



# EcoCity CLEVELAND

IDEAS AND TOOLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE BIOREGION

\$2

Volume 7, No. 3-4 April-May 2000  
Editor: David Beach

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Sustainable agriculture in the park



Dealing with the regional impacts  
of local development



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No surplus in the Great Lakes



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## Good words

There is no concern these days more important  
than the environment –

not gun control, violence in the media,  
campaign-finance reform,  
not even poverty, war, refugees  
or the curing of fatal diseases.

Americans are about to be swept up in a  
presidential election campaign in which  
candidates will rant about such issues,  
all of which are dwarfed  
by the need to protect  
and enhance our habitat.

— Roger Rosenblatt,  
*Time Magazine's*  
Earth Day 2000 special edition

How do we love  
all of the children  
of all the species  
for all time?

— William McDonough

# RESPONSIBILITIES UPSTREAM

**Doan Brook: Development upstream can cause flooding and erosion downstream.**

You pay a bill for sewage treatment.  
Why not a bill for the stormwater  
running off your property?

See pages 4-7

# Fitting in

What makes traditional urban neighborhoods work so well? What makes them feel just right as you walk down their streets?

Such questions were on the minds of many of the 300 Cleveland Heights residents who packed a community meeting to discuss the rumored expansion of Russo's Giant Eagle supermarket at Cedar Road and Fairmount Blvd. The residents shared the conviction that their intimate commercial district – with its eclectic mix of small stores, restaurants, offices and apartments – was fine the way it was. If Russo's grew from a local grocery store to a regional superstore, it would overwhelm the neighborhood. "Businesses should adapt to our community, not the other way around," said one resident.

To fit in, new buildings should respect the "scale and grain" of the existing urban fabric, explained another resident, Ruth Durack, director of Kent State University's Urban Design Collaborative. She said that older, streetcar suburbs are special because they have well-planned districts with a full range of activities – places that offer many choices close together and a grid of human-scale streets that provide many ways to access all the different places. They are districts with a fine grain. Each component is small, unique, and connected. In contrast, new sprawl suburbs are built to the scale of the automobile and are like big piles of rocks – with everything crystallized and segregated and single purpose.

"Grain is a very fragile quality," Durack said. "The dilemma is to accommodate new retail styles without losing the scale and fine grain of the community."

It's hard for national chain stores to fit their standardized boxes into this fine grain. But smart businesses are recognizing that it pays to respect the context of a community. In Cleveland Heights, Giant Eagle finally decided to redevelop its current store without a major expansion in size.

## Award for Bioregional Plan

We would like to thank the Cleveland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for awarding our *Citizens' Bioregional Plan* a Certificate of Recognition in Urban Design & the Environment. Also receiving awards at the chapter's April 2000 meeting were the Ohio & Erie Canal Association, the Cleveland Green Building Coalition, and the Urban Design Collaborative of Kent State University.

## Thanks

Thanks to The George Gund Foundation for a major grant for operating support. And thanks to The Abington Foundation for a grant to support our work on regional open space preservation.

## Web site

In the past few weeks we have started to update our Web site more frequently. Our Bioregional Calendar now provides one of the most complete and up-to-date collections of environmentally-related events in the region. Check out [www.ecocleveland.org](http://www.ecocleveland.org).



David Beach  
Editor

## Mission

EcoCity Cleveland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, educational organization.

Through the publication of the *EcoCity Cleveland Journal* and other programs, it will stimulate ecological thinking about the Northeast Ohio region (Cuyahoga Bioregion), nurture an EcoCity Network among local groups working on urban and environmental issues, and promote sustainable ways to meet basic human needs for food, shelter, productive work and stable communities.

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# Sustainable agriculture in the park

While conservationists nationwide struggle with the problem of farmland lost to development, the park managers in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area struggle with a different sort of agricultural problem. Although agriculture was practiced in the valley by native Americans and extensively by early pioneers, the National Park Service has been unable to find a feasible way to support agriculture that is in keeping with other park values: historic preservation and environmental sustainability.

