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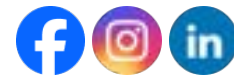
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Winter 2025



Photo Credit: Nina White

Our mission is to protect and restore water quality and habitats in Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Creek watersheds.



Winter Reflections and Exciting Opportunities Ahead

A Message from the Executive Director

As we embrace the heart of winter and look toward spring, **Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners (TCWP)** is gearing up for another impactful year of conservation, stewardship, and community education. February may still bring chilly days, but it's also a time of preparation—and we have plenty of exciting ways for you to get involved and make a difference in our community!

Our **Water Quality Monitoring Volunteer Program** is kicking off soon. We're looking for dedicated individuals to help us collect important data on the health of our watershed. If you've ever wanted to play a hands-on role in protecting our local waterways, this is your chance! [Click here](#) to share your interest. *Training included and no experience required!*

We also want to remind you that **TCWP now offers individual memberships!** By becoming a member, you're directly supporting our mission to protect and restore **Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Creek watersheds**. [Membership](#) comes with exclusive benefits, including early access to event registration, exclusive member-only events, and special behind the scenes experiences! Whether you're a longtime supporter or new to our work, this is a great way to stay engaged and make a lasting impact.

Meanwhile, we continue to expand our **environmental education programs and workshops**, helping to bring more native plants and stormwater solutions to communities throughout the watershed. And mark your calendars for **May 22**, when we'll host our **Foraged Feast**, a celebration of nature's bounty in support of our conservation efforts.

As always, we are grateful for your support. Whether through volunteering, becoming a member, or simply spreading the word about watershed conservation, **you are making a difference**. Let's make 2025 a year of even greater impact together!

Dr. Erica Matheny

Executive Director, Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners

[Join as a TCWP Member Today](#)

Winter & Spring Calendar

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

Feb. 2 - [Groundhog Day](#)

Feb 7 - Board of Directors Meeting

Feb. 21 - [Webinar: Wickedly Invasive](#)

March 3 - [Build A Buzzin' BeeHouse \(Bedford library\)](#)

March 7 - Nordonia HS STEM Day

March 12 - [Build A Buzzin' BeeHouse \(Streetsboro library\)](#)

March 13 - TCWP Communities Mayor's Breakfast

March 15 - Salamander & Frog Fest - Twinsburg

March 22 - [World Water Day](#)

March 26 - [Webinar: Majestic Native Plants](#)

April TBD - Sustainable Foraging Hike

April 3 - [Build A Buzzin' BeeHouse \(Twinsburg library\)](#)

April 22 - Earth Day

April 19 - [Hudson Earth Day & Rain Barrel Workshop](#)

April 22 - Earth Day

April 23 - Earth Day Celebration (Brecksville/ Broadview Hts)

April 24 - Earth Day Celebration (Beachwood)

April 25 - Arbor Day

April 26 - Earth Day Celebration - Oakwood Village

April 26 - Arbor Day/ Earth Day - Twinsburg

May 7 - 9 - [Ohio Stormwater Conference](#)

May 22 - Foraged Feast (Save the Date)



A male cardinal finds shelter in a tree at Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners offices.

Interested in volunteering? Get more information and sign up here!

TCWP's volunteers are instrumental in helping to protect the Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Creek watersheds. There are many opportunities to volunteer with TCWP throughout the year. These opportunities range from short-term events such as stream clean-ups and tree plantings to long-term volunteer efforts like our watershed monitoring program. To find out more about volunteering with TCWP, contact us [HERE](#).

[Volunteer Info and Sign Up Here!](#)



DARROW ROAD STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT

TCWP is collaborating with EnviroScience, Inc., RiverReach Construction, and GPD Group, to lead the Darrow Road Stream Restoration Project's design-build team. This project, funded by EPA Section 319 funds and the City of Hudson, addresses significant impairments to Darrow Road Park Ditch—including channel straightening, historic dredging, and in-stream sediment deposition, which have degraded the water quality and habitat of the stream.

