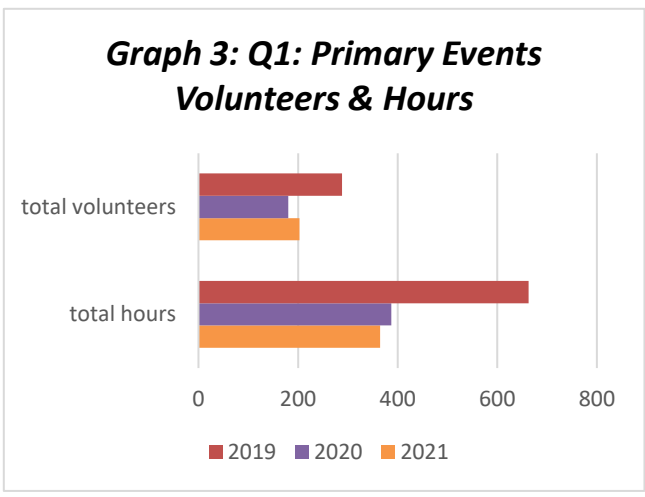
- Q1: 7 projects, 31 volunteers, 137.25 hours
- Q2: 12 projects, 56 volunteers, 368.5 hours

- Projects with significant contributions = water chemistry monitoring, Enews assistance, and invasive plant removal

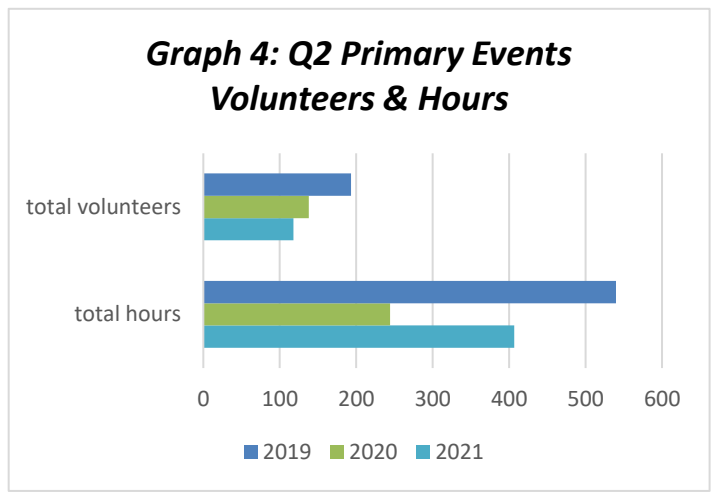
Primary Events: WVP staff host these events. See Graph 3, Graph 4, and Table 1.

- Q1: 18 events, 203 participants, 364.75 hours
- Q2: 25 events, 118 volunteers, 406.5 hours

**Graph 3: Q1: Primary Events Volunteers & Hours**



**Graph 4: Q2 Primary Events Volunteers & Hours**



**Table 1: Breakdown of Primary Events by Event Category**

<p><i>Learning opportunities</i>                      Q1: 11 events, 175 participants, 255.25 hours                      Q2: 3 events, 16 participants, 47 hours</p>	<p><i>Restoration projects</i>                      Q1: 7 events, 28 participants, 109.5 hours                      Q2: 12 events, 50 participants, 138.5 hours</p>
<p><i>Monitoring activities</i>                      Q1: 0                      Q2: 10 events, 52 volunteers, 221 hours</p>	<p><i>Outreach events</i>                      Q1: 0                      Q2: 0</p>

Supplemental Events: Events hosted by partner organizations that fit the WVP mission.

Q1: 3 events, 27 participants, 76.25 hours

Q2: 12 events, 38 participants, 103 hours

**Smart Citizen Science Initiative (SCSI):**

WVP is the Cleveland hub host for the Lake Erie-wide water quality monitoring initiative - Smart Citizen Science Initiative. It is led by the Cleveland Water Alliance and funded by the Cleveland Foundation. This initiative aims to unite and empower community members to collect, report out, and engage with data to conserve and protect Lake Erie. The Community Science Assistant, a grant-funded position with Cleveland Metroparks, was created in 2020 to assist with the development and completion of SCSI goals. Accomplishments from the first half of 2021, include:

- Participation in monthly virtual work sessions with focus groups to discuss communications methods and brainstorm monitoring procedures to be standardized across Lake Erie.
- Development of sampling and testing plans for the HAB toxin pilot aimed to collect between 20 - 40 water samples with the assistance of multiple volunteers.
- Hosting and participating in the QHEI training led by EnviroScience; 13 volunteers and partner staff and three Cleveland Metroparks staff attended virtual and field training sessions.
- Collaborating with CSWCD to host four water quality monitoring trainings for 20 volunteers
- Giving five virtual water chemistry monitoring presentations to stakeholders (NEORSD, partners, and volunteers)
- Training 22 volunteers for the Rocky River Macroinvertebrate Monitoring pilot program with CSWCD.

**Service Area:**

WVP partners with numerous organizations throughout Northeast Ohio for educational programming and service projects. The goal of the program is to improve watersheds regionally by having volunteers share and use their knowledge in their communities. We have volunteers from various Northeast Ohio watersheds.

We worked with 20 partners in Q1 and Q2, including: Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Cleveland Foundation, Cleveland Water Alliance, Cuyahoga County Soil & Water Conservation District, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Doan Brook Watershed Partners, Drink Local Drink Tap, EnviroScience, Friends of Euclid Creek, Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District, Medina County Soil & Water Conservation District, The Nature Conservancy, NEO Regional Sewer District, NEO Watershed Corps, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Richfield Heritage Preserve, Rocky River Watershed Council, Tinker’s Creek Watershed Partners, West Creek Conservancy, and Yellow Creek Foundation.



Willow Stake Harvesting at South Chagrin Reservation | January 2021



Fish ID & Sampling Workshop at Rocky River Reservation | April 2021



Water Quality Monitoring Training at Euclid Creek Reservation | May 2021



Macroinvertebrate Monitoring at North Chagrin Reservation | June 2021