

STREAM SIGNAGE PROJECT

A stream boundary and crossing signage project is underway for the Big Creek watershed. Big Creek Connects received funding through the GM Foundation to design and develop signage and will be working with the watershed communities to assist on their installation. Thirty-two proposed boundary marker sign locations have been identified along major streets entering the watershed, along with 46 locations for 23 stream crossings (one sign from each direction) The location and design choices



will be shared with representatives from each community, and with county, state, Cleveland Metroparks, and other stakeholders before making any final decisions.

The proposed wording for the boundary signs may simply read *Entering Big Creek Watershed*. The stream crossing signs will identify Big Creek's main stem and its tributaries, including the East or Main Branch that runs through the Metroparks' Big Creek Reservation, and the West, Stickney, and Chevy Branches. The project is anticipated for completion by fall 2017.

BROOKLYN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL STUDENTS "GET WET" IN BIG CREEK

Project partners Big Creek Connects, General Motors - Parma Plant coordinated the **3rd Annual Stream Monitoring Workshop** with Brooklyn Intermediate School's 7th grade students and teachers. During this year's October 10th field trip, GM's environmental "E-team" and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) staff assisted students in assessing stream habitat, gathering water samples and analyzing chemical and biological data for Stickney Creek, a tributary of Big Creek. Big Creek Connect's Executive Director Bob Gardin visits the student classrooms before and after the workshops to give greater depth to the experience, often bringing with him water resource professionals from various agencies. This year, NEORS staff joined him in the follow-up visit bringing macro-invertebrate and fish samples, and sophisticated monitoring equipment. Brooklyn Middle School Principal Mark Tanski noted recently that the program is "a wonderful, hands-on experience for our students." In May a tree sapling planting will be undertaken with the students to help prevent erosion along the stream's banks.



Students collect samples with NEORS's Dr. Eric Soehlen

WATERSHED BASED STRATEGIC POLLUTION PLAN

Big Creek Connects and project partners are developing a **Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategic (NPS-IS) Plan** for the Big Creek watershed. Nonpoint source pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewer treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground, picking up pollutants that end up in our rivers, wetlands, ground water, and lakes. The plan will identify nonpoint source pollution projects that local entities will be able to effectively propose and implement utilizing funding made available through the U.S. Clean Water Act Section 319 program and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Potential projects include conservation measures; stream restoration practices; and bioretention, bioswale, permeable pavement, and other source control retrofits.

Funding for the plan is being provided by the U.S. and Ohio EPAs, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Cleveland Metroparks, and from the Big Creek watershed communities of Cleveland, Brooklyn, Brook Park, Parma, Parma

Heights, and North Royalton. Big Creek Connects has partnered with West Creek Conservancy who is coordinating the funding of the NPS-IS plans for these adjacent watersheds, and for the Tinkers Creek and Mill Creek watersheds east of the Cuyahoga River. Tetra Tech consultants were hired to assist in the development of the Big and West Creek plans. All the NPS-IS plans will be completed in April in anticipation of approval by the Ohio EPA.



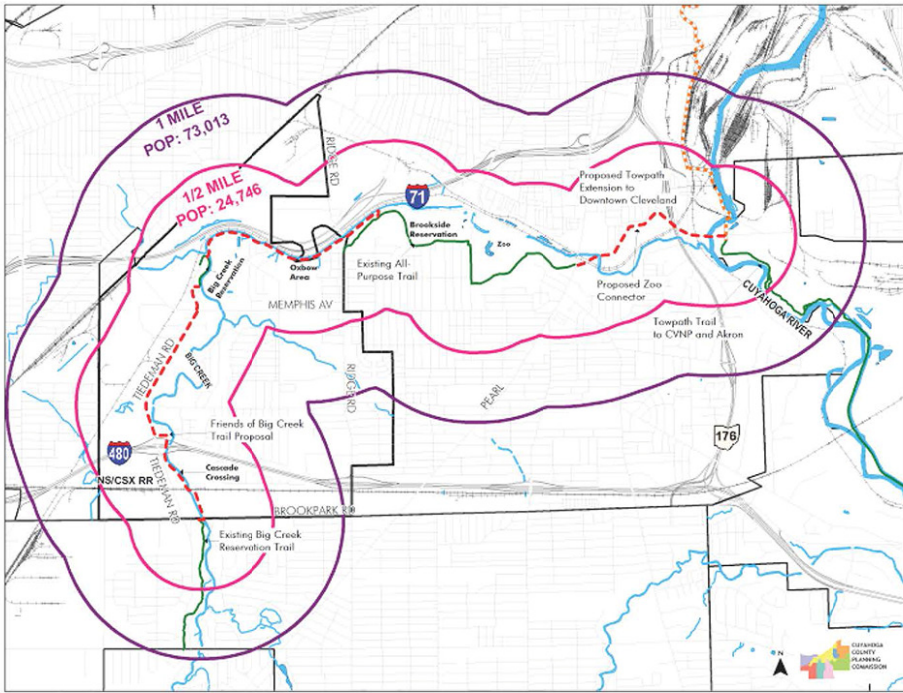
Mayor Michael Byrne (at left) talks about the Parma Heights Connector Trail in Cleveland Metroparks' Big Creek Reservation with guests during Big Creek Connects' Mardi Gras hike February 26th.