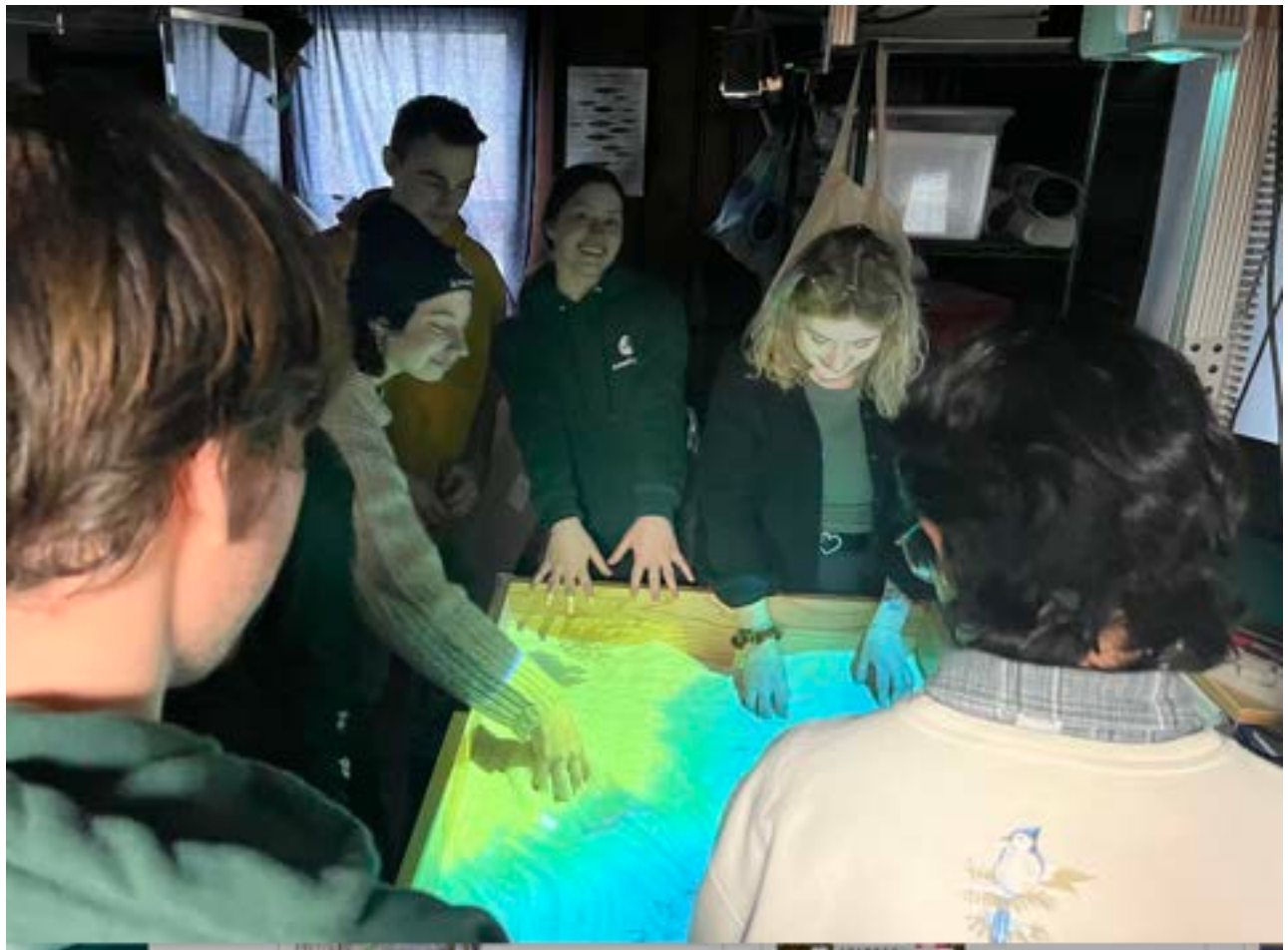
The restoration project will focus on re-establishing a healthy, functioning stream system and reconnecting the stream with its floodplain. This loss of floodplain interaction means reduced sediment deposition, nutrient exchange, and energy release—all factors that are vital to stream health. Additionally, the straightened channel has led to bank erosion and reduced habitat diversity for invertebrates, fish, and other wildlife.

This restoration effort is focused on improving water quality and stream function rather than stormwater control. The approach emphasizes minimal disruption to the existing landscape while prioritizing long-term ecological improvements.