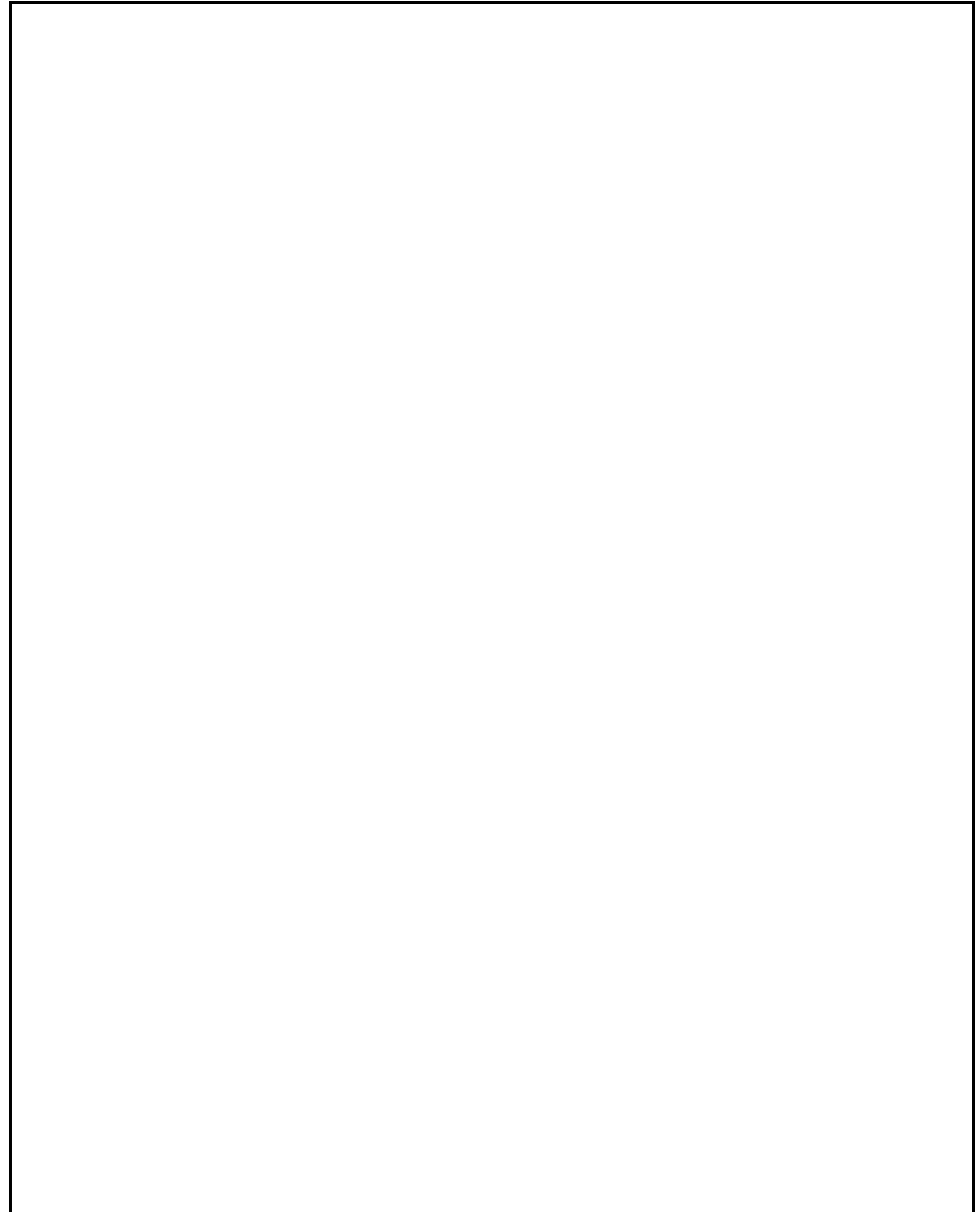
Last summer the Cuyahoga Valley Association (the friends group for the park) joined with the National Park Service to create a non-profit organization to launch a new approach to agriculture within the park. The Cuyahoga Countryside Conservancy (CCC) was formed in June 1999 to "promote, guide, assist, and manage re-establishment and revitalization of appropriate farming practices in Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area...which will conserve such area's historical-cultural landscapes, broaden their biological diversity, and enhance their recreational and educational resources."

The CCC's vision is to rehabilitate two dozen dormant farmsteads on 1,500 acres of former farmland and facilitate leases to farmers who can demonstrate sustainable, small-scale agriculture. Currently, only 425 acres of federally owned land are in agricultural use in the park. Under the new initiative, the park service is investing in the restoration of the farm buildings and fields, while the CCC seeks appropriate farmers and productive uses for the farmsteads. The new-style farming will include educational and recreational aspects for park visitors, as well as retail sales.

The CCC will in effect change the nature of agriculture in the valley towards sustainable agriculture that is ecologically healthy, socially responsible, and economically profitable. In doing so the initiative will create new sources of healthy food for the region and create a showcase for sustainable agriculture.

For more information, call Darwin Kelsey at 330-657-2532. □

This article was adapted from the newsletter of the Cuyahoga Valley Association.



**Picking chamomile: The Crooked River Herb Farm on Akron-Peninsula Road is an example of small-scale, sustainable agricultural being promoted in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.**

## Center for Farmland Preservation opens

Northeast Ohio has a new nonprofit program for preserving farmland and strengthening rural communities. In March, the Center for Farmland Preservation in Northeast Ohio opened an office near Peninsula in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Jennifer Smyser has been hired to direct the center.

Early work has focused on supporting Governor Taft's proposed bond issue to create a \$400 million Ohio Conservation and Revitalization Fund, a portion of which could help preserve farmland. The office also participated in a Northeast Ohio Farmland Preservation Roundtable held on April 19, as well as a state conference hosted by the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

For more information, call 330-657-2355.

# Responsibilities upstream

*In our last issue, we covered a new water quality plan for Northeast Ohio. The regional plan identifies future needs for wastewater treatment plants, sewer lines, and home septic system maintenance. But it also recognizes that our biggest water quality problems don't come from a discharge pipe. They come from stormwater washing off the land – roads and rooftops, lawns and construction sites, parking lots and driveways. The problems include the flooding volumes of water that flow off the hard, impervious surfaces of our urban and suburban landscapes, as well as all the pollutants that are washed off these surfaces.*

*Unfortunately, given the fragmentation of local governments in the region, we are ill equipped to deal with watershed-scale problems of stormwater run-off. No one is responsible.*

*But that could change. Other metropolitan areas have stormwater utilities, and the feasibility of such a utility is being studied in Greater Cleveland.*

*Someday soon you could be paying a monthly bill to take care of the damage caused by water running off your property. The more impervious surface you have, the more you might have to pay.*

■

In the 1970s, the financial and management problems of the City of Cleveland prompted efforts to place a number of city-based services under regional or state control. For example, the Cleveland transit service was merged with a number of suburban bus lines to form the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. The city's lakefront parks became a state park managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

And suburbs in Cuyahoga County, who were dependent on the city for water and sewage treatment, sued in court to create regional authorities to manage these essential services. The city maintained control over its water system, but the system was placed under court orders for maintenance and plant improvements, and the city was restricted from using water revenues for other city expenses.

The court battle over the city's sewer system resulted in the creation of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) in 1972. The court found that a larger, regional authority would be better able to make the huge capital investments

## Signs of trouble: Eroding stream banks are signs that Euclid Creek suffers from surges of stormwater run-off from communities upstream.

necessary to clean up the area's terrible water pollution problems.

