

Issue 30

Spring 2014

Euclid Creek Watershed Update



Euclid Creek Watershed Program Partners

Euclid Creek Watershed Council

Nine municipalities that came together in 2000 to address common environmental, stormwater and development concerns in the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Friends of Euclid Creek

The citizens group whose mission is to raise awareness about and preserve the natural features of the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District

Houses the Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator, the Program's full time staff.

To see the complete **Volunteer Water Monitoring Report Summary:** go to [www. Euclid Creek Watershed.org](http://www.EuclidCreekWatershed.org) and click on the **Volunteer Monitoring Program** page or contact the **Watershed Coordinator** for a hard copy.



How Clean is Euclid Creek?

In 2006, a group of local universities, agencies and watershed enthusiasts formed a citizen water monitoring program in Euclid Creek. Volunteers collect water quality data at five sites within the Watershed to record changes in the waterways over time and to identify contaminants and problems in the watershed. Both chemical and physical monitoring is conducted at each site monthly, and over the years 27 volunteers have participated in the program, resulting in over 2000 observations about the creek.

Nutrient levels, turbidity, dissolved oxygen concentration, conductivity, temperature and pH are examined. The methods used are selected based on guidelines provided by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). An analytical review of the data has just been released in a [volunteer monitoring program update report](#).

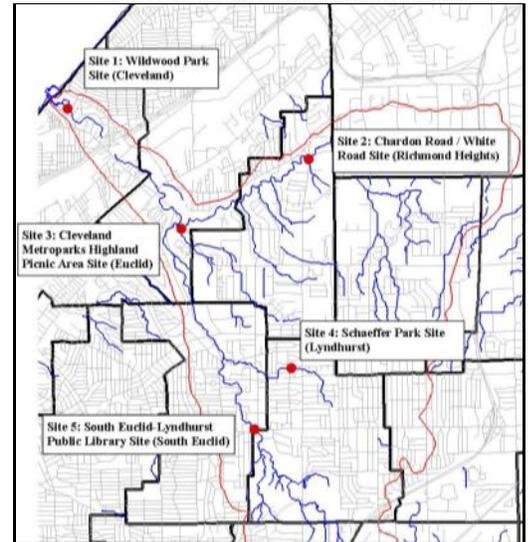
Findings show that water quality is not meeting OEPA standards due to urban development in the watershed and polluted stormwater runoff getting into our creeks and streams. Since Euclid Creek is composed of over 50% residential land use, homeowners can help a lot.

Nutrient levels (phosphorous & nitrogen) are high in the creek and can be reduced by using less fertilizer on lawns and by picking up pet waste.

Conductivity levels from road salt are also very high in the creek and residents can help by reducing salt use or switching to safer alternatives. Many communities in the watershed have passed *sensible salt ordinances* to focus salting efforts strategically on intersections, hills and bends in roadways, thus reducing salt use and the impact on our waterways, while saving money.

Euclid Creek flows directly into Lake Erie, our source of drinking water. Caring about the quality of our water is important to human and ecological health.

Euclid Creek Volunteer Monitoring Sites



Upcoming Meetings & Events

Tue, May 6, 6:30pm-8:30pm

Tue, May 10, 10:00-11:30am

Sat, May 17, 9:00am-noon

Wed, May 28, 6:00pm-8:00pm

Thur, July 10, 7:30am-9:00am

Tue, July 15, 6:30pm-8:30pm

1st Tue of Month, 6:30pm

1st Wed of Month, 7:00pm

Redstone Run Highland Reserve Nature Hike—FOEC monthly meeting*, 25309 Highland Road, 44143.

Rain Barrel Workshop and Sale, Euclid Historical Society, registration required by April 25*

Wetland Planting, Registration required at www.clevelandmetroparks.com, or call for details*

Organic Lawn Care and Green Indoor Cleaning Workshop, Mayfield Village, registration required*

Euclid Creek Watershed Council Meeting, Location TBA*

Rain Barrel Workshop and Compost Seminar, Richmond Hts., registration required by July 7*

Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC) meets monthly at South Euclid Community Center or remote location*

See page 2 for upcoming meetings and events where FOEC will be hosting our watershed table.

Highland Heights Green Task Force meets monthly at the Highland Heights Community Center

*Contact the Watershed Coordinator to register or for more event details at (216) 524-6580x16 or cposius@cuyahogawcd.org
Please check the Euclid Creek website for fall event listings or for more details about an event listed above (www.EuclidCreekWatershed.org)

Raise \$20,000 for Redstone Run Highland Reserve (almost there!), by Barb Holtz

In our last newsletter, the phrase above was listed in our accomplishments. Today, I am proud to edit this phrase:

Raise \$20,000 for Redstone Run (done and then some)!