BIG CREEK CONNECTS

We invite you to share our vision:

Build a continuous 6-1/2 mile greenway and trail network to link the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Brookside Reservation and the Big Creek Reservation through the cities of Cleveland, Brooklyn and Parma.

Find details at bigcreekconnects.org

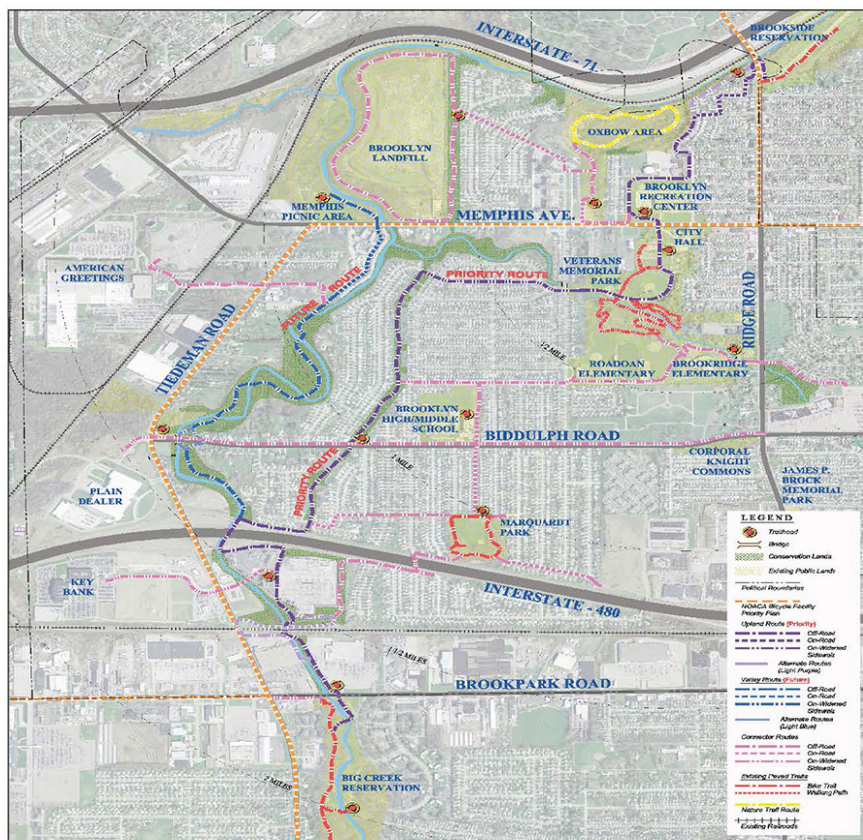


Big Creek confluence with Cuyahoga River



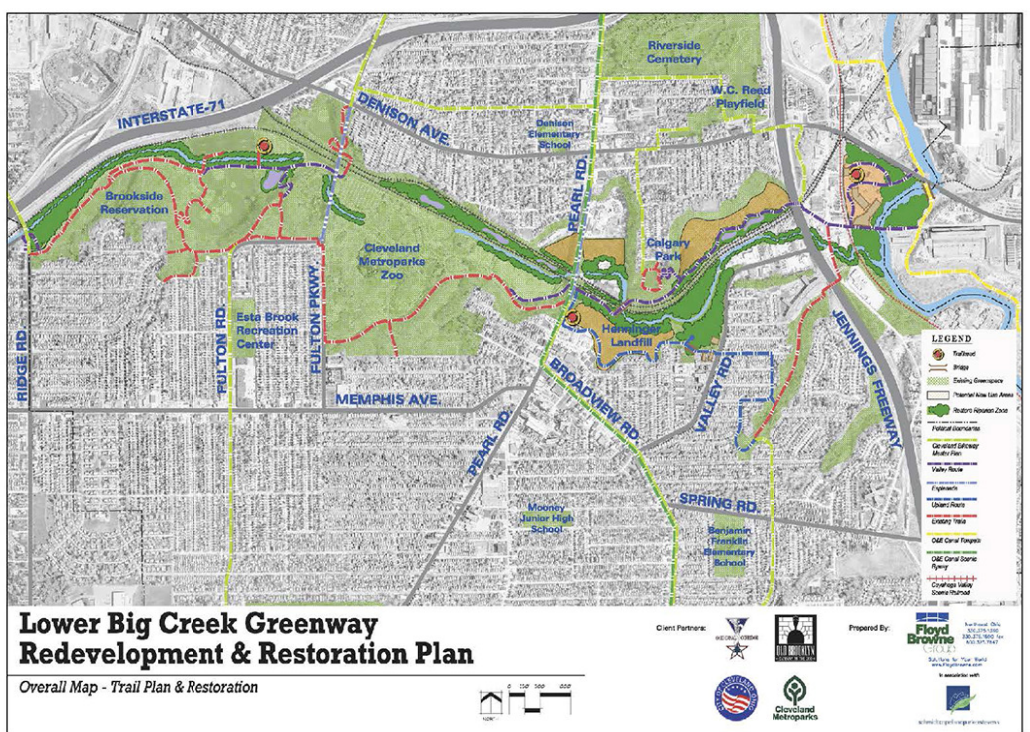
Big Creek channel along I-71

Fern Hill Picnic Area - Big Creek Reservation



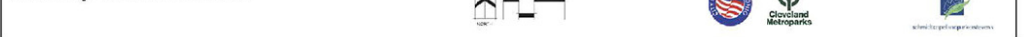
Big Creek Greenway Trail Alignment & Neighborhood Connector Plan

Overall Master Plan



Lower Big Creek Greenway Redevelopment & Restoration Plan

Overall Map - Trail Plan & Restoration



Big Creek in Cleveland Metroparks Brookside Reservation: existing drop structure (left) and proposed realignment (right)

MARK YOUR SPRING 2017 CALENDAR – Find details online

Wed., April 5 Big Creek Watershed Balanced Growth Partners – 6th Annual Meeting
4–6:30 pm Watershed Stewardship Center Cleveland Metroparks West Creek Reservation. This year’s meeting is hosted by the City of Parma, one of the 5 cities making up the partnership.

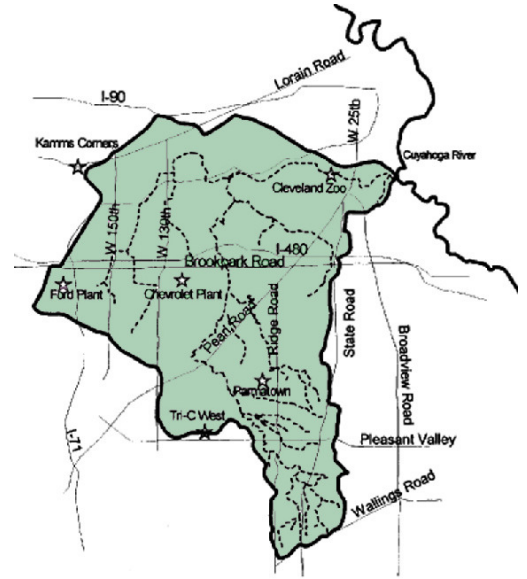
Sat., May 13 RiverSweep – Canalway Partners done-in-a-day cleanup. Big Creek/
9 am Lower Harvard: Meet at Iron City Café, 4002 Jennings Rd., 44109.

Sat., May 20 River Day – Big Creek Wetland Tour. Tour the new Fern Hill Stormwater
10 am – Noon Wetland and/or make watershed themed crafts—fun for all ages. Light snacks and beverages. Meet: Cleveland Metroparks Lower Fern Hill Picnic Area, along Big Creek Parkway – just south of Brookpark Road.

Sat., June 3 19th Annual Big Creek Watershed Cleanup. Volunteers needed at three
9am – Noon locations:

- Brookfield Park, Brookfield Ave. (between Bellaire and W. 130th)