After creating the regional sewer district, Judge George McMonagle of the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas issued the following mandate:

"The District shall develop a detailed integrated capital improvement plan for regional management of wastewater collection and storm drainage to identify a capital improvement program for the solution of all inter-community drainage problems (both storm and sanitary) in the District."

This mandate covers two systems that impact water quality:

- Wastewater – the sanitary sewer system of pipes and treatment plants that conveys and treats sewage from homes and businesses; and
- Stormwater – the system of storm drains and water detention facilities that handles rain water and prevents flooding.

### Wastewater first

Back in the '70s, the sewer district (which now serves much of Cuyahoga County and small portions of adjoining counties — see map on page 5) decided to focus first on the wastewater problems. The decision was based in part on the obvious need to upgrade the inadequate wastewater treatment plants inherited from Cleveland,

as well as the need to build large interceptor sewers to bypass overburdened community sewers and convey sewage directly to the plants. The decision to focus on wastewater facilities was also prompted by EPA regulations and the availability of federal grants, which paid up to 75 percent of the cost of these projects. Since no funding was available for storm drainage, it was decided to defer the storm drainage effort to a later date.

Through 1998, the district invested over \$1.4 billion on the planning, design and construction of wastewater enhancements. Initially, the majority of the wastewater enhancements centered on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the district's three wastewater treatment plants (the Southerly plant on the Cuyahoga River and the Westerly and Easterly plants along the lakefront). Then the district began the planning and construction of the Cuyahoga Valley, Southwest, and Heights/Hilltop Interceptors. The first two have been completed, and the Heights/Hilltop is now nearing completion.

In the 1990s, the district's focus shifted towards the development of strategies to minimize water quality impacts caused by combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Combined sewers carry both wastewater flows from residential, commercial and industrial users, along with stormwater

runoff from streets, parking lots and rooftops. Combined sewers have devices that allow a portion of the flow to “overflow” to waterways during wet weather to prevent basement and street flooding.

There are 126 locations where CSOs discharge to area waterways in the district’s service area. They are located in older communities, including the City of Cleveland and portions of Bratenahl, Cleveland Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, East Cleveland, Garfield Heights, Linndale, Maple Heights, Newburgh Heights and Shaker Heights. The sewer district has begun expensive projects along Mill Creek, Doan Brook, Walworth Run and other urban streams to reduce these CSOs. The total cost will be over \$1 billion.

### **Drainage next**

Now that the worst wastewater problems are coming under control, the sewer district is turning its attention to storm drainage planning. This is the next frontier of water quality. Increasingly, environmental regulators are realizing that additional improvement in the water quality of streams and lakes will only come through management and control of stormwater. Not only can stormwater be heavily polluted after washing off urban streets, but sudden flows during storms can cause erosion and destroy the aquatic life of streams.

During the past two years, NEORS D staff and consultants have been studying stormwater problems in the district’s service area. According to a recently released report, “Regional Plan for Sewerage and Drainage – Phase I Study,” local communities have identified hundreds of stormwater problem areas. Specifically, a recent survey of 49 communities in the area uncovered 334 stormwater problem areas, an increase from 147 areas identified in a similar survey performed in 1978 (see map at right). Problems included stream debris, bank erosion, stream flooding, basement flooding, and street flooding. The communities said they were spending \$17 million per year on maintenance and capital improvement programs to alleviate these problems.

In addition to bearing the costs of stormwater problems, local communities are facing increased environmental regulations for stormwater. In 1999, the 54 communities served by the district will become newly regulated under the U.S. EPA Phase II Stormwater Regulations and will be required to secure a stormwater permit (see sidebar on page 6). Allowable pollution from stormwater will also be

Watersheds in the service area of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District

Increasing stormwater problems over the past 20 years

Source: *Regional Plan for Sewerage and Drainage Phase I Study*, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, 1999

# Regulatory pressures

Although the federal Clean Water Act was passed way back in 1972, some of its provisions are only now being implemented. First, water quality regulators focused on controlling the visible “point sources” of pollution, such as the effluent pipes of factories and wastewater treatment plants. To do this, they developed a complex system of permits (the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) to require the reduction of pollutant loadings from these sources.

Now regulators are turning their attention to more diffuse, “nonpoint sources” of pollution, such as stormwater runoff from streets and farm fields. Two new sets of regulations will help control such sources:

## U.S. EPA Phase II stormwater regulations

By 2002, most communities in urbanized areas will be required to have stormwater permits. Under these permits, communities “will, at a minimum, require the development, implementation, and enforcement of a stormwater management program designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from a regulated system to the maximum extent practical and protect water quality.” Communities will be required to adopt six minimum control measures:

- Public education program (addressing behaviors that cause water pollution, such as not picking up pet waste or dumping oil down storm sewers).
- Public involvement program to involve all segments of the community.
- Program to identify and eliminate illicit connections of sanitary and storm sewers (some homes and businesses are unknowingly, or intentionally, dumping sewage into storm sewers). Surveys

have shown that about 8 percent of storm sewer outfalls in the NEORSD district may have illicit sanitary connections.

- Program to require construction sites of an acre or more to install best management practices to control erosion and sediment runoff (sediment running off of construction sites has been identified as the single largest cause of impaired water quality in rivers).

■ Program to ensure the long-term responsibility for the operation and maintenance of practices controlling water runoff from development sites.

- Municipal program for pollution prevention and good housekeeping (addressing issues such as frequency of street sweeping and road salt application).

## Watershed-based pollution limits

Another factor in the future regulation of local stormwater is Ohio EPA’s development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). A TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterway can receive without water quality standards being violated. The pollutant can come not only from traditionally regulated sources (such as industrial and municipal treatment plant discharges), but also from land surface runoff, storm sewers and air emissions.

Strict enforcement of TMDLs could have far-reaching consequences. It’s possible, for example, that EPA could deny permission to build a new housing subdivision in a particular watershed, if there were already too much sediment pollution impacting a local stream. Or power plants might be forced to reduce lead or mercury emissions so lakes can meet standards for heavy metals.

limited by new water quality regulations that will set “total maximum daily loads” for streams from all pollution sources.

