



# LAND TO LAKE

**magazine**

issue three | autumn 2015

landtolake.com

## Explore Your Watershed

- Places To Explore In Defiance County
- Get Outdoors This Winter

*plus:  
celebrating our resources*



# EVENTS | NEWS

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## Senate Bill 1: What Do the Nutrient Application Restrictions Mean to Me?

**Nov. 16, 6-8 pm** at Defiance Soil & Water Conservation District, 06879 Evansport Road, Defiance. Matt Lane, ODNR, Bruce Clevenger, OSU Extension, and SWCD Staff will review the new law and answer questions that producers may have. Effective on July 3, 2015, Senate Bill 1 places restrictions on commercial fertilizer and manure applications throughout the Western Lake Erie Basin.

## Farm Fair

**Jan 14-17, 2016** at the Northtowne Mall, Defiance

## Poster & Photo Contests

Open to all students in grades K-12 who are residents of Defiance County or attend a Defiance County school.

**Posters:** Design must be on 11"x17" paper and must have the words "We All Need Trees." Posters are due to the Soil and Water office **March 7-11, 2016**.

**Photos:** Categories include wildlife, education, conservation, trees and plants, and landscapes. Entries will be due **April 11-16, 2016**.

For complete contest rules and more information: [defiance-county.com/swcd](http://defiance-county.com/swcd)

## Start Composting

Visit the [Make A Difference](http://MakeADifference)

tab on our website for information.



## No News is Good News

We know that Toledo's drinking water crisis brought Lake Erie into the national spotlight in August 2014. The fact that we have not heard much about the Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) this year means that municipal surface water supplies have remained safe & stable. This does not mean the problem is solved; rather that disaster was averted for this year. Researchers from all over the world are immersed in the study of Microcystin and global impacts to fresh water, working to gain a deeper understanding of the problem in order to develop long-term sustainable solutions. Locally, the focus remains on solving the complex problems facing Lake Erie, including ongoing threats from invasive species, toxins, and pollution in order to protect the fragile Great Lakes Ecosystem and our local economies.

## Fall Clean-Up

Create your own compost pile or utilize the City Compost Site—26273 SR 281 E — a **FREE** service for residents to **dispose of yard waste**. All yard waste **not** composted should be included with trash collection.

Please do not use riverbanks, ravines or natural areas for dumping grounds! This contributes to drainage problems and causes pollutants in local waterways. Dumping pet waste or yard waste including grass and leaves is a violation of the City's laws.



### On The Cover

Oxbow Lake Wildlife Area, October 2015  
photo by Pat Grosenbacher.



**LANDTOLAKE**  
magazine

is published to provide community members in our area with information on protecting the water resources of the Maumee River Watershed throughout Defiance County.

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[jenglish@cityofdefiance.com](mailto:jenglish@cityofdefiance.com)  
and let us know you would like to be added to our mailing list.



**Defiance**  
419-782-1794  
Soil & Water Conservation District



# DON'T LET THE WEATHER SCARE YOU

# Explore the Cold Outdoors

By Stephanie Singer, Watershed Coordinator, Defiance SWCD

Don't let the dropping temperature stop you from experiencing some of the best outdoor opportunities. Fall and winter are ideal times to enjoy nature in your backyard and the great Defiance area resources listed in this edition! Following some of these tips and suggestions will enhance your adventure:

## **Always dress for the occasion.**

Make sure to suit up for the weather. Wearing the proper warm garments and sturdy or waterproof footwear can make a world of difference in your comfort and your ability to enjoy nature. Dress in many layers and start off with a hat, gloves and scarf. If you find that you are warm, you can always remove layers.

**Bring a snack.** Whether staying in your backyard or venturing to a nearby park, carrying a snack can sustain children and adults. Pulling out a snack during colder hikes can give that extra energy needed to extend the trip. Suggestions include: nuts, dried fruit, snack bars, water, and maybe even a thermos of warm tea!

