

Euclid Creek Watershed Update



Streamside Tree Planting at Community Christian Church in Euclid

On October 13th, 22 hardy volunteers planted 80 native trees and shrubs at the Community Christian Church in Euclid along the Main Branch of Euclid Creek. The project enhanced the forest along Euclid Creek as well as a large area of lawn. The weather conditions were less than ideal for humans, but perfect for the trees and shrubs to get in the ground. Thanks to all our tree stewards, church members, Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC) members, and family and friends who chose to come out on a cold, rainy, muddy day, and get the job done. Thank you to Madelon Watts for bringing the much needed donuts and coffee. Thank you to the City of Euclid for providing mulch! And special thanks to Dominion Energy and Western Reserve Land Conservancy for providing the funding!

Expanding the forest width along Euclid Creek will help reduce erosion and resulting sediment that goes into the stream along the Main Branch as this section of Euclid Creek has steep streambanks.

The site is adjacent to a heavily used road by automobiles and pedestrians, so educational signage will be placed in the spring of 2019 by



Volunteers were very happy to go home and warm up after spending the morning planting in the cold, rain, and mud.

the sidewalk and by the parking lot to educate the public and members of the church congregation about the project.

Partners on the project were the Community Christian Church, FOEC, Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (Cuyahoga SWCD) and the City of Euclid.

Staff News

FOEC and Cuyahoga SWCD's Board and Staff would like to offer our best wishes and thanks to Claire Posius, who left the district in April for a new job with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. Claire worked as the Euclid Creek Watershed Program Manager for 10 years. We will all miss Claire and we wish her luck with her new job.

Elizabeth Hiser has assumed the role of Euclid Creek Watershed Program Manager. Prior to joining the Cuyahoga SWCD, Elizabeth was an environmental scientist with Tetra Tech where she had 11 years of experience providing technical support on projects for the USEPA's Total Maximum Daily Load Program and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. She earned her B.S. degree in Water Resources from Heidelberg College in 2003.



Elizabeth Hiser (Left) and Claire Posius (Right) at our Fall Tree and Shrub planting event in Euclid

Upcoming Events

- **Sat, May 18, 2019 10:00am-noon** — Wildwood Park Spring Cleanup Day
 - **Tues, June 4, 2019 6:30 –8:30pm** — FOEC Annual Potluck, Elections & Scholarship Announcement
 - **Tues, Dec 3, 2019 7:00-9:00pm** — FOEC Annual Holiday Party
- Visit www.euclidcreekwatershed.org for details

We are currently in need of someone to lead our Marketing Committee.

To volunteer for a FOEC Board committee contact Ken Messinger Rapport (foecpresident@gmail.com). Please consider being a volunteer at a tabling event, workshop, cleanup, or tree planting. For questions, contact the Watershed Program Manager, Elizabeth Hiser (ehiser@cuyahogawscd.org).

Friends of Euclid Creek President's Message by Ken Messinger-Rapport

Year in Review

As we begin 2019, I'd like to take a moment to look back at 2018 and thank everyone who helped make our programs and services possible and give a preview of the year ahead. 2018 was a very productive year and in a couple of ways a very momentous year. We worked hard to provide quality presentations. We made the most of a new funding source from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture (CAC). And, we said good-bye to our longtime Program Manager, Claire Posius, and welcomed on-board her successor, Elizabeth Hiser.

Thanks go out to the members of the board, **Paul Costanzo**, Chair of Conservation; businessman **Jim Juknialis**; botanist and grandmother **Anna Kozlenko**; Treasurer **Chris Laskin**; hard working **Annie Roberto**; Secretary **Sue Swisher**; **Madelon Watts**, Chair of Membership; and Vice President **Chris Vild**, my partner in crime. Their time and energy, along with that of my own and the Program Manager, keep this organization running. Thanks also to everyone who served on one of our board committees, you help to make ideas reality.

