



# Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners, Inc.



Rediscover • Respect • Revitalize

## 2014 Annual Report





# THANK YOU!

*Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners would like to thank the following partners for their support throughout 2014. These relationships are essential to help protect and restore the Tinker's Creek watershed.*

## Because of You...

*Our most important partnership.*

This annual report is all about the partnerships that help us meet our mission.

We couldn't do it without you!

### 2014 Board of Directors

Justin Czekaj, P.E., CPESC - President  
Ana Burns - Vice President  
Josh Herchl - Treasurer  
Carla Regener - Secretary

Sandy Barbic  
Petar Bojovic  
Kendrick Chittock  
Chad Graber  
Michael Liptak, Ph.D  
Dr. Chris Miller, Ph.D., P.E.  
Jim Rodstrom, P.E., CPESC  
Charlie Uray, Jr., P.E., P.S.  
Scott Winograd  
Maureen Wise

### Staff

Harry Stark, Jr., RS, MPA, CMS4S - Executive Director  
Babette Gowda - Watershed Coordinator

### Community Members

Aurora  
Beachwood  
Bedford  
Glenwillow  
Hudson  
Macedonia  
Northfield  
Reminderville  
Streetsboro  
Twinsburg  
Twinsburg Township  
Valley View  
Warrensville Heights

### Community Partnerships

Biohabitats, Inc.  
Chagrin River Watershed Partners  
Chagrin Valley Engineering, Ltd.  
Cleveland Metroparks  
Cleveland Museum of Natural History  
Cuyahoga County Board of Health  
Cuyahoga Land Bank  
Cuyahoga River Community Planning  
Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District  
Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District  
NEO PIPE Council  
Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club  
Ohio Prairie Nursery  
Ohio Stormwater Association  
Portage Soil and Water Conservation District  
Summit Metro Parks  
Summit Soil and Water Conservation District  
Tetra Tech  
The Nature Conservancy  
West Creek Conservancy  
Western Reserve Land Conservancy

### Grant Providers

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

### Business Members

Davey Resource Group  
EnviroScience, Inc.  
Kurtz Bros, Inc.  
Mar-Mac Construction Products  
Neenah Foundry

## *Letter From Our President*



As President of TCWP, it is an honor to report on our successes over the past year. First, it is important to recognize the people directly responsible for those accomplishments. Our volunteer Board of Directors is populated by dedicated professionals from a variety of industries. Ana Burns (Vice-President) and Joshua Herchl (Treasurer) have been the key decision makers who bring structure to the organization. Additionally, I would like to thank Carla Regener (Secretary) for her 10 years of dedicated service to TCWP. Mrs. Regener was one of our founding members and her commitment and passion to the organization are unmatched. Each and every one of our board members brings professional excellence that forms the core of the organization.

The Board of Directors is anchored by the efforts of our staff. Babette Gowda (Oestreicher) has been the Watershed Coordinator since 2011. Mrs. Gowda provides on-the-ground assistance to our community members as well as grant writing, event coordination, program management, and education outreach. This past year, TCWP contracted with Harry Stark to serve as Executive Director. Mr. Stark's duties include long-term planning, grant management, fiscal accountability, and leading the Ohio Stormwater Conference.

Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners' events continue to reach a diversified audience, most notably through the Ohio Stormwater Conference and the annual Watershed Festival. Over the past seven years, the Ohio Stormwater Conference has grown from a small local forum to an internationally recognized event. The 2014 Ohio Stormwater Conference was held at the John S. Knight Center in Akron, Ohio. As the demand for stormwater training and networking has continued to increase, the event drew more than 650 people, including 83 exhibits and 75 speakers. TCWP looks forward to the 2015 conference, which will be held at Kalahari Resort and Conference Center May 6 – 8.

Last year TCWP partnered with the Hudson Environmental Awareness Committee to host the ninth Annual Watershed Festival. The event included 42 exhibitors and over 500 attendees. The watershed festival allows TCWP to connect with the community and highlight many of the great organizations working in the watershed. The tenth anniversary of the Watershed Festival will be held at the University Hospital Ahuja Medical Center in Beachwood on October 3, 2015.

I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. The grant dollars provided by these organizations is the main reason we are able to provide services to our members. The funding allows TCWP to provide workshops, grant assistance, and project assistance to our Member Communities.

