



INDIAN CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT LTD.

A watershed planning effort initiated under the Upper Des Plaines Ecosystem Partnership

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Stakeholder Connections

Semi-Annual Newsletter • Fall/Winter 2002

What is a Watershed?

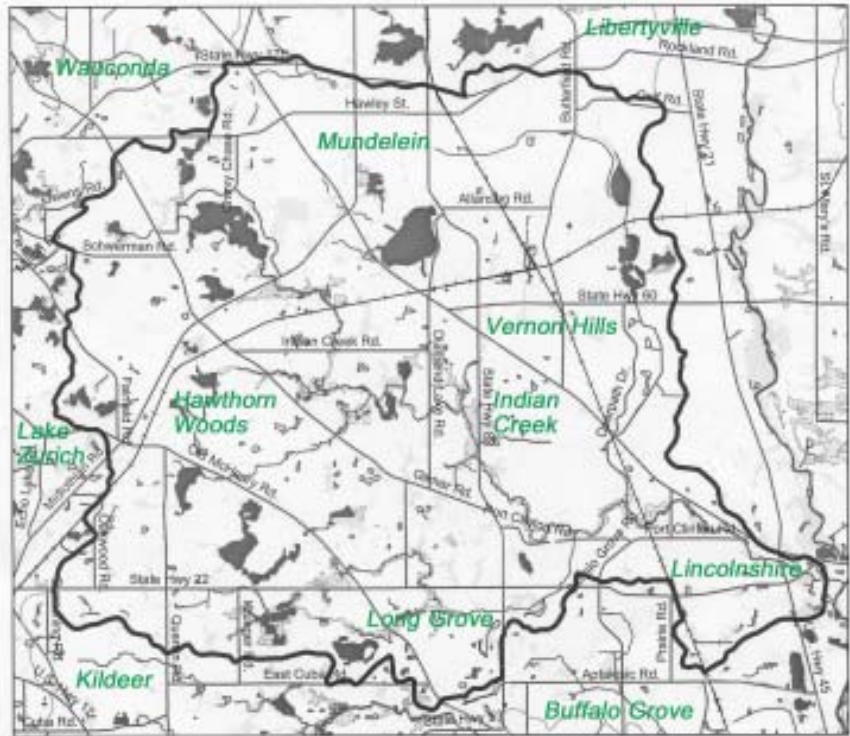
No matter where you live, you live in a watershed. A watershed is the land area that catches rain and snow and drains to a common point such as a stream, lake, wetland, or groundwater. Each watershed is nearly always part of a bigger watershed. Indian Creek is part of the Upper Des Plaines River watershed which drains to the Illinois River.

Thinking about watersheds allows us to consider natural relationships between water, earth and people. Watersheds provide habitat for plants and animals and also provide environmental benefits like water storage and filtration. Humans are also part of watersheds, relying on them for water use and the unique environments they provide. The ways people live in watersheds have dramatic effects on the proper function of watersheds and waterways. Our storm and sewer systems, our roads, highways, parking lots and other expanses of paved surfaces all impact watersheds, causing water to move more quickly off the land. "Flashy" water systems, in urbanized areas like the Indian Creek Watershed, mean larger amounts of water are surging through streams and floodways in shorter periods of time with less water refiltering back into the system.

What Is the Indian Creek Watershed Project?

The Indian Creek Watershed Project (ICWP) was formed by a group of concerned stakeholders in 1999. *For reference, a stakeholder is anyone living or working in a watershed or anyone connected, with a stake, in the watershed.* These Indian Creek stakeholders were concerned about declining water quality, flooding, and other pressures on the Indian Creek watershed. The group began to develop a grassroots plan for the watershed with support from Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources planning experts. Government support has been growing for grassroots watershed planning efforts because they educate all types of stakeholders. Public meetings have been held over the last three years and several watershed assessments have been completed as a result of the ICWP and

Indian Creek Sub-Watershed of Lake County, IL



The Indian Creek Watershed is located in central Lake County, Illinois, in the northeastern portion of the Chicago metropolitan area. Our watershed encompasses parts of Mundelein, Vernon Hills, Hawthorn Woods, Long Grove, Lincolnshire, Lake Zurich, Kildeer, Buffalo Grove, Indian Creek, and drains from portions of the townships of Fremont, Ela, Vernon, and Libertyville. If you are a stakeholder (landowner, business or governmental body) in the Indian Creek Watershed we need your help! Join us and become part of a proactive watershed network.

its efforts.

