



# Brook Notes

DOAN BROOK WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP NEWS

Fall/Winter 2018

## New volunteer-led program to restore habitat and biodiversity at Lower Lake

*By Peggy Spaeth and Andrew Klooster*

One of the highlights of the Doan Brook watershed is the Shaker Parklands, which encompass the four Shaker Lakes and feature multiple trails and paths along Doan Brook. The Parklands are a significant green space in our watershed and surrounding communities. The Shaker Parklands connect with Ambler Park and Rockefeller Park in Cleveland to constitute a nearly continuous green corridor all along the brook from the Heights to Lake Erie.

Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, and Shaker Heights all care for sections of the Parklands and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District manages the hydrology with major infrastructure projects. The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes also independently maintains its 20-acre green space. DBWP convenes an advisory group, the Parklands Management Committee, to address land management in the Parklands between these jurisdictions and municipal borders. In spite of all the work put in by these entities to protect and maintain the Parklands and to improve access to them over the years, one vital aspect of ecological health has not, historically, been the focus of much attention: plant life. As an unfortunate result, the Parklands have been overrun with aggressive non-native plants such as Japanese knotweed, Tree of Heaven,



*Friends of Lower Lake Volunteers*

Porcelain Berry, Honeysuckle, English ivy, and Buckthorn. These non-natives have outcompeted many indigenous plants upon which native mammals, birds and insects depend. Increasingly, invasive species are disrupting the food chain of the Parklands and diminishing local biodiversity.

DBWP, often in partnership with the Nature Center and watershed municipalities, has for years hosted isolated stewardship events to remove non-native plants in different sections of the Parklands but has never committed volunteers to a restoration project long-term. This year however, following up on the results of an online survey that we conducted to gather input on our current

programming, we brought together a group of volunteers to explore possibilities for a volunteer-driven project at Lower Shaker Lake. At that meeting the Friends of Lower Lake (FLL) was born, with Cleveland Heights residents Peggy Spaeth and John Barber serving as co-chairs. The mission of this new volunteer-led DBWP program is to restore habitat and biodiversity at Lower Lake, in partnership with the stakeholders who oversee the Shaker Parklands. What makes the effort truly unique, however, is the ongoing dedication of volunteer resources and time. The effort will not be isolated; in contrast, it will build accomplishments over time.

*continued inside*



# Welcome new board member!



In 2018 we added a new member to our 16-person Board of Trustees. The Board consists of two representatives from each of

our three supporting cities, members of partner organizations, and four at-large citizen representatives. Our new Trustee is Ward 6 Councilman Blaine Griffin. Councilman Griffin represents the neighborhoods of Little Italy, Fairfax, Larchmere, Woodland Hills, and parts of Buckeye-Shaker, University Circle, North Broadway, Slavic Village, and Union-Miles. He was elected to Cleveland City Council in November 2017 after being appointed in May 2017 to fill a seat vacated by Mamie Mitchell. Prior to serving on city council, he was the executive director of the city's Community Relations Board for over a decade and before that was a program officer with the Cuyahoga Department of Justice Affairs. He has also served as a program director for the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland, as a community organizer and then program manager at East End Neighborhood House, and established a coalition of community residents, activists, and businesses to fight infant mortality and morbidity as part of the Healthy Family/Healthy Start project at the Harvard Community Services Center. He currently resides with his wife and three sons in the Larchmere neighborhood of Ward 6.



*Hawken School helps the Friends of Lower Lake*



*DBWP Trustee Laura Gooch helps out at Lower Lake*



*Ephemeral Lower Lake Mascot*

## ***New volunteer-led program to restore habitat and biodiversity at Lower Lake continued from page 1***

FLL selected the Canoe Club site on the south side of Lower Lake as its first project because of its historical significance and outstanding vista of the lake. The Canoe Club was built in 1909 and razed in 1976. The building housed 30 canoes, and the club presented annual regattas for many years, attended by crowds of up to 5,000 people. The building foundation, complete with a cement boat launch, has been filled in with 40 years of silt and overrun by Porcelain Berry, Poison Ivy, and more. Getting off to a running start, FLL has enlisted volunteers of all ages who have amassed a tremendous amount of work at the site to expose the canoe club foundation and remove unwanted vegetation. Going forward, the plan is to start replanting areas that have been



*The former canoe club on Lower Lake  
Photo courtesy of Shaker Historical Society*

cleared of non-native vegetation with native plants that will benefit native birds and insect populations. This will be a project that will take shape over the next couple of years and will then demand continued maintenance at the site for years to come. If you are interested in lending a hand in the restoration of native habitat at a historic site email [friendsoflowerlake@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoflowerlake@gmail.com) to join the effort!

