THE TINKERS CREEK TRIBUTARY

News of the Tinkers Creek Watershed

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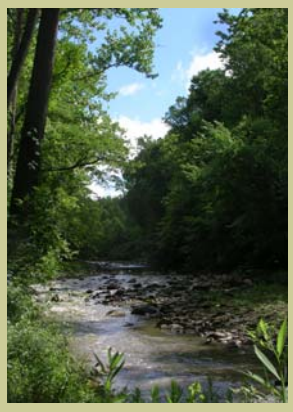

Coming Soon:

Tinkers Creek Watershed Festival

September 8, 2007
10AM—5PM

Twinsburg Wastewater Treatment Plant

From the Chair

by Harry Stark

The TCWP's mission is to promote watershed stewardship and to improve water resource quality by developing a comprehensive watershed management plan that emphasizes formation of partnerships to solve clearly identified problems. Currently, we have been moving toward a regional/watershed based approach throughout the Tinkers Creek watershed and have started to engage our communities, residents and businesses. Tinkers Creek has a lot to offer and it is important that we look at the links between healthy watersheds and healthy ecosystems. In the coming months and years, the TCWP will be working and collaborating regionally to ensure that these links are being obtained. I encourage all who live, work or enjoy the Tinkers Creek Watershed region to work with us and make positive contributions to the region we enjoy.

From the Watershed Coordinator

by Mike McNutt

The Watershed Partners have begun working with communities to assist them with storm water related concerns and NPDES ordinance development. Additionally, we have been educating officials on environmental issues. I often have the opportunity to walk Tinkers Creek and see many beautiful areas that are preserved in parks, nature preserves, and backyards. On the other hand, walking the creek also shows how destructive our actions can be. Combined sewer overflows, trash, illegal dumping, poor erosion control on construction sites, and an incredible amount of impervious cover are just some of the degraders to water quality that I see.

Individual actions can have a significant impact on the water quality in the creek. Because governments listen to the people, it is up to us to raise our voices for a new direction in decision making. The Partners would like to come to your Homeowners Associations to talk about the things you can do to help out Tinkers Creek. Our leaders need to know that Tinkers Creek is important to you and to future generations. Please contact us at 216-201-2001 x1224 for more information or to have us come to your Homeowners Association meeting.

Food for Thought

by Mershona Parshall

ECO-NEGLECT VS ECO-ENRICHMENT

As a society, we are becoming increasingly guilty of neglecting developmental opportunities for our children to experience their innate connection to nature. According to ecopsychologists, a connection to nature is especially important to make between the ages of four and seven. This connection promotes better mental health, empathy and biological affiliation. Nature exploration hones problem solving, social, and observation skills. Also, the nurturing aspect of nature is a spiritual resource that inspires and sustain individuals throughout life.

Summer Lawn Care

by Carla Regener

It is that time of year again when we all begin the tedious task of perfecting our lawn. It is important for us to remember our interconnectedness with nature. How we care for our lawns can have a direct effect on the natural systems around us - especially on the water quality in Tinkers Creek. Here are some simple tips for a watershed-healthy lawn!

1. *Mow High* - Mowing high encourages deep roots, reduces the amount of moisture lost from the soil, and makes it harder for new weeds to establish themselves in your yard. In addition, the grass grows taller and healthier, crowding out existing weeds. From April through September mow at a height of 3.5 to 5.5 inches, then gradually taper your cutting height down to 2.5 inches in October.

2. *Mow Often* - As you mow, you should never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade. Mowing your grass too short can cause disease, stop root growth, and/or encourage insects and weeds. In addition, make sure your blades are sharp. Tearing or shredding of grass blades can make your lawn more susceptible to disease.

3. *Watering* - In the summer, it is important to water your lawn. For proper growth, 1 to 1 ½ inches of water each week is necessary. Spread your watering over two sessions per week. It is best to water in the early morning because evening watering can encourage disease. When it is very hot, try watering your lawn in the early afternoon, just enough to get the blades wet.

4. *Let it Lie* - Grass clippings are 85% water and 5% nitrogen. When left on the lawn, they return water and nutrients to the soil. This means you will be able to use less fertilizer. Therefore, you should allow small clippings to lie on the ground as you cut your grass.

5. *Choose Earth-Friendly Fertilizers* – This means 50% or more of the nitrogen is in the slow release form, low or no phosphorus, and pesticide free (no weed-n-feed).

6. *Weed Control* - According to the Environmental Protection Agency Pesticide Usage and Sales Report 2000/2001, Americans apply over 90 million pounds of pesticides per year on lawns and gardens. Herbicides may pose a threat to children, animals, plants and beneficial insects beyond the intended effects on weeds or pests. Spot treatment or hand-digging of weeds are better approaches to weed control.

