

PROTECT RESTORE CONNECT

As West Creek celebrates its 26th year of protecting land and water and connecting people to these special places – we wanted to jump back into the habit of ensuring our partners, supporters, stakeholders and donors have up to date information about what we're up to!

This newsletter is specifically diving into a couple of the larger restoration projects we have underway in the region. Often, we throw around terms such as 'restoration' amongst many others...so in order to clarify the meaning or intent of some of these, you'll also find a glossary of some of the most common used terms.

Restoration within this organization is definitely a hybrid approach; un-doing unsustainable development in more urbanized areas (e.g. demolition of flood-prone buildings); retrofitting the built environment (e.g. installing rain gardens); re-forestation (tree plantings/native vegetation); wetland creation (often converting a farm field that's directly loading nutrients and sediment into the waterway); stream restoration (e.g. stabilizing highly eroding banks or re-creating channels that were historically modified); as well as other tactics that inherently improve ecology and protect local infrastructure.

Over the year, we'll be capturing imagery, taking tours and posting special updates about the projects enclosed.

West Creek prides itself on partnership and collaborative approaches – including, but not limited to park districts, municipalities, watershed groups and other non-profit organizations.

Important to note is that so many of these featured 'restoration' projects took years to first assemble and/or acquire the land then subsequently leverage either the necessary partnerships or funding to get them done. Protect – Restore – Connect.

A special thank you to all that support us – enabling us to do these amazing projects; truly, your gift to West Creek has an impact now, but leaves a legacy of conservation.

More to come!

Cheers,

Derek Schafer Executive Director



Our mission is to enrich the lives of all people in Northeast Ohio by conserving natural habitats, restoring the ecological value of our region's lands and waters, and expanding opportunities to connect people from all cultures to experience nature and discover our great outdoors.

Chippewa Creek Flood Plain Restoration







West Creek Conservancy worked with a private landowner, who owns 106-acres of land in Westfield Twp. and Seville, OH adjacent to Chippewa Creek, to develop a restoration concept to convert his agricultural land to wetlands and secure an H2Ohio Ohio River Basin Grant in 2021.

West Creek Conservancy engaged the Biohabitats & Meadville Land Service design-build team in early 2022 to design and construct the project. Since the inception of the H2Ohio Program in 2019, Biohabitats has completed 19 H2Ohio projects with an additional 4 in various stages of design including West Creek Conservancy's H2Ohio Clear Fork Preserve Project.

- Project goals were to reconnect natural hydrology, capture and treat stormwater and floodwaters, nutrient and pollutant reduction to Chippewa Creek, converting agricultural lands to wetlands, and to create aquatic and terrestrial habitat.
- The 48-acre project converted ~43 acres of agricultural land into a combination of wet meadow, scrub-shrub wetland, forested wetland, emergent wetland and riparian forest while enhancing ~5 acres of existing wetlands and forest while treating invasive species across the entire site.
- Wetland creation included ~940 CY of earthwork and ~12 acres of hummock and hollow grading and vernal pool creation.
- Adjacent stormwater runoff is now captured in restored wetlands and treated before it makes its way to Chippewa Creek.
- To date 928 trees, 765 shrubs and 500 live stakes were installed this past fall with over 1,000 herbaceous plugs to be installed in the spring of 2023 with a supplemental planting of woodies in the fall of 2023.
- Over 30 large woody debris habitat features such as downed logs, rootwads, brush piles, white pine post clusters and standing snags were also installed as part of the restoration to provide additional wildlife habitat.

It was estimated that this project will reduce annual Nitrogen inputs to Chippewa Creek by 520 lbs., annual Phosphorus by 136 lbs., and annual sediment by 90 tons.

Thank you to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' H2Ohio Program for the private land-owner who approached West Creek to make it all happen!