In 2000, the Indian Creek Watershed Project Ltd., a non-profit organization was formed, so that the group could apply for government grants for work throughout the watershed. After years in the making, a plan is nearing completion for the Indian Creek Watershed, thanks to the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and countless stakeholder volunteer hours.

Indian Creek Watershed's Demonstration Project and Public Information Strategy

The Indian Creek Watershed Project Ltd. was awarded an Illinois Environmental Protection grant in April of 2001. It is a four-part education and restoration effort. The grant, funded under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, is enabling the Indian Creek Watershed Project to realize some of its goals and objectives: building partnerships; helping to curb soil erosion and sedimentation; controlling invasive species; gathering more baseline data for a high quality natural area; and helping to increase water quality. Ultimately, the project will serve as a collaborative demonstration effort to educate watershed stakeholders about ways to improve water quality and promote low impact Best Management Practices for an urbanized watershed floodplain.

This project consists of four-components:

1. A floodplain sedge meadow restoration project within the Reed-Turner Woodland Nature Preserve demonstrates the importance of native riparian buffers and restored floodplain for increased water quality and habitat.
2. Four to six public meetings on topics like ways to prevent nonpoint source pollution (indirect pollution from runoff), and best lake management practices.
3. Road signs for watershed education have been placed along key thoroughfares in the sub-basin to remind motorists they are entering the Indian Creek Watershed. The Lake County Department of Transportation, Lake County Stormwater Management, and Fremont Township were instrumental in helping to get the signs placed in the watershed.
4. A website has been developed to educate internet audiences about ways to control nonpoint source pollution in Indian Creek, an urbanized sub-watershed. The focus is to educate stakeholders about the problems that runoff and NPS bring to a watershed. Check the website at www.indiancreekwp.org.

This project and other efforts underway in the watershed will help to improve water quality and other natural conditions through public outreach and on the ground projects. We hope ongoing efforts will in turn lead to improved conditions for the watershed, the Des Plaines River and even have a ripple effect downstream.



Volunteers pose after workday at Reed-Turner , 3/02

Indian Creek Facts

- 24,108 acres in watershed or 37.7 square miles
 - 644 acres of lakes
 - 40 miles of tributaries
 - Over 4,000 acres of wetlands
- More than 50% of our watershed acreage has been developed.*



Celebrating New Indian Creek Signs On a Cold Day in March

The Indian Creek Watershed Project, Ltd. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization formed in the summer of 2000 to promote water quality education and improve conditions in the Indian Creek watershed of northeastern Illinois. We are proud to have the following Board of Directors:

Tori Trauscht/*President*
 Bill Grinnell/*Treasurer*
 Jeri Swanson/*Secretary*
 Cheryl Longfellow/*Director*
 Rosemary T. Aitken/*Director*
 Ron Aidikonis/*Director*
 Mike Warner/*Off Board Advisory*



Become a member of our action network!
 Contact us via e-mail at cleanwater@indiancreekwp.org

Wetlands Hold A Lot Of Water, Preserving Them Will Help Preserve Water Quality AND Prevent Flooding

Wetlands are important to Indian Creek and other watersheds in northern Illinois. Instead of carrying water downstream quickly, wetlands hold water for long periods of time. These areas are saturated with water most of the year, wetlands are the workhorses of our water systems. They help reduce flood damage by absorbing and storing heavy rains and runoff; they help maintain water levels in rivers and streams as well as underground water supplies by holding huge amounts of water; they improve water quality by removing pollutants via native plant networks; they provide habitat for a rich variety of animals, birds, and plants - many rare and endangered; and they provide public recreational opportunities ranging from hunting to bird watching. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources reports that about 40 percent of Illinois' threatened and endangered species depend on wetlands.



