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THANK YOU

With the invaluable support of our members, volunteers, donors, and funders, we have made a significant and tangible impact. **2023 BY THE NUMBERS** 26,056 Hours served by 16 NOWCorps AmeriCorps Members 39,485 Social Media Engagement 6,183 2023 Reach for Quarterly Newsletter Linear Feet of Stream Restored Attendees at the Ohio Stormwater Attendees at Educational Workshops **Volunteer Hours Served by Board Members** Attendees at Eight Rain Barrel Workshops Attendees at Watershed Family Fun Day Volunteer Hours for the Ohio Stormwater Conference and Water **Quality Monitoring** Trash Bags of Invasive Plants Removed Attendees at Educational Workshops on Microplastics & Watersheds Tinker's Cree<mark>k Stormwater</mark> Storywalks



OUR STORY

In 2006, Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners (TCWP) officially incorporated, marking a pivotal moment in our journey. The following year, TCWP achieved 501(c)(3) status and established its first Board of Directors, laying the foundation for our enduring commitment to the community.

Since then, TCWP has grown significantly, driven by a dedicated team of five full-time staff members and guided by our esteemed 16-member Board of Directors. As we celebrate our 16th year, our work continues to have a profound impact on the communities we serve.

At TCWP, we are dedicated to protecting and restoring water quality and habitat in the Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Creek watersheds through community partnerships.

Our vision of clean water, healthy habitats, and engaged communities is a shared goal that unites us with local residents, businesses, and stakeholders. Tinker's Creek watershed, spanning 96.4 square miles, is the largest tributary to the Cuyahoga River, intersecting 24 communities across Cuyahoga, Summit, Portage, and Geauga counties. The Brandywine Creek watershed, covering 27 square miles across Summit and Cuyahoga counties, also falls under our stewardship. These watersheds are vital to the environmental health and wellbeing of our region.

Our volunteer Board of Directors brings diverse expertise in stormwater management, environmental education, engineering, natural resources conservation, planning, law, and economic development, ensuring a holistic approach to our initiatives. Guided by a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan, we implement programs and projects that directly benefit our communities.

TCWP's efforts are bolstered by five Ohio and U.S. EPA-endorsed non-point source implementation strategic plans (NPS-IS Plans), each tailored to specific sections of the Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Creek watersheds. These plans are essential for protecting and restoring these ecosystems and educating the public about their importance.

The work we do at TCWP matters because it directly impacts the quality of life for residents in our watershed communities. By ensuring clean water, preserving natural habitats, and fostering community engagement, we are creating a sustainable future for generations to come. The support and involvement of our community members are crucial to our success, and together, we are making a meaningful difference.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Partners of Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners.

It is my privilege to share the remarkable progress we have made this year in advancing our mission and vision, thanks to the dedication and hard work of our sponsors, volunteers, staff, and partners.

In our ongoing efforts to educate and engage the public, we have expanded our outreach initiatives. Our programs on macroinvertebrates, aquatic health, pollinators, and microplastics have reached thousands of individuals, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the intricate dynamics within our watershed. These educational efforts are crucial as we work to cultivate a community that is informed and passionate about environmental stewardship. These efforts are also exemplified through the hard work of our ever-growing NOWCorps program members and host sites.

We continue to successfully host the Ohio Stormwater Conference, a premier event for sharing knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions in stormwater management. The conference not only highlights the challenges we face but also celebrates the collaborative spirit and ingenuity that drive progress in our field.

None of these achievements would be possible without the unwavering support of our sponsors. Your contributions provide the essential resources that fuel our projects and programs. To our volunteers, your time and effort are invaluable; your hands-on involvement brings our mission to life in the most tangible ways. To our dedicated staff, your expertise and passion are the backbone of our organization. And to our



Samantha Robbins President

Samantha Robbins, CESSWI Environmental Program Manager Beaver Excavating Company

Sam holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences from The Ohio State University and has 9 years of experience in construction, environmental consulting, and project management. When she's not working, you can find Sam outdoors - kayaking, hiking, skiing, or playing disc golf.

partners, your collaboration and shared vision amplify our impact exponentially.

As we reflect on this year's accomplishments, we are filled with immense gratitude.

Together, we are making an impact, ensuring that Tinker's Creek and its surrounding habitats remain vibrant and healthy for generations to come. Thank you for your continued support and commitment. We look forward to achieving even greater milestones in the year ahead.

