



THE TINKERS CREEK TRIBUTARY

News of the Tinkers Creek Watershed

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Winter 2008

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From the Chair

Harry Stark

The Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners (TCWP) has made great advances in the short time it has been in existence. One year ago, we started the process of obtaining our 501(c)-3 non-profit status, we were planning for our first annual Mayor’s Breakfast, and we were securing our Board of Directors positions. Since that time, we have secured our non-profit status, had an extremely successful Mayor’s Breakfast, and have seen a dedicated Board of Directors established for the TCWP. We have also participated in installing a rain garden and worked on a stream restoration project in collaboration with the City of Twinsburg, are currently completing a wetland assessment within the watershed, and are completing the Tinkers Creek Watershed Action Plan. We have also applied for several grants to continue developing our outreach programs and other special projects for the watershed.

Our biggest endeavor to date is sponsoring the Northeast Ohio Stormwater Conference. This conference is scheduled for May 21-22, 2008 at the Cuyahoga Community College Eastern Campus in Highland Hills. This conference has been a great marketing tool for our organization and has brought stormwater management to the forefront of issues here in NE Ohio. We have had a great response to the conference. Currently, we have over 50 sponsors and exhibitors signed up, over 50 speakers presenting on a variety of topics, including the Ohio EPA Director, Chris Korleski, and the US EPA’s Nikos Singelis, both speaking as keynotes. To find out more about the conference, visit our website at www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org. We are also having this year’s Mayor’s Breakfast the day before the conference, May 20th, at the Eastern Campus of Cuyahoga Community College. This year’s breakfast will focus on the theme of the stormwater conference and offer information to the Mayors on stormwater management.

I would also like to welcome some new members to the organization. This includes the Cities of Macedonia and Streetsboro. This makes 12 communities that are now members of our organization. We have also received new individual members as well and would like to welcome: Ron Janke, Julie Sanders, Bob Gardin, Tom & Sally Pate, and Edith C. Chase.

I would like to personally thank all of you who have become members or have been a volunteer on some of our projects. I also want to thank the Board of Directors for their commitment to the group. If you are reading this and are not a member, I encourage you to learn more about our group and seriously think about joining. Additionally, we are also always looking for volunteers to assist us in the many projects we are working on.

Mark your calendars for the following events hosted by the TCWP:

- May 20th: Mayor’s Breakfast
- May 21-22: NE Ohio Stormwater Conference
- Summer 2008: Various stream cleanups – please visit the website for updates as to dates, times, and locations.
- September 13: Tinkers Creek Watershed Festival, Twinsburg Town Square

TCWP Members

Individual

Edith Chase
Bob Gardin
Dale Godbey
Ron Janke
Brian Malone
Belinda S. Miles
Seth Wilmore

Family

David & Georgette Hague
Fred Losi
Mike McNutt
Tom & Fran Schultz
Laura & Chris Travers
Gary Truxton
Bill Zawiski

Sponsor

Erv Ball
Justin & Jacklyn Czekaj
Chris & Stacey Hartman

Denny Linville
John McLeod
Marion Olson
Megan Parnell
Jerry Piasecki
Pam Sawchyn
Harry & Rosanne Stark
Stanley Stine
Chris Vild
Jeff Wyatt

Benefactor

Holly Norton
Mershona Parshall
Tom & Sally Pate
Julie Sanders
Judith Zala

Creek Partner

Jane Goodman
Northfield Park Associates
Lisa Perry

Katherine Procop
Larry Szuhay

Businesses & Organizations

Biohabitats
Cuyahoga County Board of Health
EMH&T
EnviroScience Inc.
FMSM Engineers
Partners Environmental
Summit County General Health District

Welcome to all of our new
members!

