



TINKER'S CREEK WATERSHED PARTNERS' VISION FOR THE FUTURE: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

May 7, 2026: Thank you, Ohio Stormwater Conference participants, for helping us to celebrate our 19th annual Ohio Stormwater Conference and our 20th year as an organization. We couldn't do this important work without you!

After a year of significant change, we've been envisioning what the next five years will hold for TCWP. Like TCWP, many communities and partners were impacted in April 2025 by the abrupt cessation of Federal funding for environmental programming, including AmeriCorps' NowCorps program, in which many local partners were engaged. The cuts mandated a rapid pivot for all involved. Since then, our Staff and Board of Directors have created new goals for how we work, while remaining true to our mission: **to protect and restore the Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Watersheds through community partnerships and education.** The team has, since last autumn, been engaged in a Strategic Revisioning process to create TCWP's next 5-year Strategic Plan (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2031). We are delighted to share with you our new vision, and we welcome comments from you, our stakeholders and allies in this important work. A copy of the draft plan is available for review at the TCWP table in the Exhibit Hall, near the river on fire, and the giant disco record dj station.

While the final version of the new Strategic Plan is not yet complete (the plan will be formally adopted at the next meeting of the Board of Directors in June 2026), we are delighted to share with you the core pillars of the new plan. They are:

What we do: Provide impactful programs centered around technical excellence in environmental stewardship

Who we are: Be known as a trusted community leader, convening stakeholders as water advocates and defenders of the Watershed

Marketing and messaging: Create unified messaging using a variety of channels to champion and create clean water and a healthy environment, driving broad engagement across our region.

Strategic relationships and partnerships: Support financial stability, expand TCWP's influence, and support growth of our organization in alignment with our mission.

Additionally, slight adjustments have been made to the organization's guidance statements:

Mission: To protect and restore the Tinker's Creek and Brandywine Creek watersheds through community partnerships and education

Vision: Clean Water, Healthy Habitats, Engaged Communities

Tag line: Rediscover, Respect, Revitalize

Five-Year Theme: Advancing Great Lakes Health Through Local Action and Environmental Leadership

Finally, we remain committed to our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Statement:

At TCWP, we are dedicated to fostering a culture of DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging) in all aspects of our work. We believe that a diverse and inclusive environment is essential to achieving our mission of preserving and restoring water quality and habitat in our watershed through community partnerships and education. We recognize that diversity encompasses a wide range of identities, backgrounds, and perspectives, and we are dedicated to creating an inclusive and equitable space where everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, or background, feels welcomed, respected, and valued.

We actively seek to dismantle barriers to participation and address systemic inequities that may exist in our work. We are committed to ongoing learning, growth, and accountability in our DEIB efforts, and we invite our stakeholders to collaborate with us in this important work. We believe that by embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, we can better serve our watersheds community and work towards a more just and sustainable future for all.

With tremendous appreciation, we bid farewell to outgoing board members Rebecah Troutman and Rich Greco, and departing staff Kaylee Nickol and IREX fellows Joseph Losi & Jim Cordoba-Alfaro and we welcome new board members Tony Burgoyne, Anne Schoeffler), new staff member Kylie Kovach, and IREX Fellow Refka Abroug. Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to all who have been involved in the Strategic Revisioning process: our current Board of Directors, Directors



Emeritus (Michael Liptak and Justin Czekaj), the Stormwater Conference dynamic team - particularly, Harry and Allie Stark, our invaluable TCWP staff, and all community partners and supporters who advocate for our Watersheds.

TINKER'S CREEK WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN 2027-2031 PILLARS