There are many different types of wetlands, bogs, swamps, marshes, wet prairies, fens, vernal pools, and river bottomlands. Wetlands connected to streams and river systems help to keep riparian systems cleaner and prevent flooding, but the value of isolated wetlands is becoming increasingly important. Isolated wetlands help to filter groundwater slowly. Even vernal pools, which are temporary wetlands, provide immense water storage during rainy months and safe breeding habitat for frog, salamander and other rare amphibians that would fall prey to fish in our lakes. The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission has recently gained regulatory authority to protect these isolated flood prevention sinks.

Preserving wetlands is so important for better water quality and reduced flooding!

Indian Creek's Most Wanted!

Please help us eradicate these invasive species. They promote erosion, clog waterways, and edge out our native species.

BAD 666

Purple Loosestrife

Brought over from Europe in the 1800's as a medicinal cure, this plant liked our region so well that over \$45 million is spent annually to control it! It is choking out our wetlands. Cut this plant to the ground and dispose in plastic garbage bags. Huge populations may require experts or beetles. *More info at: www.ill-inps.org/index_page0004.html*



BAD 666 Buckthorn

This plant was brought over from Europe as a privacy hedge. It now thrives in woodlands and is shading our old oak/hickory forests to death. Cut out female trees first (those with blue berries in Fall), to stop birds from spreading populations. Quickly herbicide stumps or tree will resprout.

Plant these and other native species in your sunny buffer areas next to lakes and streams!

They need less maintenance and watering, prevent erosion, help filter pollutants, and provide vital habitat for native creatures. (Source: Lake Co. Health Dept. Lakes Management Unit and USDA's Native Plant Guide for Streams and Stormwater Facilities in NE IL, 1997)

GOOD Native Plants Listed by Common Name

Upland/Not in Water	In Water/Distance from Shore
4 Prairie Cordgrass	4 Arrowhead (0-1ft.)
4 Little Bluestem	4 Blue Flag Iris (0-1ft.)
4 Prairie Coneflower	4 Water Plantain (0-1ft.)
4 Fox sedge	4 American or Large Leaf Pondweed (1-5 ft.)

Ecosystem Partnership Is Actively Working for Des Plaines River Improvements

The Upper Des Plaines River Ecosystem



UDPREP planning committee meets to develop organizational framework.

Partnership (UDPREP) is made up of representatives from Racine and Kenosha counties in Wisconsin and

Lake, Cook and Dupage counties in Illinois. Ecosystem partnerships have been formed in river systems throughout the state to promote watershed planning, education and grant coordination for improved water quality, habitat and reduced flooding. This year the group helped review more than 30 grant applications to assist in maximizing their successful completion. Indian Creek participated as one of 22 sub-watersheds of the Upper Des Plaines River corridor.

More support is need for the important work this fledgling organization is doing. If you are interested in more information, in attending an UDPREP meeting or want to get involved contact Ingrid West, coordinator at 847/566-9189 or email at westmri@hotmail.com.



Calendar of Events • Indian Creek Watershed

Important!

Public Review of Indian Creek Watershed's New DRAFT Watershed Plan presented by Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and Applied Ecological Services
 * Wednesday, October 23, 7pm *
 Lake County SMC offices, 333 Peterson Rd, Libertyville
 Phone - 847/918-5260

Other Events For Stakeholders, Meetings Open to Public:

- Indian Creek Watershed Planning Committee meetings**
 Thursdays, Sept. 19, Nov. 21, Dec. 19, Jan. 16
 1:30 to 3:30 at SMC office
- Upper Des Plaines River Ecosystem Partnership meeting**
 Topic: C2000 Grant funding status, Nancy Williamson/IDNR
 Thursday, September 26, 9:30am, Prairie Crossing
 Call 847/566-9189 for directions
- Chicago Botanic Gardens' Invasive Plants Conference**
 October 27-30, www.chicagobotanic.org
- Indian Creek Watershed Project, Adopt-A-Hwy Cleanup Day**
 Saturday, Oct. 18 and Jan. 18, 9am - Noon
 Meet at Woodlawn School on Gilmer Road
- Reed-Turner Woodland Workday, Long Grove**
 Saturday, January 18, 2003 from 9-1pm

