Euclid Creek Watershed Council Update

The Euclid Creek Watershed Program began in 2000 when 10 communities in the watershed organized informally to address common environmental, stormwater and development concerns. The partnership was formalized in 2004 when nine of the watershed communities created bylaws and entered into a partnership with Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) to provide supplemental funding for a watershed coordinator position to create and assist in the implementation of the Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan, which sets goals to protect, restore, and manage the watershed.

Every 4 years since, the steering committee, made up of community Mayors or their designated representatives, has chosen to renew this agreement for Cuyahoga SWCD staff to continue work on Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan implementation.

During these trying times we recognize that budgets are tight and priorities may shift. We are very grateful that the members of the Euclid Creek Watershed Council (ECWC) have agreed to renew this partnership again for 2021-2024.

The funding provided results in cost-sharing across the nine participating communities, and is used to leverage outside funding. The watershed staff at Cuyahoga SWCD assist community partners with watershed grants and projects. To date almost $11 million has been secured for Euclid Creek watershed projects. In addition $35 million was dedicated to connecting septic system owners to sanitary sewers, and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District has spent $194 million on the Euclid Creek Storage Tunnel.

Our work isn’t done yet though. We want to thank our community partners for their continued commitment to the ultimate goal of swimmable fishable waters in the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Join Us

Our content has moved online this year! View recorded content here: euclidcreekwatershed.org/programs/euclid-creek-online-presentations

Sign up to volunteer at cleanups, planting and invasive management events today! euclidcreekwatershed.org/events

For questions, contact Watershed Program Manager, Elizabeth Hiser (ehiser@cuyahogaswcd.org).
Dear Environmental Friends:

This year has turned out to be not what anyone expected. I remember the wonderful February kickoff meeting of the Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC). We had new volunteers signing up, new volunteers for the board, and a 2020 event calendar expected to be a great success. By March that was all wiped out. We were faced with the challenge of advancing our mission of educating the public in the Euclid Creek Watershed without being near the public, or even meeting with each other. Luckily, our former president Ken Messinger-Rapport did have some tech savvy and got us going with Zoom for our meetings. It did take us a while to reorganize and to learn how to go virtual. Now we will be able to finish off the year with some very nice video and possibly socially distant activities.

Elected President in June, I have certainly lucked out. I have a fantastic board, all willing and interested in furthering our watershed mission. Steve McIntosh, a special education teacher and learning garden instructor, is our vice president and chair of the Education Committee. Natalie Keyerleber, retired nurse and Certified Watershed Steward, is our Membership chair. Ginny Aveni, our founder, has come back on the board to help with the Education Committee. Esther Trepal, former editor and Registered Dietitian, is heading our Conservation Committee. A special thanks to the board members who stayed on to help: Jim Juknalis, retired businessman, is our Marketing chair; Paul Costanzo, a restoration rehabilitation naturalist, is on our Conservation Committee; and Sue Swisher, retired librarian, is our secretary.

In August, we had our first virtual presentation by MaryAnne Hejna, detailing her Masters research on the Euclid Creek water monitoring efforts (see pg. 5). On September 1, we will host Sustainable Cleveland: Engaging Community Through Climate Action, presented by Cathi Lehn, Ph.D and Kristin Hall. We hope to have a tour of the Dusty Goldenrod Preserve in October. The preserve is one of three conservation properties in which FOEC volunteers work with the Euclid Creek Watershed Program to improve and protect (see pg. 3). To finish off the year, Chris Vild, our former Vice President and arborist will do a socially distant walking tour in the watershed to tell us about the importance of trees.

Friends of Euclid Creek is an all-volunteer environmental watershed 501(c)(3) organization. For nearly 20 years, we have been educating on the increasing environmental problems in the watershed and what can be done about them. We want people to know that even doing simple actions (foregoing chemicals on the lawn and garden, picking up litter, recycling, reducing plastic use) can make a difference. From practicing simple things to helping to restore wetlands, there is a role for everyone. Everyone can make a difference; every environmental action counts.