We began the year with three presentations: one on bird songs, another on bees and wasps, and one on the human impact on our waters. The partnership with CAC turned out to be exceptional. The first event in that series we hosted at Praxis Fiber Workshop in Collinwood. We attracted a lot of new people, and gave away some warm clothing to the Salvation Army. In August, we presented the Perils of Plastics which gave us a sobering look into the world of disposable plastic in which we have become immersed (see page 3). In September, we presented a Nature Festival together with the

City of Richmond Heights at Greenwood Farm. For those who braved the chilly fall weather, it was a day filled with interesting, educational and fun programs ranging from critter collecting, tree planting, tee shirt painting and much, much more. **We could not have done it without the great support of Cuyahoga SWCD, our members and volunteers, the staff of the recreation department of Richmond Heights, Cleveland Metroparks and Western Reserve Land Conservancy. Thank you all!**

We hope 2019 will be just as engaging. We are in the planning stages now. We again applied for and received a \$3000 CAC grant which will support some of our programming. We are working to schedule a follow-up event at Praxis in February. Following on the success of the Perils of Plastics event, we are planning to return to having a panel of guest speakers, which we will be calling our "Lake Erie Series." Additionally, we will be holding a series of rain barrel and rain garden workshops throughout the watershed. All that and more will be supported by the CAC grant. Lastly, we will be offering hikes to study bird migrations, discuss the impacts of climate change, and admire the changing colors of the leaves in autumn. That's in addition to our regularly scheduled events including the

annual potluck and the holiday gathering.

As you can see we are a vibrant organization with many facets. **You can help us continue our work by volunteering to serve on one of our five operating committees which do a lot of the essential work to make our programs and services possible.** It's not a big time commitment, but it provides essential assistance in helping our organization run. In addition, I would mention that our board needs to be refreshed every two years, and **we currently are in need of a marketing person who can help with communications and marketing** the Euclid Creek watershed program. So, if you can help in any capacity please let me or any of our board members know.

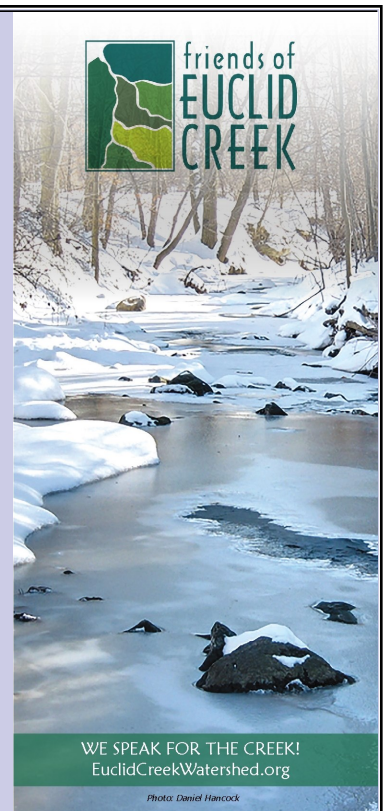
New Brochure

FOEC has a wonderful new brochure about the group and the watershed. The brochure highlights FOEC activities and has a great map showing projects in the watershed.

A big thanks are in order to Ken Messinger-Rapport, Annie Roberto, Patrick Henry, and Claire Posius for putting together this beautiful resource.

Please share the brochure widely. You can download the guide on our website at:

www.euclidcreekwatershed.org/files/resources/foecbrochure2018.pdf



Cleveland Rock(s) Oaks by Barb Holtz

Euclid Creek cuts steep ravines through layers of shale creating dramatic views. Rock outcroppings on ravine edges are a dry, harsh environment suited only for hearty and adaptable species. Easily spotted in inland Euclid Creek Reservation, Rock chestnut oak is that special species.

Rock chestnut oak (*Quercus montana*) resides in the Allegheny Plateau, more frequently found in Ohio's southeastern counties. But eastern Cuyahoga County claims Allegheny Plateau as well. We are on the cutting edge between mountains and plains. We are a naturally exciting phenomenon hidden by human infrastructure but present nonetheless. This remarkable geography makes room for species found in drier, highland habitats.

Rock chestnut oak is a member of the white oak group (rather than

red oak group) conveyed by rounded leaf margins rather than pointed tips. It clings to shale barrens atop the ravine or can be found among other forest trees in the area. Leaves are somewhat thick and heavy, decomposing slowly and stifling understory growth in pure stands. The bark is deeply furrowed and acorns are rather large.

I'm often asked by folks what a particular plant is good for. Well, it's good for wildlife, the environment, and you. Rock chestnut oak makes a great shade tree chiefly in dry, rocky soil. Acorns feed birds, deer, and small mammals. Oaks in general are one of the best trees to plant in support of insect populations. Trees in general are important components of soil anchoring, runoff detaining, air cleaning, and oxygen producing.



Wikipedia images of Rock chestnut oak tree leaf/seed and bark

I'd say a big thumbs up for trees!