Lake County Stormwater Planning in Indian Creek Due for Completion in Spring of 2003

Planning, data collection and networking is underway for creation of a comprehensive watershed plan for Indian Creek by the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission. The planning contractors, Applied Ecological Systems, are analyzing current data and helping to determine objectives for the Indian Creek Watershed. A draft plan for action will be developed by fall 2002. The cost of the Indian Creek Watershed Planning effort is being shared by SMC and a Section 319 Clean Water Act grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Watershed planning is proactive. The plan serves as a blueprint for improving water quality, reducing flood damage, and protecting natural resources in a watershed. It also provides direction for preventing existing watershed problems from worsening as a result of future land development. Additionally, watershed planning offers an opportunity for multiple jurisdictions with varying priorities to coordinate their efforts and accept responsibility for the impact their actions have both up and downstream. Planning can help lessen impacts on natural drainage systems such as wetlands, lakes and streams in watersheds.

For more on watershed planning check SMC's website at:
http://www.co.lake.il.us/smc/projects/Plng_Descrpt.htm

We Are Very Thankful To Our Project Supporters!

Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (SMC)
 Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)
 Lake County Health Dept./Lakes Management Unit (LMU)
 Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC)
 Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Illinois Nature Preserves Commission/Steve Byers
 Upper Des Plaines River Ecosystem Partnership (UDPREP)
 Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
 Reed Turner Woodland Stewards
 Fremont Township and Highway Department
 Vernon, Libertyville, and Ela Townships
 Lake Co. Board Members, Diana O'Kelly, Carol Calabresa,
 Pam Newton, Sandy Cole, Al Westerman
 Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD)
 Lake County Dept. of Transportation (LCDOT)
 Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD)
 Integrated Lakes Management
 Witness Tree Native Landscapes
 Applied Ecological Services
 Strauss and Malk, Attorneys at Law
 Michael Silver and Co, Certified Public Accountants
 Indian Creek Watershed Project, Ltd. (ICWP Board)
 All of the Indian Creek volunteers who have helped us.

**We Truly Appreciate Our Donors!
 Your Donation Will Help Us Do Even More!**

*Reed Turner Woodland Board of Trustees
 Long Grove Park District*



*Barbara Reed Turner
 Fremont Township
 Village of Lincolnshire
 Village of Vernon Hills
 Jeri and Eric Swanson
 Dorothy Davis Smith
 Brice R. Smith Jr.
 The Trauscht Family*

*Rosemary Aitken
 Swanson's Home Leisure Products, Inc.*

These People Have Helped Us on Special Projects

Sean Wiedel, Tony Wolff, Patty Werner, Ward Miller and SMC staff
 Riverwatch sampling volunteers

- Greg Denny Cheryl Longfellow
- Mike Warner Joe Hmieleski
- Kathy Donnelley Kathy & Nicole Felice
- Volunteer Lake Monitoring
- Greg Denny Rosemary Aitken
- LCDOT Adopt-A-Highway volunteers
- Bridget Berns Lisa & Alex Tomscheck
- Tracy Trauscht Kaitlin Pilewski

Indian Creek Watershed Student/State Award Winner!
 Bob Harvey of Long Grove

Lake County Health Department's Lakes Management Unit is Keeping a Close Watch on Indian Creek and Other Lakes

The Lake County Health Department Lakes Management Unit (LMU) adopted a new lake initiative in 2000. The goal was to assess every lake in lake county over the next five years. The LMU studies water quality by visiting lakes once a month, from May to September, and collecting various data. In the Indian Creek Watershed the LMU has assessed the following lakes: in 2000, Charles, Harvey, Forest, Countryside, Bresen and Salem; in 2001, Leo, Naomi, Pond-A-Rudy, Sylvan and Windward; in 2002, Big Bear, Little Bear and Diamond lakes.

Reports last year stated the biggest problems with most lakes in the watershed are excessive nutrient loads (from phosphorous and other algae producing substances) and Eurasian water milfoil, an invasive aquatic plant that chokes out beneficial native plants. To combat milfoil boat owners are cautioned to clean the hulls of their boats and boat trailers to minimize passing the species from one lake to another. Algae is an indicator of bad water quality, while plants provide habitat for fish and other species.