## New authority?

What can be done to control stormwater problems, many of which cross the boundaries of several communities? Who has the authority to require action? Where will the funding come from to meet new regulations?

In the next two to three years, NEORSD will expand its drainage study and try to answer such questions. One possibility is for the sewer district to become a stormwater utility.

“We will identify potential solutions and costs – what it would take to get into this business,” says Frank Greenland, the project manager. “Currently, we have no legal authority over stormwater, and we can’t divert funds from wastewater to stormwater. So we would need new authority and a new revenue stream.”

Greenland adds that the NEORSD board of trustees will have to decide whether to seek the political mandate to be a regional stormwater utility. But, clearly, the sewer district is positioning itself for that role.

There are about 230 stormwater utilities in the country, including ones in Cincinnati and Columbus. Most charge fees based on the amount of impervious surface on one’s property. In Cincinnati, the typical homeowner pays \$2.11 a month for stormwater services.

NEORSD officials know that it will be difficult to convince Greater Clevelanders to pay a bill for stormwater. Drainage is not a high priority issue – at least until basements flood. And the pollution impacts from stormwater are not as visible as a burning river. It will take a clear and persuasive explanation of the benefits to convince people that it’s time to take responsibility for something they’ve mostly taken for granted – the ability to let rain run off their land.

## Paying for parking lots?

But doesn’t it make sense to charge the Wal-Mart for all the water quality damage caused by its parking lot? And doesn’t it make sense for some regional authority to manage stormwater so that development in one community (e.g., Beachwood) doesn’t flood the community downstream (e.g., South Euclid)?

Paying a fee for stormwater might make us reconsider our careless land use practices. If the Wal-Mart does a good job managing stormwater on site (perhaps by installing a wetland filtration system in the corner of the parking lot, or by reducing the size of the parking lot), then it might be charged a reduced fee. Or if homeowners landscape their yards with native plants that retain water and refrain from using lawn chemicals, then they also might get a break.

It’s all about taking responsibility for our environmental impacts. Our past investments in water quality have dramatically improved our quality of life and the health of our communities. Further progress will require more attention to the water washing off the land. □

## Resources

- **NEORSD:** The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District recently completed a series of public meetings to gather comments on its drainage study. For more information on the planning study, call Frank Greenland at 216-881-6600.
- **NOACA:** If you’re interested in how the larger, seven-county region plans to protect water resources, check out Clean Water 2000, the water quality management plan for Northeast Ohio (which was the subject of the cover story of our last issue). The plan is available online at [www.noaca.org](http://www.noaca.org) or at local libraries. For more information, call the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency at 216-241-2414.
- **U.S. EPA:** Stormwater regulations are available at [www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2](http://www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2).
- **Ohio EPA:** See the Division of Surface Water at <http://chagrin.epa.state.oh.us/>.

## ***“An incentive to develop every last inch”***

One result of the [current state policy on school funding] is that communities have an incentive to develop every last inch of property to achieve the maximum property tax revenue. This is one of the factors that are behind the push by the City of Lyndhurst to approve the development of a new shopping mall on the land that is currently part of TRW’s international headquarters. In addition to the new income taxes and sales taxes that would be generated by the project and would help pay for Lyndhurst’s municipal services, the increased property taxes would greatly benefit the South-Euclid Lyndhurst Schools.

But developments such as this also have an impact on the environment and on traffic congestion. These impacts often lead to increased costs across the region, which will ultimately be paid for by all taxpayers, not just those who live in the community in which the development is located. There is currently no law that requires these side effects of new development to be taken into account before the development is approved.

Rep. Ed Jerse and I intend to introduce legislation, modeled on a law currently in place in Maryland, that would require a regional review of the environmental issues at stake in a new development project. This is not a new idea in Ohio. Previous efforts have been resisted both by developers and by cities that still have land left to develop. While opposition will still exist, it is time for this debate to resume in Ohio. Urban sprawl cannot continue forever. We must provide for some prudent planning so that new commercial and residential development can coexist with environmental protection.

— State Sen. Eric Fingerhut, from an e-mail newsletter to constituents, March 2000

**Suburban development increases flows of traffic and stormwater: A new shopping center could attract more traffic to the already congested intersection of Cedar and Richmond roads. Who pays when development causes problems for neighboring communities?**

## **TRW development: Impacts beyond one community**

TRW’s plan to sell 129 acres of land around its corporate headquarters in Lyndhurst has people talking about the regional impacts of development. The wooded site at the northwest corner of Cedar and Richmond roads could become an upscale shopping center, offices and multi-family housing.

While the development would bring welcome tax dollars to Lyndhurst, surrounding communities are worried about increased traffic congestion, increased stormwater runoff and flooding, loss of green space, and additional competition for existing shopping areas. Massive development across the road in Beachwood has already caused traffic problems. And South Euclid is threatening to sue Beachwood over stormwater issues.

The TRW proposal, which requires rezoning and is opposed by some Lyndhurst residents, has prompted local elected officials to think harder about how to plan for big projects that have impacts beyond the boundaries of one community. State Rep. Ed Jerse and Sen. Eric Fingerhut are sponsoring a bill that would require cities to ensure that water runoff from new developments would not harm communities downstream (see sidebar at left).

Ohio’s fragmented system of local

government control over land use has “created the condition under which the incentive is for cities to develop every inch they can, and to do it without regard to the impact around them,” said Fingerhut in a recent *PD* article.

The bill, which is modeled on a Maryland statute, would require the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to implement a stormwater management program. The agency would establish procedures and guidelines for the preparation of stormwater management plans by cities and counties, as well as guidelines for coordination of plans between multiple cities and counties in a watershed. State rules also would set standards for development of a parcel of land – standards designed to maintain predevelopment runoff characteristics of the land and reduce erosion, pollution, sedimentation and flooding. Prior to development, a developer would have to submit building plans to a city or county to explain how these rules would be followed.