Enjoy a stroll through Euclid Creek Reservation in search of this special find. It's easily seen along the all-purpose trail at the Anderson Road end of the parkway. Marvel at your presence in one of the most exciting physio-geographic boundaries in the United States and at this oak that calls it home. Cleveland rock(s) oaks!

Perils of Plastics Presentation and Video

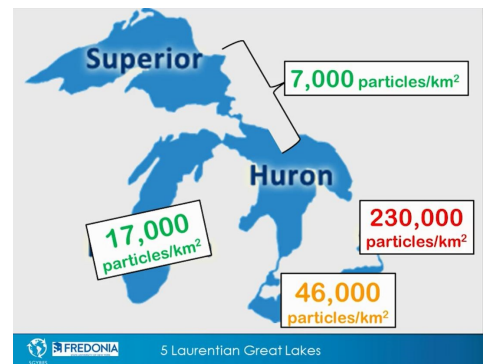


Over 100 attendees joined us for our August workshop.

On August 14th at the Beachwood Community Center, the FOEC welcomed Dr. Sherri Mason from the State University of New York at Fredonia to present her research on plastic pollution in the Great Lakes and its tributaries; and on plastic in our tap water, bottled water, beer, and sea salt. As it turns out, beer had the least amount of plastic debris. The event also featured Dr. Cathi Lehn from Cleveland Office of Sustainability, Director Diane Bickett from Cuyahoga Solid Waste District, and Cuyahoga County Councilwoman Sunny Simon, who spoke about local plastic reduction efforts and the latest on changes to our county recycling program. The night concluded with a question and answer session as well as ideas about how we can address this threat by making simple changes in our daily lives, such as refusing a straw or bringing re-usable bags to the grocery store.

The event was recorded and is available on our website: www.euclidcreekwatershed.org/euclid-creek/programs/perils-of-plastics. Please share the video with others as the goal is to learn and become educators who will spread the message about reducing our collective dependence on disposable plastics.

We'd like to thank our financial sponsors Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, NEORS, and other local watershed groups. Special thanks to the people who made the event possible: Beachwood Community Center for the venue, Dr. Cathi Lehn, Ken Messinger-Rapport, FOEC President, and Chris Vild, FOEC Vice President for their hard work producing this event.



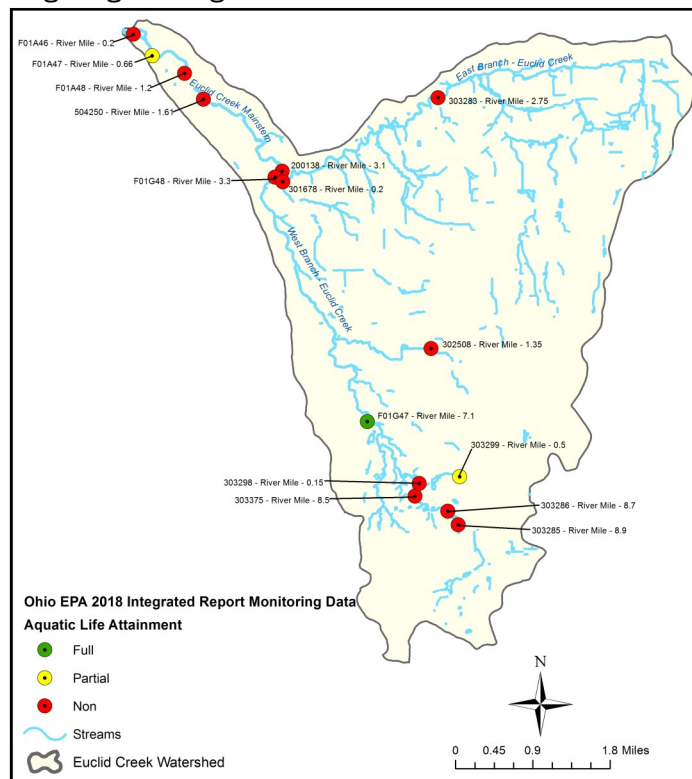
Dr. Mason sampling data of particles of plastic in each Great Lake. Lake Erie rivals the most plastic-polluted areas in the oceans.