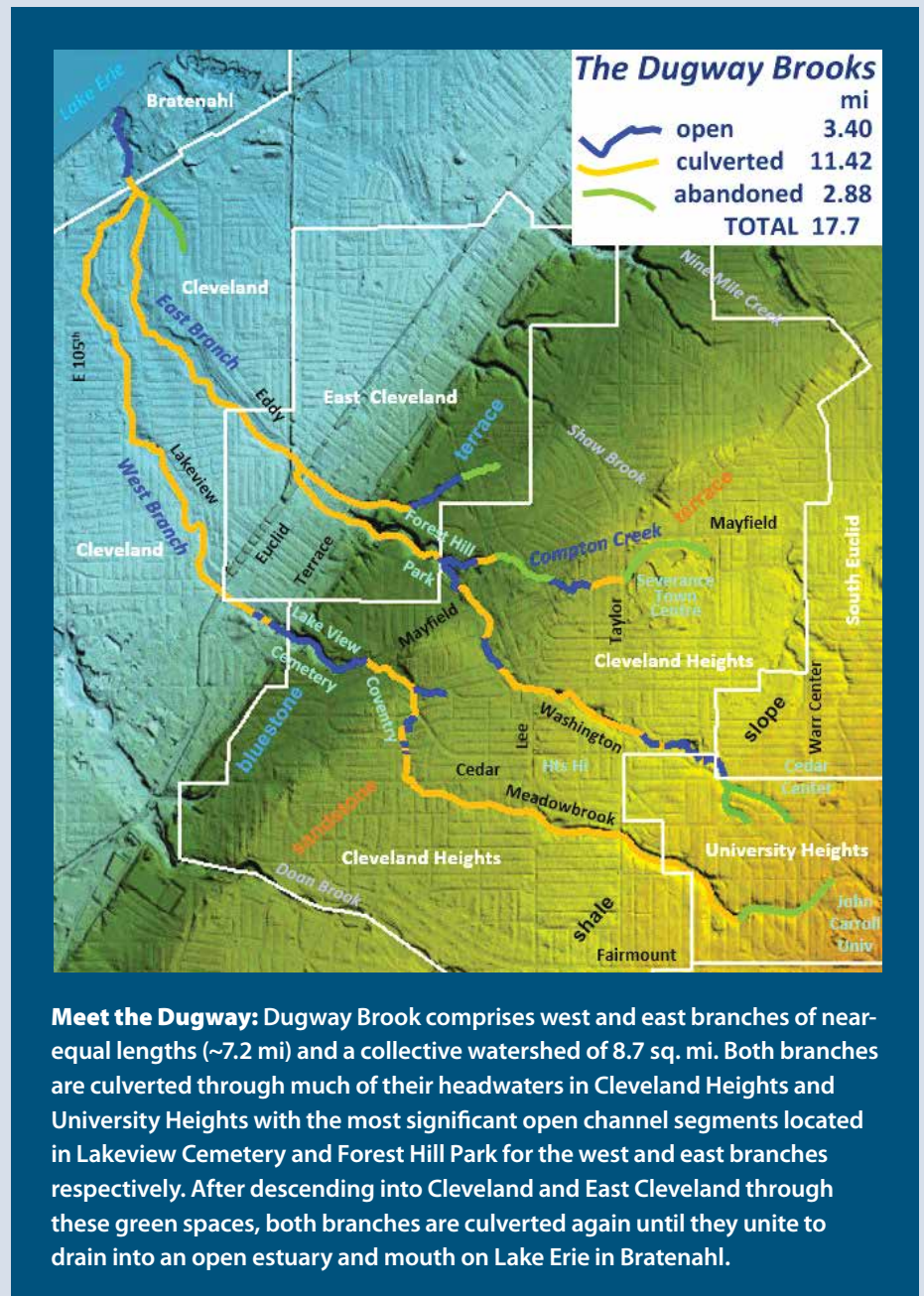


# DBWP hosts multiple stewardship and volunteer events in the Dugway watershed

By Andrew Klooster

In 2018, Doan Brook Watershed Partnership, in partnership with Dr. Roy Larick of Bluestone Heights, Elsa Johnson of the East Cleveland Parks Association, and the City of Cleveland Heights, hosted multiple stewardship and volunteer events in the Dugway watershed, particularly in and around Forest Hill Park. Focusing attention on the pervasiveness of litter in our local green spaces and around our waterways, we hosted three clean-up events in Forest Hill Park that drew volunteers from the general public, Hawken School, and from Youth Opportunities Unlimited. These efforts resulted in the removal of a combined 40 trash bags worth of plastic bottles and bags, food wrappers and containers, discarded auto parts, and much more. In addition to clean-ups, we hosted three storm drain stenciling volunteer events in Cleveland Heights neighborhoods in the Dugway, Shaw, and Nine Mile watersheds. Altogether, our stenciling volunteers tagged 460 storm drains in these neighborhoods with the “Lake Erie Starts Here” message to help spread awareness about the impact of storm water pollution on local waterways. Finally, Doan Brook Watershed Partnership and East Cleveland Parks Association promoted and sponsored a tree planting organized by a Cleveland Heights-based Wolpert Fund that hosted over 30 volunteers for the planting of 20 trees in the Great Meadow of Forest Hill Park. These outreach efforts supplemented our established programming in the Doan Brook Watershed this year and served to spotlight one of Doan’s neighboring watersheds and its spectacular green spaces.

Going forward, expect DBWP to continue to collaborate with Bluestone Heights on stewardship activities and other events in the neighboring Dugway, Shaw, Nine Mile, Giddings and Green Creek watersheds in Cleveland Heights and Cleveland. This effort is critical in bringing awareness to the water quality and storm water runoff issues in these streams, which like Doan Brook, are all direct



**Meet the Dugway:** Dugway Brook comprises west and east branches of near-equal lengths (~7.2 mi) and a collective watershed of 8.7 sq. mi. Both branches are culverted through much of their headwaters in Cleveland Heights and University Heights with the most significant open channel segments located in Lakeview Cemetery and Forest Hill Park for the west and east branches respectively. After descending into Cleveland and East Cleveland through these green spaces, both branches are culverted again until they unite to drain into an open estuary and mouth on Lake Erie in Bratenahl.

Lake Erie tributaries between the Cuyahoga River and Euclid Creek. Unlike Doan Brook however, all of these other streams are mainly culverted throughout their courses, which makes it difficult for residents in surrounding neighborhoods to connect to their waterways and watersheds.