With deepest appreciation,



EXECUTIVE BOARD



Rebecah Troutman Vice President



Karen Farkas Secretary

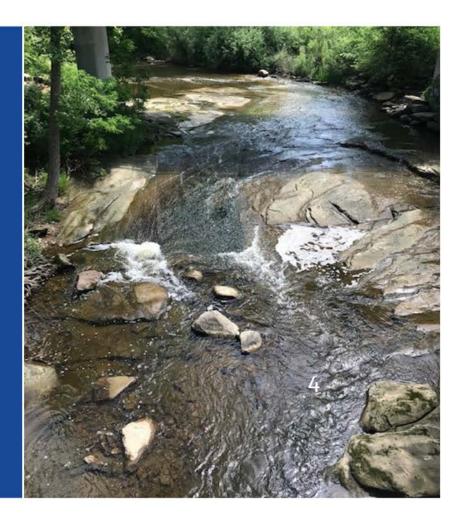


John L. Day Treasurer



Ana Burns
Former President

The Board of Directors form the backbone of Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners. They provide strategic direction and guidance and ensure the support of the mission, financial stability, and adherence to the 5-year strategic plan. In addition, the Board brings diverse skills, experiences, and knowledge while serving as organizational ambassadors - building relationships with donors and community partners to ensure TCWP's continued success and sustainability.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Josh Herchl



Sandy Barbic



Katherine G. Holmok



Michael A. Liptak, PhD.



Jim Rodstrum



Mike Cunnington



Andrew R. Zellers



Jesús Sanchez



Elizabeth Myers

OUR STAFF



Dr. Erica Matheny Executive Director



Angela Brodie NOWCorps Director



Harry Stark
Conference & Finance
Coordinator



Alyssa Mills Watershed Steward & Educator







KrakenProtector of Creek &
Catnip

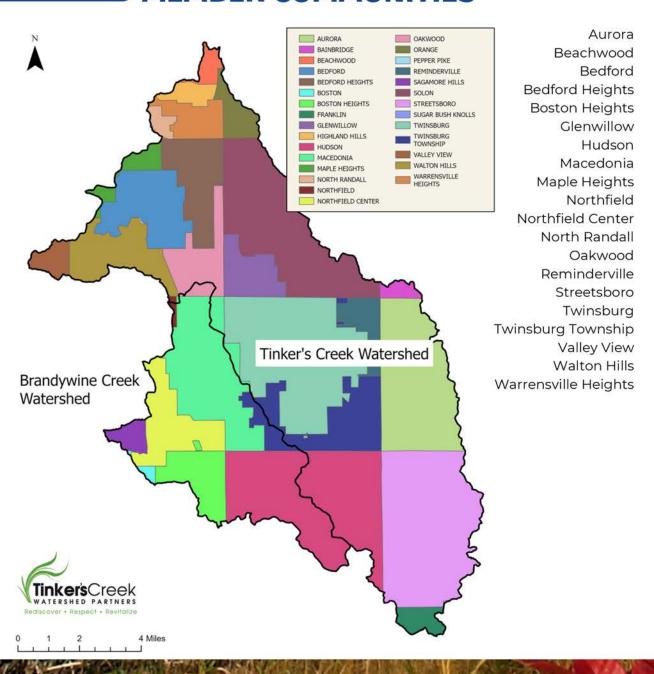
Our team's steadfast commitment has been pivotal in driving our organization's mission forward over the past year. Each team member brings their own diverse expertise and unwavering dedication to our collective efforts. Their enthusiasm and hard work are essential in the ongoing objectives to protect and preserve our watersheds.



Nina White NOWCorps Member



MEMBER COMMUNITIES



BRANDYWINE CREEK







Four-toed Salamander Photo- Hemidactylium scutatum by Brian.gratwicke, available under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike SJ O Unported License at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hemidactylium_scutatum.jpg

PROTECTING NATURE

The Brandywine Creek watershed is a crucial habitat for a diverse array of species, including fish, insects, and birds. Similar to Tinker's Creek, the wetlands in this watershed support vulnerable and unique species, such as the elusive wood ducks, a favorite of birders, artists, and woodcarvers. Brandywine also offers refuge to four-toed salamanders, which are a species of concern in Ohio primarily to due habitat loss and fragmentation.

