

SUMMIT COUNTY SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

BATH TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER - MARCH, 2020



Surface Water Update



This is the first Newsletter of the Summit County Surface Water Management District, a quarterly publication to inform Bath Township residents about what's up in the SWMD.

by David L. Koontz, PE, SI - SWMD Coordinator

The Surface Water Management District (SWMD) and Bath Township have been proactive in addressing stormwater and its impact on the community. Under the SWMD, the program charges a nominal stormwater utility fee to all developed properties in the township. Accumulated fee revenue is being used to implement stormwater solutions that provide the greatest benefit to the community. Now in its second year of implementation, the Summit County Engineer's Office is using fee revenue collected from the SWMD in Bath to perform a professional examination of the various watersheds in order to identify problems and develop solutions that are beneficial and cost-effective.

Yellow Creek Watershed Study The entire Yellow Creek Watershed, a drainage area of roughly 30 square miles that includes most of Bath Township, along with parts of eight other communities in Summit and Medina counties, was evaluated to identify the root causes of erosion, flooding and water quality issues in and along the streams and creeks. This comprehensive review was followed by a determination of potential solutions to the issues, and development of a slate of projects that provide remediation.

Sustainable Streams, Inc. was retained by the Summit County Engineer to conduct this comprehensive watershed study. Their experts walked approximately 41 of the 97.4 miles of streams and tributaries in the Yellow Creek Watershed to gain hands-on knowledge of changes due to increased speed and volume of water and identify problem areas. They collected data on stream gradients and bed material types at 8 stream sites to better understand the causes of stream erosion. Representatives from the group also visited over 50 sites of reported flooding, erosion, or drainage issues to learn about the stormwater problems. Their final report is a guide map for future planning on stormwater issues. Sustainable Streams identified 53 potential construction projects with an estimated cost of \$36 million. They have recommended 11 high-impact priority projects that fall into two categories:

- **Stormwater Control Projects:** These 6 projects provide detention to hold excess stormwater during storm events, lowering flow velocities for reduced erosion and cleaner water, and fewer instances of flooding. These local and regional projects would cost about \$3.5 million.
- **Stream Stabilization Projects:** These 5 projects would stabilize almost a mile of streams that threaten the bases of slopes ranging from 45 feet to 65 feet tall and would cost about \$8 million.

Project selection will be determined based upon a project's effectiveness, value, and its potential for attracting outside funding. As part of this, Sustainable Streams is assisting the Summit County Soil and Water Conservation District in their preparation of a Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategy (NPS-IS). This document will identify watershed characteristics, issues, goals, and will include recommended mitigation projects. Much of the information required in the NPS-IS is already included in the Yellow Creek Watershed Report. Once the NPS-IS is approved by Ohio EPA, the mitigation projects will be eligible to compete for USEPA 319 grant funding. Stephanie Deibel, Watershed Coordinator with the Summit Soil & Water District, is currently working on a NPS-IS for the Yellow Creek watershed. The projects listed in our report will be included in the NPS-IS, and Sustainable Streams is assisting Stephanie with technical aspects.

YELLOW CREEK FOUNDATION WEBSITE MISINFORMATION

Many folks in Bath wonder why the Yellow Creek Watershed Conservancy District (YCWCD) is needed, since the Summit County Surface Water Management District (SWMD) is already in place in Bath Township. While arguments can be made for the YCWCD, is there anything that it can do that the SWMD cannot accomplish? If you look at the website of the Yellow Creek Foundation, you will find a page comparing solutions provided by the two entities. Unfortunately, the information provided by YCF is biased toward the YCWCD and blatantly false regarding the SWMD. Following are some fallacies listed, and the truth:

- *Limited Scope – Uses an approach limited to a specific county or municipality. (FALSE)*
The Truth is the SWMD uses a watershed approach, and has already had a consultant perform a study of the entire Yellow Creek Watershed.
- *Limited to Opt-in Township – Shifts the burden of costs onto the few voters in municipalities which have opted to join. (FALSE)*
The Truth is, the Ohio Revised Code ditch petition process will determine and assess all benefitting/ contributing landowners in the project sub-watershed. The SWMD revenue will help defray the cost for those that already pay the SWMD fee.
- *REACTIVE – Reacts to problems which develop and then are identified through petitions for redress. (FALSE)*
The Truth is the SWMD has done a full watershed study and identified problems, which will be prioritized for solution on a regional basis.
- *Spot Band-Aid Spending – Implements spot, Band-Aid fixes because funds are only available only from opted-in communities, resulting in inefficient spending. (FALSE)*
The Truth is the SWMD is taking a watershed-based approach, and through the ditch petition process can assess landowners outside the SWMD community.
- *Channels streams' force – Channels the water's force downstream into rivers, streams and ditches. Directs flooding downstream – Channels, rather than abate, floodwater forces, flooding downstream properties. (FALSE)*
The Truth is Proposed SWMD projects will install and expand upland storage, enhance floodplain storage, and provide stream erosion control measures.
- *Erosion control along roadways/ prioritizes erosion control along roadways. (FALSE)*
The Truth is the SWMD will construct numerous stormwater management facilities that slow the water, in order to reduce erosion and flooding. Local highway agencies will be encouraged and required to correct roadside ditch erosion, and SWMD funds will not be used to correct roadway drainage issues.
- *Manages Road & Bridge Water Only (not yards, tributaries, streams) – Funnels funds into projects selected. (FALSE)*
The Truth is SWMD funds cannot be used to improve roadways and bridges. Road and bridge projects are funded by a completely separate revenue stream.
- *Eminent Domain – Public Utilities use eminent domain, taking private lands to protect public roadways, possibly imperiling downstream properties. (FALSE)*
The Truth is eminent domain will rarely be required, and the majority of projects will reduce erosion and flooding of private properties. Any benefit to protect public roadways will be funded by the County or Township's road and bridge funds.