The project is currently in the permitting phase, with woody invasive removal to follow. Construction is slated to begin in 2025 to transform Darrow Road Park Ditch into a thriving, ecologically balanced stream system. For more information [click here](#).



TCWP's NOWCorps AmeriCorps *Insider*



NOWCorps Members at the University of Akron Field Station during February's monthly training. Exploring the AR sand table which models various landscapes.



Jarrod Robinson, member serving at Cuyahoga County Board of Health.



Member Brandon (serving with Holden Forests and



Danielle Dejak, new member at Chagrin River Watershed

Gardens) holding a snake during January's monthly training. Partners.

NOWCorps Thoughts

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS, JARROD AND DANIELLE!

We welcomed two new members, Jarrod, serving at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, and Danielle, serving at Chagrin River Watershed Partners. Their onboarding signifies a full Corps! Jarrod, serving as Watershed Program Assistant, says he's most excited to do some fieldwork pertaining to watershed health and is hoping to gain water quality monitoring experience. Danielle, Education and Outreach Specialist, brings her herbalism background to this education and conservation role. She's most excited to "meet all the amazing people working in the environmental field in Northern Ohio." We're thrilled to have Jarrod and Danielle join our Corps and can't wait to see how they "get things done!"

Although in the "slow season," the NOWCorps program has been productive this winter, despite all the snow and ice!

INTRODUCING: THE NOWCORPS MEMBER ROUND TABLE, A SPACE FOR COLLABORATION

Earlier this quarter, we launched something new—the **NOWCorps Member Roundtable!** This virtual gathering brought together members and the member coordinator to **discuss GIS trainings, share past projects, and troubleshoot current challenges.**

With a mix of experience levels in the group, **members with strong GIS backgrounds offered informal guidance**, while others showcased how they've integrated GIS into their work. **Katherine, a second-year member**, shared her insights, saying, *"I loved being able to highlight some of the GIS projects I've worked on, such as mapping Holden's irrigation valves and assessing damage from the August 2024 storm."*

As the discussion progressed, members **began problem-solving together**, despite working in different roles at various host sites. Katherine added, *"It was also really interesting to see how other members are using GIS at their organizations."*

Looking Ahead

Encouraged by the success of this first session, we're **excited to expand the Roundtable Series** based on member feedback. Future topics may include:

- ✓ **Advanced GIS training opportunities**
- ✓ **Environmental outreach strategies**
- ✓ **Networking and professional development**

NOWCorps members dedicate a year to serving at a single host site, and this new **Roundtable Series provides a valuable space to connect, collaborate, and learn from one another outside of monthly meetings.**

Are you an expert? Would you like to lead a roundtable discussion? If so, get in touch! Email Claire Ilersich at claire@tinkerscreek.org

MAXIMIZING GROWTH: THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POINTS SYSTEM

At NOWCorps, we are committed to fostering **professional growth, training, and**

networking opportunities for our members. This year, we introduced the **Professional Development Points System** to encourage members to **think beyond their year of service** and invest in their future careers.

Each member is encouraged to earn **10 professional development points** throughout their term by engaging in activities such as:

- ✓ **Earning a certification**
- ✓ **Attending a conference**
- ✓ **Conducting an informational interview**
- ✓ **Participating in professional training sessions**

Leveraging Opportunities for Growth

To support members in their journey, we've created a **comprehensive spreadsheet** with online and in-person training opportunities. **Jennifer, serving at Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District**, has already gained multiple professional development points in her first quarter. Her advice?

💡 **"Use any downtime during service to pursue professional development. Take advantage of your training stipend, and seek out free trainings that align with your service area and interests. The more you learn, the bigger impact you can make!"** Jennifer's experience highlights the value of continuous learning—not only does it enhance **post-service career opportunities**, but it also empowers members to **make a greater impact in their current roles**.



The 2025 Ohio Stormwater Conference: A Must-Attend Event

Are you passionate about stormwater and watershed management? The **Ohio Stormwater Conference** is back for 2025, offering an unparalleled opportunity to **expand your knowledge, network with industry leaders, and discover the latest innovations** in the field. Whether you specialize in planning, design, implementation, or regulatory compliance, this conference is a **premier event you won't want to miss!**

Dates: May 8-9, 2025

Location: Kalahari Resort & Conference Center, Sandusky, Ohio

Why Attend?