The watershed is also home to several rare and state-listed plants, including early coralroot, southern wild rice, and fringed gentian. Despite its extensive history of impairment, Brandywine Creek's ability to support these valuable species underscores the importance and potential of ongoing restoration efforts. The continued presence of these species highlights the success and necessity of our conservation initiatives.

One of the most iconic features of the watershed is the falls, which marks its entry into Cuyahoga Valley National Park and eventual confluence with the Cuyahoga River. This geological marvel draws nature enthusiasts and history aficionados alike, making it a beloved attraction in the region.

TINKER'S CREEK

PRESERVING HABITAT

Tinker's Creek and its watershed provide vital habitat for a wide array of native species. The wetlands, in particular, are home to many fascinating species, such as Virginia rails, barred owls, bald eagles, watersnakes, and beavers.

Located within the Mississippi Flyway, the watershed welcomes millions of migratory birds each year during the fall and spring. Our swamps and wetlands serve as essential resting sites for waterfowl and shorebirds, while nearly all habitats burst with color and birdsong as the highly sought-after neotropical warblers briefly grace us with their presence.

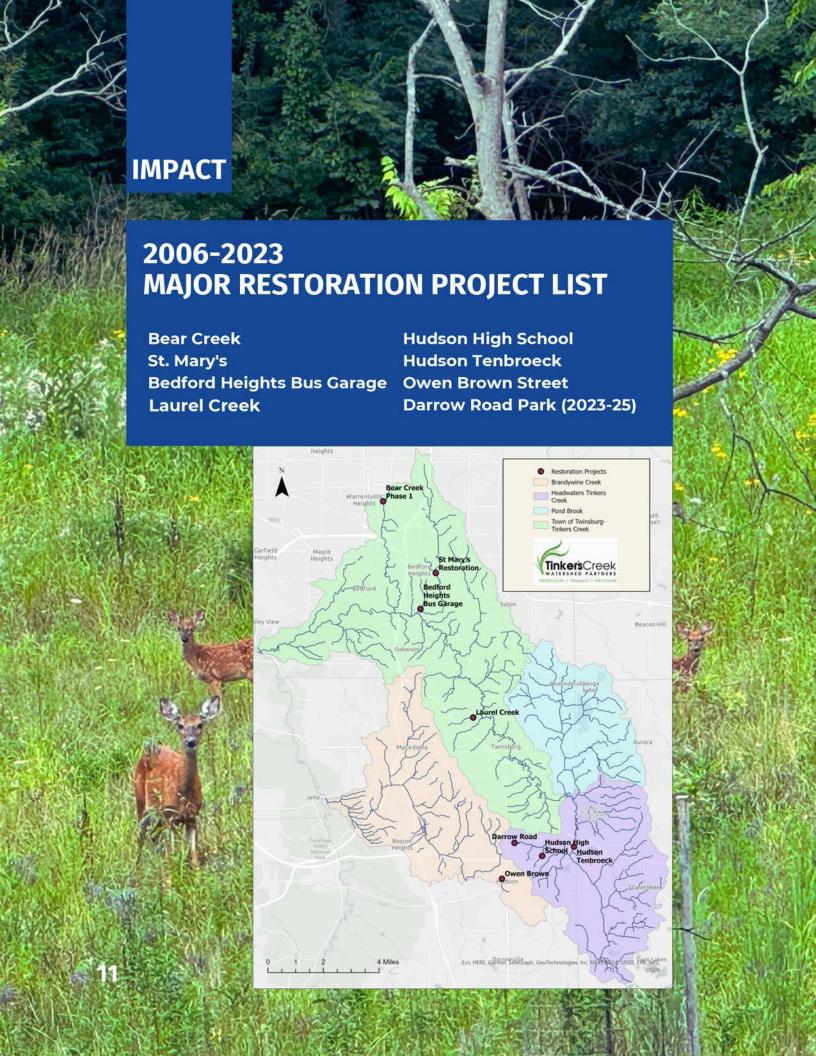
Much like its wildlife, the plant communities of Tinker's Creek are ecologically valuable and diverse. Wildflowers, such as buttonbush, cardinal flower, and swamp milkweed, can be found in various locations. Patches of American pondweed grow throughout the stream bed, while towering sycamores inhabit the riparian zone.