- Brooklyn City Fire Station (8400 Memphis – Brooklyn)
- Snow Road Picnic Area (Along Big Creek Parkway)

Dress for the weather – Wear long sleeves and pants – Boots or work shoes recommended – Bags and work gloves will be provided – Children under 18 must have adult supervision – Refreshments.



Big Creek is the 3rd largest tributary of the Cuyahoga River. Its watershed contains over 130 miles of streams and culverts. Together they drain nearly 39 square miles from 8 municipalities - Cleveland, Brooklyn, Linndale, Parma, Parma Heights, Brook Park, Middleburg Heights, and North Royalton. Over 90% of the watershed’s area has been developed and 39% of the land surface has been made impervious, making Big Creek the most heavily urbanized watershed of any major tributary in the Cuyahoga River Watershed. This degree of urbanization provides tremendous challenge ... and opportunity.



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Big Creek Connects (formerly Friends of Big Creek) is a greenway advocacy and watershed stewardship 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Supported in part by financial assistance from:



To conserve, enhance, and bring recognition to the natural and historic resources of the Big Creek Watershed and develop a recreational trail network that connects these resources to each other and the community.

SUPPORT BIG CREEK CONNECTS WITH YOUR ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION

- ✓ \$250.00 Partner
- ✓ \$ 50.00 Supporting
- ✓ \$ 20.00 Individual
- ✓ \$100.00 Steward
- ✓ \$ 35.00 Sustaining
- ✓ Corporate Sponsorships available

Send your contribution with your name, address, phone and email. Make checks payable and mail to:
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Secure credit card payment is available online at bigcreekconnects.org. Your contribution is tax-deductible.

Thank you for your interest and support!