For more information about Friends of Euclid Creek or to sign up for our monthly email, please contact me at friendsofeuclidcreek@gmail.com.

I hope you will join us!

Jim Juknalis, Kelly Butauski, and Natalie Keyerleber (L:R) at socially distant outdoor board meeting. Not pictured: Steve McIntosh, Esther Trepal, Neil Barrett.
For me, there’s nothing quite like deep yellows partnered with vibrant purples. Fall paints with this palette throughout the watershed. While leaves often steal the autumn show, visit any meadow or right-of-way to take in golden rods and purple stars. Why are purple and yellow so pleasing to the eye? Because they are complementary colors, opposite each other on the color wheel. Who said color schemes are relegated to home decorating?

Goldenrods get a bad rap as hay fever culprits. Yes, they have pollen, but not the havoc dust of ragweed, the real sneezy, itchy eyes villain. Goldenrods are diverse if you care to take a closer look: plume-topped and flat-topped, short and tall, yellow and white, common and rare. Showy purples include towering ironweed, named for its hearty stem, to New England aster that flashes violet blooms among its meadow neighbors.

Goldenrod, ironweed, and many late summer bloomers are asters. As mentioned, they are common through the watershed, generally in open, sunny locations. Their disk-shaped flowers are easy “prey” for bees and butterflies that walk across bunches of blossoms sipping nectar or collecting pollen. Birds and squirrels are not the only critters pilfering as much as they can during fall. For insects that over winter or migrate, autumn harvest gives the energy needed for winter dormancy or flight.

These beautiful natives aren’t just for the wild landscape. Plan your perennial garden to fade into winter with a last hurrah of vibrancy as well as provide important end of season sustenance for pollinators and birds. The time for seeding native plants comes from late October into early winter. Or, make a note now to purchase late summer to mid-fall bloomers at a spring native plant sale.

This fall I invite you to take your head out of the trees and scan meadows or prairie pockets for color. The hues will warm your heart as much as that wooly sweater wrapped about your shoulders. Ah, welcome autumn!

Yellow and Purple by FOEC Member, Barb Holtz

Dusty Goldenrod Updates

Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC) volunteers have been hard at work this year stewarding the Dusty Goldenrod Preserve. This 37 acre property in Highland Heights was purchased for conservation by West Creek Conservancy in 2019 with funds from a Clean Ohio Grant.

FOEC received a 2019 Dominion Energy and Western Reserve Land Conservancy Watershed Mini Grant for $3,000 to manage invasive species, establish a bioengineering streambank stabilization project, enhance native plant populations, and build experimental deer exclosures at the Dusty Goldenrod Preserve.

In November 2019, then conservation committee chair, Paul Costanzo, led a group of FOEC conservation committee members and volunteers from Case Western Reserve University’s Zeta Beta Tau fraternity in setting up 4 deer exclosures, removing a patch of invasive phalaris, and pulling several bags of trash (and an old car!) from the property.

The planned spring planting project was put on hold as Covid hit in March. It will be rescheduled for November 2020 and will be limited to small groups of 10 or less practicing social distancing.

In addition, new conservation chair, Esther Trepal (see pg. 5) will be leading efforts to remove aggressive maples from the meadow habitat after the dusty goldenrod finishes it’s 2020 bloom and new signage will be purchased and posted at the main entryways to the preserve.

Stay tuned to project progress on our website!

euclidcreekwatershed.org
Click on Programs—
Highland Heights Dusty Goldenrod Preserve
Thirty volunteers, 100 plants, four hours, and lots and lots of rocks. That is what it took to install the FOEC Native Plant Garden in Sims Park, Euclid. In June of 2019, the FOEC board granted $500 to start a much-needed native plant garden. A native garden right on the shores of Lake Erie is ideal for birds and pollinators migrating back and forth.