Gott Fen, a state nature preserve within the watershed, boasts several rare and unique species, such as bayberry and round-leaved sundew, both of which are stateendangered. TCWP protects these organisms and their ecosystems through our continued conservation efforts.











BACKGROUND

The Darrow Road Park Stream Restoration involves restoring a stream and its floodplain for an unnamed tributary of Tinker's Creek headwaters in Hudson, Ohio. The stream currently faces numerous impairments due to channelization, historic dredging, and instream sediment loading, which have led to water quality degradation.

To restore this site, it is essential to reconnect the water to the surrounding landscape. Our goal is to enhance and permanently protect the riparian habitat and wetlands in this valuable headwaters area of Tinker's Creek. Invasive species will be removed, and native species will be planted to increase diversity, resilience, and stormwater functionality in the area.

The site features a wide, flat valley at the eastern portion, defined by a 1,040-foot berm. Leveraging this topography will enable the restoration of several acres of forested and scrub-shrub wetland communities.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Darrow Road Park Stream Restoration will encompass the construction of 1,600 linear feet of new stream and improvements to the existing stream. Restoring the stream alignment using the natural topography will reestablish hydrologic connectivity to 4 acres of wetlands in the valley that were previously impacted by the channelized ditch.

Wetland enhancement efforts will involve removing invasive species from the existing wetland areas and along stream corridors. These invasive treatments will extend into the adjacent upland areas, covering 4 acres. To support these communities, the design team will conduct a vegetative community assessment and develop a comprehensive planting plan.

New trees, shrubs, and live stakes will be installed in areas where invasive species have been treated and removed, promoting a diverse and resilient ecosystem. Groundbreaking for this project is scheduled for 2024.

IMPACT

EDUCATION & OUTREACH (



OHIO STORMWATER CONFERENCE

The Annual Ohio Stormwater Conference is the premier resource for advancing comprehensive stormwater management, including all aspects of stormwater planning, design, implementation, and regulatory compliance. In 2023, 976 attendees participated in-person or virtually and more than 100 speakers presented, sharing their expertise and insights.



TREE PLANTING

On Arbor Day, the First Energy Green Team and other dedicated volunteers planted 150 trees near Center Valley Park in Twinsburg. Planting trees provides many environmental benefits, including improving air quality, enhancing habitat for wildlife, reducing soil erosion, and managing stormwater. This initiative not only beautifies the community but also contributes to a healthier and more sustainable environment.



MICROPLASTICS EDUCATION

Thanks to support from an NEORSD Community Relations grant, TCWP provided microplastics public education in Hudson and Twinsburg.

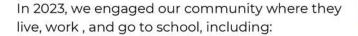


RAIN BARREL WORKSHOPS

A total of 135 people attended educational rain barrel workshops to learn how to collect and reuse stormwater for their lawns and gardens. During a spring and summer season with 10 inches of precipitation, each 55-gallon barrel can capture up to 8,160 gallons of stormwater runoff. Collectively, this results in nearly 1 million gallons of runoff being removed! Additionally, rain barrel users in the NEORSD service area may be eligible for a stormwater reduction credit.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

TCWP thrives on the vibrant energy and active participation of our community members. We believe in the power of collective action to protect and enhance our watershed's natural resources. TCWP engages community members through a variety of inclusive and inspiring initiatives, from stream cleanups and tree plantings to educational workshops and public outreach events. Our aim is to foster a deep connection to the environment, empowering everyone to contribute to the health and sustainability of Tinker's and Brandywine Creeks. Together, we are safeguarding watersheds for future generations.



- · Watershed Family Fun Day, Twinsburg
- Bedford High School watershed education
- Music in the Park, Maple Heights
- · Pollinator Festival, Twinsburg
- Twinsburg High School watershed education



TCWP Watershed Family Fun Day



Bedford High School students exploring watershed topics.

STORMWATER STORYWALKS

A new original StoryWalk was developed and installed in Center Valley Park in Twinsburg. It features a tale about children defeating the Stormwater Monster by protecting their watershed and managing stormwater properly. As families stroll through the park, they'll learn about stormwater management, the dangers of pollution, and steps to safeguard the environment. This interactive experience inspires all ages to become watershed stewards.



Children on a storywalk with Twinsburg library staff.