Each year, we find new ways to interact and assist our Member Communities. In 2014, TCWP provided assistance to Bedford, Glenwillow, Maple Heights, and Macedonia with land acquisitions and projects aimed at protecting Tinker's Creek. Most importantly, TCWP's outreach materials, trainings, and events can be used to fulfill requirements of the minimum control measures in the Ohio EPA NPDES permit. We strive to provide quality services to our member communities and look forward to expanding our services in the years ahead.

The ultimate success of TCWP continues to be built on partnerships throughout the watershed and the surrounding region. We appreciate the community, business, and organizational partnerships we have built over the past nine years. We remain dedicated to growing these relationships to protect and restore the Tinker's Creek watershed.



# *What We Offer Our Communities*

**Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners** is working hard to improve water quality and habitats by strengthening our relationships with all of the communities within the watershed. Providing services to our community members is valuable for both the local residents and the watershed as a whole.

Community memberships are available with Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners and allow us to provide communities with watershed protection and educational services.

**Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners provides the following member services:**

- Assistance to local planning commission and zoning boards as well as other voluntary governmental boards, commissions, and citizen groups in making informed decisions about local water resources. This includes helping to secure information and technical resources on issues such as protection of wetlands, streams, and floodplains.
- Communication on flooding and erosion issues to regional, state, and federal agencies on behalf of our members.
- Representation in an advisory capacity is available at local government meetings.
- Development and implementation of local educational programs, forums, and presentations that promote current approaches and alternative solutions for environmental problems to local officials, municipal workers, and citizens.
- Performance of Public Involvement and Public Education (PIPE) requirements for Phase II stormwater permits.
- Quarterly Phase II updates to member communities.
- Wetland, riparian setback, pre- and post-construction, and illicit discharge ordinance assistance.
- Funding for rain gardens, rain barrels, and other stormwater best management practices.
- Grant writing assistance.



# Tinker's Creek Watershed Map

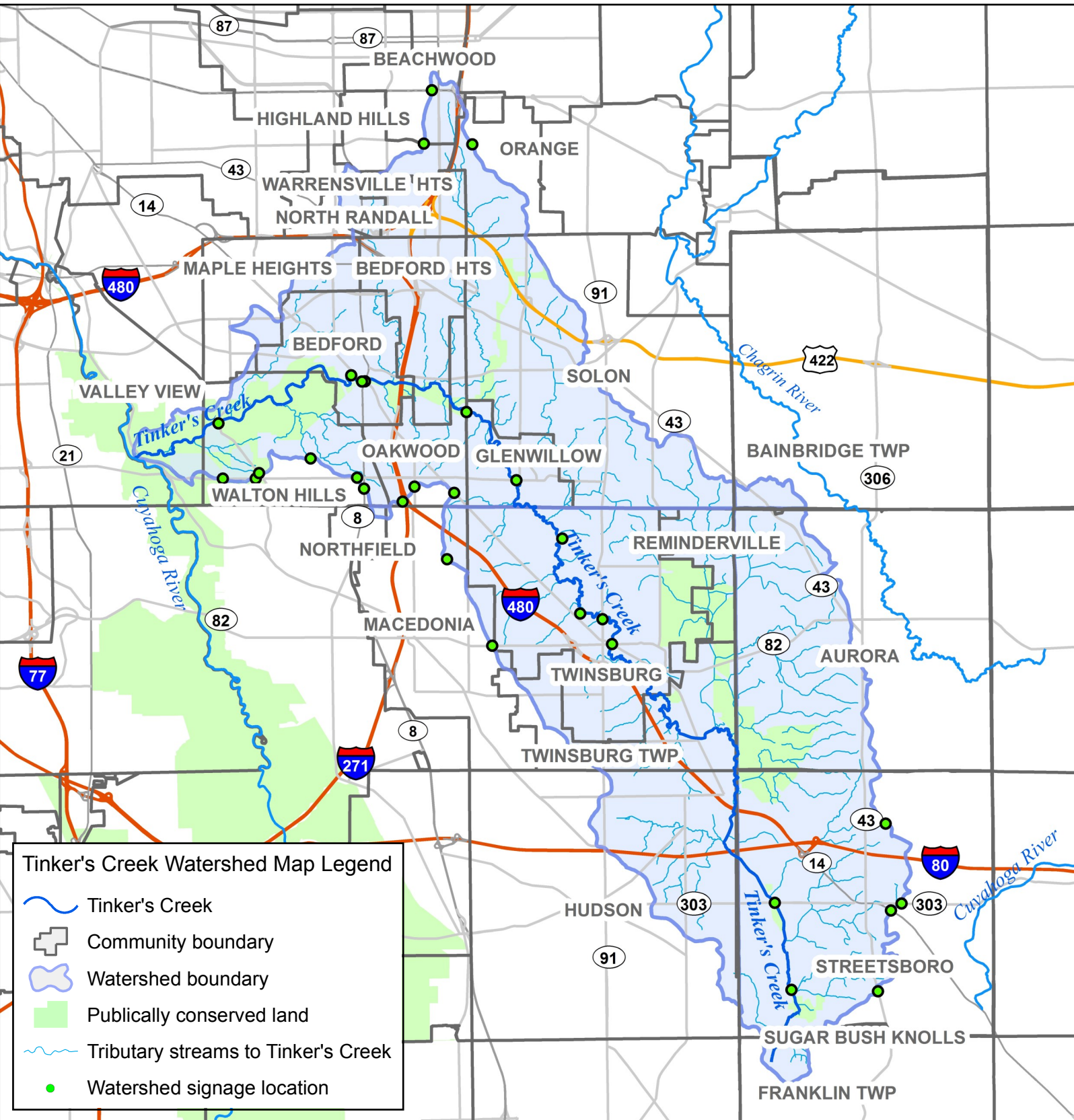
**Tinker's Creek Watershed (TCW) Spans 4 Counties and 24 Communities!**