When the idea for the Land Conservation Fun was hatched over a year ago, our focus was on Redstone Run. Having funds left after the transaction was complete was a dream at best. Well, dreams do come true. **Today, the fund totals \$9,177.20.** From small donations to large, each was essential to us reaching our goal. We can't THANK YOU enough!

To continue the momentum, our Finance and Fundraising Committee is looking at next steps. How can we continue to grow the fund for new land conservation interests? Ideas on the table range from fundraising events to reaching out to the business community, partnering with the Cleveland Foundation to remembering FOEC in a will.

We always welcome ideas from you! Maybe another organization you belong to had success raising money in a particular way. Share those experiences. Does your employer match employee contributions to non-profits? We have already taken advantage of this through The Lubrizol Corporation. Progressive Insurance also offers this opportunity. Does your place of worship or civic group make donations to non-profits via a mission or outreach fund?

We never underestimate the value of an individual donation at any time. Again, we could not have reached our goal without dollars given by individuals who simply wanted to help. Take a moment to personally share why you contributed with others. Fundraising takes a village. Many voices raised to ***speaking for the creek.***

Spend Time With Friends

Every month, Friends of Euclid Creek gathers to raise our awareness about watershed issues and how we can help. We'd like to invite you to join us!

Here's what's coming up:

May 6: Redstone Run Highland Reserve field trip to the property conserved in Richmond Hts. last year. Discover more about the forest cover as well as the geology of the area with archeologist, Roy Larick, and arborist, Alan Klonowski.

June 3: Annual Meeting and Picnic in the Cleveland Metroparks Euclid Creek Reservation.

July 1: Member Talks—We want to hear from you! Our annual Member Talks invite FOEC members to share a 5 - 15 minute presentation on a watershed topic of their choice.

During the next several months, FOEC will take our message to the people hosting a table at events and festivals. Members are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer at the following. Sign-up at one of our meetings or email foecpres@yahoo.com.

Stop by our Euclid Creek Watershed table at the following community festivals:

EarthFest 2014, Sun. April 13, 10am-5pm, County Fairgrounds;

Beachwood Entrovation, Fri. May 2, noon-6pm at the Beachwood Community Center;

Waterloo Arts Festival, Sat. June 28, noon-7pm, Cleveland;

Euclid Beach Blast, Sat. Aug. 2, 5pm-9pm, Euclid Beach Reservation

Check out the many other opportunities found throughout this newsletter to support watershed conservation and education. FOEC often gives a hand to our watershed coordinator at rain barrel workshops, meetings, plantings and clean-ups.

FOEC meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the South Euclid Community Center—1370 Victory Dr. (located behind Giant Eagle on Mayfield Rd.). Check our website to confirm meeting location as some meetings are field trips in the watershed.



Explore our newest conserved site in Richmond Heights, the Redstone Run Highland Reserve



Making A List of Land Interests

Friends of Euclid Creek recognizes that one of the best ways to protect the creek is to protect the land around it. FOEC has partnered with Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District, West Creek Conservancy and other entities to preserve property. As grant funds become available, our goal is to piece together available parcels to create green corridors throughout the watershed.

At this writing, we are waiting to hear about funding for acreage in Highland Heights near a previously protected property. But as we wait, we continue to make our list of land interests and check it twice.

Protection does not have to mean purchasing a property. We have targeted key properties that have high ecological value in the watershed that are creekside and of a certain size. By contacting owners, we'll take the opportunity to discuss conservation easements and how this strategy can be a win environmentally and economically. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their property while retaining private ownership of the land. The easement is signed by the landowner, who is the easement donor, and the conservancy, who is the party receiving the easement and ultimately the easement is signed and recorded with the County Auditor and continues in perpetuity after land transfers. Certain benefits can be realized like federal income tax deductions, so it's a benefit to both the long term conservation of key habitat and a benefit to the land owner.

Another environmental and economic win can be accomplished through employing best management practices for stormwater runoff to control water pollution and improve water quality. Again, we have designated various key private and corporate landowners to discuss alternative lawn care, restoration via native plantings and reduction of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Less mowing and no petroleum-based chemical use = reduction in materials and labor costs + cleaner water.

Large pieces of property are not the only sites that matter. Since most parcels in the watershed are small they have a large cumulative impact on the watershed, so landowners with small parcels can consider putting a portion of their homestead into easement as long as it has ecological value. With the many tributaries that weave through the 12 Euclid Creek communities, there is certainly opportunity for individuals to help us create green corridors. If each yard in the watershed did one or all of the following: said no to lawn & garden care fertilizers and biocides, reduced lawn size by adding native plants to gardens, stopped mowing to the creek edge, reduced use of gas-powered landscaping tools, and/or used alternative lawn care methods, the leap we could take in the health of our water and the wildlife and people that use it would be dramatic.