Stickney Creek Floodplain Restoration in Veterans Memorial Park

Veterans Memorial Park is located on the southwest side of greater Cleveland, in Brooklyn, Ohio. Here, a reach of Stickney Creek flows northwest through the park between Ridge Road and Roadoan Road, before flowing into Big Creek near Memphis Road and Tiedeman Road. The project site contains 2,500 linear feet of Stickney Creek channel and approximately six acres of restored floodplain that will now prevent approximately 3.3 tons of sediment from entering the stream annually along with approximately 3.3 pounds of Phosphorus and 6.6 pounds of Nitrogen.

This project site is immediately downstream from a floodplain restoration and sewer realignment project completed by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. [SEE NEORSD Stickney INSERT] This restoration in Veterans Memorial Park further advances the current restoration efforts in the watershed. West Creek Conservancy commonly works with partners such as the NEORSD to coordinate projects that link together to incrementally build a riparian corridor as part of a bluegreen infrastructure plan.



The Stickney Creek watershed covers approximately five square miles with approximately 56% impervious surface. The drainage area upstream of the project area is only 4.3 square miles. However, the watershed was mostly built-out by the 1950s, when streams were often ditched, or placed in culverts in a belief that it would help control flooding. Currently only two miles of Stickney Creek flows through open channels. Upon exiting the culvert at Ridge Road, the Stickney Creek channel has been straightened, and is entrenched for approximately 600 feet. Typical of streams in urbanized watershed, the sediment starved water has scoured down to bedrock and is eroding the stream banks. The bedrock, however, is providing some vertical stability to help maintain limited connection to the floodplain. Unfortunately, the in-stream habitat in this reach is reduced to long, shallow bedrock riffles, and small pools at cracks or fissures in the bedrock.

The project is the result of several years of watershed planning and advocacy by Big Creek Connects for the stream restoration with the support of the City of Brooklyn. Big Creek Connects asked West Creek Conservancy to assist with property easements, grant administration and project management of the restoration. To finance the project, West Creek sought support from the Ohio EPA and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District for the stream restoration. Additional funding was acquired by the city through an ODNR Recreational Trails Program grant to enhance neighborhood connections to the park and complete a trial loop with a new footbridge across the creek.

This restoration project was also catalyst to an extensive Clean Ohio Green Greenspace Fund grant to West Creek Conservancy that leveraged local funds for a total of \$2.1 million to protect 65 acres in Brooklyn and Parma that includes 2.5 miles of stream channel, 16 acres of wetland and critical floodplain and upland forested areas.





In 2019, the Sewer District completed a stream restoration project on Stickney Creek as part of its Regional Stormwater Management Program.

Prior to the project, Stickney Creek had limited access to the low-laying land beside the channel, called floodplain. The floodplain reduces the energy of the stream during high flows. The slower water maintains stable banks and encourages debris and sediment to deposit along the creekside, instead of clogging culverts and bridges.

Without floodplain access, a stream will erode downward until it reaches harder material. When it can no longer erode downward, it begins to widen, eroding banks and threatening adjacent homes and utilities. The photo above shows the old sewer that was exposed by Stickney Creek on this site!



The Sewer District's solution was to move the stream and the sewer away from one another and reconnect Stickney Creek to its floodplain.

This project relocated and increased the size of the 66" brick, combined sewer to 72", to manage additional volume since its original construction. In summary, the project improved the alignment of the stream as it travels through the site and under Ridge Road, benefited water quality by reducing sewage contamination and erosion, and maintained fish and macroinvertebrate habitat in the stream.

This holistic planning approach maximizes the natural function of the stream and protects the public sewer, now and in the future.



Cuyahoga Headwater Restoration Initiative



This project restores and protects important wetlands all the way at the very headwaters of the Cuyahoga River in Montville, Geauga County, Ohio. When completed, this project will preserve the high quality, Category 3 vernal pool wetlands that existing on the site. It will re-establish and rehabilitate high quality vernal pool wetlands and wetland buffer habitats that will result in a gain in aquatic resource functions. And it will provide a diversity of restored habitat features that will establish additional connectivity through habitat corridors.

The project area was significantly altered to allow for row cropping, grazing practices, and timber harvesting starting in the early 1800's and extending to the current day. Through the activities of row and hay crop production the land has been tiled and the top soils have been greatly impacted through agricultural process.