Water Quality Monitoring Update

In 2015, Ohio EPA surveyed Euclid Creek and found that it does not meet attainment of aquatic life use standards within the Main and East Branches as well as the headwaters of the West Branch (see red circles in map below). This data can be found online at: wwwapp.epa.ohio.gov/gis/mapportal/IR2018.html

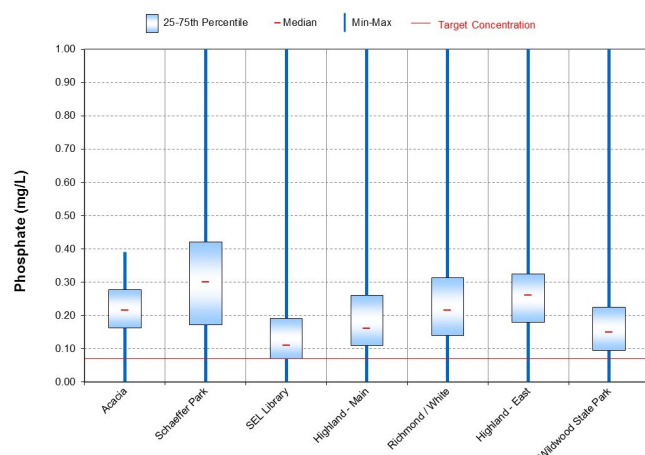
Our volunteer water quality monitoring data indicates that phosphorus levels in Euclid Creek continue to be above the targets set for the creek by Ohio EPA.

All volunteer water quality monitoring data is available on our website under the outcome section of the Euclid Creek Volunteer Monitoring Program Page.



Help reduce phosphorus levels by limiting erosion, using rain gardens or rain barrels, replacing lawn with native deep rooted plants and picking up after your pet.

Volunteer Phosphorus Monitoring Data Summary 2006-2018



Each year, a dedicated group of volunteer monitors sample seven sites in the Euclid Creek watershed measuring physical and chemical water quality parameters in the creek. This data helps us understand water quality trends in Euclid Creek and is critical to understanding issues in the creek ranging from nutrients to road salt.

Huge thanks are in order for **Lou Rifici**, the Program Manager who teaches environmental science at Tri-C Eastern Campus. Lou keeps the equipment calibrated, trains volunteers and coordinates the equipment pick-up and drop-off. His volunteer management of the program is invaluable.

We also want to recognize and thank **David Farrell** and **Dave Muthersbaugh** who, after ten years of sampling and over 135 monitoring events at 4 stations, are retiring from volunteer water quality monitoring. We will miss your dedication!

A special thanks goes out to our 2018 Volunteers:

Mary K. Evans
 David Farrell
 Shawn Green & Sons
 Patrick Henry
 Lillian Houser
 John Hurst

Matthew Knittel
 Dave Muthersbaugh
 Erica Prange
 Annie Roberto
 Ashley Weitzel

An earlier version of this newsletter incorrectly said Ellen Brown was a volunteer. This version has been corrected.



Mary K. Evans and Lillian Houser monitoring at Highland Picnic Area this summer.

If you are interested in getting involved with our volunteer monitoring effort contact the Watershed Program Manager (contact information on back page).

Spring 2019—Lower Hawken School Tree Planting

In October, FOEC received a \$2,400 watershed mini-grant from Dominion Energy and Western Reserve Land Conservancy to fund a tree planting event at Lower Hawken School in Lyndhurst along the Main Branch of Euclid Creek. The project will enhance 834 lineal feet of steep slopes upstream of a detention basin designed to catch runoff from the school property that drains to Euclid Creek. 0.28 acres of turf grass will be converted to a forested area along the steep slope draining to the detention basin and stream. Shrubs will be added to the slopes to help stabilize and prevent erosion.

The Lower Hawken School is in Critical Area 2 of the Euclid Creek watershed, identified in the Euclid Creek Nine-Element Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategic Plan. This area is in non-attainment of the Warmwater Habitat aquatic life use designation due to flow regime modification, pollutants in urban stormwater, habitat alterations, and unknown causes. Forested buffers help to address urban stormwater impacts by infiltrating and soaking up water, filtering nutrients and other pollutants, as well as protecting steep slopes from erosion.



Lower Hawken Students carrying a tire and trash that they helped clean out of Euclid Creek at their fall service day event in South Euclid.

2018 Special Service and Tom Jenkins Awards *by Ken Messinger-Rapport*



Roy leading a Bluestone Hike.