This two-day event is packed with **insightful sessions**, hands-on learning opportunities, and engaging discussions led by **top experts in stormwater management**. Explore topics ranging from **cutting-edge technologies** to **best practices in watershed conservation**, ensuring you leave with actionable strategies to implement in your work.

Beyond education, the **conference fosters meaningful connections**. Attendees will have plenty of chances to engage with peers, share experiences, and build professional relationships that extend beyond the event.

More Than Just Learning—It's Fun Too!

The Ohio Stormwater Conference isn't all work! Join the **interactive scavenger hunt**, bid on exciting items in the **silent auction**, and cap off your experience at the **80s-themed networking reception**—a perfect chance to unwind, connect, and show off your best retro style!

Register Soon!

 Registration opens at the end of February
ohstormwaterconference.com

Spots fill up fast, so mark your calendar and secure your place! **We look forward to seeing you there!**

The Early Bloomer of Wetlands: Skunk Cabbage



They say the early bird gets the worm, but what does the early wildflower get? A head start on the season—with some fascinating adaptations! One of the first wildflowers to bloom each year, **skunk cabbage** emerges as early as late February, thriving in wet forest bottoms, marshes, and other wetland habitats.

Skunk cabbage is easy to spot during this time, thanks to its **distinctive red-purple spathe**—a hood-like structure that shelters the plant's spadix, a central stalk lined with tiny flowers. But its most unique trait? **It generates its own heat!** This thermogenic ability allows skunk cabbage to **melt the snow and thaw the soil** around it, creating a warm microenvironment for its early bloom. True to its name, skunk cabbage emits a **strong odor** when damaged, a scent that mimics decaying matter. While unpleasant to us, it serves a purpose—it **attracts early-season pollinators like flies and carrion beetles** that help the plant reproduce.

So, as winter transitions to spring, keep an eye (and nose) out for this remarkable early bloomer—it's one of nature's first signs that warmer days are ahead!




KRAKEN'S CORNER


A Purr-spective on Bird Flu: Keep Our Feathered Friends Safe!


Hello, humans! It's me, your favorite (and only) office cat, here to share some important news—about birds! Now, I know what you're thinking: "A cat? Talking about protecting birds?" But trust me, I'm all about a balanced ecosystem (and, let's be honest, I prefer my meals served in a bowl).


Lately, I've overheard my human coworkers talking about something called **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)**—or as you humans call it, *bird flu*. It's a serious virus that affects wild and domestic birds, spreading rapidly through flocks. And while I personally enjoy a good birdwatching session from the window, I want to make sure our feathered friends stay healthy.

How You Can Help Birds Stay Safe

 **Keep Feeders & Baths Clean** – If you have bird feeders or baths, make sure to **clean them regularly** with a diluted bleach solution to prevent disease spread - or better yet, put them away until the disease spread has slowed. Dirty feeders are like a cat's litter box—nobody wants to use one that's full of germs!

 **Avoid Contact with Sick or Dead Birds** – If you find a bird that looks unwell or has passed away, **avoid touching it** and report it to your local wildlife agency. I know curiosity killed the cat (not me, of course—I'm too smart for that), but in this case, it could harm birds too!

 **Protect Backyard Poultry** – If you have chickens or other domestic birds, keep them away from wild birds to prevent cross-contamination. A little extra caution goes a long way!

 **Respect Wildlife** – Avoid disturbing bird roosting areas, and if you see a large number of birds acting strangely, report it. The humans in charge of wildlife health need to know!

A Healthy Ecosystem Benefits Everyone (Even Cats!)

Birds play an essential role in our environment—helping control insect populations, spreading native plant seeds, and even keeping watersheds healthy! So, while I may be content snoozing on my office chair, I want to remind you all to **do your part in keeping them safe**.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a very important nap scheduled. But before you go, share this info with your fellow humans—our local birds (and your favorite office cat) will thank you!

Purrs and whiskers,

Kraken

TCWP's Mouser-in-Chief

Thank you for being a part of our community. Your support helps us continue our mission to protect and restore our watersheds.

We'd love to hear from you! Join us at our next event, sign up for our volunteer opportunities, or follow us on social media to stay connected.



Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners
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