The watershed that drains though this site is approximately 0.34 square miles placing it at the very beginning of the Cuyahoga River where the land is 70.3% forested, with only 1.04% impervious surface and 4.94% developed (urban) land. This makes the 1,003 feet of stream on the property a Class 2 Primary Headwater Stream. There are also six wetlands within the boundary of the site. According to the National

Wetland Inventory these wetlands consist of the following Cowardin wetland types: palustrine emergent seasonally flooded (PEMC), palustrine forested broadleaved deciduous seasonally flooded (PFO1C), palustrine forested/scrub-shrub broad-leaved deciduous seasonally flooded (PFO/SS1C), palustrine scrub-shrub broadleaved deciduous seasonally flooded (PSS1/EMC), palustrine forested dead/emergent semi permanently flooded (PFO5/EMF). Together, they give this property nearly 38 acres of wetlands.

Of the 243 wetlands randomly selected within the Cuyahoga watershed for assessment by Fennessy and others (2007), those in Geauga County were by far the highest quality, comprising 1494 acres of the total 2142 acres of Category 3 wetlands for the entire Cuyahoga watershed. The low human population levels and relatively low intensity of surrounding land uses, including the presence of many remaining sizeable forested parcels, has allowed a large proportion of Geauga County wetlands to maintain these high levels of ecological condition.

The Cuyahoga Headwaters site will preserve 28.9 acres of forested wetland, plus abundant opportunities to re-establish and rehabilitate wetlands in the farm fields west of the preserved forested wetland complex. Specifically, this project will result in the re-establishment of 6.8 acres of Forested Wetland and 2.5 acres of Non-Forested Wetland (PEM/PSS); rehabilitation of 4.2 acres of non-Forested Wetland (PEM/PSS); and addition of 55.4 acres of existing and restored wetland buffer within 50 meters of wetland boundaries.

The Nature Conservancy is finishing up construction on West Creek Conservancy's 120-acre property in Geauga County, situated right at the point where the Cuyahoga River begins. Planting is expected to be complete in spring 2023, after which The Nature Conservancy will help West Creek Conservancy diligently monitor and manage the site into perpetuity.

When complete, this project will have permanently protected and restored 38 acres of high-quality Category-3 wetlands, restored 9.5 acres of additional wetland, restored 42.5 acres of forested riparian buffer, and reforested an additional 29 acres of riparian buffer. All right where the Cuyahoga River begins!



Black River Preserve Restoration Project

The Black River Preserve Restoration project involves the acquisition and restoration of land currently used for soybean farming in the southwest corner of Medina County, Ohio. West Creek Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy pooled their collective resources and seized an opportunity to acquire this important 76-acre agricultural parcel. By restoring and preserving this property it is intended to improve habitat diversity and water quality in the Black-Rocky Rivers watershed, and connect the Medina County Park District's East Fork Nature Preserve to their Black River Nature Preserve, Bluebell Valley, Hidden Hollow Camp park lands.

Located in the Village of Lodi, this project aims to undo changes to the environment done by antiquated agricultural practices. The natural flow of water has been highly modified by straightening of streams and extensive drain tiling, historically used to drain flat topography such as this site. Moreover, the streams in this area of Harrisville Twp, which drain directly into the Black River and then into the central Lake Erie Basin, are highly impacted by nutrient inputs from agricultural land use.

The restoration work of this project will include restoring natural flow to two tributaries of the East Fork Black River and re-establishing a diversity of native vegetation to the riparian corridor surrounding these restored streams. Invasive species, such as the glossy buckthorn and reed canary grass, will be treated and a high diversity of native plant species will be planted throughout the property. Existing degraded wetlands areas will be rehabilitated and former wetland areas in the agriculture fields, which have partially hydric soil with an active subsurface drainage system, will be re-established through disruption of drain tiles and subtle contouring of the soils of the row cropped areas.