Meanwhile, nearby residents are fighting the TRW development proposal with lawyers and ballot initiatives. They are seeking to modify the Lyndhurst city charter to require that zoning changes that affect more than 10 acres be approved by the voters. □

## Competing for new capacity

Though last year's difficult process to prioritize the region's transportation wish-list for major new capacity projects only recently ended, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is already working on the next round of project selection.

Fourteen public agencies and municipalities met a March 31 deadline by submitting proposals for 27 projects. Here are some of the projects, with the funds requested:

- New interchange on I-480 a quarter mile west of I-77 in Independence (\$8 million).
- Widening of 3.5 miles of SR 43 between SR 91 and the Geauga County line (\$18 million).
- Widen and improve Boston Road in Brunswick (\$7.5 million).
- Hopkins airport entry and exit road improvements (\$16 million).
- Widening Detroit Road in Westlake (\$6.6 million).
- Widening five miles of SR 18 in Medina County (\$9 million).
- Reconstruction of Bagley and Pleasant Valley roads between Pearl and State Roads (\$24 million).
- Construction of a Crocker/Stearns connector in Westlake (\$22 million).
- Four transit projects sponsored by the Greater Cleveland RTA – a transit center project and continued work on extensions of the Red, Blue and Waterfront Rapid transit lines (unspecified amount).
- Continued planning for each of five projects in Cleveland – improvements to the Grayton Road interchange, the Flats transportation system, Uptown Shaker Blvd., the Fleet Ave. corridor, and the Miles-Broadway-Turney-Warner rotary (\$200,000 to \$1 million).

The final list of proposed projects will cost many millions of dollars more than the region can expect to receive from the state. NOACA committees will work to establish regional priorities during the summer, with final board approval of the region's request scheduled for August. Projects from Northeast Ohio will then compete with projects from the rest of the state before ODOT's Transportation Review Advisory Commission.

This selection process is important

because the choice of where to add capacity to our transportation system helps shape the future of our region by determining where development will occur. For more information, call NOACA's John Hosek at 216-241-2414.

## Transit saves more than ever

With the recent increase in the cost of gasoline, public transportation makes more economic sense than ever. In fact, the typical commuter in Greater Cleveland can save more than \$2,300 a year by taking transit instead of driving to work.

RTA researchers computed the potential savings by assuming 250 work days a year, a 10-mile one-way commute with a late-model intermediate-size car, and at least a \$5 per day parking fee, which is on the low side for downtown lots. That means an average commuter might drive 5,000 miles to and from work each year. At 35 cents a mile, that comes out to \$1,750 for driving, plus \$1,250 for parking, for a total cost of \$3,000 per year.

RTA's unlimited rides with a monthly express pass costs \$54 a month, or \$648 a year – a cost savings of \$2,352 annually over driving to work. The savings would be even greater for people who drive more than 10 miles a day to work, or for those who pay more than \$5 a day for parking. Savings also grow when employers and employees use the Commuter Advantage Program, which allows RTA monthly passes to be purchased through employers with pre-tax payroll deductions.

## Inaccessible jobs

Sprawl makes it hard for entry-level workers to reach new jobs in the suburbs. Existing bus service either does not take riders to far-flung job sites or it is too time-consuming. To help provide better access to employment sites in Beachwood, the Beachwood Chamber of Commerce is working with Greater Cleveland RTA and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency to provide a special vanpool service. Workers can be picked up at the end of the Blue Line rapid transit and transported to companies in the I-271 corridor. There's been no word yet about the possibility of affordable housing being built in Beachwood so workers can actually live near their jobs.



## Ohio's unbalanced transportation system

Transit is getting a smaller share of federal gas tax dollars as states, including Ohio, pour funds into building highways that are unlikely to solve traffic congestion. In the last two years, the portion of federal spending on new roads grew 21 percent while spending on other transportation modes fell by 19 percent. This occurred as overall transportation spending increased by one-third, according to a recent report by the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP), a Washington-based advocacy group.

The report found that Ohio has not taken much advantage of changes in federal law that give states greater flexibility to invest in a more balanced transportation system. Instead, Ohio has chosen to spend most of its share of federal transportation funds on traditional highway building programs that give Ohioans few transportation options.

Specifically, the report shows that:

- Ohio's average per-capita spending of federal funds on transit during the 1990s was less than \$11 per year (the national average was almost \$17 per capita).
- Per capita spending on projects to make it easier to bicycle or walk was just \$0.47 per year.
- Ohio continues to spend most of its "flexible" federal transportation dollars on roads, even though federal law has made it possible for communities to tailor that spending to any local transportation need (only 2.1% of this money has gone to funding buses, trains, bikeways, or sidewalks, compared to a national average of 6.5%);
- Ohio is under spending on innovative programs designed to enhance communities and improve the environment. Only 71% of the funding authorized over the last eight years for the popular Transportation Enhancements program was actually spent, and just 72% of the funding authorized for a program to improve air quality was spent.

The full report is available from STPP at [www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org).



## Time for bikes

Communities in the region are becoming more interested in promoting bicycling for transportation and recreation. In the past two years, bike planning has attained a higher profile at the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), which coordinates funding for transportation projects in the region.

In April, NOACA sponsored a major bike planning workshop. And in May, the NOACA governing board approved \$212,000 in funding for a regional "Rack & Roll" project to install 265 bicycle



racks on transit buses. Lorain County Transit and Laketran will outfit their entire fleets (25 buses each), while the Greater Cleveland RTA will start with 200 buses, about 25 percent of its fleet, including all #6, #7 and #9 buses. The smaller transit systems in Brunswick, Medina County and Geauga County will install 5 racks each.