To become a member, please fill
out our membership form on
page 6, or visit

www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

My street is receiving sewer lines for the first time. I have been on a septic tank for many years, and it is in bad shape and needing to be replaced. I also have a sump pump and a pit for ground water in my basement. Water from around my foundation drains into this pit during rain events and is pumped out through the septic system. I have just learned that this should not be the case, that ground water and storm water cannot be drained into the new sanitary sewer. My problem – that sump pump is very necessary to keep my basement from flooding, but when the house is hooked up to the sewer the sump pump drain water will not be allowed to go through the new sewer.

Would it make sense to try to reroute this storm water into a rain garden, if one could be built in my yard? There can be a great deal of water going out from this sump. How large a rain garden would you recommend? How could we get a handle on how big to

make it? Also, are there people or companies who specialize in digging the correct depth for a rain garden? Another problem: rain gardens are supposed to be planted with native plants that tolerate being in standing water. Where does one find these kinds of plants? Is there a nursery in the Solon/Aurora/Twinsburg area that sells native plants suitable for a rain garden? How else could I find these plants – private individuals, web sites, what?

Signed, Puzzled

Dear Puzzled:

Stormwater is becoming an increasingly troublesome problem for homeowners and many local municipalities. Flooding, because of increased impervious surfaces from development, can cause old sewers to either overflow or backup, spilling raw sewage into

basements and streets. Communities such as Cleveland and Akron have major problems because of the combined sanitary and stormwater lines. As communities continue to “hook up” homeowners to the new sanitary lines, the stormwater needs a place to go.

Rain gardens and bio-swales are fantastic options for both the homeowner and the business owner.

These gardens are used to hold stormwater from rooftops and parking lots that would otherwise be directed to the overtaxed storm sewers. In addition, these areas are planted with native vegetation which has adapted to the climate in Ohio and will filter the water by absorbing it into the plants. The idea is that each home and business will minimize the quantity of water leaving the individual site. An abundance of information about rain gardens, bio-swales, and where to find native Ohio plants can be found at:

www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org.

Happy Streams

Imagine taking a ride in the countryside and seeing a beautiful little bubbling brook meandering through a valley. Chances are that the little brook has banks covered with herbaceous plants and shrubs, like purple coneflower and buttonbush, and is overhung with a variety of stately trees such as willow and sycamore. When you walk down the gently sloping flood plain and get closer to the stream you can see minnows swimming in the clear water, water boatman striding on the surface, and dragonflies hovering above. Looking down, you are able to see all the way to the bottom, where there are mixed cobbles, pebbles, and smaller grains of sand in the streambed. This variety of sediments creates a diversity of habitats. Imagine lifting a rock and finding a crayfish among a multitude of other small creatures, making their homes and raising their families in the bottom sediments. We would definitely call this stream “Happy.” Happy streams are also healthy streams.

Streams meander naturally, and when they do, some erosion occurs on the outer curve where the water has a higher velocity and flows more swiftly. Then this loose material is transported, either as suspended load, bed load, or deposition onto the inner part of the curve where the water slows down. In this way, streams form their bank patterns, including sand bars and islands. When there is a rainstorm event, erosion, transportation, and deposition increase proportionally, depending on

the intensity of the storm. So the stream’s configuration may change temporarily, but ultimately, all streams are trying to reach their best equilibrium, even though they are always dynamic in energy flow.

Unfortunately, not all streams are happy because they have not been allowed to maintain their natural state. Many streams have been degraded by human attempts to channel them for convenience sake, either for agricultural, residential, industrial, or municipal development purposes. When we force a stream to flow in a straight channel, either earthen or concrete, the velocity increases dramatically due to the increased volume and often, height or slope. When the velocity increases, so does the erosive power, and the stream cuts down its own banks or bottom. This increased erosion leads to increased suspended sediment, bed load, greater turbidity, or muddy water, and greater sediment deposition and disturbance in the bed. Muddy water effectively stops photosynthesis because light cannot penetrate down to the aquatic plants on the bottom. Thus, the available oxygen also decreases. Then the animals not only lose their food source, but also their air to breathe, and their hiding and nesting habitat.