This work to rehabilitate the degraded wetlands, former wetlands, and establish a riparian corridor will improve water quality on site and downstream by reducing the influx of fertilizers, pesticides, and sediment from entering the streams, and it will reduce the volume and velocity of flow following storm events.

The project is a collaboration between Governor Mike DeWine's H2Ohio water quality initiative, West Creek Conservancy & The Nature Conservancy. Overall, this project will restore over 20 acres of wetland, reforest 50 acres of upland buffer and restore over ¼ mile of stream! Progress through partnerships.



Stream and Floodplain Restoration of the former Padua Soccer Fields

This restoration project will restore the streams and floodplains altered when the Padua soccer fields were built in the city of Parma, Cuyahoga County. Historically, to construct the Padua soccer fields and parking areas, approximately seven acres of land were leveled, and over 15,000 cubic yards of fill material were brought onsite to create level fields in what was a wooded river valley. Currently, the site has two athletic fields, two parking areas, and a stormwater retention area.

Prior to all these land modifications, two drainage systems flowed through the site (as can be seen in an historic USGS topographic maps). The northwest area of the site drained directly north to a culvert under West Ridgewood Drive; and the southern portion of the site drained eastward towards a tributary of West Creek. The land reshaping for the fields excavated two earthen ridges and the re-routed the natural drainage by channelizing a stream and the filling of a second stream.

This restoration project will create a new stream and floodplain riparian area cutting through the existing athletic fields in an attempt to restore the original natural drainage system. Project activities include excavation of the historic fill material, re-construction of two earthen ridges, re-creation of a historic stream channel, restoration of an existing channel, excavation of floodplain wetlands, creation of a mowed walking path, excavation of one-third of an existing asphalt parking area, construction of a stormwater bioretention areas, and re-vegetation of the entire site with native vegetation.

If you're familiar with 25 years of West Creek efforts.... this is all a part of the 'greenway' puzzle – an effort to assemble and restore the lands within the West Creek Valley; and following the restoration of this property, it will be integrated into the park and trail system in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks and the City of Parma.

Support for this long-term initiative has included the Ohio Public Works Commission's Clean Ohio Greenspace Fund, the Ohio EPA's 319 Program, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and the James A Cox Foundation.

For more information about this project, please contact Derek Schafer at dschafer@westcreek.org





Riverwood Restoration Project



The Riverwood Restoration Project will restore and enhance stream and riparian habitat on approximately 45 acres of a former golf course by creating approximately 9.1 acres of wetland, 11.2 acres of floodplain, 3,784 linear feet of headwater streams, and 25 acres of upland habitat. Eventually public access will include a trail system complete with public trailheads and a potentially even a kayak ramp to place this site as a put in/take out along the State designated Cuyahoga River Water Trail.

Located in Summit County on Riverview Rd adjacent to the Cuyahoga River, it is just across the river from 988-acres of high-quality preserve in the Sand Run Summit Metro Park.

The restoration site sits within the FEMA floodplain between River Mile 38.5 and 39.7, and it acts as the natural riparian zone for the mainstem of the Cuyahoga River along a section of the river known for migratory spawning of Steelhead Trout. Furthermore, there are two tributaries that join the Cuyahoga River at and upstream of this site--Sand Run and Mud Brookthat increase the volume or river water. There was a development plan that was in place to develop the entirety of the site, but West Creek Conservancy worked with the developer (Petros Homes) to only impact the upland sections of the parcels outside of the floodplain. Restoration of the lower portion will open up the floodplain within this 1.3 mile stretch of the mainstem of the Cuyahoga River creating 33 acres of naturalized flood zone riparian community that will be seeded and planted with a diverse assemblage of native trees and shrubs.

So far the topographic survey, wetland delineation, and aquatic resource inventory are complete, and the project is currently progressing through Design Stage. Like other restoration projects, when excavation begins, it will start with the breakage of drain tiles and decompaction of the soil. And then proceed with bank stabilization along the Cuyahoga River to restore the natural riparian habitat.