Bike racks on buses make it easier for bicyclists to get to and from work, shopping, and recreational opportunities throughout the region. They extend the reach of the transit system to more people and

provide the region's residents with a wider set of good transportation alternatives. Placed on the front of buses, the racks are a convenient, fast and secure way of taking bikes on transit rides, and over a third of the country's transit systems have already installed them. The "Rack & Roll" project was initiated by the Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods. For more information, call Ryan McKenzie at 216-281-1827.

It also was pleasantly surprising to see that the official State of Ohio Web site recently featured "Bike Ohio" on its home page. The link took you to an Ohio Department of Transportation site that has information about funding programs for bike and pedestrian enhancement projects, as well as information about bike trails in the state.

### Transportation Summit, June 16

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is sponsoring a regional transportation summit, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., June 16, at the Cleveland State University Convocation Center. Speakers will include Congressman Steven LaTourette (R-19), ODOT director Gordon Proctor, and NOACA director Howard Maier.

For registration information, call 216-241-2414, ext. 310.

## Cleveland-to-Columbus rail proposal in trouble

The Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) recommended on May 12 that ODOT not invest in Cleveland-to-Columbus rail service because of cost-estimates that have risen to over \$50 million. This is the latest setback that supporters of the proposed rail service have faced. Reductions in the proposed number of trains and trips per day and decreasing ridership estimates have made it more difficult to advocate for the service. But the final blow may have come when CSX, the freight rail company that owns most of the tracks between Cleveland and Columbus, requested \$39 million in track construction and signal system improvements.

The proposal to reinstate Cleveland to Columbus rail service after more than 30 years came as part of a 1998 compromise agreement on ODOT's \$500+ million project to reconstruct and widen I-71 between Cleveland and Columbus. ODOT planners had concluded that providing rail service could not remove enough vehicles from the highway to eliminate the need for widening it. But following a surprisingly strong show of support for rail service by businesses, elected officials and the public, they agreed to study the idea for its own sake.

ORDC's recommendation against investing in Cleveland-to-Columbus rail service seems to be a case of picking their battles. ORDC executive director Jim Seney told a *Sun Press* reporter that "this is not a good project for passenger rail service to get a foothold in this state." Instead, he suggests Ohio participate more actively in an effort by nine Midwest states to develop a high-speed rail system (currently this includes Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago and Cincinnati-Indianapolis-Chicago service).

The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers (OARP) is asking that the proposal be sent back to the drawing board, rather than killed outright. "A lack of leadership from Governor Bob Taft has failed to give ORDC the direction it needs to take an aggressive approach to passenger rail development," said Stu Nicholson, OARP executive director. Taxpayers are being made to shoulder too much of the burden, he argues, while other potential sources of funding — from CSX, Amtrak and federal programs — haven't been adequately explored.

The final decision on the Cleveland-to-Columbus rail service proposal rests with the project study committee and with ODOT. Call ODOT's Matt Selhorst (614-644-7091), ORDC (614-644-0306), or OARP (614-267-8253) for more information.

Great Lakes  
Basin

## No surplus water in Great Lakes

Arid parts of the world may covet Great Lakes water, but a recent study recommends that Canadian and U.S. governments should not permit the removal of water from the Great Lakes Basin unless it can be demonstrated that the removal will not endanger the integrity of the world's largest freshwater ecosystem.

The study by the International Joint Commission (IJC), the binational agency that monitors Great Lakes issues, says that proponents of water removals should demonstrate that there are no practical alternatives to the removal, sound planning has been applied in the proposal, the cumulative impacts of the removal have been considered, conservation practices have been implemented, the removal results in no net loss of waters to the area from which it is taken (and, in any event, no greater than a five percent loss in the process, the current average loss within the Great Lakes Basin) and that all waters are returned in a condition that protects the quality of and prevents the introduction of alien invasive species into the waters of the Great Lakes Basin.

Because there is uncertainty about the availability of Great Lakes water to meet all ecosystem needs, including human needs, over the long term, the report concludes that water should be managed with caution to protect the resource for the future. It also concludes that international trade law obligations, including the provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), do not prevent Canada and the United States from taking measures to protect their water resources and preserving the integrity of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem so long as there is no discrimination against individuals from other countries in the application of those measures.

For more information about the IJC's *Final Report on Protection of the Waters of the Great Lakes*, visit [www.ijc.org](http://www.ijc.org).

### Great Lakes issues

Great Lakes United, the citizens advocacy group for a healthy Great Lakes Basin, recently found an interesting way to categorize the major issues facing the lakes:

**Air:** Transition to clean cars, deposition of air pollutants across national boundaries.

**Fire:** Coalition building, community health, global warming.

**Water:** Concerns over export/diversion of Great Lakes water, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between the U.S. and Canada, native species restoration.

**Earth:** Biological diversity, ecofeminism, world trade.

These issues will be discussed at Great Lakes United's annual meeting, June 2-4 in Two Harbors, MN. For more information, call 716-886-0142.

***If all the interests in the Basin are considered, there is never a "surplus" of water in the Great Lakes system. Every drop of water has several potential uses, and trade-offs must be made when, through human intervention, waters are removed from the system.***  
— ***International Joint Commission***

## Lake Erie coastal programs

The water quality and habitat quality of Lake Erie depends a lot on what happens around the lake – especially on how land is used in the coastal area that drains into the lake. Consequently, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has developed a Coastal Management Program to manage development and protect resources in the coastal zone.

