

Wednesday Mini-Workshop

Making Connections: How Stewardship and Partnership Lead to Stormwater Success

Brief Overview

Successful watershed and stormwater management involves the expertise of professionals of varying disciplines, availability of resources, the education and will of local officials and even the support of the impacted population. Speakers will discuss tools, programs and case studies that serve as examples of how to bring partners from all of these arenas to the table.

Speakers and Topics:

Watershed Volunteer Program: Providing Stewardship Opportunities to Northeast Ohio

Jennifer Grieser and Samantha Catella, Cleveland Metroparks

Based out of the new Watershed Stewardship Center at West Creek, the Watershed Volunteer Program (WVP) is an effort to engage residents in an array of active management projects to improve watershed conditions. Funded by the Ohio Environmental Education Fund, the project began in fall 2012 through Cleveland Metroparks Division of Natural Resources. Since that time WVP volunteers have been involved in many events, community extension activities, and independent projects. Hundreds have participated in at least one event, 30 participate regularly, and of those 21 are considered Certified Watershed Stewards. Certified Watershed Stewards continue to work closely with WVP and Cleveland Metroparks to organize independent field work and community outreach activities. In order to facilitate awareness of watershed and stormwater issues the Watershed Volunteer Program brings in professionals and collaborates with other area agencies to offer a wide variety of learning opportunities, while restoration events contribute on-the-ground results to regional site improvements. Monitoring activities connect volunteers to their watersheds and provide invaluable data on tree survivorship, water quality, and bank erosion to organizations like Cleveland Metroparks and West Creek Conservancy. The Water Sentinel Program, introduced this spring in conjunction with Sierra Club, trained 26 volunteers to do independent water quality testing. Results will provide a baseline for stormwater pollution in Cleveland Metroparks and surrounding communities. The Watershed Volunteer Program gives residents the tools and opportunity to understand and combat non-point source issues through community events and ongoing independent projects. As the number of Certified Watershed Stewards increases, so will the potential to collect more data and undertake more projects to protect watershed health.

Ohio's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP): An Example of CWSRF Financing for Nonpoint Source Improvements

Jerry Rouch, Ohio EPA Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

The Clean Water Act amendments of 1987 called for the phasing-out of the Construction Grants Program and the phasing-in of the Clean Water State revolving Funds (CWSRFs). All 50 states have a CWSRF program. In Ohio, the CWSRF, which is known as the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (or WPCLF) has been used to provide financial assistance to nonpoint source pollution control projects since 1993. Starting with the development of the "linked deposit" funding mechanism for agricultural best management practices (BMPs), Ohio recognized the benefits of offering financial incentives for the correction of nonpoint source problems. In 1997, the linked deposit mechanism was extended to County Health departments for the correction of failing home sewage treatment systems. In 2000, Ohio created another new program – called the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (or WRRSP). The goal of the WRRSP is to counter the loss of ecological function and biological diversity that jeopardize the health of Ohio's water resources. The WRRSP achieves this goal by providing funds, through WPCLF loans, to finance implementation of projects that protect or restore water resources, by ensuring either maintenance or attainment of General Warmwater Habitat or higher designated aquatic life uses under Ohio Water Quality Standards. WRRSP projects rely upon a WPCLF "sponsor" and a WRRSP "implementer". Funds for WRRSP projects are made available by advancing a portion of the estimated amount of interest to be repaid by the sponsor (a WPCLF loan applicant) over the life of the loan. A

WPCLF loan applicant that is sponsoring a WRRSP project will also receive a small discount to its WPCLF loan interest rate as a further incentive. Since 2000, the WPCLF has funded 116 WRRSP projects worth over \$161 million. These projects have made tremendous improvements to Ohio's impaired waterways, as well as protect some of the highest quality resources.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: Urban Stream and Wetland Restoration

Joel Bingham, EnviroScience Inc

Urban stream and wetland restoration has its own set of unique challenges that involve flooding, hydraulic modeling, public perception, public protection, infrastructure, multiple government and municipal agencies, local politics and stressed environmental conditions. Combine these with the unique dynamics of a lacustrine system and it creates a complex project. This presentation discusses a case project on the lower Euclid Creek, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, where challenges to merge many objectives of the City of Cleveland, USACE, OEPA and local residents to achieve federal flood control standards while meeting the ecological stream and lacustrine wetland restoration goals.

Collaborative Governance and Adaptive Capacity: a Case Study of the Chagrin River Valley

Wendy Kellogg, Ph.D., Cleveland State University

This session describes lessons learned from a study of the organizational and social networks that contribute to collaborative governance for Ohio's watersheds. By nature, work to restore and maintain Ohio's network of tributary streams of Lake Erie must engage a wide range of stakeholders, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and businesses, each with specific responsibilities and roles. Successful collaborations manage relationships among these organizations, mobilize the flow of technical information, mobilize funding resources to support water quality outcomes, and build capacity of the governance structure itself over time to operate across geographic and jurisdictional scales. We feature these aspects of the collaborative governance network that has emerged in the Chagrin River watershed over the last two decades to compare and contrast with other Ohio watershed management efforts. Located east of Cleveland, the Chagrin River is a direct tributary to Lake Erie covering 267 square miles across four Northeast Ohio counties. Water quality conditions in the river are generally very good and seventy-one miles of the have been designated as a State Scenic River, with and many segments of the system contain warm and cold-water habitat supporting Ohio brook trout. This high quality watershed is threatened by sediment erosion and filling and drainage of wetlands for residential and commercial development; nutrient loading from failing septic systems, package plants and lawns care runoff; and bank full flooding and storm water runoff from impervious surfaces. The majority of the river retains forest or field cover, offers a diversity of terrestrial and aquatic communities, and has extensive headwater wetlands. While many watersheds in Ohio have watershed coordinators, nonprofit groups, and enjoy the participation of state and federal agency staff in monitoring and managing, a characteristic of the governance network that has emerged in the Chagrin River atypical in Ohio to the degree it links water and land management. Local governments in the watershed have joined to form a membership organization: the Chagrin River Watershed Partners, which hires a technical advisory and coordination staff to provide assistance to these local governments in their relationships with governments and land owners in the valley. This formal organization of local governments moves collaboration to an unusual level, and provides the often-missing lynchpin of local land use control front and center in governing the water/land interface in the Chagrin River Valley.