When finished, this project will enhance fish habitat and riparian habitat in and along 1.3 miles of the Cuyahoga River within the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern to help meet the State of Ohio's Beneficial Use Impairment Restoration Targets for fish habitat. Fluvial and adfluvial fish habitat will be enhanced and expanded. Invasive plant species currently present at the site will be treated with herbicide and physically removed. And this project will provide important marsh and riparian habitat for the black-crowned night heron (Nycticorax nycticorax), a threatened species in Ohio, which was recorded at the Sand Run Summit Metro Park just across the river.

The project will also result in an important reduction of sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen loading by restoring the site's natural ecological functionality, inclusive of, but not limited to stream channels, direct tributaries, wetlands, vernal pools, floodplain, and riparian area. Restoring these numerous wetlands and riparian areas where the golf course currently sits will capture nutrient loading from residential runoff, and stop the massive amount of phosphorus from the fertilization practices of the golf course.

Support for the project has been provided by the Ohio Public Work Commission's Clean Ohio Greenspace Fund, Ohio Department of Natural Resources' H2Ohio Program and Petros Homes!





Twinsburg Heights Preserve Stream and Wetland Restoration

More than 76 acres in northern Summit County will be protected from future industrial or retail development in an acquisition that West Creek Conservancy says is a win for environmental justice. Known as the Twinsburg Heights Preserve property, it is located in Twinsburg Township and the City of Twinsburg.





The Preserve features rock outcroppings, steep slopes, and ledges and is located within miles of Liberty Park. Bat surveys conducted between 2003 and 2015 identified the federally threatened northern long-eared and the Indiana bat in Liberty Park. The Preserve property provides suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species, and the preservation of the property supports a variety of native plant and wildlife habitats. The site has water quality implications as well considering there are over two miles of headwater streams on the Preserve.

West Creek purchased the property with grant funding through the Clean Ohio Green Space Program, administered by Ohio Public Works Commission, and the H2Ohio Program, administered by Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The H2Ohio Program is a water quality initiative working to address serious water issues.

The H2Ohio Program has also funded the restoration of portions of the Preserve. The Clean Ohio Program is dedicated to environmental conservation including the acquisition of green space and the protection and enhancement of river and stream corridors.

Protecting this land will provide access to green space for the adjacent community that historically lacks access in part due to previous redlining. 76 acres will remain preserved for use as a park, public forest or for other natural areas. A portion of the property where homes are and were previously, will again be used for residential purposes.

"The inclusion – as part of this project – of new homes on existing lots where homes previously stood will be a welcome return to the surrounding neighborhood, consistent with the township's aggressive efforts over the past two decades to promote stability and improve property values," said Robert Kagler, township manager of Twinsburg.





Greening the Art House Campus

The Art House Green Infrastructure Garden Project will create a large rain garden designed to collect all the rainwater that falls on the property, and detain it, allowing it to naturally soak into the ground where it gets filtered before finding its way into the local stream of Big Creek. Decades of seemingly good urban growth have left old urban landscapes dominated by impervious surfaces that prevent rainwater from infiltrating the ground, and instead forces it to aggregate into large over-ground flows causing erosion and flooding. Thanks to a Green Infrastructure Grant from the Northeast Ohio Regional ple of all ages and skill levels. Each year they serve some 6600 kids form urban Cleveland.

Located at 3119 Denison Avenue, Art House is in a 3,200-square foot, domed Quonset-style building built in 1948. This building sat behind two old houses that were demolished in 2021, leaving a half acre of open space to make way for the creation of this rain garden. It will create an open green space for Art Education programming for children and adults, beautify the neighborhood, and capture stormwater runoff and keep it from entering the combined sewers system.



Sewer District and project collaboration with Big Creek Connects, this project will reduce impermeable surfaces and create greenspace that will help alleviate stormwater runoff entering the combined sewer system, reduce flooding and help keep Big Creek watershed clean.