Our first award presented during our annual Holiday Gathering went to three people, known collectively as the three Daves: **David Smith, David Farrell, and David Muthersbaugh**. Together the three thought it would be fun and possibly intriguing to test the waters of the Euclid

Creek. And that is what they did for the next ten years. At four of the monitoring sites across the watershed they went out once a month, spring, summer, fall and winter to take samples, test them, and report their findings back to the program manager Lou Rifici, professor of Environmental Health and Safety at Tri-C East. When Dave Smith passed away in 2016, the two Dave's continued with their monitoring but obviously it wasn't the same. This year they announced their retirements. It takes an extraordinary amount of commitment and dedication to volunteer to take a few hours a day, every month season after season, year in and year out to collect water samples and report the test results. But it is an invaluable service to the Euclid Creek Watershed Program because it allows us to track the progress in water quality improvements or impairments as they occur over time. ***We owe a great debt of gratitude to these three volunteers*** for their

efforts over the past ten years. We were very pleased to recognize them with Special Service Awards.

The Tom Jenkins Award, which is named in honor of the founding father of the Friends of Euclid Creek, is given annually to a person who has exemplified their dedication to the organization and its mission by their work and contributions to furthering our goals. ***This year's honoree is Roy Larick***. Through his own organization, Bluestone Heights, Roy offers nearly monthly tours and lectures throughout the watershed. In recent years he has taken it one step further by actively inventorying the natural resources in several sub-watersheds within the area. Roy has presented to our members on countless occasions, to the Watershed Council, and to the wider environmental community of professionals in the region. When Friends acquired eight acres of land in Richmond Heights in 2013, much of which is comprised of steep ravine going into a stream, Roy provided us with a name: Redstone Run. He led an inaugural hike into that ravine to explain the geology of the area. I can still remember climbing back out. Hardly a year passes when we don't ask him to lead a hike, or provide a presentation for the benefit of the watershed communities. Although Roy serves in many capacities and for other organizations he has always been there as a resource for us whenever we've called, and for that we are especially grateful and proud to consider him our own.

Acacia Restoration Update *by Jenn Grieser, Cleveland Metroparks*

Life After Golf

Is there life after golf? Many an avid golfer may not think so, but participants in Cleveland Metroparks 2018 “bioblitz” – or count of all things living – can decidedly assure you there is. Where a uniform mix of non-native, high maintenance grasses once greeted the putter hoping to make a birdie, now a diverse blend of native wildflowers welcomes real birds – actually 153 different species of birds. Six years ago a slice may have led a golfer into the rough, basically a strip of mature trees with long-ish grass below. Now that ball would likely land in a small pool ringed by wetland vegetation, visited by any of the 94 species of insects found at Acacia. Or perhaps that poor drive landed in a bunker, providing a brief reminiscence of a bygone beach vacation. Now that reminiscence may more accurately recall a jungle, with sand traps covered by cottonwood saplings or humped bladderwort or any of the other 237 plant species recorded to date.

At Acacia Reservation an “ace” no longer refers to a hole-in-one, but rather a great walk to observe restoration in progress and perhaps with the luck of viewing a mink in a pool, an eagle in the sky or a monarch on a flower.

May you have many aces in your future and experience life after golf firsthand!



Acacia life by the #s as documented on July 31, 2018:

- 3 Amphibian species
- 3 Fish species
- 8 Arachnid species
- 12 Mammal species
- 60 Fungi species
- 94 Insect species
- 153 Bird species*
- 237 Plant species
- 465 Total species described
- 44 Humans contributing to bioblitz tally

*This is the total documented on eBird, which is a cumulative total rather than single day.

More information about the results of the bioblitz can be found on our website here:

www.euclidcreekwatershed.org/euclid-creek/programs/acacia-restoration



Little Wood Satyr (*megisto cymelo*) at Acacia

iNaturalist map of approximate locations of Bioblitz observations at Acacia Reservation, July 31, 2018. Red = Insects, Green = Plants, Blue = Birds, Mammals & Fish, Pink = Fungus, Purple = Slime molds

Reducing Stormwater Fees and Helping Pollinators: A Win-Win Project in Richmond Heights *by Barb Holtz, Faith UCC Member*

If asked to name places overrun by pavement, two come immediately to mind: schools and places of worship. An island building surrounded by a turf grass-pavement sea are typical and historical. Large yards are for play and visual affect, pavement is for parking. Historically, Americans generally build and landscape just as we have since the end of World War II.

At Faith United Church of Christ, we saw an opportunity to tweak the typical and support our tenet of environmental stewardship. The church parking lot needed repair especially near a tree island. Roots had begun buckling the asphalt. What if we ground out the pavement, and expanded the island for the trees and native seeding? Not only could we provide pollinator habitat, but we could also decrease our stormwater runoff.