Land preservation and conservation, especially in riparian or creekside areas, is key to watershed health but so are you. As you ready your yard for spring and summer, how can you help keep Euclid Creek clean? Make one change and the water that comes out of your faucet and the natural world will be better for it.



Mayfield School Board-owned Dusty Goldenrod site preserved through a conservation easement in 2007. The state listed endangered Dusty Goldenrod native plant was found on this site in Highland Hts.

Who Lives In The Watershed? by Barb Holtz



Spring beauties appear delicate but are tough enough to withstand early spring in Cleveland.

While we are all tired of waiting for spring, the wait will be worth it. It is every year!

For many years I had a friendly competition with a co-worker of who could find the first spring beauty. Just when I'd think they were never going to come, I'd spy a sleek stem topped with a cascade of unopened buds. A warmish day or two and the buds would pop into pink-streaked, white blooms. These streaks are nectar guides, showing early pollinators where to find the sugary prize in each flower.



Hepatica flowers can be purple, pink or shades in between depending on soil and sunlight conditions.

Another one of my favorite spring wildflowers is hepatica. A member of the buttercup family, it sports purple to pink flowers and liver-shaped leaves. It is because of this leaf shape that hepatica was historically used to treat liver ailments.

Take a walk in the watershed and say hello to spring!

“The Vine That Ate the South” Heads North, *Jim Bissell, Cleveland Museum of Natural History*

In 2004, Jim Bissell, Director of Conservation at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, received one of the biggest shocks of his career. A longtime volunteer, Mary Baum of Cleveland Heights, brought him a piece of a climbing vine she'd spotted outside a local company.

Kudzu.

Among invasive plant species, garlic mustard gets the headlines around Northeast Ohio, but it does not compare to kudzu. Originally from Japan, kudzu is tenacious and grows with frightening speed—up to a foot per day. It's rampant in the southeastern United States, where it engulfs trees and houses and spreads at a rate of 150,000 acres per year.

Bissell says he told the company he'd organize the eradication, “but it would have cost thousands” and the company passed. Assuming the Northeast Ohio winter would kill it off, he forgot about it. Then last year he heard it had spread. He went to see for himself and found it stretching merrily along the railroad tracks near East 147th Street.

The item was added to the agenda at a recent Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership for Biodiversity (LEAP) meeting. The Cuyahoga Valley National Park gets federal funds for invasive weed mitigation, and folks here are hoping to secure enough to eradicate the local infestation. Bissell estimates the cost at \$10,000.

“It's a great example of LEAP coming through to get things done,” he says. “Teamwork is everything.”

But he won't rest until it's gone. The Museum's Kingsville Swamp natural area, an important ecosystem, sits along the same railroad in Ashtabula County, and Bissell says it's not impossible that passing trains could carry the windborne seeds there. “It keeps me awake at night,” he says.

This article is from the Museum of Natural History's *Explore* member magazine.



Kudzu is an invasive vine prevalent in the South, but now many Northern states have it as well. Anne Glausser of QUEST Ohio recently reported on a patch that has seeded in the Collinwood neighborhood in the Green Creek watershed, adjacent and to the west of Euclid Creek.



Kudzu can grow 1 foot in a day



*In Southern Ohio, kudzu stands take over whole hillsides like this one in Chesapeake, OH.
Photo by Eric Boyda*

Did you know that Grass and Leaves can be harmful to our waterways?

Few, if any, property owners think it's acceptable to dump tires, machine parts, plastics and other unnatural trash into our waterways. But many still believe it's okay to deposit organic material like leaves and grass onto a streambank or into the stream itself.

Well, when it comes to stream dumping, even organic doesn't “cut it.”

Many leaves will naturally fall into the water, but as homeowners, we should be mindful not to upset nature's balance. Leaves, grass clippings and pet waste should never be dumped in or even next to a creek, ditch or pond.

Yard waste (grass clippings, leaves, pet droppings, etc.) is the 2nd largest category of all discarded trash. When these materials are put into the stream, they begin to decompose and use up the critical, life-giving oxygen in the water. As a result these streams can become unsightly and release a foul odor. Furthermore, this excess debris can obstruct flow and clog downstream culverts, leading to localized flooding and erosion problems.