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IMPACT

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Assessing Key Water Quality Indicators

In 2023, TCWP successfully completed its fifth year of data collection at 11 monitoring sites in Tinker's Creek and 5 sites in Brandywine Creek. For the second consecutive year, TCWP partnered with the Lake Erie Volunteer Science Network (LEVSN) to enhance collective impact. This collaboration allowed us to share best practices and data with other watershed groups in the Lake Erie Basin.

Watershed Background:

- Tinker's Creek Watershed: 44.1% developed, 31.0% forest, 15.0% grass/pasture, 5.4% row crop, 4.5% other (water).
- Brandywine Creek Watershed: 65.4% developed, 27.3% forest, 4.9% grass/pasture, 0.3% row crop, 2.1% other (water).

Our volunteer water monitors are essential to our mission, diligently collecting data on key water quality indicators, including **pH**, **dissolved oxygen**, **temperature**, **E. coli**, and **conductivity**. These parameters are critical for assessing the health of aquatic life and ensuring water quality for human use. When values exceed expected thresholds, we track these anomalies over time and report them to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) as necessary.



NOWCorps member Nina White collecting water quality data on

While most parameters remained within normal limits, both watersheds experienced elevated conductivity levels. This increase is likely due to high chloride levels from residual winter road salt. In some areas, conductivity levels significantly exceeded the EPA's recommended limit of 250 mg/L for potable water.

Through continued monitoring and collaboration, TCWP remains committed to protecting and improving the water quality in our region. Stations of extreme exceedance occurred during low base flow conditions and warmer, drier months of the year. Both Tinker's and Brandywine Creek monitoring stations are located in high-density, urban areas.

These measures support our continued work to advocate for "sensible salting" for winter roadways.



IMPACT

NOWCORPS

Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners' Northern Ohio Watershed Corps (NOWCorps) AmeriCorps program, a program of ServeOhio, Ohio's Commission on Service and Volunteerism, and AmeriCorps, works with government and nonprofit organizations to facilitate outreach, education, capacity building, and environmental stewardship.

With additional support from the Gund Foundation, NOWCorps mobilized seventeen members across twelve host sites throughout Northern Ohio in 2022-23. NOWCorps members serve their host site communities by supporting ecological restoration, education and outreach, trail building and restoration, water quality monitoring, community engagement, and more. In return, our host site partners and supervisors provide invaluable support to our members including daily supervision, mentorship, networking, and training.

Since 2019, NOWCorps members have devoted over 100,000 hours to service in their communities. While service is the focus of NOWCorps, members also gain valuable skills and experiences to prepare them to become future environmental leaders.

Host Site since 2019-2020















Host Site since 2020-2021





Host Site since 2021-2022







Building the Pipeline (61 Alumni)

39 in Environmental Field



Julio Olivarez, The Nature Conservancy

22 at NOWCorps Host Sites



Sarah Brunot, CRWP member now CSWCD staff

5 as HS Supervisors



Kevin Saracino (supervisor) and Heather Beukeman (member), CRWP

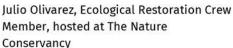
MEMBER AND SUPERVISOR PERSPECTIVES

"We love this program, it has changed us so much for the better. We have been able to grow and serve more students because of the increased capacity, creativity, and enthusiasm our NOWCorps members have brought to The University of Akron Field Station over the last 3 years. We are so thankful to be a part of this program and can't wait to bring in our new member!"

Dr. Lara Roketenetz, Host Site Supervisor, The University of Akron Field Station



"NOWCorps has given me various opportunities to **develop new skills**, to **network** within my career field, and to **give back to my home state**."



"Through my NOWCorps host site, I've decided what career path I will pursue. It was a great experience serving alongside industry professionals. I **gained a wealth of knowledge** and some **awesome experience** for my resume."

Cora Crilow, Conservation Program Assistant, hosted at Ashland Soil & Water Conservation District





"NOWCorps has been an amazing asset for my department! We have been able to **expand capacity and complete projects...** with the help of our member. We have been able to use the strengths and interests of our member and align it with projects we want done to **create a mutually beneficial plan** for both the member and our department."