Highlighting these watersheds through stewardship events and activities is one way to contribute to awareness about the streams and their connections to our regional hydrology, and lays the groundwork for these watersheds to become more prominent markers of ecological space and community.



**DOAN BROOK**  
Watershed Partnership

12200 Fairhill Road, Suite C-238,  
Cleveland, OH 44120

[www.doanbrookpartnership.org](http://www.doanbrookpartnership.org)

ph: 216.325.7781

Victoria Mills, Executive Director  
[mills@doanbrookpartnership.org](mailto:mills@doanbrookpartnership.org)

Andrew Klooster, Watershed Programs  
Coordinator  
[Klooster@doanbrookpartnership.org](mailto:Klooster@doanbrookpartnership.org)

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## Shake the Habit for Doan and its Lakes

With winter weather approaching we would like to broadcast a friendly reminder to everyone in our watershed and beyond about the importance of “sensible salting” that provides safe passage for humans, mammals, fish and amphibians. Winter salting can be incredibly harmful to our local aquatic life. When excess salt from roads and sidewalks is transported through snowmelt, amphibians, such as frogs, toads and newts, are particularly hard hit due to their permeable skin. Many studies have documented that most fish species have less successful reproductive cycles as salinity and chlorine rise in our local streams and lakes. Excess salt also ends up in our green spaces and has negative impacts on soil stability and nutrient uptake in trees and plants. By simply changing the amount of salt we use and the way we use it, we can make an enormous difference in the health of our local environment without making our sidewalks and driveways less safe. Here are some tips:

- 1) Follow application instructions! More salt does not equal more rapid deicing! One 12-oz coffee mug of salt is enough to deice 10 sidewalk squares.
- 2) Only apply salt where it is necessary! If you do not frequently use a side or back door, do not apply salt in that entryway.
- 3) Consider the temperature! Most salt is ineffective at deicing below 15°F so do not waste your time applying salt when it will not help melt ice.
- 4) Remove excess salt! If your driveway and sidewalks are cleared of ice and there is still salt remaining, sweep it up to prevent it from washing into a storm drain.
- 5) If you apply sand in addition to salt, make sure to sweep up and remove sand after use because excess sediment is also harmful to our waterways.