Grass clippings and other garden debris is not good for water quality

Yard waste should be composted, or set out with the trash according to your community's yard waste pick-up guidelines. Pet waste should always be bagged and placed in the trash. You can further protect our local waterways by leaving an unmowed buffer strip next to any creek on your property and by planting trees and shrubs on and next to stream banks. This streamside buffer helps to filter pollutants from runoff and to protect the streambank from erosion.

You can learn more by calling Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (216) 524-6580 and requesting a free copy of *Life at the Water's Edge: Living in Harmony with Your Backyard Stream*.

Remember – clean water starts with you!

Wildwood Wetland and Stream Restoration Project Complete!

The Lacustrine Refuge wetland and stream restoration project in the Wildwood Reservation is officially complete! Our fantastic design and construction team, RiverWorks, and the oversight team, Davey Resource Group, did a phenomenal job and are owed a huge thanks and kudos!

While the construction and grant-funded portion of the project are done, work on the site is far from over as we move in to the project monitoring stage. As part of our permit requirements and as good watershed restoration practice, we will monitor the site for the next five years to ensure the goals of the project are met and to troubleshoot any issues that could arise quickly. The main goals of the project are to get the native wetland vegetation established and to see more diverse species of Great Lakes fish enjoying the wetland.

Partners from many agencies will help us on all aspects of the monitoring. Cleveland Metroparks, the land manager, will take the lead on monitoring the wetlands and the native vegetation establishment on the site, with assistance from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's conservation staff. The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) and Cleveland Water Pollution Control (WPC), the land owner, staff are leading efforts to ensure the stream channel remains stable over time; with the Watershed Coordinator and WPC staff inspecting the site after large storm events to ensure channel stability. And the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and NEORS are assisting with biological surveys looking at fish communities, macroinvertebrates (aquatic bugs) and habitat.

We will continue with planting events and removing invasive plants as we see them, so your help at the site is still needed moving forward!

Join us on Saturday, May 17 from 9:00am-noon as we plant more natives throughout the site. One of the plants (spadderdock) is from Singer Bog in Geauga County which we will harvest some time the week before—so if you're interested in participating call the Watershed Coordinator (216) 524-6580 x16.

Lastly, **let us know about your wildlife observations at the new wetland**—please email or call the Watershed Coordinator if you see unique birds, fish, etc., and please share photos. We will post your photos on the FOEC facebook page and the project website.



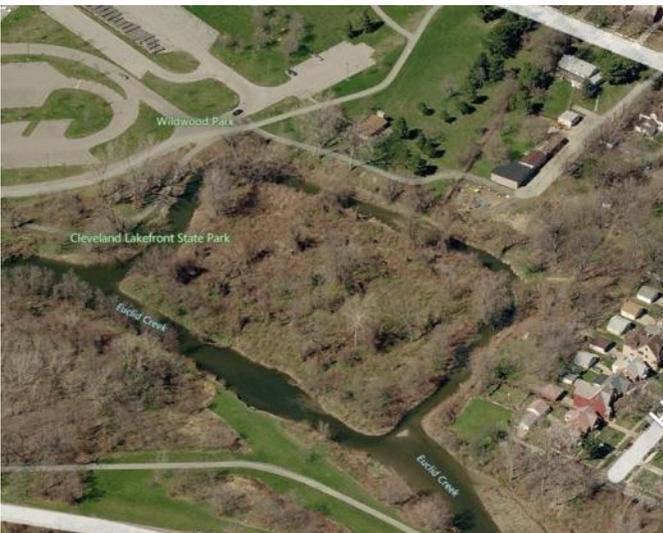
Native wetland vegetation getting established, fall 2013



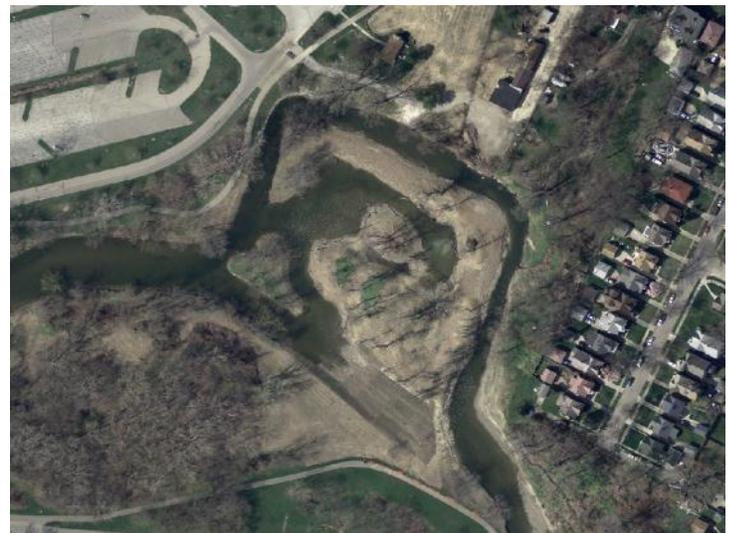
Great Egret looking for a meal at the wetland, fall 2013, photo by James Latsch