*Okay, now that your body is warm and nourished, what about entertainment? Here are some helpful ideas to facilitate nature exploration:*

**Bring along a handful of crayons or paint sample swatches.** Pass out the colors to your group/family asking them to match their color to something they find in nature. This really gets everyone



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searching and discovering. Everyone should share their finds!

**Search for Nuts.** Autumn is the time when trees are dropping their seeds in hopes that some will take root next spring. See if you can find some of these nuts before the wildlife. Examples include buckeyes, acorns, hickory and black walnuts.

Kids have a great time counting, sorting and collecting. Collecting and crafting with beautiful fall leaves can be equally fun!

**Search for Tracks.** Fresh snow is the perfect opportunity to search for tracks. Many animals will rarely be seen but they leave behind the evidence that they have been there! See rabbit, mouse, deer, fox and raccoon tracks then think about where the animal might be heading and why.

**Look for birds.** Many birds that rely on insects and berries need to move

south for the winter to find food. What is left? Nut and seeds! Some birds that stick around Ohio are the ones that can eat the nuts and seeds left on plants this winter. Look for local winter favorites like Northern Cardinal, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, White-Breasted Nuthatch and winter visitors such as the Dark-Eyed Junco.

Don't let your busy schedule and that fear of the cold air keep you from exploring the outdoors! Setting a regular schedule can help. For example, plan a family hike every Sunday afternoon. Even when weather doesn't seem inviting, suit up and head out! Some great experiences can occur in less than ideal weather conditions. Will your family complain and attempt to refuse? Probably! —But they will end-up having fun, making memories, getting exercise, and experiencing some sights unique to our Ohio winter.

# Explore Your Watershed

Defiance County offers many opportunities for year-round outdoor recreation.

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*Take advantage of these beautiful public parks right in our own backyard!*

## ox bow lake

Ox Bow Lake lies 10 miles northwest of Defiance, and can be accessed from State Route 15 at Schick Road. This 416 acre wildlife area includes a large lake with fall fishing for bass, bluegill, bullhead and northern pike. Ice fishing is especially popular!

Ox Bow Lake is also a great place to walk, run, and observe birds. Great blue herons can be spotted during the summer months and many migrating shorebirds and songbirds can be seen during spring and fall.

For maps, bait recommendations, a complete list of regulations, and more information visit:

[wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/oxbowlakewa](http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/oxbowlakewa)



## independence dam

This state park is located roughly 3 miles east of Defiance on St. Rt. 424 and offers recreational opportunities including boating access, hiking trails, camping, fishing, scenic drives, and picnic areas. A hiking trail, once the towpath for the Miami/Wabash/Erie Canal, meanders between the old canal and the river for a distance of three miles ending in Florida, Ohio. This trail offers imaginative trips into the colorful past of Ohio's canal era.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has confirmed plans are pending to re-open the Independence Dam campground in 2016.

For more information about Ohio State Parks, visit: [ohiostateparks.org](http://ohiostateparks.org)

## city reservoir

The municipal reservoir, originally built as an EPA mandate to improve the quality of municipal drinking water, has become so much more than a water supply. Within just a few years, it has become a recreational asset for local residents and visitors to the community.

Some of the features are a result of City efforts, such as the decision to build a sledding hill at the outset, but many of the amenities at the reservoir are a result of independent groups taking pride and ownership to develop opportunities for different interest groups.

The City has received donations for landscaping, tree planting, the building of two shelter houses and supplies to build a disc golf course. The Boat Dock/Ramp that provides boaters access to the reservoir was funded by ODNR. Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, Bark'n Runners, Prop Floppers, Reservoir Dogs, and especially the Reservoir Committee, the site continues to provide recreation and fitness opportunities for the community.