- *3 Trustees' decision for inclusion – enacted by 3 trustees, not through ballot, petition, or voter initiative. (Misleading)*
 The Truth is the trustees are elected representatives of the people, and a citizen action committee of volunteers recommends which projects are prioritized for design and construction.
- *Ditch petition history? Was recently enacted by the county and has no experience or history of success. (FALSE)*
 The Truth is as the ditch petition process is defined by the Ohio Revised Code and has been utilized across the state for decades with great success since its revision in 1957.
- *Directed by municipality and engineer – open to bias – Implements projects selected by the municipality and engineers using varying metrics. (Misleading)*
 The Truth is SWMD decisions are reviewed and prioritized by a citizen involvement committee, with all meetings open to the public.
- *May become political/Possible money spent with no plan – Has fragmented supervision, which could be partisan. (Misleading)*
 The Truth is that this process is not indifferent to the citizens. The SWMD is guided by engineering experts and must perform satisfactorily to a number of elected officials at the local and county level. These elected officials answer to the public, unlike a court appointed board of a watershed conservancy district.
- *Claims that the YCWCD is Smartest use of funds/Non-political and that the YCWCD is supervised by judges from each county and a non-partisan board. (FALSE)*
 The Truth is, the judges are involved only in forming the YCWCD and reviewing its annual budget, not in supervising the operation of the YCWCD. The conservancy district board members are appointed, and not subject to any public vote.
- *No justification requirement – Does not have to justify projects it selects and has no long-term plan requirement. (FALSE)*
 The Truth is the SWMD is dedicated to providing good stewardship of the funds collected, and the funding mechanism for each project must first be approved by the Bath Township Board of Trustees.
- *Staff are highway & bridge engineers only – employs solutions focused on water transport, such as ditch construction or enlargement. (FALSE)*
 The Truth is the program manager for the SWMD and other advising staff members at the Summit County Engineer's office have over 100 years' of stormwater management expertise in both public and private sectors. Furthermore, the SWMD retains experts in the stormwater field to perform the watershed studies and design projects to mitigate erosion and flooding.
- *Local and County officials dictate which parcels are taken for projects. (Misleading)*
 The Truth is because any land that is deemed necessary by the expert consultant will be vetted by the local officials who have an interest in protecting the public, through the process established by Ohio Revised Code.



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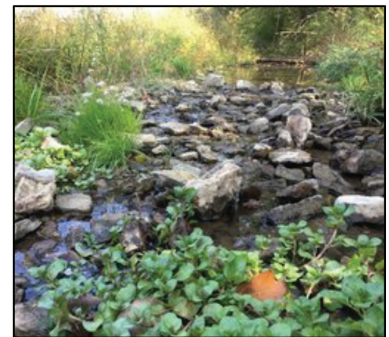
The Wye Road Flooding and Erosion Mitigation Project Bath Township requested a study into potential solutions to chronic flooding along Wye Road in front of The Bake Shoppe in Ghent. This project will provide stormwater control and stream stabilization on a local level, with water quality benefits to Yellow Creek. The project will construct 2 new detention basins in the Sanctuary of Bath subdivision and will enlarge an existing detention basin there as well. Also, segments of eroded streams in the area will be repaired and stabilized.

Bankfull Wetlands are recommended to be constructed alongside streams to take on excess flows during storm events. These excavated basins will be helpful in slowing the flow and also providing habitat for aquatic life. This feature enhances water quality and will help to attract EPA funding.



Stream Stabilizations and Landslides

The SWMD will stabilize some streams, and some of these may be at the base of precarious slopes that have or may experience landslides. However, stabilization of the slopes themselves will be the responsibility of the affected landowner, be it a public entity (as for a road) or the private owner of a home or business.



The Surface Water

Advisory Committee (SWAC) Assisting the county engineer's office with recommendations on policies and project selection is a Surface Water Advisory Committee consisting of 7 Bath residents plus 5 alternates. This group meets quarterly to provide citizen input to the SWMD and the township trustees.

This first issue is mailed, subsequent issues will be online.