**13 Cuyahoga County communities = 41.7% of TCW is in this county**

**6 Summit County communities = 30.6% of TCW is in this county**

**4 Portage County communities = 27.2% of TCW is in this county**

**1 Geauga County community = 0.6% of TCW is in this county**



# Grants Awarded in 2014

## Ohio Department of Natural Resources Watershed Coordinator Implementation Grant

Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners was the recipient of a three-year, \$32,000 per year operating grant from ODNR, Division of Soil and Water. This grant was officially awarded and took effect on February 28, 2012. These grants are provided to local watershed organizations to employ watershed coordinators or specialists.

The grant was used to fund the full-time position of the Tinker's Creek Watershed Coordinator, Babette Gowda, who was appointed in October 2011. In accordance with grant stipulations, Ms. Oestreicher's highest priority is implementing projects identified in the State of Ohio-endorsed Tinker's Creek Watershed Action Plan (WAP). Additionally, the grant supports outreach efforts within the 24 watershed communities that encompass Tinker's Creek to develop and execute restoration projects.



## Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District Operating Support Grant

NEORSD provided \$32,314 to support the organization's mission in 2014. A portion of this grant provided funding for the watershed coordinator and other contracted positions that helped TCWP serve our communities. This funding also provides assistance for events such as the Watershed Festival and the Minimum Control Measure 6, Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping trainings. This grant also helped fund educational outreach to public officials and collaboration efforts to conserve important land parcels. Additionally, TCWP was able to expand the Sustainable Lawn and Ground Care Program by assisting students in Hudson, Ohio implement a targeted door to door campaign.