Long-time Euclid residents remember a beautiful circular perennial garden in Sims Park to the west of the historic Henn Mansion, installed more than thirty years ago by the Euclid Lakeshore Garden Club.

Unfortunately, time moves on for us all and the gardeners could no longer care for the bed that lay empty and weed-ridden for some years.

When the FOEC heard about the garden site, they decided to take it over as an “Adopt-a-Spot” for the City of Euclid’s “Keep Euclid Beautiful” program. This new garden would contain only native plants (those that were growing here before colonists came to our shores). Native plants are the very best food and habitat we can provide pollinators such as bees, birds, and butterflies.

October 6, 2019 was the final big planting day. Little did the planning committee know just how much work was involved to get to that point as many problems happened along the way. In 2016, the city parks department had put in new soil, landscape fabric, and mulch to cut down on invasive plants. When they removed the mulch and landscape fabric, a big problem was revealed: the soil was now rock solid. Fortunately, the park workers were able to till the soil in preparation for the coming installation.

Sarah Cech and Barb Holtz, former Cleveland Metroparks staff, volunteered to design the garden and choose the plants. When the designers finished the garden layout, it included the surprise of a path winding into the middle of the garden. Barb Holtz explained, “We feel strongly about the path that swirls into the center. The wave-like shape connects to the garden’s proximity to the lake. We want to invite folks, especially children, in to experience the garden up close...to be part of the garden. The large rock in the middle can be a place to sit or stand to get a pollinator’s view.”

Those overseeing the project were in a quandary as to how to delineate a path that would satisfy the design yet be economical of effort and money. The Parks department came to the rescue once again when Qnard (“Q”) Green and other employees used old bricks to line the path following the design and then filled the path with sand in preparation for a top layer of gravel or mulch.

Barb Holtz and Sarah Cech volunteered to get the plants from Avalon Gardens in Chardon. The board of FOEC increased the grant with an additional $500 to allow completion of the garden planting in 2019 instead of having to go back again in 2020. It made all the difference. We had enough money to get most of the plants and buy temporary deer fencing.

Continued on page 5.
October 6 was the big day. In spite of predictions of rain, several volunteers came early at 8:00 a.m. to help Barb Holtz with the unloading and planting. When several more volunteers arrived at 9:00 a.m., most plants were in. Q Green was there to assist and showed Sarah Cech some rocks he had collected from the beach. Sarah decided to build a stone path, an adjustment the volunteers loved. It was so fitting that the rocks came from the Sims Park beach. Volunteers collected, sorted, and set rocks in the path. Everything was complete by noon, just as it started to rain.

Of course, the project didn’t end there. There were many more things to do. We organized a volunteer Garden Care Crew to water and weed as needed; volunteers drilled holes and inserted the 17 fence poles; and the following week they tied 100 feet of netting to the poles.

The success of the garden installation is due to the hard work and support of everyone involved. FOEC could not have completed this successful project without the support of the City of Euclid, Euclid Parks employees, and volunteers from far and wide. The final touch to the garden is our interpretive sign funded by the Hanes Family Foundation. Euclid residents, Sims Park visitors, and all the birds, bees, and butterflies will enjoy this park for years to come. If you would like more information about the garden or would like to volunteer, contact Linda Beck, City of Euclid, Keep Euclid Beautiful program, 216-289-2786, or email friendsofeuclidcreek@gmail.com.

Introducing New Conservation Chair by FOEC Board Member, Esther Trepal

I am very happy to have assumed the Chairmanship of the Conservation Committee in July. I believe our work is at the crux of Friends of Euclid Creek. We are charged with overseeing three conservation properties, identifying problems and executing any action plans that are needed.