Channeling is not the only way that we disturb our streams. Every time that we mow our lawn right to the edge of the stream, or cut down “weeds” and bushes or trees on the bank, we do

Sandy Barbic
Education Specialist, Summit SWCD

great damage. The roots of all these water-loving plants hold the soil in place and stabilize the banks. These roots also filter out pollutants from our storm water and provide a barrier to pollution in the stream. When it rains, the greatest amount of pollutants wash off the land as sheet flow, at the very beginning of the storm.

When we damage our streams and riparian areas, (areas along streams), in the ways that I have mentioned, we also increase the risk of flooding. With its natural width, depth, and volume, the stream can hold water all the way to bank full, or on its floodplain, and the natural vegetation absorbs a huge amount of water in the roots and the stems (or trunks) and leaves. If we remove the natural containment capacities of streams, and fill or build on floodplains, we leave our fellow creatures and ourselves in a very vulnerable predicament.

So if you know of a “Happy” stream, help to keep it that way with conservation practices. If you know of an **“unhappy”** stream in your own yard or neighborhood, get involved and see what you can do to restore it to its natural balance.

For more information and suggestions contact the Summit Soil and Water Conservation District at 330-929-2871. We are located at 2795 Front Street, Suite D, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, 44221.



“Going Green” & Public Health

Mike McNutt
Watershed Coordinator

Amongst the U.S. population we have reached a fervent need for environmental education. Americans consume 24% of all energy produced globally while only having 5% of the global population. Each American produces 1 ton of garbage and recycles only 32.5% of the waste. Since 1934 flood damage has steadily increased to cost property owners and tax payers billions of dollars. Americans continue to treat water as a waste product rather than a resource. We consume more water per person than any other country in the world, 159 gallons per day, while half of the global population lives on 25 gallons per day.

The march of the westward expansion 200 years ago instilled a manifest destiny mentality within the ideological foundation of America. Land, resources, and nature were to be conquered, and consumed as quickly and decisively as possible. This same mentality still permeates American culture today. The decisions of long ago are only now being felt. Flooding, global climate change, clean water, over-harvesting of fish, urban sprawl, and habitat loss are all issues that future generations will contend with. Educating the young minds of our youth about being informed, protective stewards of the environment is crucial to the longevity of our global ecosystem. However, we must first deem these issues as important and legitimate.

We have all been told to lead by example. But do we practice what we preach? Do you recycle? Do you use energy efficient light bulbs? Do you turn the thermostat down when you leave for work? Are you more inclined to buy a more energy efficient vehicle over an SUV? To some of us the answers are, “yes” and to some, “not so much.” Western culture emphasizes consumption, consumerism, and the idea that bigger is better. Cheap energy has been the foundation for our booming economy and growth rate since the industrial revolution.

However, the world is getting smaller, the economy is becoming more and more global, and the population is getting larger. The U.S. is finding itself having to share finite resources with the rest of the developing world, not to mention that the rich oil producing countries are realizing that they can keep supply at levels that increase their profits and increase our costs. With an increase in oil prices comes an increase in costs for virtually all goods and services from milk to apples, to meat production, to rubbish pickup. This means that people like you and me have less money in our pockets. Increasingly, housing foreclosures and credit card debt have paralyzed the “American Dream” and have begun to cripple our economy. America’s manifest destiny is wearing thin and a new ideological shift toward conservationism is crucial for our sustainability.

“Going Green.” What does this mean? Is it a sensationalized slogan that we all get tired of hearing? Is it like that one Christmas commercial that you hear over and over again that grates you so bad that makes you push the mute button and pump your fist in the air in protest, with a little yelling? Is it something that you do only in public and not at home? Or is it something that you strongly believe in and focus on in your daily routines? As Environmental Health professionals, we should be talking about environmental issues, more than just our traditional functions. More than ever we are on the front lines of this necessary ideological shift toward conservationism. Everything that we do as Health Departments is connected to the environment. But there are also many issues that we don’t address that are major public health risks. Air pollution, water pollution, storm water pollution, combined sewer issues, watershed management, and the built environment are all important health related risks, which are non-traditional, but clearly impact public health. Did you know that the number one water quality impairment is sediment in the

water? Urban runoff, poorly maintained construction sites, farm field erosion, and too much water in streams are all impacting the biological fitness of our waterways. So, “Going Green” is not a façade. It isn’t just about recycling, or what type of light bulbs you use. It is a way of life.