After contacting Richmond Heights, Rev. Gene McAfee determined we could create the oasis without risk to existing trees. Working with our contractor, approximately 3800 square feet of impermeable pavement was put out of commission! The sub-surface was "roughed up" and 6-8 inches of double shredded hardwood mulch backfilled.

With the help of Ohio Prairie Nursery in Hiram, an appropriate native seed mix complete with flowering perennials and annuals, sedges, and grasses was blended for our project. The mulch makes an excellent

medium for sowing native seed. Native seeds often require cold treatment for germination so sowing seeds commenced in late fall 2017. Beyond the sweat and toil of spreading 1000 yds. of mulch, our next task was patience. Growing native plants from seed takes time. Nature is seldom in a hurry.

This past spring and into summer, native annuals sprouted and bloomed along with some sedges. In late spring/summer 2019, more species will emerge. By 2020, our little patch of prairie will come into its own. We'll weed out competitors and are considering notching the surrounding curb. This will allow runoff to flow into the garden. Even without this fine-tuning, a call to Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District regarding our project reduced the stormwater utility we pay monthly.

The project is "Good for the planet, good for people and good for the church's bottom line." – Rev. McAfee



Many hands (and backs and shovels and wheelbarrows) make light work.

East Branch Euclid Creek Stream Restoration Project Update



Using pump around to allow equipment use in the stream to create pool and riffle habitat.

Construction at the Willoughby-Eastlake School of Innovation Stream Restoration Project is complete! The project removed a culvert with maintenance issues (it was replaced with a riffle ford crossing), created pools and riffles for habitat, and re-graded streambanks to allow for connection to the floodplain (flood storage!). Biohabitats and Meadville Land Services were awarded the project on June 7th, 2018 and construction started in October.

School of Innovation students have been involved with the project and will be helping with management of invasive woody plants, they helped design some of the solutions used in the restoration project, they helped to plant trees and shrubs, and will design protection for the shrubs from deer. Next spring, we will plant the wetlands with student support. **Keep an eye on our website and Facebook for project updates! www.euclidcreekwatershed.org**

Euclid Creek Watershed Program Manager
Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District
3311 Perkins Ave., Suite 100
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

More About Our Program Partners

Euclid Creek Watershed Council (ECWC)

City of Beachwood	City of Cleveland
City of Euclid	City of Highland Heights
City of Lyndhurst	City of Mayfield Heights
Mayfield Village	City of Richmond Heights
City of South Euclid	

Council meets three times a year and has several committees that focus on education & outreach, technical issues and volunteer monitoring.

Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC)

The Friends of Euclid Creek is a community-based watershed stewardship group, a non-profit 501(c)(3).

Goal: To improve the health of the environment in the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Vision: FOEC is the citizen voice for the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Mission: To raise awareness about and preserve the natural features of the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Meetings: FOEC holds educational meetings, hikes and tours throughout the year. Check our website or Facebook page for the meeting schedule.

Support FOEC by becoming a member or donating as we need your support! Call, email, or check the website to find out how.

Friends of Euclid Creek
P.O. Box 21384
South Euclid, OH 44121
FriendsofEuclidCreek@gmail.com



Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District houses the Euclid Creek Watershed Program Manager, the Program's full time staff person who implements the Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan and acts as the liaison between the ECWC and FOEC.

Euclid Creek Watershed Program Manager, Elizabeth Hiser
216-524-6580 x1002
216-524-6584 fax
ehiser@cuyahogawcd.org



Program Website and Social Media

Website: www.EuclidCreekWatershed.org

Facebook: Like 'Friends of Euclid Creek'

Instagram: Follow 'foecwatershed'



Only Rain Down the Drain

If you would like to **receive this electronic newsletter**, sign up on the website, email, or call the Watershed Program Manager with your email address.

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What is a Watershed? A watershed is the area of land that drains to a single river, stream or lake. Because the actions we take on land directly affect the quality of our rivers and streams, it is important to take the entire watershed into consideration when trying to protect and improve the health of our local waters.

The Euclid Creek Watershed drains 24 square miles from 11 Northeast Ohio communities in Cuyahoga County and a portion of Lake County. The Creek includes 34 miles of streams as far as 8 miles away from the Creek's outflow to Lake Erie, our source of drinking water, at Wildwood Park in Cleveland.

Euclid Creek is one of the most densely populated and developed watersheds along the Ohio Lake Erie coastline which results in poor water quality. Contact us to find out how you can help Euclid Creek today!



Map of the Euclid Creek Watershed.