



# THE TINKERS CREEK TRIBUTARY

News of the Tinkers Creek Watershed

Volume 1, Issue 1

Winter 2009

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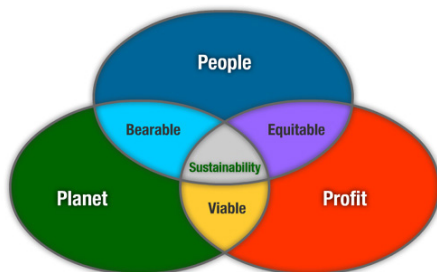
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## From the Coordinator

Mike McNutt

A lot has happened in the last year for the Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners. Our organization continues to grow in membership, we held our 3rd Watershed Day in Bedford, the 1st annual storm water conference was a smashing success, several restoration projects are in the works, and the initial draft to the Watershed Action Plan is being submitted by the end of the year. But there is still quite a bit of work to do.

Tinkers Creek, like so many other urban watersheds, has significant non-point source pollution issues. The implementation of the Action Plan will begin to address some of these problems. However, the real change will come from you to make adjustments in your daily routines and habits. Many times we fall into the mindset that our personal action(s) have no impact on the health of the watershed or the environment because it is just you; one person. But employing that same rational to thousands of people doing the same thing, the cumulative impact begins to have a significant negative influence.



We have now entered a time where we are perched at many crossroads of decision making. How do we innovate our way into the future? How do we redevelop our crumbling infrastructure and neighborhoods? How do we make ends meet with increases in prices for everything and our incomes staying the same? While we may be able to adjust our household budgets to accommodate this changing financial climate, will it be enough to *sustain* us for the long haul?

The need for balancing human progression while upholding environmental integrity has never been more important to our future. Integrating the principles of sustainability into our households, businesses, industries, local governments, development/redevelopment plans, and overall cultural ideology is crucial to our future generations. The Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners along with the watershed communities and you as residents can be the foundation for change and become the models for others to build from.

Happy Holidays!!

### WATER FOOTPRINT

By Mershona Parshall

Water is being called the new gold, as freshwater resources become increasingly scarce. Changes in global water supplies are being attributed to climate change, over consumption, and population growth. In many parts of the United States, for instance, aquifers are being depleted faster than they are replenished and fights over water are expected to intensify in coming years. Tens of millions of people around the world do not have access to adequate drinking water or water to irrigate crops. As a precious resource we can no longer take water for granted, even in NE Ohio where we are fortunate to be relatively rich in water resources.



While most of us have become familiar with the concept of the “carbon footprint,” the “water footprint” is an emerging conservation concept that is increasingly important in our changing world. In 2002, Professor Arjen Y. Hoekstra, from the Netherlands, introduced the “water footprint” concept as a way to measure the true cost of water consumption. The water footprint offers a way to measure the volume of water consumed to produce goods and services by estimating direct and indirect water use. The water footprint can be calculated for individuals, businesses, communities, or nations.

There are three components that make up the water footprint. These are called the *blue water footprint*, the *green water footprint*, and the *gray water footprint*. The blue water footprint refers to fresh surface and groundwater evaporated in the process of producing goods and services. The green water footprint refers to the volume of water evaporated from the ground as soil moisture, most applicable to agriculture. The gray water footprint is the volume of water that becomes polluted during its consumption. The gray water footprint also includes the volume of water it would take to dilute the polluted water in order to meet basic water quality standards. To measure the water footprint of a product such as coffee, one would add the volume of waters it takes to grow, transport, and process the coffee. It is calculated that the water footprint of one cup of coffee is 140 litres. In contrast, the water footprint of one cup of tea is only 30 litres.

The water footprint of nations has also been calculated and, not surprisingly, the water footprint of the United States is two times that of the world average. This is largely attributed to the U.S. being a high consumer of industrial products and the American diet that includes high consumption of meat. As a typical American, consider the following as part of your water footprint. Your blue water footprint would be comprised of the volume of water it took to produce all the goods and services you use such as a car, electricity, appliances, and gasoline. Your eating habits and lifestyle choices also contribute to your water footprint. If you take 30 minute showers, water your lawn frequently, wash your car often, and let the water run while washing dishes, your water footprint will be much higher than someone who uses conservation strategies. If you eat meat frequently and buy your food from a grocery store that ships its produce from far distances, you will have a much greater gray water footprint than a vegetarian or someone who buys food from the local farmer’s market. Next consider how much gray water you produce. Remember that your gray water footprint is the polluted

An example of our water footprint in Tinkers Creek is aptly demonstrated by the recent study published on the occurrence of organic wastewater compounds found in Tinkers Creek. There were 95 organic compounds found in the water samples in the creek. Many of these compounds are chemicals found in medications and personal care products that are discharged into the watershed from the seven wastewater treatment plants along the creek. Here is a great example of the gray water footprint can directly be attributed to the communities in the Tinkers Creek Watershed.