The project site is on the property of Art House, a nonprofit arts center located in the historic Brooklyn Centre neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio. Art House was founded in 1999 by local artists and residents who were dedicated to the belief that the arts enrich lives and help to create better communities. Art House has a mission to inspire exploration and expression through the visual arts. They make art accessible through high-quality, free, and low-cost visual and creative arts programs for peoCalled a bioretention basin, the depression of earth used to collect rainwater will cover about 1000 square foot: 20 feet wide, 50 feet long and 3 feet deep. It will be lined with a 24" layer of sand and gravel that will capture water and hold it so that it can seep into the ground. The basin will be surrounded by lots of native shrubs and trees, sidewalks, a performance stage, and a small parking area. The old asphalt drive, which drained onto the street, will be removed and a new parking lot installed that will slope towards the garden and bioretention basin. Runoff from the existing Quonset hut style building will be captured by French drains along each side of the building and will empty also into the bioretention basin. The native wildflowers and grasses will help absorb rainwater and provide natural habitat for birds and pollinators. The Art House Green Infrastructure Garden project will bring a small piece of nature back to this urban landscape, and it will be visible and accessible to the local community.

The demolition of the two houses removed 4800 square feet of impermeable surface, or 20% of the total for the property. It is expected that this beautiful green space will reduce annual stormwater runoff at this site by about 75% or an estimated 237,000 gallons per year.







Glossary

Adfluvial

Fish that spawn in tributary streams where the young rear from 1 to 4 years before migrating to a lake system, where they grow to maturity.

Bioretention basi

(a.k.a. rain garden) – A basin containing landscaping features adapted to provide on-site treatment (removal of contaminants and sediment) from stormwater runoff.

Degraded wetland

A wetland altered by man through impairment of some physical or chemical property which results in a reduction of habitat value or physical functions such as flood storage.

Emergent plant

A rooted plant that has parts extending above a water surface, at least during portions of the year but does not tolerate prolonged inundation.

Floodplain

A flat depositional feature of a river valley adjoining the channel, the floodplain is formed by climate and hydrological conditions and is subject to periodic flooding.

Habitat

The environment occupied by individuals of a particular species, population, or community.

Headwater

A small stream at the source where a river starts.

Herbaceous

Plants with soft, water-conducting tissue, and no persistent woody stems above ground.

Hydric soil

A soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions that favor the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation.

Impervious surface

Not allowing fluid to pass through.

Invasive plants

Harmful non-native species that invade native ecosystems, spread quickly, out-compete native plants, deteriorate soil quality, and cannot be used by wildlife for food.

Native plants

Originated in a particular region and have formed symbiotic relationships with native wildlife over thousands of years.

Outcrop

Rock that is not covered by soil and is visible at the surface of the Earth.

Rehabilitation

To restore or improve some aspects of an ecosystem but not fully restore all components.

Restoration

Return of an ecosystem to its predisturbed condition.

Riparian

The banks of a river or the terrestrial aquatic interface. The part of a terrestrial landscape that exerts a direct influence on stream channels or lake margins, and the water or aquatic ecosystems.

Tributary

A stream that flows into a larger stream.

Vernal pool

Seasonal pools of water that provide habitat for distinctive plants and animals.

Watershed

Entire land-drainage area of a river. Also called a basin, drainage basin, or catchment.

Wetland

Areas inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater most of the year to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Seasonal Hike Series

We're continuing our seasonal hikes/tours! Our goal is to get people outside and enjoy different parks, trails and other areas protected by West Creek. Tours will be limited to 30 people, unless otherwise noted. To register visit westcreek.org/events or eventbrite.com, and search by the event name.

Protect – Restore – Connect: the West Creek Valley

May 20 | 9-11am

Following years of acquisition, reclamation and restoration, we're approaching the integration of approximately 100 acres into West Creek Reservation. Join us for a hike to and through the former Padua/Camp Corde and Parmadale properties. Restoration is expected to be near completion. We'll meet in the parking lot, right off 2901 W. Ridgewood in Parma. Moderate terrain but dress for a mess – it's Spring so could be wet.

Location: 2901 W. Ridgewood Dr., Parma



Our hike series continues throughout the year! Visit westcreek.org to check out all our hikes and events!