PILLAR 1: WHAT WE DO	<i>Provide impactful programs centered around technical excellence in environmental stewardship</i>
OBJECTIVE # 1	Align programs and initiatives to staff expertise.
Tasks	Review and update job descriptions for all current positions. Assess staff strengths and align roles accordingly to strengthen fundraising, project development, and delivery of TCWP's mission.
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	Define TCWP's core programs and initiatives, assign clear staff leads and support roles, and establish realistic performance metrics for each.
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	Expand priority programs with stable funding and diversified revenue, and build dedicated staff capacity with the expertise to lead and sustain each program area. Metrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented growth in programs aligned with new funding opportunities • At least 50% of staff time consistently allocated to core programs
OBJECTIVE # 2	Engage external stakeholders to strengthen alignment with community priorities and develop impactful, broad-reaching programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify synergies with partner organizations to align efforts, reduce duplication, and strengthen program impact • Seek and incorporate external input to ensure TCWP's work reflects community needs and priorities • Build and maintain strong relationships with municipal officials, residents, nonprofits, schools, and park systems across the watershed
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new engagement opportunities to connect with communities and partners • Create consistent methods to gather community input and feedback • Conduct an annual review of partnerships and programs to improve efficiency and eliminate redundancies
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase joint programming and collaboration on grants and funding opportunities • Expand TCWP visibility across communities • Increase volunteer opportunities for residents and students Metrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 1 volunteer event per year • Engagement with at least 1 school per year • At least 1 presentation or workshop delivered per year
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	Leverage established relationships to move beyond coordination and into implementation of on-the-ground restoration and preservation projects in partnership with municipalities, schools, residents, and other stakeholders Metrics:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete at least 1 implemented restoration or preservation project (pending funding)
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PILLAR 2: WHO WE ARE	<i>Be known as a trusted community leader, convening stakeholders as water advocates and defenders of the Watershed</i>
OBJECTIVE #1	Define and consistently live TCWP's organizational identity
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and adopt a clear, concise elevator pitch (Year 1) ● Define and formalize core values (Year 1) ● Governance Committee conducts annual review of DEI policy and practices
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elevator pitch reflects TCWP's mission, vision, and value proposition and is adopted by board and staff ● Board and staff can consistently and confidently communicate TCWP's purpose and impact ● Core values defined, adopted, and used to guide internal decision-making and operations ● Core values reflected in internal communications and organizational practices ● Board and staff can clearly explain what a watershed is, TCWP's role, and how residents and municipalities connect to the mission
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Core values are consistently reflected in external communications, partnerships, and brand identity ● TCWP is recognized as a trusted regional leader in watershed protection, restoration, and stormwater management ● Staff expertise demonstrates both technical strength and community-centered leadership ● Staff, board, and volunteers increasingly reflect the diversity of watershed communities served

OBJECTIVE #2	Develop leadership and expertise across staff and board
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish and maintain a structured professional development process for all staff ● Define leadership expectations and engagement pathways for board members ● Position staff as subject-matter experts through presentations, publications, and regional partnerships ● Identify priority trainings and certifications aligned with TCWP's mission and develop an annual plan and budget
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff professional development plans are in place and actively implemented ● Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and aligned with organizational priorities ● Increased staff participation in conferences, trainings, and regional events ● Each staff member presents or contributes to at least one external event, workshop, or publication ● Staff begin pursuing relevant technical certifications and leadership training

3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff demonstrate increased leadership capacity and technical expertise across program areas ● TCWP staff are regularly invited to present and contribute at regional and state-level events ● Each staff member presents or contributes to at least four external events, workshops, or publications ● Staff obtain and maintain relevant certifications aligned with their roles ● Board members actively contribute to organizational leadership through committee work, partnerships, and resource development
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OBJECTIVE #3	Develop and grow external leadership through volunteers, youth, and community ambassadors
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a Youth Advisory Panel to elevate youth voice, leadership, and engagement ● Strengthen and formalize the volunteer program, including recruitment, onboarding, and retention ● Build and maintain relationships with alumni (past interns, fellows, youth participants, and volunteers)
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased volunteer engagement and participation across programs and events ● Clear, accessible pathways for volunteers to get involved and grow into leadership roles ● Initial recruitment and framework established for Youth Advisory Panel ● At least 10 new volunteers engaged ● Defined volunteer roles, onboarding process, and engagement opportunities ● Youth Advisory Panel structure, purpose, and recruitment plan completed
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustained growth in volunteer engagement year over year ● Active Youth Advisory Panel contributing to programs, outreach, and organizational input ● Alumni network established and contributing to TCWP through mentorship, volunteering, or advocacy ● Annual increase in active volunteers and retention rates ● Youth Advisory Panel meets regularly and participates in defined initiatives ● Documented alumni engagement (events, mentorship, or program support)

PILLAR 3: MARKETING & MESSAGING	<i>Create unified messaging using a variety of channels to champion and create clean water and a healthy environment, driving broad engagement across our region</i>
OBJECTIVE # 1	Build and implement an integrated communications strategy that supports programs, education, engagement, and fundraising
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refresh website with clear structure, updated content, and audience-focused messaging