I don’t have a background in environmental issues, but was drawn to Euclid Creek clean-ups by an experience I had at Mentor Headlands State Park two years ago. I am a native of Euclid, but lived away for many years. When I returned in 2016, I fell in love with Lake Erie! While swimming one day, I noticed a strange golden “cloud” in the water that got thicker and thicker. Of course, it was algae, something we never had back in the day. It made me so sad to think that this great resource we have is endangered. As a child, my working class family couldn’t afford vacations, but we didn’t care. We had Euclid Creek, Strawberry Lane, Squires Castle and Mentor Headlands. Especially at this time of Coronavirus, when pools are closed, finances are hurting and travel/entertainment is limited, our parks and beaches are crucial.

The Dusty Goldenrod Preserve in Highland Heights is a gem that I am getting to know first hand. In this 37-acre property you can find wetlands, a floodplain, an abundance of native plants (some quite rare for this area), meadow and forest. I am discovering the intricate dance between the various plants and animals/insects that inhabit this space. My desire is that they continue for eons, because their dance is our survival.
What a year. We had a large turn out in April to our water quality monitoring party where we recognized our volunteers with a pizza party and trained new hopeful volunteers. Just as our new partnership with Cleveland Metroparks started, COVID-19 came and shut down the nature centers hosting our monitoring kits.

Despite COVID-19 putting a short pause on our monitoring program, we have successfully started things back up and currently have our kits stored at the Wildwood Marina for volunteers looking to sample. New safety protocols are in place.

Cuyahoga SWCD has big news—we hired a new watershed coordinator! Meg Hennessey (pg. 7) is going to be leading all of our SWCD volunteer monitoring programs going forward.

A few of our volunteers are helping to take our monitoring program to new heights this year and we wanted to let you know about their efforts!

Cleveland Metroparks is partnering with Cleveland Water Alliance on a Smart Citizen Science project. Watershed Volunteer Program Coordinator Lisa Meranti, and Citizen Science Assistant, Breoni Turner are coordinating this effort.

As part of this project several volunteers are testing out new handheld devices designed to give water quality results using their iPhone. Four brave volunteers have adopted Euclid Creek and are trying out these Erie Open System Devices. This means many hours calibrating and comparing results to our normal spectrometer results. Thank you to Tim Bencic, Kevin Harrison, John Hurst, and Gurnoor Majhail for taking this journey with us!

Thank you to the following monitors who have dedicated their time to Euclid Creek this year!

**2020 Monitors:**
- Neil Barrett*
- Colleen Berg*
- Mary K. Evans
- MaryAnne Hejna
- John Hurst
- Caroline Kelemen
- Annie Roberto
- Esther Trepal*

* Denotes new Monitors

Special thanks to Neil Barrett and Esther Trepal who have adopted new sites at the Dusty Goldenrod Preserve and are calibrating their kit monthly!

We want to recognize Mary K. Evans, Lillian Hurst, and Patrick Henry who have been monitoring with the program for many years. They have provided valuable input as we update protocols to our new equipment.

We are very excited to announce that one piece of the Smart Citizen Science project is the addition of our Euclid Creek Watershed dataset to a tool called Water Reporter.

This tool will allow volunteers to enter their data and have it be mapped in an interactive platform for public viewing. Users can click on specific stations and see which water quality parameters are high or low, and how parameters trend throughout the watershed.

Go to our website, click on Euclid Creek Volunteer Monitoring Program and then click on “Interactive Data Map” to check it out.
MaryAnne Hejna and Dr. Teresa J. Cutright of The University of Akron conducted widespread water quality monitoring research throughout the Euclid Creek watershed from March 2019 – March 2020. Field investigations were conducted 36 times over the course of the year. Results indicated substantial reduction of nutrient water pollution by the presence of two Cleveland Metroparks within the watershed. The extensive grass and tree coverage within the Metroparks along the West/Main Branch decreased phosphorus levels on average by one-third during dry weather. In particular, the stream restoration at Acacia Reservation provided key, impactful results. The East Branch, lacking similar riparian protection, experienced an undesirable phosphorus rise (double) across its reach. The highest phosphorus levels, up to 20 times the target concentration of 0.05 mg/L, were located in upstream residential areas. The suspected cause was leaky sanitary sewers.