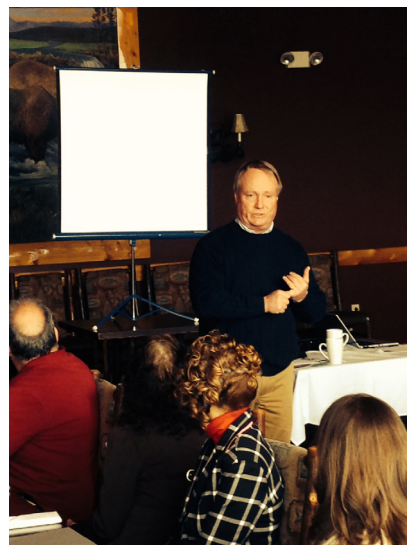
# Engaging Communities

## **Eighth Annual Ohio Stormwater Conference June 4-6, 2014 John S. Knight Center, Akron**

The Annual Stormwater Conference is hosted by TCWP to provide a forum for sharing technical and policy information on the management of stormwater. TCWP has been the host of the conference since 2008 and has received support from the Ohio Stormwater Association to help bring the event to a larger audience. The conference is held in different cities around the state and has grown each year and is now ranked the second largest stormwater conference in the nation. The 2014 Conference was held in Akron, Ohio on June 4-6. The conference had a record-setting 650 attendees, 83 exhibitors, and over 75 speakers. TCWP participated in hosting tours around the watershed. The tour of projects included: Bear Creek Restoration (Warrensville Heights), Hudson High School Stream Restoration (Hudson), Laurel Creek Restoration (Twinsburg), and Pond Brook Restoration (Twinsburg). The 2015 conference will be May 6-8 at the Kalahari Resort and Conference Center in Sandusky, Ohio.

## **Mayors' Breakfast February 25, 2014 Blue Canyon Restaurant, Twinsburg**

A large representation of watershed communities attended the annual Mayors' Breakfast, where they had the opportunity to learn about the accomplishments of TCWP in 2013 and goals for 2014. Mayor Kathrine Procop welcomed guests with guest of honor Congressman David Joyce speaking about recent legislation to protect Lake Erie and the importance of watershed protection. Representatives from the watershed communities of Aurora, Beachwood, Bedford, Bedford Heights, Hudson, Macedonia, Northfield, Twinsburg, Twinsburg Township, Streetsboro, and Warrensville Heights were present. Discussion amongst the attendees focused on strengthening partnerships and developing new relationships throughout the watershed. Following the breakfast, TCWP held individual meetings with the community leaders to help identify specific needs within the watershed.







## **Ninth Annual Watershed Festival**

### **September 20, 2014**

### **Hudson, Ohio**

The Ninth Annual Tinker's Creek Watershed Festival was held in Hudson, Ohio in collaboration with the Hudson Green on the Green Day Event on September 20, 2014. Each year this event is held at a different location within the watershed and is free to the public. Attendees to the event had the chance to talk with 42 organizations, listen to live music, and participate in a rain barrel workshop. The Mayor William A. Currin of Hudson, and Congressman David Joyce also addressed the crowd. The event drew over 500 visitors. A special thank you to the City of Hudson for all of their assistance in making the festival a success! The 2015 Watershed Festival will be held in the City of Beachwood in collaboration with University Hospital Ahuja Medical Center and the city.





# Engaging Communities

## **Soil Health through the Seasons Workshop**

**August 19, 2014**

**Twinsburg City Hall**

This free event was hosted by the NEO PIPE Council, of which TCWP is a member and was held on August 19, 2014 at the Twinsburg City Hall. The event provided the 112 attendees the opportunity to learn methods of creating a chemical-free lawn, keeping soils healthy and protecting local water resources. Featured guests included Alec McClennan, Owner of Good Nature Lawn Care, who spoke about how to naturally manage your lawn, and Ann Brandt, Co-Owner of Walnut Creek Seeds, who spoke about using cover crops to optimize soil health and manage weeds. All attendees received the 2015 Lawn Care Calendar, soil testing kits, cover crop seeds and educational literature on protecting soils and local water resources.

## **Minimum Control Measure (MCM) 6, Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping Training**

TCWP provided trainings to municipal workers on MCM 6, Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping as required by the Ohio EPA's Stormwater Permits for municipalities. The training focused on best management practices (BMPs) that are important to municipal operations such as good housekeeping, spill response, materials storage and handling, landscape maintenance, and street maintenance. Employees working in fleet maintenance, garages, parks, recreation facilities, street maintenance, and other departments all benefited from this training. The communities of Reminderville, Streetsboro, and Valley View participated in the trainings.





## **Walton Hills Stream Restoration Planting November 9, 2014**



In 2013 the Cleveland Metroparks was awarded a Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Grant to purchase 16 acres of land along Tinker's Creek across from the Bedford Reservation. One component of the project was to help restore floodplain connectivity through the creation of an overflow channel. Over 37 volunteers came out on November 9 to help stabilize the overflow channel with trees, shrubs, and perennials, and bioengineering materials. The volunteers and Cleveland Metroparks staff planted 27 containerized trees, about 600 two-foot (willow and sycamore varieties) live stake trees, 20 six-foot sycamore posts, 15 small trees, about 300 tall grass (sedge) plugs, and about 400 native perennial plugs including blazing star, monkey flower, ironweed and swamp milkweed. Native meadow mix seeds were also sowed. These plantings were designed to help stabilize the banks of the channel to help slow flow and provide habitat.

