

25 June 2013

Dear Watershed Partner,

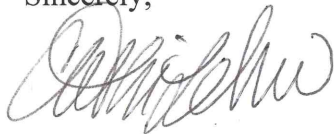
In 2010 the Brandywine Creek Watershed Partners completed a draft of the *Brandywine Creek Balanced Growth Initiative Watershed Plan*. We would now like to re-convene the Watershed Partners, complete the Balanced Growth Plan and submit it to the State for endorsement. The goal of the Balanced Growth program is to protect and restore Lake Erie and its watersheds to assure long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health, and quality of life in Ohio. By participating in the completion of this Plan your community will secure economic and ecological benefits. Please see the accompanying sheet for more information on the benefits of a Balanced Growth Plan, financial incentives provided by the State for endorsed Plans, and a timeline for completion of the Plan.

Your community's participation in this process is critical to its success. We invite you and your community representatives to join the Watershed Partners for a meeting to be held on Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m. to be hosted by the City of Hudson. The agenda for this meeting will include a review of the criteria for the determination of Priority Conservation Areas and Priority Development Areas and the selection of these Areas for the watershed.

I will plan to followup with you in the near future with more of the specifics regarding this meeting and to answer any questions you might have about Balanced Growth Plans.

Thank you

Sincerely,



Cathi Lehn

Program Manager

# Brandywine Creek

## Brandywine Creek Watershed Balanced Growth Plan Information Sheet

### Introduction

Over the past several years, representatives from communities in the Brandywine Creek Watershed, assisted by the Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization (CRCPO), have compiled data and information characterizing the watershed. This data was used to complete a draft of the *Brandywine Creek Balanced Growth Initiative Watershed Plan* in 2010. The goal of a Balanced Growth Plan is to protect and restore Lake Erie and its watersheds while supporting sustainable economic development. Upon endorsement of the Plan by the State, technical advice and financial incentives are available to communities for implementation of the Plan.

Completion of the Brandywine Creek Watershed Balanced Growth Plan and submission to the State for endorsement by the end of 2013 is a very attainable goal and one that can be met with participation from all communities.

### What is a Balanced Growth Plan?

Balanced Growth is a strategy to protect and restore Lake Erie and its watersheds in order to assure long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health and quality of life. A Balanced Growth Plan is a community-driven land suitability plan that will assist in balancing economic growth while conserving critical natural resources that provide flood and erosion control and protect water quality. The Plan identifies Priority Conservation Areas and Priority Development Areas using criteria as defined by the watershed communities. It further provides guidance to member communities for their comprehensive master plans and improvements to their land development codes and engineering standards.



### Cuyahoga River Watershed

Watersheds are an area of land from which surface water drains into a common outlet, such as a river, lake, or wetland. The Cuyahoga River watershed drains 812 square miles in northeastern Ohio. Although the watershed occupies only 2% of Ohio's land area it is home to roughly 10% of the state's population.

### Brandywine Creek Watershed

The Brandywine Creek watershed covers approximately 26 square miles and drains portions of nine communities: Boston Heights Village, Boston township, Hudson, Macedonia, Northfield Center Township, Sagamore Hills Township, and Twinsburg Township with a small portion of Qakwood Village. It is one of the fastest-urbanizing watersheds in the Cuyahoga River watershed and is experiencing drastic changes to its

natural stormwater management and water quality infrastructure. Major issues within the Brandywine Creek Watershed include the loss of wetlands and the loss and fragmentation of forest canopy and natural area.

Approximately 70% of the watershed remains undeveloped. These areas are filled with critical natural features, notably some of the last large wetlands in the basin. Suburban development and the related polluted runoff and stream encroachment has impacted the headwater streams and biological community.

The Creek is designated a Warm Water Habitat. This designation means that it should be



able to support a well-balanced population of fish and aquatic insects. The majority of Brandywine Creek does not meet Ohio EPA's water quality standards; however the Creek does steadily improve as it flows into the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Phosphorous levels just downstream of Hudson remain high, possibly due to fertilizer runoff from lawns, failing septic systems and nutrient-laden lakes in the area.

In September 2008, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission awarded a Lake Erie Protection Fund grant to the CRCPO for the development of a Brandywine Creek Balanced Growth Watershed Action Plan. As a result of several meetings with community representatives, the draft *Brandywine Creek Balanced Growth Initiative Watershed Plan* was completed in 2010. This draft was accepted as fulfillment of the grant to CRCPO by the Lake Erie Commission, but has not been formally ratified by member communities or recognized as complete by the State of Ohio.

### **Why should communities within a watershed produce and implement a Balanced Growth Plan?**

The short answer is that managing community development and growth based upon a Balanced Growth Plan is economically and ecologically beneficial.

A watershed is home to a system of many natural water control elements. Wetlands store and release water into the system at a proper, slower rate. They also provide filtration of sediment and contaminants as well as recharge aquifers. Tree canopy and grassland capture and release rainwater into the atmosphere thereby reducing runoff into streams.