### Reservoir Bike Path

The City has recently completed construction of a bike/pedestrian walkway at the base of the municipal reservoir. Just over 1 mile long, the new asphalt trail runs from the parking lot on Precision Way to the parking lot on





Kibble Road. Running parallel with Canal Road for a short section, the trail also features crosswalks and connections to the adjacent neighborhood sidewalks on Kiser and Jackson Streets, making the trail safe, fun and accessible for individuals of all ages and abilities.

#### Proposed Nature Trail:

The new walkway around the base of the reservoir has a clear starting and stopping point but does not fully connect. The proposed Nature Trail would create a complete loop, starting with an extension of asphalt from each of the two parking lots and extending as a boardwalk through the wooded area on the north side of the reservoir. This connector section of trail would be approx. ½ mile long and provide a quiet, relaxing, experience!

## Get Outdoors

Visit the [EXPLORE](#) tab on our website for more ideas and information.



## celebrating our resources

As the City celebrates the success of the new Reservoir Trail, it has become clear that we must do more to promote and bring awareness to our existing public resources.

With *more than a dozen City parks, and some publicly-owned spaces that might surprise you*, there is something for everyone to do! Finding ways to enhance our quality of life with simple solutions – like walking and bicycling are an important part of the City’s Strategic Plan. The long-term planning for quality of life includes finding ways to provide more “access and visibility” to the rivers; to enhance our City parks

and connect the new reservoir trail to the downtown area by revitalizing the historic canal lands.

Building on recent momentum, the City is poised to bring people together by promoting fitness and good health, creating opportunities for recreation and leisure, cultivating pride in our natural, historical and cultural resources while developing strong connections with regional assets, such as the Buckeye Trail, Scenic Byways and Rails to Trails Programs. All of these actions enhance our sense of place in Defiance while adding vibrancy and resiliency to our community.



CAPITALIZING  
ON OUR  
RIVERS:

Proposed  
Water Trail

The Upper Maumee Watershed Partnership is working to create more access points for canoers and kayakers looking to enjoy the Maumee River. The Maumee River is a state designated Scenic River and anyone that has paddled on it knows that is truly is a breathtaking corridor. Unfortunately, public access points from the Indiana state line to Defiance are limited. The group aspires to locate and develop public access points approximately every 10 river miles and create a map detailing these points along with safety tips and environmental highlights.

Get More Information at: [watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/watertrails](http://watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/watertrails)

# EXPERIENCES

## local event highlights

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### Land to Lake Conference

The Conference on June 11th at Defiance College was a great success! Forty-three people attended this informative event to hear speakers on Lake Erie research, green infrastructure, agriculture programs, outdoor recreation, history of the rivers, water monitoring, and economic opportunities that tie to natural resources. Thank you to everyone who presented and to those who attended this informative event!

### Boots, Boats and Bikes: Across the Valley

A trail conference was held by the Maumee Valley Heritage Corridor, on Oct. 9th at Oberhaus Park Pavilion in Napoleon. This event brought together experts in the field with interested citizens to collaborate on opportunities to increase and improve outdoor recreation in our area. This is an annual event so get involved to make next year's conference even better!

Conference presentations can be found at [landtolake.com/explore](http://landtolake.com/explore).

### Canoe Trips

The local leader and public canoe trips were held August 14 and 15 on the Maumee River, after excess rain and high water in June caused us to reschedule. The boats were provided by ODNR Scenic Rivers Program. Participants paddled a 5 mile stretch of the Maumee River enjoying the beautiful scenery spotting both mature and immature bald eagles, hawks, blue and green herons and kingfishers – to name a few! These free annual trips are designed to get more people connected to our water resources and for citizens to become more active in watershed stewardship.

Visit ODNR Scenic Rivers Program: [watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/scenicrivers](http://watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/scenicrivers)

**These are Annual Events**  
*join us next time!*

**For more information:**  
Follow **Land to Lake on Facebook**,  
Visit **landtolake.com**,  
or Contact **Defiance SWCD**  
**419-782-1794**



### Chemistry Students Learn about Stream Water

Mr. Jacob Panico's Fairview High School Chemistry students received some first-hand experience using their chemistry skills. The class met with the Defiance Soil & Water Conservation District Watershed Coordinator, Stephanie Singer, to perform water quality tests on Platter Creek and Sulphur Creek. Mr. Panico's students participated last school year and plan to help again this spring.