## **Native Plant Workshop: Healthy Gardens: Picking the Right Plants & Avoiding Invasive Plants November 12, 2014**

This event was held in the City of Streetsboro on November 12, 2014 at the Pierce Library. Expert Garrett Ormiston, from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, educated attendees on how to create a beautiful garden that also increases habitat and biodiversity. Garrett explained why native plants are important and how to identify and manage non-native invasive plants. The Tinker's Creek Watershed Coordinator discussed the important role a healthy lawn and garden plays in the watershed. Attendees received a 2015 Healthy Lawn Care Guide Calendar and annual and vegetable seeds to help kick off a healthy gardening season in 2015.

## **Newsletters, Articles, and Social Media**

The TCWP newsletter is produced quarterly and distributed to over 450 individuals. Articles on specific topics in watershed protection were shared with communities for publication and distribution to their residents. Some of the topics covered in 2014 included sustainable lawn care practices and information on projects in the watershed. The TCWP website contains technical reports, maps, educational materials, and links to watershed partners. TCWP also communicated with the public through Facebook and Twitter, updating our followers about events and information occurring throughout the watershed and beyond.

# Projects Throughout The Watershed

## City of Macedonia Surface Water Infrastructure Fund (SWIF)

TCWP helped the City of Macedonia with conceptual designs, budget, and narrative for a 2014 Surface SWIF grant proposal. The city was awarded over \$28,000 from SWIF to implement a demonstration project displaying multiple stormwater practices. The city will provide a match in the form of labor and materials. The stormwater practices will include pervious concrete sidewalk, pervious asphalt parking lot, and a large rain garden and turfed swales. These practices will capture and treat stormwater from nearby impervious surfaces, allowing water runoff to infiltrate into

the ground. The use of multiple stormwater practices will serve as an example for the residents, businesses and other communities on methods to reduce the harmful impacts of stormwater runoff. The project will be located in a highly visible location near City Hall at the intersection of Route 82 and Park Avenue. The site is owned by the city and drains into Indian Creek which is a tributary stream to Brandywine Creek. The location of the project will also serve as a park for the community with benches and gardens for residents and visitors to enjoy. TCWP is assisting by providing information for educational signage and promotion of the project throughout the watershed. The project preparations started winter of 2014 and are expected to commence spring 2015.



## Glenwillow Tinker's Creek Preserve

The Village of Glenwillow was awarded a Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant to acquire and protect a 17-acre parcel in the Village of Glenwillow. The Tinker's Creek Preservation Project will protect the south-bank, riparian area, and floodplain along Tinker's Creek. The Project will also provide valuable habitat for native species while providing a great outlet for access to the outdoors within the community. The parcel sits adjacent to the existing Cleveland Metroparks Bedford Reservation and secures another integral piece of greenspace corridor in urban Cuyahoga County. The property also has a small tributary stream that receives runoff from a nearby trailer park development. A structure on site was torn down in late 2014 to help create a more natural green space. TCWP provided soil and watershed information for submission and a letter of support for the project and will be working with the Village and WRLC to investigate restoration possibilities.





## Maple Heights Land Acquisition



The City of Maple Heights was awarded a Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant to acquire the Wood Creek Preserve project located in the City of Maple Heights. The acquisition of the 24.21-acre parcel will protect valuable woodland and stream habitat while adding to the network of greenspace in the county. The project will protect old field habitat, upland forests, steep ravines and natural riparian areas around streams. The property contains approximately 2,358 linear feet of streams, including a short section of the tributary stream, Wood Creek (also known as Hemlock Creek) and several of its tributaries. This parcel is within the sub-watershed of Wood Creek which has the highest impervious surfaces of any other sub-watershed of Tinker's Creek watershed.

## St. Mary's Stream Restoration

The City of Solon was awarded \$148,556 from a Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Project Grant to implement restoration of a stream on the property of St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church. This section of stream on the property is impacted by severe streambank erosion that increased sedimentation to Hawthorne Creek, has over-widened the channel and also threatens a utility pole and wastewater infrastructure. The aptly named St. Mary's Stream Restoration will restore 430 linear feet of stream through natural streambank stabilization and the restoration of 0.25 acre of riparian corridor and vegetated floodplain on Hawthorne Creek, a tributary of Tinker's Creek. TCWP provided some watershed related information and will provide updates about the project via their social media outlets, e-newsletter and when applicable at meetings and events.