The “water footprint” is becoming an important aspect of sustainability strategies, after all, no life can exist without it. From manufacturing to agriculture to the water that comes out of our faucets, we all need to rethink how we treat this natural resource. In the future, we will all be hearing more about how to lighten our water footprint. For further information please go to [www.waterfootprint.org](http://www.waterfootprint.org). You can also calculate your own water footprint at [www.H2Oconserve.org](http://www.H2Oconserve.org).

## Membership Information

### Membership Renewals

Members of TCWP that joined our organization by March 31, 2008 will be receiving a membership renewal notice in the mail sometime in January. Words alone cannot express how appreciative we are of the support all of our members have provided since the inception of TCWP. Requesting your continued support through membership renewals is important to TCWP’s ability to build upon our past successes.

However, we are also sensitive to the tougher than normal economic times impacting our local economies. Although we encourage you to renew at or above your current mem-

bership level, any support you are able to provide is greatly appreciated. If you joined TCWP since April 1, 2008 you will not receive a membership renewal notice until January 2010. Once again, thank you so much for your past and continued support of TCWP.

### Raingarden Contest

Nothing warms a winter’s day more than the thoughts of spring plantings. Did you know that as a current member of TCWP your name will be automatically entered into our on-going raffle for a Raingarden? That’s right, at our March 5, 2009 meeting of the Board of Directors, we will be drawing the name of one very lucky member.

Arrangements will be made to have TCWP volunteers install the raingarden sometime this upcoming Spring season.

Arrangements will also need to be made with the winner to locate, design and install the garden. However, there is one catch...the garden must be constructed within the Tinkers Creek Watershed. There is still time to encourage your friends, family members, and co-workers to join TCWP prior to March 5, 2009 and also have a chance to win the Raingarden. Also, if you’re looking for that last minute gift idea, consider a gift membership to TCWP; the recipient will become eligible to win the raingarden too. Good luck!

# WISHING FOR A GREENER HOLIDAY

Sandy Barbic  
Education Specialist, Summit SWCD

I'm wishing for a greener holiday season this year. No, I don't wish that the snow would disappear. By "a greener holiday season" I mean one that is environmentally friendly. Here are some ideas that we can all use to make this holiday season more eco-friendly.

Recycled paper products and newspaper comic pages make unusual gift-wrap. You can also re-use your last year's holiday wrappings and save them for next year's wrapping and decorations. Last year's holiday cards make great gift tags and homemade cards for this year. If every family reused just 2 feet (0.6 meter) of holiday ribbon, we would have 38,000 feet (61,000 kilometers) and could tie a bow around the entire planet. Even if you don't want to reuse your holiday papers, you can shred old gift-wrap and use it for colorful packing material. Every year, Americans throw away a million extra tons of garbage, including packaging materials, each week between Thanksgiving and the December holiday season. Anything we can do to reduce this waste would certainly help the environment.

When selecting a Christmas tree, keep in mind that nearly all of the trees sold at seasonal Christmas tree lots are grown on tree farms, so choosing a cut tree doesn't impact forests. If you want a potted tree, it is best to leave it outside and decorate it there, since potted trees do not thrive in unseasonably warm homes. One negative issue concerning natural trees is that they do require several applications of chemicals to control pests and speed growth. These chemicals do end up in streams and ground-water supplies.

If you do choose an artificial tree, however, you will save on fuel used in traveling to pick out a tree each year. However, according to the National Institute of Health, and a study done by the University of North Carolina, artificial trees are often composed of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which is a petroleum based, non-renewable plastic. The manufacture of artificial trees, and/or the disposal of them by incineration, both release dioxins into the atmosphere. Artificial trees also consume a great deal of energy during the manufacturing process.

If you choose a cut pine, do not apply fake snow, and please remove all tinsel, because these items cannot be recycled, and you definitely will want to recycle your tree. The National Christmas Tree Association and Earth 911 have a joint website where you can enter your zip code to find one of the 3,800 tree recycling centers near you. Just go to <http://earth911.org>. According to Paul Wilkerson of "THE METROPARKS SERVING SUMMIT COUNTY", the Parks system also has a tree-recycling program for wildlife habitat. Then the trees are chipped and the chips distributed on the trails. There are four areas set up in the parks, where you can drop off your trees. To find out where these areas are, call 330-867-5511, or call your local Summit County Community.

