



Friends of
**EUCLID
CREEK**

Strategic Plan

for

Friends of Euclid Creek

2013~2016

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Introduction

Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC) is a grassroots non-profit organization that cherishes the Euclid Creek watershed and has a history of successes in protecting it. FOEC is however faced with many challenges. In order to continue with its mission, the Board of FOEC decided in late 2012 to undertake a strategic planning process. This document represents the results of that process.

We, the Board of FOEC, have a goal of advocating for the health of the watershed. A number of barriers exist that we must overcome in order to increase our visibility and improve our effectiveness.

- We need further organizational structure, procedures, and a defined focus, which limit our visibility.
- The watershed contains many communities with differing laws that slow down projects toward the completion of our goals.
- Many citizens and public officials are unconcerned about keeping the watershed healthy.
- We live in a developed urban environment, which contributes to flooding, pollution, and storm water runoff and degrades our quality of life.
- We have limited funds, which prohibits us from protecting parcels of land.

We have invested ourselves in the health of the watershed, which includes:

- We aspire to a high quality of life by living here.
- We believe we are working for the benefit of future generations who will live here.
- We experience spiritual rejuvenation by advocating for a healthy watershed.
- We value the watershed for what it is: In fact, we believe we are partners with the watershed itself.
- We want other people to become FOEC members, help them to do so, and mentor them.

These are our values, and they support our vision of being the citizen voice for the watershed.

Given the above mentioned factors, we have concluded that our newly revised mission is "to preserve the natural features of and raise awareness about the Euclid Creek watershed". We plan to involve our membership in creating a slogan to go with it. The slogan should emphasize:

- Euclid Creek is in our backyards.
- Euclid Creek should have rights and protection just like any citizen.
- We want all FOEC members to be good neighbors to the creek because what happens in our yards doesn't stay in our yards.
- Our behavior influences watershed health.

We spent a great deal of time during the strategic planning process analyzing our internal strengths and weaknesses. We know what they are; some of them became known to us in a member survey we conducted on August 7, 2012. We also examined opportunities in the community which can capitalize on for success. Lastly, we examined forces in the community and the world that threaten the environment and FOEC. Based on this soul-searching exercise and research, we developed three core strategies that will direct our efforts in the coming years.

We rely on the volunteer spirit of FOEC members, present and future, to help us implement these strategies, achieve our vision, and accomplish our mission.

Goal, Vision, and Mission

Goal

To advocate for the health of the Euclid Creek watershed.

Vision

FOEC is the citizen voice for the Euclid Creek watershed.

Mission

To awareness about and preserve the natural features of the Euclid Creek watershed.

Organizational History and Profile

Organization History

2001 Group of six interested volunteers form Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC) as response to development of Legacy Village and impact on natural resources in the watershed.

2001 City of Highland Heights is awarded \$300,000 Clean Ohio grant to protect 12 acres for Dusty Goldenrod wetland meadow with endangered plants.

2002 FOEC members hold 'A Day in the Park,' festival and sign up 40 members and volunteers.

2003 FOEC receives non-profit status under state incorporation and Federal Internal Revenue Service.

2003-4 FOEC members participate in community events, educating public on watersheds and watershed issue; i.e., Greenwood Farm, Beachwood Green Dream, Lyndhurst Home Days, South Euclid Home Days.

2005 FOEC, partners of Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and John Carroll University, to begin regular water quality monitoring of key sites in the watershed.

2005 Highland Heights turns down the Clean Ohio grant from Ohio Public Works Commission. FOEC adopts the grant and, with Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District, negotiates with property owner, Mayfield City Schools, assumes grant requirements and preserves the land.

2005 Completes Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan.

2005 FOEC receives Ohio EPA Environmental Education Fund grant for organizational brochures and roadway signage, raising awareness about Euclid Creek watershed.