Public Health Departments have been, and continue to be leaders to the communities we serve. Change is a process. “Rome wasn’t built in a day.” But as our understanding unfolds about the environmental footprints that, as a collective “we”, leave behind by our cumulative daily habits, the more important it will be to incorporate principals of conservationism into our work and home environments, lead by example, and educate our communities through our actions. At no other time has an issue which impacts both the communities that you represent and the entire global population existed. Becoming self-sustaining where balancing human progress and upholding environmental integrity is an issue that for most of us, has never been considered a public health problem. So whose problem is it? Who will address these realities? If we choose to do so, how do we do it? There is no one answer to these questions. But without a doubt, environmental health is people, planet, and sustainability and that is definitely part of public health.



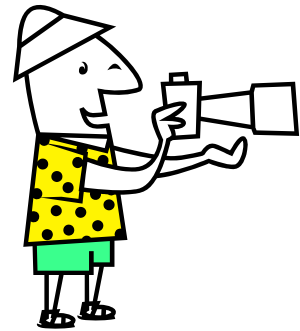
Tinkers Creek Watershed Photo Contest

Winning photos will be featured in the 2009 Tinkers Creek Watershed Calendar. Photos will be accepted until April 30, 2008. Contact Mike McNutt with any questions or for more information.

Phone: 216-201-2001 x1224
E-mail: mmcnutt@ccbh.net
www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org

Rules for Submittal:

- All photos must be taken within the Tinkers Creek Watershed.
- Entrants must submit a physical print 8x10 inches in size. A digital copy of the photo must be available upon request. The following information must be included with the entry: Name, address, phone number, e-mail address, location where photo was taken, and T-shirt size.
- All photos should accurately reflect the subject matter as it appeared. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (cropping, adjustments to color & contrast, etc.) will be disqualified from the contest.
- Photos must be postmarked by April 30, 2008 and sent to:
Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners
Attention: Mike McNutt
5550 Venture Drive
Parma, OH 44130
- Submission of a photo conveys a non-exclusive license to TCWP to use the image for any display, publicity, public relations, educational, or promotional use without further compensation to the copyright holder.
- All photo submissions will become the property of TCWP.
- Entrants retain ownership and all other rights to future use of their photographs. The TCWP shall have the right to verify, in their sole judgment, winner eligibility.
- Previously published material for which non-exclusive rights were granted may be entered as long as the entrant still warrants full rights. The entrant must disclose when and where the photo appeared previously upon submission.



Support the TCWP - use GoodSearch.com

GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it's powered by Yahoo!, so you get great results.



Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners as the charity you want to support. Please spread the word!

Calendar of Events

2008 Northeast Ohio Stormwater Conference

May 21-22, 2008
Cuyahoga Community College - East Campus
Highland Hills, OH
For more information or to register, visit www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org.



Tinkers Creek Watershed Day

September 13, 2008
Twinsburg Town Square
More information coming soon!

Please participate in our Environmental Awareness Survey, which can be accessed at www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org.

TINKERS CREEK WATERSHED PARTNERS

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Member Communities

- Bedford
- Bedford Heights
- Glenwillow
- Highland Hills
- Macedonia
- Maple Heights
- North Randall
- Oakwood
- Reminderville
- Streetsboro
- Valley View
- Walton Hills

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

Return this form to the address below, or visit www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

T-shirt Size _____

*Please make checks payable to:
Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners
P.O. Box 444
Twinsburg, OH 44087*

Yearly memberships

Individual \$10 Family \$15 Sponsor \$25

Benefactor \$50 Creek Partner \$100 I would like to volunteer my time