Development in the Brandywine watershed has destroyed or negatively impacted these natural control elements. Tree canopy has been lost. Brandywine has been channelized and straightened which has increased the water velocity and decreased water storage capacity. Impervious surface has dramatically increased from more rooftops, streets,

parking lots, and driveways, which prevents water from soaking into the ground and increases the volume and rate of flow into the stream. All of this accelerates the rate of erosion and flooding downstream, impacting public infrastructure, private property and aquatic life.

Integrating a Balanced Growth Plan and its recommendations into a community's comprehensive master plan, land development code and engineering standards protects and improves the critical natural features and generates tangible economic benefits for communities in the watershed, including:

- Higher taxable property values
- Reduced frequency and area of flooding resulting in lower property losses
- Less costly public drainage infrastructure
- Reduced pollution treatment from sewer system infiltration and ingress.
- Improved stream water quality yielding improved biological integrity and aesthetics
- Increased groundwater recharge.



Additional noneconomic benefits of social, cultural, and environmental value can also accrue if mitigation and restoration programs are successful.

Once the Brandywine Creek Balanced Growth Plan is completed and endorsed by the State of Ohio, member communities will have available a range of resources to assist in implementing the Plan. Twenty-six (26) state programs are available to Balanced Growth participating communities

### **Summary**

A Balanced Growth Plan offers many benefits to participating communities by linking local watershed and land use practices. A draft plan has already been completed for the Brandywine Creek Watershed, however in order to complete this Plan and receive State endorsement the Watershed Partners need participation from all communities. Upon endorsement by the State, communities will then be eligible for financial incentives to implement elements of the Plan.

## EXMPLES OF FINANCIAL INCENTIVES & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR BALANCED GROWTH PLAN COMMUNITIES

<http://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/Portals/0/BG%20Documents/Special%20Incentives%20Confirmed%202013-1-7.pdf>

### *Grants*

**Clean Water Act 319 Implementation**-Provides financial assistance to local governments to implement watershed management actions designed to eliminate impaired waters and reduce nonpoint source pollution in Ohio. Up to \$400,000 to conduct stream restoration and nonpoint source pollution management projects is available annually.

**Lake Erie Protection Fund**- Provides funds to local governments for programs pertaining to water quality and resource protection in the Lake Erie watershed. Up to \$15,000 per year is available for a Balanced Growth project.

### *Technical Assistance*

**Floodplain Management Technical Assistance Program**-Provides technical and planning assistance to local governments in order to reduce flood loss and preserve the natural benefit and function of floodplain resources in Ohio.

**Streams and Storm Water Program**-Provides technical assistance to local governments, businesses and individuals in the areas of site development, storm water management, stream mitigation, rehabilitation and restoration.

### *Loans*

State loans are also available to Balanced Growth communities.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

State of Ohio's Balanced Growth website  
<http://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/>

A short video including interviews with community leaders about using Best Local Land Use Practices

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiwhoRsMhm0>

## GOALS for 2013-2014

The goal for the Brandywine Creek Watershed Partners in 2013-2014 is to complete the Balanced Growth Plan for Brandywine Creek Watershed, receive formal member community ratification of the Plan and submit the Plan for State endorsement.

### Next Steps

#### 2013

1. By the end of July, re-energize the planning effort and ensure that each member community has appropriate representation at future meetings
  - a. Each community will review the Partnership Agreement signed in 2007
  - b. Each watershed community will designate representatives to work on the Plan. Each community is authorized a number of seats at the planning table based on their share of the watershed as follows:

| Community                        | % of Watershed | No. of Authorized Representatives |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Boston Heights Township          | 12.44          | 4                                 |
| Boston Township                  | 1.34           | 2                                 |
| City of Hudson                   | 29.40          | 6                                 |
| City of Macedonia                | 31.21          | 6                                 |
| Village of Northfield            | 0.51           | 3                                 |
| Northfield Center Township       | 17.03          | 4                                 |
| Oakwood Village                  | 1.28           | 3                                 |
| Sagamore Hills Township          | 3.59           | 2                                 |
| Twinsburg Township               | 3.84           | 2                                 |
| CVNP                             | 2              | 2                                 |
| Metroparks Serving Summit County | 2              | 2                                 |
| Total                            |                | 36                                |

2. By the end of August, identify PCA/PDA's for the watershed
  - a. Confirm criteria for the identification of Priority Conservation and Development Areas
  - b. Identify preliminary PCA/PDA's for the watershed.
  - c. Bring in additional stakeholders to review selections.
3. By the end of September finalize the PCA/PDA selection.
4. By the end of October, make necessary revisions to the Plan.
5. By the end of November, submit draft to State for review

#### 2014

6. By the end of January, make necessary revisions to the Plan based on comments from the State.
7. By the end of March, adopt a formal resolution from communities representing 75% of the geographic land area, local governments, and population.
8. By the end of May, submit the Balanced Growth Plan to the State for final review and endorsement.