2005 FOEC members tour Baldwin Filtration Plant, learning the issues, cost and technology of drinking water protection.

2006 FOEC evaluates benefits and challenges of rain gardens in Euclid Creek; installs four demonstration gardens with educational signage in watershed communities. Grants are from Ohio Lake Erie Commission and Lake Erie Protection Fund.

2007 FOEC members tour Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's Easterly Treatment Plant, learning management issues of sewage discharge and control in Lake Erie.

2008 FOEC receives service award as 'Watershed of the Year' from Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

2009 FOEC receives \$1.4 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative award for restoration and redesign of Wildwood Park estuary.

2009 FOEC accepts donation of Marcella Road 1 acre parcel along the Creek in Cleveland. Cleans and plants trees on the property.

2010 FOEC establishes \$500 college scholarship for high school seniors living in the watershed.

2010 FOEC, with Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District complete and celebrate removal of a low-head dam on the East Branch of Euclid Creek.

2011 FOEC members hold driving tour of upper Cuyahoga River Watershed.

2012 FOEC receives \$162,000 Clean Ohio Fund award for preservation of Redstone Run 8- acre riparian area in Richmond Heights.

2013 FOEC completes strategic plan for short- and long term organizational plan.

2013 FOEC and CSWCD contractors complete Wildwood lacustrine wetland construction of wetlands.

2013 FOEC members participate with Cuyahoga RAP in 'releaf' planting on Euclid Creek estuary in Richmond Heights.

2013 FOEC begins fund drive, Land Conservation Fund, to raise \$20,000 for closing costs on Richmond Heights property.

FOEC members, in partnership with Cuyahoga SWCD, volunteer at numerous rain barrel workshops. FOEC members conduct and aid in beach and stream cleanups, invasive plant removals, and water quality monitoring every year.

Organization Profile

The membership of Friends of Euclid Creek is comprised of approximately 130 citizens from nine communities located within the Euclid Creek watershed. Membership is granted via payment of annual dues. FOEC provides monthly educational meetings and/or field trips for member and friends. All meetings are open and free for the public.

A watershed coordinator, retained by Cuyahoga County Soil & Water District (CSWCD) manages the water conservation and education work of FOEC.

A 10-member board directs FOEC's activities. The Board is comprised of four officers and six directors. The Board structure and responsibilities may be as follows:

- President - planning, implementation of strategic plan
- Vice President - Communication
- Treasurer - Finance, fundraising, budget
- Secretary - Records, correspondence, scholarship
- Director - Programs
- Director - Communication
- Director - Finance & Development
- Director - Membership
- Director - Volunteers
- Director - Special projects

Committees may develop in support of any of the above categories.

Summary of Core Strategies

1. Raise awareness about our public profile to increase our visibility in the community.

FOEC strives to be the sought-after or “go-to” group for active advocacy of the Euclid Creek watershed. In order to achieve this reputation, we need excellent internal and external lines of communication and cooperation with members, other citizens, and public officials in the community. We believe we can do this by forming working relationships with the Euclid Creek Watershed Council and our city councils, partnering with like-minded organizations to share our mission, and engaging the media to convey our mission and successes to a broader audience.

2. Strengthen the internal organization, including financial structure, in order to sustain FOEC.

A consistent, critical mass of committed Board members have been driving FOEC. As in most non-profit organizations, our efforts are fragmented by a myriad of non-prioritized projects. We need to recruit and align officers with our needs, prioritize projects, raise funds for those projects, recruit members who will be active in the organization, and market our brand. We also need to develop a smooth transition from one administration to the next and archive each administration’s accomplishments in an annual report. Without these strengths, we won’t be able to pursue ambitious projects we have in mind, and in a worst-case scenario, a personnel drain and erosion of funds could cause FOEC to dissolve as an organization.

3. Support the implementation of the Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan to develop conservation priorities for FOEC.