The students used a hand held meter to measure the water's pH and temperature, and a sediment stick to determine the total suspended solids, or the clarity of the water. In a more complicated test, they measured the dissolved oxygen in the water with a redox titration. They collected samples to be analyzed for nitrogen, phosphorus and dissolved reactive phosphorus. "I think stream testing is a great example of how the concepts and procedures they are learning in Chemistry class can be very useful in the real world". The data collected is part of a study of 8 sub-watersheds in the Upper Maumee for the purpose of reducing nutrients traveling to the river and Lake Erie.





# Around Defiance County

## Rotary Walkway Improvements

As part of the ongoing restoration of the Auglaize Riverbank along Washington Avenue, crews are in the process of removing invasive plant species and planting native riparian species. These plant combinations will reduce erosion, create wildlife habitat and enhance views of the river.

The City is developing a plan to upgrade the Rotary Walkway that follows the riverbanks from the Clinton Street Bridge to the Second Street Bridge. These improvements will include replacing old benches, adding new trash cans, picnic tables, bicycle racks and lighting upgrades.

## Diehl Park Bioretention Update

With any new project, there is always a learning curve. The “Diehl Park Project” is no different! Tetra Tech was selected by the City to design a bioretention area in order to remove stormwater from the Sanitary Sewer System. One of the challenges faced is the fact that mature trees in the park are growing in places where we wanted to dig. Back to the drawing board! The design has been changed to preserve the mature trees and some of the smaller ones will be moved. As a result of these changes, construction for the project will be delayed until 2016.

## Public Rain Gardens

Have you noticed your neighbors installing rain barrels and rain gardens to save water and beautify their property? Through the Land to Lake project, 145 rain barrels have been installed and 79 rain gardens have been planted! Curious? Check out the 3 Land to Lake public rain gardens. All three gardens were designed with native plants as demonstration sites to inspire more rain gardens.



**Defiance Library:** This simple rain garden sits between a parking lot and the Maumee River. Water from the parking lot and surrounding area runs into the rain garden to be filtered before entering the Maumee River. Library patrons can understand that ‘every drop counts’.



### Apache Dairy Bar (Sherwood):

Here, customers can get an up-close look at a rain garden while enjoying a meal or treat. This beautiful rain garden has been integrated into the owner’s landscaping plans. The gutters from the pavilion and part of the building along with runoff from the parking lot are directed into the rain garden.