Compared to historical data, phosphorus levels significantly increased \([p<0.05]\) at headwater locations in the West/Main Branch, while levels significantly decreased at downstream sites \([p<0.05]\). Phosphorus levels remain unchanged \([p>0.05]\) in the East Branch. The adjacent map shows typical phosphorus levels for the immediate upstream catchments of the 14 sampling sites. Here, two sampling sites meet the watershed target of 0.05 mg/L, Telling Mansion and Wildwood. All other sites tested above the target. As shown in the legend, each color change represents a five-fold increase, a sizeable intensification of pollution.

During wet weather, storm sewers carried large amounts of rainfall and subsequent nutrients into Euclid Creek. The amount of rainfall, rainfall intensity, and preceding number of dry days all impact the nutrient levels released into Euclid Creek. Spring storms contributed the most pollution to the creek seasonally. The West/Main Branch provided passage for more water to Lake Erie than the East Branch; however, the East Branch contributed more nutrient pollution. Riparian improvements along the East Branch were suggested. Additional future water quality recommendations included green infrastructure storage (i.e., wet weather streams, rainwater harvesting, rain barrels) in the upstream branches to delay storm flows. Slowing down wet weather flows with green infrastructure will enhance the community environment for residents and supply cleaner water to Lake Erie.

Meg Hennessey is Cuyahoga SWCD’s new Watershed Coordinator. A biologist and ardent nature lover, Meg has previously worked in watershed and ecosystem health in Indiana and New Mexico. Her favorite part of the job is making science more relatable for folks of all backgrounds since the health of our environment impacts everyone! At Cuyahoga SCWD she will be heading up the volunteer monitoring programs and working with watershed groups. In her free time she is a weaver, fiber artist, backpacker, and horse rider. She looks forward to meeting and working with all the friends and partners of Euclid Creek.
When Cleveland Metroparks took ownership of the former Acacia Country Club in Lyndhurst in late 2012, the stretch of Euclid Creek onsite was ravaged by the effects of urban stormwater run-off and exhibited very low biodiversity with only three fish species present. In 2016 a grant-funded stream restoration project was conducted to improve the habitat and increase floodplain connection to buffer the negative effects of stormwater surges.

Based on surveys following project completion, stream habitat and fish abundance improved dramatically. Yet due to downstream barriers, fish diversity remained low - only the original three fish species present, just in much higher numbers. Among these were pumpkinseed sunfish, a species which does not tolerate low water quality, which was a promising sign of the site’s potential.

Noting the limitation of additional fish having access from downstream, Cleveland Metroparks decided to give the project a helping hand. Staff sought to translocate additional fish to the site, meaning we would collect additional native fish species from elsewhere in the watershed to transplant to the site. After acquiring the required permit, Natural Resources staff collected a total of 387 fish on three dates between August 2019 and May 2020 to release at the site. These included ten species not formerly present that came from two downstream sites in the watershed as well as a pond at Acacia Reservation.

The fish will be given an opportunity to establish, then we will conduct a follow-up survey to assess their success in establishing at the site. On a final note, the site successfully weathered a massive flood earlier this spring and maintained its integrity. The creek has certainly accomplished the goal of buffering stormwater runoff. We look forward to reevaluating the fish community in the future.

Have you noticed the small 2x4 stand near the Euclid Creek Stream Restoration at Acacia? This is a chronolog station designed to help show how the restored headwaters are improving stream health and water quality.

1)Brackets help visitors position their smartphones to take consistently aligned photos over time.
2)Instructions on the sign tell visitors where to email the photo.
3)Chronolog adds every photo to the site’s time lapse.
See the Acacia time lapse here: www.chronolog.io/site/CMP103
Can you find the high water mark?
Mayfield Campus Restoration Project

Cuyahoga SWCD recently received funding from Ohio Lake Erie Commission to design a stream restoration project for the Mayfield Campus golf course in Lyndhurst. The golf course lies on the West Branch of Euclid Creek and is home to over 11,500 feet of stream and 235 acres of land, a significant contiguous portion of the Euclid Creek Watershed.