You can purchase gifts made from recycled items on-line at home, or on-line at your local library. Simply bring up your favorite search engine and enter "environmentally friendly gifts." Also check your local news media for "greener" choices. There are also many worthy charities where you can protect and sponsor wild and domestic animals,

plant a tree, or even provide a goat or a small flock of chickens for a family half way across the world. All of these can be purchased as a gift in someone else's name, and will have a positive ecological impact. Most of these groups can be found on-line, and include such organizations as "The National Wildlife Federation", "The World Wildlife Fund," "The Humane Society of the United States", "The Fund for Animals", "Heifer International", "The National Arbor Day Foundation", "The Nature Conservancy", "The National Audubon Society," and many more, as well as many local organizations dedicated to helping people, animals, and plants.

These are just a few suggestions but with a little imagination, you can find a lot more. All of these ideas will help our planet and improve the quality of life for all who live on it. With a little shared effort, we can all have "Greener" days for the holidays, and for all the days thereafter.



Sandy Barbic  
Education Specialist  
Board Member, TCWP



'IT'S NOT ME'

## Fall is an Ideal Time for Soil Nutrient Testing

Stacey Yanetta  
CPESC-IT, CESSWI

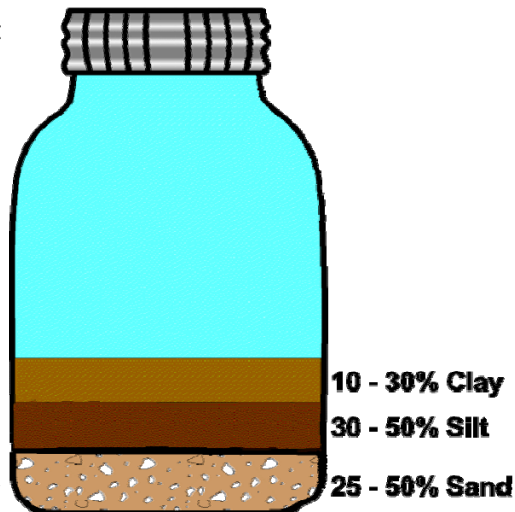
Performing a soil nutrient test on your lawn or garden in the Fall will help you prepare for the growing season in the Spring. A soil nutrient test measures the levels of essential nutrients important in optimum plant and lawn growth as well as other parameters such as the pH level and the base level of saturation. Results from a soil nutrient test are typically used to determine the proper amount of fertilizer to be applied to any deficient areas and any necessary adjustments of pH levels to aid in nutrient up-take.

In Cuyahoga County, the Soil and Water Conservation District provides soil nutrient testing for \$32.00. This test provides results for the following parameters:

Phosphorous, Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium, pH, CEC (cation exchange capacity), and base saturation. Two cups of soil are needed for the analysis. Using a trowel or soil core auger, take a few samples throughout your yard or garden from roughly 6-inches in depth (it is recommended to take samples from at least 5 different locations) and combine into a plastic bag labeled with your name and contact information. Drop off the sample along with the appropriate payment at the Cuyahoga County Water Quality Laboratory located at 6100 West Canal Road, Valley View, Ohio 44125. Results will be mailed to you within a few weeks.

The results from your soil nutrient test along with the intended land use (i.e. planting garden crops, improving lawn) will determine what steps should be implemented next. Most plants require a pH range of 5.2-7.8 for optimum growth. However, lawn

### Loam Soil



grasses prefer a range of 5.5-6.5, and plants such as blueberry bushes, azaleas, and rhododendrons thrive in a more acidic soil with a pH of 4.5-5.2 (Portage County, WI extension office). Based upon your soil pH results and the vegetation type, you may need to raise the pH level in your yard by applying a limestone-based product or lower the pH by applying Sulfur or acid peat in order to encourage efficient nutrient up-take. The soil nutrient test results will also indicate if your soil is deficient in any of the essential growth nutrients such as Phosphorous, Potassium, etc. This information will assist you in applying only the amount of fertilizer needed to meet the soil nutrient needs of the plants/grasses in your yard. By performing a soil nutrient test every few years, you can save money on fertilizer by only using the amount necessary for your yard

and can help keep excess nutrients from polluting nearby water ways.