Indian Creek lakes with the highest phosphorus levels are Salem, Pond-A-Rudy, Bresen, Countryside and Harvey. The lakes with the best water quality are Windward, Leo and Diamond. Diamond Lake is the only glacial lake in the Indian Creek Watershed. All other lakes are man-made.

According to LMU staff, promoting native grasses in lakes and planting native vegetation as shoreline buffer while reducing carp populations, pollution and invasives, is the best recipe for lake success.

We thank the LMU for all their information and their hard work! 2000 and 2001 reports can be viewed online at: <http://www.co.lake.il.us/health/chs/lakes.htm>

We Are People in Action - Join Us!

These pictures will better explain all we have been doing!



ICWP sedge meadow restoration crew works to restore a portion of Reed-Turner Woodlands' wetland and stream corridor under IEPA 319 Clean



Riverwatch volunteers count macroinvertebrates to assess water quality and stream health during a training session, May/01



SMC, LMU and IDNR water quality experts assist during a fish assessment of Indian Creek in early Fall/2001

Sylvan Lake Homeowners Are Working Hard For Better Lake Water Quality

Sylvan Lake homeowners began looking at erosion problems along their lakeshore and tributaries 10 years ago. Best management practices were sought to curb erosion, increasing sediment and reduced lake water quality. The community received project funding to improve several locations. At Ravinia Park funding was obtained through a Watershed Management Board (WMB) grant from the Stormwater Management Commission. Fremont Township has also helped with costs and Sylvan Lake Homeowners provided funds and hundreds of volunteer hours.

At Ravinia Park, the tree canopy was opened, allowing native species to reemerge along a streambank that had been heavily eroded due to increased run-off from nearby commercial and residential developments. Riffles were built in the stream to slow down the water flow, and

erosion blankets and small stone were laid for increased stabilization. On workdays volunteers cleared erosion promoting invasives like buckthorn, Norway Maple and garlic mustard. Plantings of native Illinois species will further stabilize the area and encourage native wildlife and humans to enjoy the park. A test site for native plants has been installed by residents to determine the best stabilizing species for Sylvan shorelines.

Sylvan resident Jeri Swanson says "the goal is to educate residents and help them to improve erosion, lessen soil loss, and learn why non-native species like purple loosestrife and buckthorn are threatening the wildlife and water quality here." Other projects are planned and Sylvan residents have high hopes these projects will improve their lake quality.

10 Things YOU Can Do To Help Improve Conditions In The Indian Creek Watershed

1. Get rid of invasive or exotic species (like garlic mustard, buckthorn, reed canary grass, purple loosestrife, and European honeysuckle) around your lake, stream, or wetland.
2. Replant restored areas and lake or stream buffers with deep rooted erosion preventing native vegetation then ...
3. Don't mow around your lake, leave a natural buffer. Deep roots and buffers help to stabilize lakes and stream shorelines and stop runoff.
4. Don't fertilize close to waterways, and please use fertilizers WITHOUT phosphorus.
5. Minimize your use of salt on roads and parking lots. Salt is killing our wetlands.

6. Fish responsibly, don't release bait into lakes, many times those tiny fish turn into huge mud churning carp.

7. Pick up litter and garbage around waterways. Better yet adopt the road or stream nearest you!

8. Conserve water use. Don't let the water run needlessly!

9. Find out where your storm drains are going and please don't dump pollutants into waterbodies.

10. Get involved in your watershed. JOIN US! Come help on a workday, attend the Wednesday, October 23 planning meeting, and/or check out our website at www.indiancreekwp.org.

The Mission of the Non-Profit Indian Creek Watershed Project, Ltd.

The Indian Creek Watershed Project is comprised of watershed stakeholders dedicated to the preservation, protection, and improvement of the Indian Creek sub-watershed of the Des Plaines River. Our mission is to realize a long-term vision for a healthy watershed and an educated citizenry. Our goal is to educate while building partnerships to improve water quality, reduce flooding, and preserve and restore wetlands, woodlands, and other natural resources for future generations.

Boundaries don't protect rivers, people do. Aristotle