The FOEC Board stated that it was disconnected from the Euclid Creek Watershed Council. We are not a player in this network. We are also not strongly connected to the information contained in the Watershed Action Plan. Increased familiarity with and understanding of this plan would aid FOEC in planning projects that fulfill our goal as an advocate for the health of the watershed. This discussion led to an invitation from Watershed Coordinator Claire Posius, who is on the strategic planning committee, for FOEC board members to attend meetings of the Watershed Council and make our presence known to council members. Several FOEC board members attended the Watershed Council meeting on February 14, 2013. Now that we have begun to form a relationship with the Watershed Council, we plan to encourage a partnership to accomplish joint projects.

FOEC ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2013-2016

CORE STRATEGIES	SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES	INITIAL ACTIONS	WHO	START DATE
<i>Raise awareness of our public profile to increase our visibility in the community.</i>	Reach a broader citizen base using a “boilerplate” presentation to convey our mission and successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify audiences. • Create a 30-second presentation. • Create a 30-minute presentation. 	Claire Barb Christie	June 1
Same strategy	Engage the media to reach a broader audience to convey our mission and successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate already-prepared press-worthy items. • Identify media outlets. 	Gary Jeanette	March 15
Same strategy	Approach the Euclid Creek Watershed Council and suggest a partnership to do joint projects.	Attend Euclid Creek Watershed Council meetings.	All FOEC Board members who can.	July 28 meeting
Same strategy	Partner with like-minded organizations to share our mission.	Put on future board meeting agenda.	Barb	May 28 meeting
Same strategy	Have FOEC members attend City Council meetings and report back to FOEC.	Put on future board meeting agenda.	Barb	Fall 2013 meeting
Same strategy	Upgrade technology	Develop Watershed Program website with Claire. Strengthen social media presence.	? Meiring	July
<i>Strengthen structure and finances to sustain FOEC.</i>	Determine an organizational structure (roles of officers).	Identify roles of officers.	FOEC Board	April 17 Board meeting
Same strategy	Determine an organizational structure and strengthen transition between officers.	Develop a work plan, review by-laws and modify as necessary, and create a procedural manual.	FOEC Board	April 17 Board meeting
Same strategy	Archive our history	Produce an annual report	Barb	ongoing
Same strategy	Determine funding priorities and targets.	Finance Committee reports to board.	Ginny	March 20
Same strategy	Recruit members who will be active in FOEC.	Form a Membership Committee.	Frank Fran Ken	June 4 meeting

FOEC ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2013-2016, Continued

CORE STRATEGIES	SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES	ACTION	WHO	WHEN
<i>Support the implementation of the Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach the Euclid Creek Watershed Council and suggest a partnership to do joint projects. • Develop conservation priorities for FOEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain guidance from Watershed Coordinator. • Study what the Watershed Action Plan. • Land acquisition • Habitat restoration • Water chemistry monitoring • Biomonitoring (avian, wetland) 	Claire FOEC Board	Immediately

STRATEGIC PLAN PARTICIPANTS

The following people participated in the FOEC’s strategic planning process in early 2013:

List the community from which each member belongs

List Board members’ titles and their full names

- Barb Holtz, President (South Euclid)
- Christi Carlson, Vice-President (Richmond Heights)
- Jeanette Evans, Secretary (Highland Heights)
- Ken Messinger-Rapport, Treasurer (Highland Heights)
- Steve Albro (South Euclid)
- Gary Bloom (South Euclid)
- Judy Dearden (Highland Heights)
- Richard Evans (Highland Heights)
- Fran Hogg (Highland Heights)
- Bill McReynolds (Cleveland)
- Frank Skala (Highland Heights)
- Carolyn Sugiuchi (South Euclid)
- Virginia Aveni, past Board member (Lyndhurst)
- Mary K. Evans, past Board member (South Euclid)

Advisors:

- Claire Posius, Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator, Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District
- Cathi Lehn, Ph.D., Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization

Facilitator:

Tom Romito