This project is a result of the need to improve fish and aquatic insect populations and habitat within the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern (which Euclid Creek is a part of). The purpose of this project is to stabilize eroding streambanks utilizing bioengineering, thus reducing the amount of sediment that travels downstream, stabilize the stream bed, improve in-stream and riparian habitat, and reconnect the streams to their floodplain while still allowing for a functional golf course.

Stakeholders from Cuyahoga River Restoration, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, the City of Lyndhurst, the Mayfield Campus golf course, and Ohio EPA are working with Cuyahoga SWCD on the project.

EnviroScience, Inc. leads the contract team awarded the project. EnviroScience staff met with project partners in July to mark out and review planned restoration design elements in the field. The next step will be to work on the 30% design for project partner review.

The design will aim to restore and stabilize at least 2,000 feet of stream channel, enhance 10.7 acres of existing riparian forest, and convert 2.6 acres of existing rough from turf to native riparian forest or meadow.

Once we have full designs and a bid package in place later this year it will be time to find funding options for construction of the project.

Volunteering in the time of Covid

Your actions on the land can help protect and improve water quality in Euclid Creek.

This year we have focused our volunteer efforts on small groups and outdoor activities. Monthly stream cleanups have continued, and monthly Greenwood Farm workdays have started. In addition, the Friends of Euclid Creek Conservation Committee has been very busy stewarding Euclid Creek conservation properties.

While we are limiting our group events to 10 people for safe social distancing this year, we have started our Euclid Creek Virtual Cleanup Challenge, which will continue all year long. If you helped clean up trash in your neighborhood we want to hear about it! Report your efforts and send us an email or post photos on Facebook or Instagram and tag us #TrashTag #EuclidCreek

Log your cleanup efforts with our google form:
https://tinyurl.com/eccreek20

Together all of our efforts really do make a difference, let us know what you are doing to help your local watershed with this form: https://tinyurl.com/SWCD2020

The work to protect and restore the Euclid Creek Watershed does not get done without the key efforts of watershed volunteers. This year individuals have dedicated over 500 hours to Euclid Creek through July.

Natalie Keyerleber, FOEC Marketing Chair, cuts back an invasive shrub at Greenwood Farm

Spring Cleanup at Acacia—30 bags of trash removed!
Euclid Creek Watershed Council
Composed of the mayor of each city that participates in the ECWC or their official designee.
Meets three times a year, approves Euclid Creek Watershed Program Work Plan.

**EUCLID CREEK WATERSHED COUNCIL**
Blackwood • Cleveland • Euclid
Highland Heights • Lyndhurst • Maple Heights
Mayfield Heights • Richmond Heights • South Euclid

Friends of Euclid Creek
An all-volunteer watershed stewardship organization dedicated to ensuring the health of the Euclid Creek watershed through educational programs and assisting with partner restoration projects.

FriendsOfEuclidCreek@gmail.com

Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District
Houses the watershed program manager and watershed coordinator who help implement the Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan and act as the liaison between the ECWC, FOEC, and other watershed partners.

Watershed Program Manager, Elizabeth Hiser
ehiser@cuyahogaswcd.org
Watershed Coordinator, Meg Hennessey
mhennessey@cuyahogaswcd.org

A watershed is simply the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river, or lake.

The Euclid Creek Watershed encompasses 24 square miles, 11 communities, and 2 counties (Cuyahoga and Lake).

Our program is directly supported by the efforts of: the Euclid Creek Watershed Council (ECWC), the Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC) and the Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD).

Stay tuned to our website for additional event and project updates! EuclidCreekWatershed.org

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, sign up on the website, email, or call the Watershed Program Manager at ehiser@cuyahogaswcd.org or 216-524-6580 extension 1002.

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