Rebecah Troutman, Host Site Supervisor, Holden Forests and Gardens





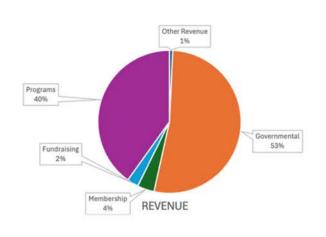


FINANCE

REVENUE & EXPENSES

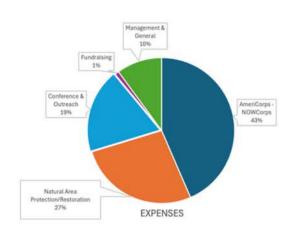
REVENUE

Revenue Source:	
Foundation	\$2,500
Governmental	\$458,973
Membership	\$33,175
Direct Public Support	\$1,342
Fundraising	\$22,576
Programs	\$349,074
Non-Profit	\$2,500
Total revenue	\$870,140



EXPENSES

Expense Source:	
AmeriCorps - NOWCorps	\$464,212
Natural Area Protection/Restoration	\$285,534
Conference & Outreach	\$199,695
Fundraising	\$9,754
Management & General	\$107,528
Total Expenses	\$1,066,722



THANK YOU

GRANTS & SUPPORT





















PARTNERS & IN-KIND SUPPORT

- Advanced Drainage Systems
- Ashtabula SWCD
- Big Creek Connects
- Bluestone Heights
- Chagrin River
 Watershed Partners
- · City of Avon Lake
- · Cleveland Metroparks
- Cleveland Water Alliance
- · Coca-Cola Consolidated
- Collaborative for the Lake Erie Basin
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Cuyahoga River AOC

- Cuyahoga SWCD
- Davey Tree
- Doan Brook Watershed Partnership
- Enviroscience
- Erie SWCD
- First Energy Green Team
- Friends of Euclid Creek
- Geauga SWCD
- Lake Erie Volunteer Science Network
- Lake SWCD
- Lorain County Stormwater
 Management District
- Lorain SWCD
- Medina SWCD
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

- Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Northeast Ohio Public Involvement Public Education (NEO PIPE)
- Portage County Health District
- Portage SWCD
- Rocky River Watershed Council
- Stark SWCD
- Summit Metro Parks
- Summit SWCD
- U.S EPA Region 5
- West Creek Conservancy
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy

VOLUNTEERS



We are grateful for the dedication of our water quality monitoring, tree planting, stream cleanup, board of directors, and other volunteers. Their unwavering efforts have been instrumental in supporting the health of Tinker's and Brandywine Creek. Their commitment continues to inspire positive change within our community.



BUSINESS MEMBERS & FUNDRAISING

BUSINESS MEMBERS



DRINKERS FOR TINKER'S



The 2023 version of this annual fundraiser and networking event was held at Hop Tree Brewing in Hudson. Eighty-one attendees gathered to enjoy great food, conversation, and to toast our beautiful watershed. Teams competed in Tinker's Trivia, where they showcased their extensive knowledge of the watershed and our organization! Thanks to our community's generosity, this year's event raised nearly \$7,000.

FORAGED FEAST

Our second annual Foraged and Invasives dinner, or "Foraged Feast" was held at Bottlehouse Brewery in Cleveland Heights. As it was held on May 4th, we had to go with the theme of "May the Forest Be With You." The intimate event was capped at 50 attendees, who enjoyed an incredible scape of finger foods, fine brews and meads, and inspiring talks about foraging and sustainability by Holden Forests and Gardens staff and the evening's chef.



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FUTURE FOCUS

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY SUCCESS

Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners aims to increase and improve our targeted investment in watershed communities by expanding our educational programs, enhancing community engagement, and securing additional funding for conservation projects. By collaborating with local stakeholders, we plan to implement more green infrastructure initiatives, restore critical habitats, and support sustainable land use practices. These efforts will strengthen our commitment to preserving the health and vitality of the Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Creek watersheds.

ENHANCING MEMBER SERVICES

Community members are an essential component of our focus for the upcoming year, which includes enhancing stormwater control measures outreach, expanding watershed-based initiatives, and advancing environmental education to meet community MS4 requirements. We are committed to working closely with our community contacts to adapt to the evolving climate and regulatory landscape, ensuring we meet the changing needs of our members.

NOWCORPS

Our NOWCorps program continues to grow. 2023-2024 will include 17 host sites and 27 members. Our reach from year one to year five has doubled with continued interest from other local organizations. We are continuing to strategically explore funding options to support this growing program.