Project signage installed



Before aerial—Duck Island before restoration



After aerial—wetland restoration during construction

Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator
Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District
6100 West Canal Road
Valley View, Ohio 44125

More About Our Program Partners

Euclid Creek Watershed Council (ECWC)

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| City of Beachwood | City of Cleveland |
| City of Euclid | City of Highland Heights |
| City of Lyndhurst | City of Mayfield Heights |
| Village of Mayfield | City of Richmond Heights |
| City of South Euclid | |

Each community appoints a representative to serve on the Council, which meets three times a year and has several committees that focus on education & outreach, technical issues and volunteer monitoring.

Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC)

The Friends of Euclid Creek is a community-based watershed stewardship group, a non-profit 501(c)(3).

Board: Barb Holtz, President; Christi Carlson, Vice President; Jeanette Evans, Secretary; Rick Evans, Treasurer; and Directors: Steve Albro, Gary Bloom, Judy Dearden, Lou Drasler, Stephen Love, Bill McReynolds, Ken Messinger-Rapport, and Chris Vild.

Monthly Meetings: First Tuesday of the month, 6:30-8:30pm, South Euclid Community Center. Meeting location may vary, please check website to confirm location.

Join FOEC or donate to our land conservation fund. For more details call, email, or check the website.

Friends of Euclid Creek
P.O. Box 21384
South Euclid, OH 44121
FriendsofEuclidCreek@gmail.com



Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District

Houses the Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator, the Program's full time staff person who implements the Euclid Creek Watershed Action Plan and acts as the liaison between the ECWC and FOEC.

Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator, Claire Posius
Cuyahoga SWCD
6100 West Canal Road
Valley View, Ohio 44125
216-524-6580 x16 office
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Program Website, Blog and Facebook

Website: www.EuclidCreekWatershed.org

Blog: foecnews.blogspot.com

Facebook: Like 'Friends of Euclid Creek'



Only Rain Down the Drain

If you would like to **receive this newsletter electronically**, email cposius@cuyahogawcd.org or call 216-524-6580 x16 with your email address.

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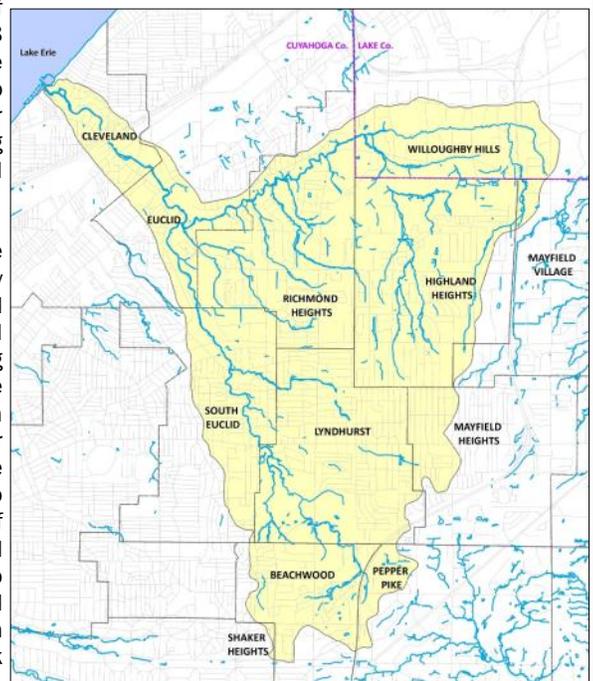


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What is a Watershed? A watershed is the area of land that drains to a single river, stream or lake. Because the actions we take on land directly affect the quality of our rivers and streams, it is important to take the entire watershed into consideration when trying to protect and improve the health of our local waters.

The Euclid Creek Watershed drains 24 square miles from 11 Northeast Ohio communities in Cuyahoga County and a portion of Lake County. The Creek includes 34 miles of streams as far as 8 miles away from the Creek's outflow to Lake Erie, our source of drinking water, at Wildwood Park in Cleveland.



Map of the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Euclid Creek is one of the most densely populated and developed watersheds along the Ohio Lake Erie coastline—which results in poor water quality. But we have a plan to restore the health of the watershed and it includes you, so contact us to find out how you can help Euclid Creek today!