Projects begun in the past year include:

- A detailed wetlands inventory that will lead to strategies for protecting priority wetland areas.
  - A community-based planning process for the Mentor Marsh area to deal with issues such as wetland degradation, invasive species, barrier beach disruption, habitat fragmentation, and conflicting land uses caused by rapid development.
  - A joint project of ODNR and Ohio EPA to study how to incorporate considerations of cumulative and secondary impacts into permit decisions (for example, officials need to understand how the granting of many routine permits to fill small amounts of wetlands will have a cumulative impact on a watershed; or they need to appreciate how permits to build a highway will have many secondary impacts on surrounding communities, as the highway enables increased development).
  - The development of recommendations by the ODNR's Division of Soil and Water Conservation on how to preserve the natural water flows in small streams that are impacted by development.
  - A study by the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District on ways to protect the Arcola Creek watershed.
- For more information about coastal programs, call 614-265-6391.

**Dirty power**

One of the most contentious environmental issues in the country is what to do with the dirty, coal-fired power plants in Ohio and other Ohio River Valley states. Of particular concern is the Ohio-based American Electric Power Co. (AEP), which is ranked first in the nation in utility emissions of sulfur dioxide (causing hazardous soot, acid rain and haze), nitrogen oxides (causing summer ozone smog), and carbon dioxide (causing global warming).

The Ohio Environmental Council and other environmental groups have announced their intent to sue AEP for violating the Clean Air Act at 11 of its plants. The groups say that AEP failed to install modern pollution controls when it modified or upgraded the plants. The Justice Department is also filing suits on behalf of U.S. EPA against AEP and other utilities. For more information, call 614-487-7506.

**Dirty power II**

The magnitude of power plant pollution is apparent in the latest Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) for Ohio. The TRI requires polluters to report the amount of toxic chemicals they release into the environment or transfer off site. More than 600 chemicals are included.

In 1998, power plants were required for the first time to report TRI emissions (previously, there had been a loophole inserted in the federal regulations to exempt them). The numbers are staggering.

Electric generating facilities released 114 million pounds of toxic chemicals, almost one third of all releases in the state. The state's top ten air polluters in 1998 were all power plants. First Energy's Eastlake plant ranked sixth, with emissions of 6.3 million pounds.

For complete information on TRI, see [www.epa.state.oh.us/dapc](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dapc) or call 614-644-4830.

**Parks on the ballot**

Park districts in Portage and Geauga counties will have levies on the ballot in November. Both

counties are undergoing rapid development, and the window of opportunity to purchase land for parks is closing.

The Portage County Park District is the only district in the region that is not supported by a dedicated tax. Its proposed 1-mill levy would generate about \$1.5 million a year for five years and enable the fledgling district to greatly expand park areas and services. To volunteer for the levy campaign, call 330-995-5101.

**Big issues**

What are the top environmental issues in Ohio? At the Ohio Environmental Council's recent Lobby Day at the Statehouse, activists focused on the Wayne National Forest, factory farms, clean air/clean energy, the proposal for a Darby National Wildlife Refuge, development of a statewide stream protection plan, Gov. Taft's environmental bond proposal, and urban sprawl. For details, call 614-487-7506 or see [www.theoec.org](http://www.theoec.org).

**Transitions**

■ **David Sweet** is receiving many fond farewells as he prepares to leave his position as Dean of the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University, where he has served for more than 20 years. He is leaving to become president of Youngstown State University.

■ Many in the local planning, architecture and urban design community mourned the recent death of **Foster Armstrong** (1936-2000)

■ **Carol Sahley**, executive director of SEED Ohio, the sustainable energy group, has been appointed by the governor to serve on the Public Benefits Advisory Board, which ensures that affordable energy services are available to low-income customers in Ohio. **Amanda Rhoads** is SEED's new project coordinator, and **Dolores Watson** is helping to market green power.

■ **John McFadden** is the new Northeast Lakeshore region nature preserve manager for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

**Pressure points**

■ **Old mall struggles:** As expected, the new SouthPark Mall in Strongsville is taking business from older Parmatown Mall. The Dillard's department store at Parmatown, which is now closing, saw its sales cut in half since SouthPark opened in 1996. It's another example of how new suburbs are sucking wealth and tax base from inner-ring communities.

■ **Six Traffic Jams?:** People in Bainbridge and Aurora are bracing for traffic gridlock this summer, as the Geauga Lake Amusement Park reopens as Six Flags Ohio. The new owners are investing \$40 million in new rides and a marketing campaign to attract tourists from surrounding states. Access to the park is by two-lane, country roads.

■ **Sulfur Springs threat:** One of the highest quality streams in the region, Sulfur Springs, is threatened by the possible development of 71 acres off SOM Center Road and adjacent to the Cleveland Metroparks South Chagrin Reservation. The land formerly was a thoroughbred horse farm.

■ **Corporate regionalism:** Business leaders in Northeast Ohio have organized a new Regional Business Coalition to promote cooperative strategies for economic development. One priority will be getting the region's universities and research facilities, such as medical institutions, to work together as catalysts of high-tech growth.

■ **Nuclear waste dilemma:** If the federal government moves ahead with plans to bury high-level radioactive waste from the nation's nuclear power and defense plants at Yucca Mountain, NV, then thousands of shipments of the lethal waste could be traveling on Ohio's highways. This raises concerns about the potential for catastrophic accidents. But the alternative is to leave the waste in "temporary" storage sites next to nuclear reactors, including the 701 tons of waste fuel rods stored on the shore of Lake Erie at the Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear plants.

■ **Lorain County issues:** At a candidates forum in Oberlin prior to this spring's primary election most of the questions from the audience dealt with the proposed expansion of the county airport, urban sprawl, habitat destruction, and other concerns related to growth.

■ **Solon dump:** Residents and businesses near the closed Cuyahoga Regional Sanitary Landfill in Solon are concerned about plans to open a new construction debris landfill on top of the existing dump. They worry about leakage of contaminated groundwater from the dump, as well as problems with truck traffic, noise and dust.

■ **Airport expansion:** The extension of runways at Cleveland Hopkins Airport will require the filling in of a portion of Abrams Creek, a tributary of the Rocky River. Airport officials are now searching for places to mitigate some of the damage – other local streams where habitat restoration can take place. Doan Brook on the east side of Cleveland is a candidate.