Riparian Setbacks

by Carol Moraco

Why are riparian setbacks important to a community?

Riparian areas are naturally vegetated areas found along rivers and streams. With an adequate undisturbed buffer, nature provides us with "free" services, including filtration of pollutants, reduction of flooding problems, and reduced erosion along stream banks.

Most local governments have established riparian setbacks in their zoning code which set limits on development or disturbance to these areas. Adequate setbacks usually range anywhere from 25 – 300 feet on either side of the waterway, depending on its drainage pattern. Where setbacks were not utilized in the past, the direct impact on the public's health and safety has become evident.

Without riparian setbacks, the natural functions of riparian areas are lost. Ultimately, man-made structures will be used to perform the same functions. Over time, riparian setbacks are an important investment for any community. It is more cost effective to let Mother Nature perform the work it was intended to do.

Conservationism vs. Progressionism: Can the Two Co-exist?

by Mike McNutt

In the last few years all of us have noticed that the world is becoming smaller. I remember at a young age feeling that the corners of the globe were mystical and ancient, majestic and intriguing, remote and very far away. But recently I have found evidence to the contrary. As I drive my Volkswagen Jetta to the filling station, I am still amazed that finding gas for $2.86 is, in today's terms, a bargain. It never occurred to me that my family budget would become governed by high gas prices. One less date with the wife, one less ice cream outing with the kids, one less pizza night – all of the things we enjoy doing. It has become clear to me that my dependence on gasoline is essential to my life. I need to go to work. I need to buy my groceries which have been transported across state lines. I need to have my garbage picked up. All of these services and items are in some fashion dictated by the price of gasoline. However, as our cost of living continues to increase, our wages and income stay the same. So how can we get ahead? How do we save a little for ourselves?

A while back I was thinking about the inception and westward expansion of our great country. We held high the banner of "manifest destiny." We wanted to conquer and engineer everything. We wanted to build, build, and build some more. In 200 years we have been able to create some incredible things: the Empire State Building, the Hoover Dam, the National Park System, and the Panama Canal. But as we expanded, so did the rest of the world. We are now at a tenuous crossroads between pioneering a new era of sustainability while still carrying the banner of "manifest destiny," but in a new "green" direction.

Conservationism is to maintain the health of our natural world. Progress is to move forward or grow. Progressionism is the process of moving forward. I once heard the following quote: "Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare." We often do things without knowing the consequences of our actions. For instance, when you wash your car on your driveway, do you know where the water goes? It goes into the gutter in the street. But what about after that? There is a whole infrastructure underground called the storm sewer system. This is a network of pipes that carry water away from our roads, and is completely different from the pipes that carry water from our toilets and sinks. This water flows, untreated, to the nearest stream. Therefore, the soap from washing your car will ultimately find its way to Lake Erie. "So what?" you might ask. After all, you are only one person, right? But what happens when thousands of people do it on the same day? That's a lot of soap!

Benefits from conservation practices are not just valued in the ecological sense. Communities are beginning to recognize the associated worth of those natural resources with increases in property values, reductions in municipal infrastructure costs, and increases in the quality of life of residents. The "free" services offered by Mother Nature not only benefit the environment by providing biological habitat, but also offer floodwater storage, erosion control, nutrient removal, and recreational opportunities for communities.

None of us are purposefully doing things that harm the earth. Only now are the consequences of our past actions becoming apparent. Did we have vision long ago? Absolutely. Are there things we could have done differently? Of course. But the question now arises, how do we balance growth and maintain the health of our earth so as to avoid a nightmare in the future? What are we willing to change in our personal daily routines that can have a cumulative positive impact on our earth? How do we create a sustainable infrastructure for renewable energy? How do we change an ideology that revolves around individual best interest, rather than the common good?

Since the earth is the only planet in our solar system that can sustain life, it is in our best interest to recognize the need to change our course from consumption to conservation. Our society will continue to grow, and with that growth, important decisions will need to be made. Perhaps it is time to connect vision and action, rather than having one without the other. Otherwise, the lack of balance between progress and conservation will lead us down a road to disaster.

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Member Communities

Walton Hills
Valley View
Reminderville
Oakwood
Glenwillow
North Randall
Bedford Heights

TinkersCreek WATERSHED PARTNERS
Rediscover • Respect • Revitalize

Membership Information

I would like to be a member of the Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners!

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Name

_____
Address

_____
City State Zip

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E-mail

Yearly memberships

- ❑ Individual $10
- ❑ Family $15
- ❑ Sponsor $25
- ❑ Benefactor $50
- ❑ Creek Partner $100
- ❑ I would like to volunteer my time

Please make checks payable to:
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