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define messaging for key audiences (residents, municipal officials, funders, partners) ● Establish email/newsletter strategy (frequency, content themes, audience segmentation) ● Align all communications with TCWP's mission, programs, and core values
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review and update website to ensure clear, audience-specific content ● Messaging framework adopted and used consistently by staff and board ● Regular newsletter schedule established and executed ● Staff communications aligned with organizational priorities
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communications strategy evolves with organizational growth and program expansion ● Messaging reflects TCWP's role in regional water issues and policy context ● Communications consistently support fundraising and partnerships
OBJECTIVE # 2	Strengthen and integrate marketing and social media to increase reach and engagement
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create consistent, educational, and project-based content aligned with audience interests ● Use data and platform trends to improve visibility and engagement (not just chasing trends) ● Define roles and coordination between staff responsible for communications
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consistent posting schedule across platforms ● Clear coordination between staff on traditional and digital communications ● Identified gaps and priorities for future marketing capacity (staffing or contractor) ● Initial connections established with high schools and colleges for outreach and content collaboration
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fully integrated marketing and communications function ● Sustained growth in audience reach and engagement ● Defined and resourced marketing capacity (dedicated staff or equivalent support)

OBJECTIVE # 3	Engage new audiences and emerging leaders through storytelling and partnerships
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop compelling stories that connect people to TCWP's work and impact ● Identify and engage environmental professionals and partners to expand reach ● Formalize youth engagement pathways (internships, service hours, volunteer roles) ● Build relationships with colleges, universities, and community partners
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least one new institutional partnership established ● Initial storytelling framework developed and applied across platforms ● Defined structure for youth engagement (internships, volunteer pathways)
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consistent pipeline of youth and emerging leaders engaged in TCWP programs ● Storytelling regularly drives engagement, participation, and partnerships ● Active partnerships with 2–3 colleges or universities

OBJECTIVE # 4	Increase public understanding of watersheds and TCWP's role through clear, accessible messaging
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and deliver simple, consistent messaging about what a watershed is and why it matters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share TCWP's work and impact across all communities in the watershed ● Use a mix of digital content, presentations, and in-person outreach
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased baseline awareness of watershed concepts among target audiences ● More consistent public-facing education across platforms and events
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased community engagement in projects, programs, and stewardship activities ● More community-driven project ideas and funding opportunities ● Stronger local support for watershed protection and restoration efforts

PILLAR 4: STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS	<i>Support financial stability, expand TCWP's influence, and support growth of our organization in alignment with our mission</i>
OBJECTIVE # 1	Conduct a landscape analysis to strengthen, prioritize, and expand strategic partnerships
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inventory existing and prospective partners ● Categorize partnerships by type, strength/ mission-aligned. ● Assess current value, gaps, and opportunities across partnership categories ● Re-engage key legacy partners (including NOWCorps network) as priority collaborators
1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comprehensive partnership inventory completed and categorized ● Clear understanding of strengths, gaps, and priority opportunities ● At least 4 priority partners identified in collaboration with the Board ● At least 2 in-person meetings held with a priority partner, with Board participation ● Re-engage NOWCorps partner ● Completed partnership map and categorization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimum quarterly engagement with priority partners
3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal, ongoing collaborations established with at least 3 priority partners ● Partnerships include shared funding, technical collaboration, and/or joint program delivery ● Expanded reach into new stakeholder groups not currently engaged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 3 partnership agreements or sustained collaborations

OBJECTIVE # 2	Develop and execute a partnership prospect strategy to diversify revenue and expand capacity
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<p>Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage prospects through coordinated outreach, including Board involvement ● Define clear value propositions for each partnership type ● Include past partnerships established through NOWCorps ● At least 6 viable Fee-for-Service (FFS) opportunities ● At least 3 new grant funding opportunities beyond current sources ● At least 2 workforce development or service corps partnerships (including NOWCorps-related models)
<p>1-year outcome(s)/goal(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 2 in-person meetings with priority prospects (Board engaged in at least one/prospect) ● Application pathways established for at least 2 new grant opportunities ● Defined pathways for at least 2 workforce development partnerships ● Initial FFS opportunities scoped and evaluated for feasibility
<p>3-5 year outcome(s)/goal(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 2 active FFS contracts generating 3–5% of total organizational revenue, w/annual growth ● Expanded grant pipeline with at least 3 active funding streams and multiple annual submissions ● 3–5 active workforce development or service partnerships in place ● Ongoing prospect development, with at least one new partnership explored annually ● FFS revenue as a percentage of total budget ● 3-5 grant applications submitted and awarded annually ● 3-5 active workforce/service partnerships ● Annual increase in new partnership prospects engaged

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