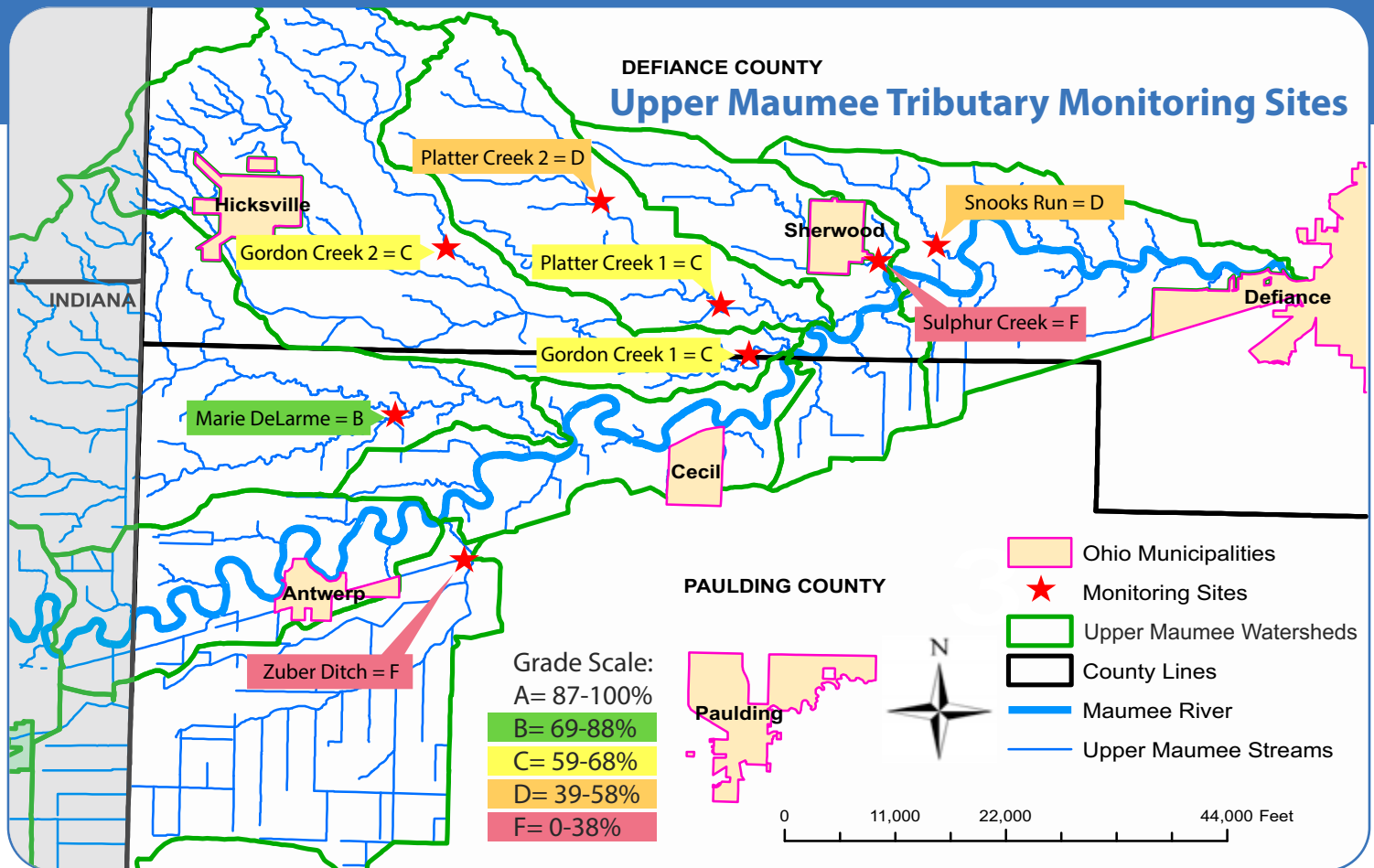


**Arthur/Main (Hicksville):** Situated on a vacant corner lot, this rain garden intercepts gutter water from a nearby garage and surface water. Through the partnership with the Village of Hicksville, a new sidewalk allows pedestrians to take a shortcut and enjoy the native plants and pollinators.



Funding provided by OEEF.  
Visit the [Public Projects](#) tab on our website for more info.

# 2014-2015 Water Quality Report Card



## Why is this report card important?

Measuring the water quality on the tributaries is essential to understand the difference between the pollutant load on the Maumee River coming from Ft. Wayne and the large watershed upstream and the potential pollutant load coming from our local watersheds. Quantifying the nutrient levels on our small streams allows us to focus on projects in designated areas and measure improvements.

Data was collected on a monthly basis by local volunteers and the water samples were analyzed at Heidelberg National Center for Water Quality Research.

The overall grades were calculated from monthly samples taken May 2014-April 2015. The grades were based on the percentage of times the stream met water quality standards for nutrients and sediments. Parameters averaged were: total suspended solids, nitrates, soluble reactive phosphorus, and total phosphorus. Also measured: pH, dissolved reactive oxygen, temperature.

This project was funded by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. The Upper Maumee Watershed Action Plan and more details on data collected can be found at [landtolake.com](http://landtolake.com)



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