### Environmental Quick Facts

Every ton of recycled office paper saves 380 gallons of oil

Energy saved from one recycled aluminum can will operate a TV set for 3 hours, and is the equivalent to half a can of gasoline

Americans use 50 million tons of paper annually -- consuming more than 850 million trees

63,000 square miles of Rainforests are being destroyed each year

When you visit a pharmacist, one in every four purchases will have come from a tropical forest

Using straight vegetable oil for fuel can lower greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 100 percent, greatly reducing air pollution

Global wind power capacity jumped 24 percent in 2005, to nearly 60,000 megawatts. The growth in wind power capacity was nearly four times the growth in nuclear power capacity

The United States is responsible for almost 25% of the world's total energy consumption. We use one million gallons of oil every two minutes



## Tinkers Creek Watershed Photo Contest

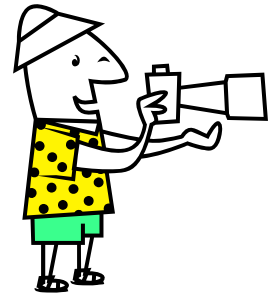
Winning photos will be featured in the 2010 Tinkers Creek Watershed Calendar. Photos will be accepted until July 1, 2009. Contact Mike McNutt with any questions or for more information.

Phone: 216-201-2001 x1224

E-mail: [mmcnutt@ccbh.net](mailto:mmcnutt@ccbh.net)  
[www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org](http://www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org)

### Rules for Submittal:

- All photos must be taken within the Tinkers Creek Watershed.
- A digital copy of the photo is preferred with a 300dpi resolution. The following information must be included with the entry: Name, address, phone number, e-mail address, location where photo was taken, and T-shirt size.
- All photos should accurately reflect the subject matter as it appeared. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (cropping, adjustments to color & contrast, etc.) will be disqualified from the contest.
- Photos must be postmarked by July 1, 2009 and sent to:  
*Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners  
 Attention: Mike McNutt  
 5550 Venture Drive  
 Parma, OH 44130*
- Submission of a photo conveys a non-exclusive license to TCWP to use the image for any display, publicity, public relations, educational, or promotional use without further compensation to the copyright holder.
- All photo submissions will become the property of TCWP.
- Entrants retain ownership and all other rights to future use of their photographs. The TCWP shall have the right to verify, in their sole judgment, winner eligibility.
- Previously published material for which non-exclusive rights were granted may be entered as long as the entrant still warrants full rights. The entrant must disclose when and where the photo appeared previously upon submission.



## Something to Think About

Life on our planet is the earth's most remarkable feature. The very fact that we find ourselves in a world teeming with life against the backdrop of what seems like an otherwise lifeless universe, is almost beyond comprehension. As we carry on with our everyday affairs we tend to lose sight of how special our world truly is. This leads us to take nature for granted. As if no matter how we treat our environment the world will always rebound to our advantage. Are we in denial, or have we become totally possessed by greed? Are we really at the point where the welfare of future generations is the price that we are willing to pay for financial and political gain today?

What do we lose when we replace woods with strip malls, when we turn streams and waterways into gutters? When wetlands are drained and filled? Are we unraveling the very chain of life that ultimately leads to us? Is there anything that we can do to make a difference? No one has all of the answers, but asking the right questions is a great place to start. We have taken on the challenges of polio, and malaria. The questions about these conditions have led to answers. Now is the time to ask the questions that lead to answers for the environment. Take some time to appreciate the wonder of ... The Natural World Around Us. It's a world worth saving! [www.milesreed.net](http://www.milesreed.net) by: Miles Reed, Natural History Filmmaker



## TINKERS CREEK WATERSHED PARTNERS

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Sandy Barbic  
Harry Stark  
Ted Marten  
Stacey Yanetta  
Carla Regener  
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Jeff Pritchard

### Member Communities

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Bedford  
Bedford Heights  
Glenwillow  
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Macedonia  
Maple Heights  
Northfield  
North Randall  
Oakwood  
Orange Village  
Reminderville  
Streetsboro  
Twinsburg  
Valley View  
Walton Hills

***I would like to be a member of the Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners!***

Return this form to the address below, or visit [www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org](http://www.tinkerscreekwatershed.org).

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

E-mail

T-shirt Size

Please make checks payable to:  
Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners  
P.O. Box 444  
Twinsburg, OH 44087

### **Yearly memberships**

- Individual \$10       Family \$15       Sponsor \$25  
 Benefactor \$50       Creek Partner \$100       I would like to volunteer my time