Mill Creek Bike Tour

June 3 | 9-11am

Join Bike Cleveland and Mill Creek Watershed Partnership to bike the established trails in Mill Creek and learn about the new upcoming trails through these communities. We will explore the hidden gems Mill Creek Watershed has to offer, including Mill Creek Falls, Morgana Bluffs Nature Preserve, Bacci Park, and many more!

The bike tour is around 15 miles and is free and open to the public. While the majority of this ride is on trail, there are a couple on road portions. Please bring a working bicycle, and bicycle helmets are required.

Location: 11350 Broadway Ave, Garfield Hts., OH 44125. Parking available near Trolley Turn Canopy



Meet Our Board

West Creek has recently added several new board members. Welcome to the West Creek family!

Karen Vargo



I am honored to be a member of the West Creek Conservancy Board because I want to help preserve Cleveland's title as the "Forest City." Growing up in Northeast Ohio I

enjoyed the Metro Parks and Lake Erie but I was dismayed to see the green space shrinking. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from The Ohio State University and I received my medical degree from the Medical College of Ohio. As a pediatrician at the Cleveland Clinic, I know how important it is for the physical and mental wellbeing of children and adults to get outside and commune with nature. I am pleased to be part of an organization that is helping to reclaim and restore green space and waterways for current and future generations to enjoy.

Albert Johnson III -



Growing up in Northeast Ohio, I have developed a strong appreciation for one of the best local park systems in the nation. I have spent an abundance of hours kayaking,

hiking, and enjoying the beautiful parks in the region with friends and family. Our region's park systems have continued to enhance the lives of many. Overseeing ADA compliance and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, I believe my professional experiences throughout my career will support and contribute to the mission of West Creek.

Being a member of the West Creek Board has provided me with an opportunity to give back to the community and contribute to future sustainability.

Luke Schwan



Growing up on 90 acres in Medina county I always had an appreciation for the simplicity and quiet that can be found in the woods. I still love to kayak, bike, and hike-taking photos along the way-but now that I am living in Lakewood, I am much more dependent on the National Park and Metroparks systems than when I was growing up. Serving on the Board of West Creek gives me the opportunity to give back so that future generations can benefit from the park systems in Northeast Ohio. Professionally, I have a background in external audit and currently work in the corporate accounting department for the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company.

Mengxue Xie -



I am an attorney at Ulmer & Berne LLP. I grew up in Beijing and proud to call Cleveland my second hometown. When I'm not working, you can find me climbing at rock climbing gyms or crags. As an outdoor enthusiast, I particularly appreciate the wonderful park

systems in Cleveland. I am proud to be on the Board of West Creek Conservancy and looking forward to serving the community.

John Crawford -



I am the Land Services Division Leader at CT Consultants and oversee our Geospatial and Land Surveying Groups. I grew up in Leroy Township, a small community in Lake County. My Mother and Father both instilled in my brother and I a strong love and respect for the outdoors and our natural resources, whether it be

fishing on Lake Erie, small farm ponds, or just walking in the woods. Throughout my childhood and into my adult life I have enjoyed the National Park and local Metropark systems and feel it is time for me to give back. Give back to the community and the environment in a way where future generations can have the same experiences and make the same memories that I have. I believe in the mission of West Creek Conservancy and being on the Board of Directors gives me the opportunity to serve and improve our communities and the environment for future generations to enjoy.

Meet Our Staff

West Creek is also excited to welcome several new staff members to our team!



Brett Rodstrom Director of Conservation



Kara Benninghofen Stewardship & Outreach Coordinator



David Saja Senior Watershed Project Manager



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Connect with us! F

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Yes, I want to help West Creek Conservancy and help protect greenspaces in Northeast Ohio.

 Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:

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□ I have already included West Creek Conservancy in my will or estate plan.

□ Email me updates on programs and member events.

Please make checks payable to: West Creek Conservancy, P.O. Box 347113 Cleveland, OH 44134 You can also join by credit card online at www.westcreek.org or by calling 216.749.3720

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