## City of Bedford Columbus Road Land Acquisition

In early 2014 TCWP was approached by the land owner of a multi-parcel property along Bear Creek in the City of Bedford. The property owner recently acquired the parcels and wished to create a positive impact on the stream by donating the properties to be protected as greenspace. TCWP worked with the land owner, the City of Bedford, West Creek Conservancy (WCC), and the Cuyahoga Land Bank to create an agreement for permanent protection of the parcels. There were four structures on site, two that were impeding the stream's access to the floodplain, and three of which were in disrepair. TCWP sought help from the Cuyahoga Land Bank who graciously offered a grant to have the structures removed, which is scheduled to happen by spring of 2015. The properties are temporarily placed in the name of the Cuyahoga Land Bank with ultimate ownership going to WCC for continued stewardship and maintenance. TCWP provided money to place a fence on the property to allow the property to naturalize without being a nuisance to the city. TCWP will continue to work with project partners to investigate restoration possibilities.





# *Outreach and Events*

Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners strives to increase understanding and protection of the watershed through public outreach. Below is a list of events and activities in which TCWP participated, organized or contributed to in 2014.

## **TCWP Hosted Events**

- Healthy Gardens: Picking the Right Plants and Avoiding Invasive Plants – Streetsboro
- Hudson High School Stream Restoration Girl Scout Tour
- Ohio Stormwater Conference Host – Akron
- Ninth Annual Watershed Festival – Hudson
- Minimum Control Measure 6: Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping Training  
Reminderville, Streetsboro, Valley View

## **Community Partner Hosted Events**

- Burning River Fest – Cleveland
- Earth Day at Cuyahoga County Fair Grounds – Berea
- Entrovation – Beachwood
- ideastream® Listening Project Community Leader Conversation on Northeast Ohio's parks, Lake Erie – radio broadcast/web post
- Ohio Wetland Association Tinker's Creek State Nature Preserve Tour – Streetsboro
- NASA Glen Sustainability Day – Cleveland
- NEO PIPE Soil Health through the Seasons Workshop – Twinsburg
- Twinsburg Stream Clean Up
- Walton Hills Stream Restoration Planting
- Water Quality and Industrial Surveillance - Multi-Agency Meeting – Cuyahoga Heights
- Watershed Recruitment Night – Parma
- World Water Day at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History – Cleveland



# *About Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners*

Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners (TCWP) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) watershed organization officially established in 2006. Our mission is to protect and restore water quality and habitat of the Tinker's Creek watershed through community partnerships. The Tinker's Creek watershed drains 96.4 square miles and is the largest tributary to the Cuyahoga River. The watershed area spans 24 communities in Cuyahoga, Summit, Portage, and Geauga counties.

TCWP is governed by 15 dedicated volunteer Board Members who bring a variety of expertise in the fields of stormwater management, environmental education, engineering, natural resources conservation, planning, and economic development. The daily activities of TCWP are carried out by the watershed coordinator with the support of the Board. The state-endorsed Tinker's Creek Watershed Action Plan (WAP) guides TCWP in their efforts to protect and restore the watershed and educate the public. The WAP along with the group's mission shapes the goals of TCWP.

## **Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners Goals**

- Increase understanding about the natural and economic and social value of protecting water resources to community officials and the public.
- Promote low-impact and conservation development practices that balance environmental integrity with human development.
- Educate watershed communities about their daily activities and habits that negatively impact environmental surroundings and provide alternative approaches to those practices.
- Encourage a no-net-loss wetland mitigation policy where mitigation remains localized within the watershed rather than outsourced to other watersheds.
- Lead a watershed-based approach to decision making that advances the concept of connectivity between the different political jurisdictions within the watershed.
- Increase recreational opportunities in the watershed by connecting greenways, corridors, and bike paths between the different jurisdictions.

P.O. Box 444, Twinsburg, Ohio 44087

[www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org](http://www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org)

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# Tinker's Creek

WATERSHED PARTNERS

Rediscover • Respect • Revitalize