■ **Couch potato state:** Ohio ranks last in the percentage of adults who exercise regularly. Coincidentally, it ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the amount of public recreational land per capita.

## Winners

- For conservation efforts along Conneaut Creek in Ashtabula County, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History gave its **2000 Conservation Award** to Cissy Hubbard and her late husband Thomas, Ann Barrows, and Gertrude Richardson, her son Rick and daughter-in-law Elaine.

- Ecological research is advancing in Northeast Ohio, thanks to a new partnership between Cleveland State University, John Carroll University, and the National Park Service. The three institutions have established the **Woodlake Environmental Field Station** in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. In addition, the University of Akron has established the **Bath Township Field Station**. Research at both stations will focus on the ecological impacts of urbanization in the Cleveland-Akron corridor and Cuyahoga River watershed. For more information, call 216-687-4860.

- The **West Creek Preservation** folks in Parma and surrounding communities continue to do amazing work to focus attention on this long-neglected tributary of the Cuyahoga River. They recently raised \$63,000 to prepare a watershed management plan that will identify steps to enhance open space protection, habitat conservation and outdoor recreation in the watershed. The plan will also identify potential routes for greenway trail connections to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. For more information, call 330-468-6461.

- Erie Metroparks is gearing up for a Fall 2000 campaign to raise funds for the purchase of **Edison Woods**. The 1,400-acre property includes more than 500 acres of wetlands and a sandstone escarpment offering views of Lake Erie. It had been assembled for a nuclear power plant, but now FirstEnergy Corp. wants to sell. If Erie Metroparks is successful, Edison Woods would be one of the largest park purchases in recent memory in Northern Ohio.

- The sustainable energy group, SEED Ohio, gave **Tom Rapini** its 1999 John Perera Volunteer of the Year Award for his work on the group's wind monitoring stations and the annual Solar Home Tour.

- Brian Davis**, executive director of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, recently received a humanitarian award from the Metropolitan Strategy Group for his leadership in providing housing for homeless people and people with mental disabilities and for monitoring their housing providers.

## Gypsy moth spraying

In early May, low-flying planes sprayed biological pesticides on about 14,000 acres of the Cuyahoga Valley between Cleveland and Akron. The bacterial and virus-based pesticides kill gypsy moth larvae and are supposed to have no adverse effects on people or pets. However, one of the sprays being used also kills "nontarget" species of butterflies and moths.

Officials from local parks and the Ohio Department of Agriculture are trying to prevent an outbreak of voracious gypsy moths, who in the caterpillar stage eat tree leaves and can completely defoliate large expanses of woods. In other parts of the country, such suppression efforts have ultimately proved to be futile.

For information on the spraying, call the Gypsy Moth hotline at 440-546-5993 or see the National Park Services Web site at [www.nps.gov/cuva/managing.htm](http://www.nps.gov/cuva/managing.htm).

## Seventh Generation expands with new home

Seventh Generation, the Lorain County environmental organization, recently completed its move into a new Black River Environmental Center at 15233 SR 58 south of Oberlin, a move that will allow it to expand educational programs and partnerships with local schools. The center includes a renovated farmhouse for Seventh Generation's offices, as well as 80 acres of land adjacent to the Lorain County Joint Vocation School.

The land has been developed into a "land lab" for watershed-based, environmental education. Hundreds of school children have already been out to see the wetlands, woods, and garden areas at the center and to learn more about the ecosystems that shape the environment of their region.

This summer, Seventh Generation will begin a series of camps at the center geared towards improving proficiency test results through environmental education. And to further enhance the educational opportunities available in Lorain County, Seventh Generation has become part of the Globe Franchise project of NASA and NOVA. This project organizes teachers and students to collect data that is then shared with 89 countries via the Internet to enhance global understanding of global warming.

The new facilities have also been the impetus for a native-plant landscaping project. Plants are being salvaged from construction sites and then re-used in demonstration gardens at the center.

For more information, call 440-776-2800.

## Earth Day clean energy agenda

Recognizing that our quality of life and impact on the environment depend a great deal on how we generate and use energy, the theme of Earth Day 2000 was a "Clean Energy Agenda." It outlined common-sense ways to mobilize American ingenuity and resources for a rapid transition to renewable energy sources and a phase-out of fossil fuels and nuclear power. A transition to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources will combat global warming, protect our health, create new jobs, protect habitat and wildlife, and ensure a secure, affordable energy future.

The four tenets of the Earth Day 2000 U.S. Clean Energy Agenda are clean power, clean air, clean cars, and clean investments:

**Clean power:** In the next decade, increase four-fold the amount of energy obtained from non-hydro renewable resources such as the sun and wind. By 2020, produce at least one-third of the nation's energy from renewable sources, and double the efficiency of energy use in homes, buildings, transportation and industry.

**Clean air:** Clean up our power plants by setting progressively tighter limits on all power plant pollution - including carbon dioxide, the major cause of global warming. Close the loophole that allows old coal-fired power plants to pollute much more than newer plants.

**Clean cars:** Hold sport utility vehicles, pick-up trucks and mini-vans to the same air pollution standards as cars. Improve the fuel efficiency of new cars and light trucks to a combined average of 45 mpg by 2010 and at least 65 mpg by 2020. Offer incentives that build strong markets for renewable fuels and for clean vehicles powered by hybrid motors and fuel cells.

**Clean investments:** Quadruple federal investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency within five years, and continue this momentum over the long term. Stop spending taxpayer dollars to subsidize the coal, oil and nuclear industries. Provide adequate resources and job training for affected workers and communities to ensure a just transition to a sustainable energy economy.

To endorse this agenda, see the information at [www.earthday.net/signup/endorse.asp](http://www.earthday.net/signup/endorse.asp).