



LANDToLAKE

magazine

issue 14

2021

overview

PROTECTING RESOURCES
of the **Maumee River Watershed**
THROUGHOUT DEFIANCE COUNTY

Upper Maumee Smart Watershed Pilot

H2Ohio Wetlands Project in Defiance

Empowering Our Community

Blazing the Buckeye Trail

ENCOURAGING local involvement 2021

Clean Up Your Parks Day

The City of Defiance kicks off each Spring with an annual Clean Up day at our city parks. Youth groups, service organizations and local citizens pitch-in to get our parks ready for the season.

The Defiance City Division of Parks and Recreation provided free lunch and t-shirts to volunteers at this year's 25th Annual event.



Arbor Day

The Division of Parks and Recreation and the City Shade Tree Commission celebrated Arbor Day with tree plantings on April 30th, 2021 at the newly renovated East Side Park and at the City of Defiance Reservoir.

Defiance RiverFest

This annual event is held to provide education on the importance of our area waterways, to encourage protection and conservation of natural resources, and to celebrate the beauty and recreational opportunities provided by our rivers and streams. RiverFest 2021 included:

- Follow the Blue Blazes group hike with Defiance County Commissioners,
- Confluence Clean-Up presented by Rotary Club of Defiance, and a
- Kayak Raffle with David Proulx drawn as the lucky winner.



Local Business Support

In 2021, Land to Lake was proud to promote local start-up JT Adventures as they began offering kayak rentals and providing greater recreational access to the Maumee River Water Trail in Defiance.



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Published to provide the community with information on protecting the water resources of the Maumee River Watershed throughout Defiance County.

EDITING: **Jennifer English**
MS4 Coordinator, City of Defiance

DESIGN: **Yvonne Dale**
ydgraphics.com

PRINTING: **Homewood | HOT Graphics**
hotgraphics.us



Printed With
Wind-Generated
CLEAN ENERGY



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Land to Lake provides information on water-quality and conservation-related activities in the region.

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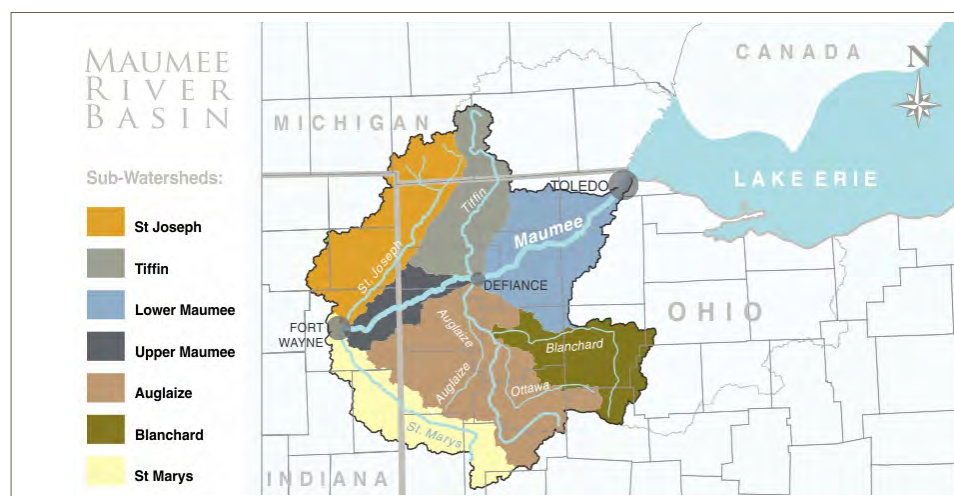
COVER PHOTO: Auglaize River near the confluence
in downtown Defiance. Image by LG Images.

UPPER MAUMEE

Smart Watershed Pilot

The City of Defiance obtained funding through a Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS) mini-grant to provide installation of real-time sensors for monitoring nutrient levels in the Upper Maumee River at the City of Defiance Water Treatment Plant (WTP). The data obtained will enable WTP staff to make critical data-driven decisions on when to pump from the Maumee into the Defiance water supply reservoir. In addition, this information will fill important data gaps needed to support the City's current Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) and future work to develop its Integrated Watershed Improvement Plan (IWIP)—complementary efforts that are both designed to benefit water quality in the Maumee watershed and Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB). This project will also provide information needed to help create stakeholder-driven conservation efforts through agricultural and urban-rural partnerships; not only in the Upper

Maumee Watershed, but in other parts of the Great Lakes Region. The work in Defiance will serve as a replicable, scalable pilot project for a Smart Watershed approach in the Great Lakes tributaries through civic engagement, ongoing implementation of best management practices and data communication with GLOS. Finally, this project will support the goals of the “Smart Great Lakes Initiative” by strengthening partnerships with other regional stakeholders working to address basin-wide water quality problems in the Great Lakes.





RESTORING WETLANDS

Improving Water Quality



The City of Defiance, through the H2Ohio program, will establish a wetland to improve water quality in the Maumee River Watershed.

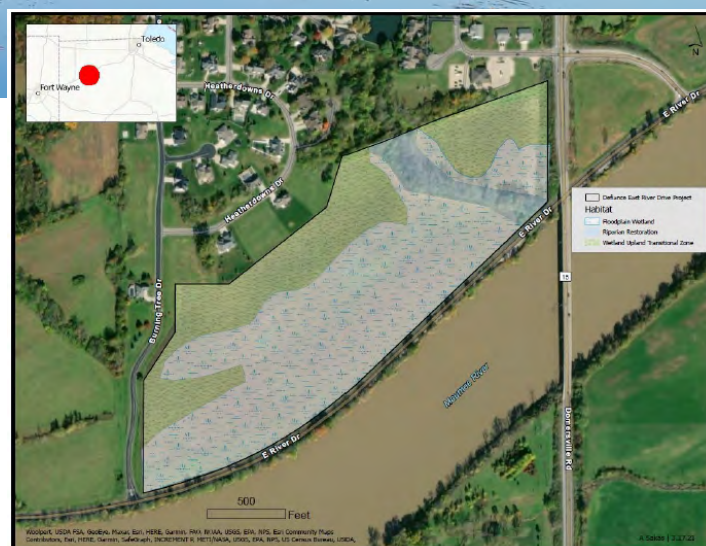
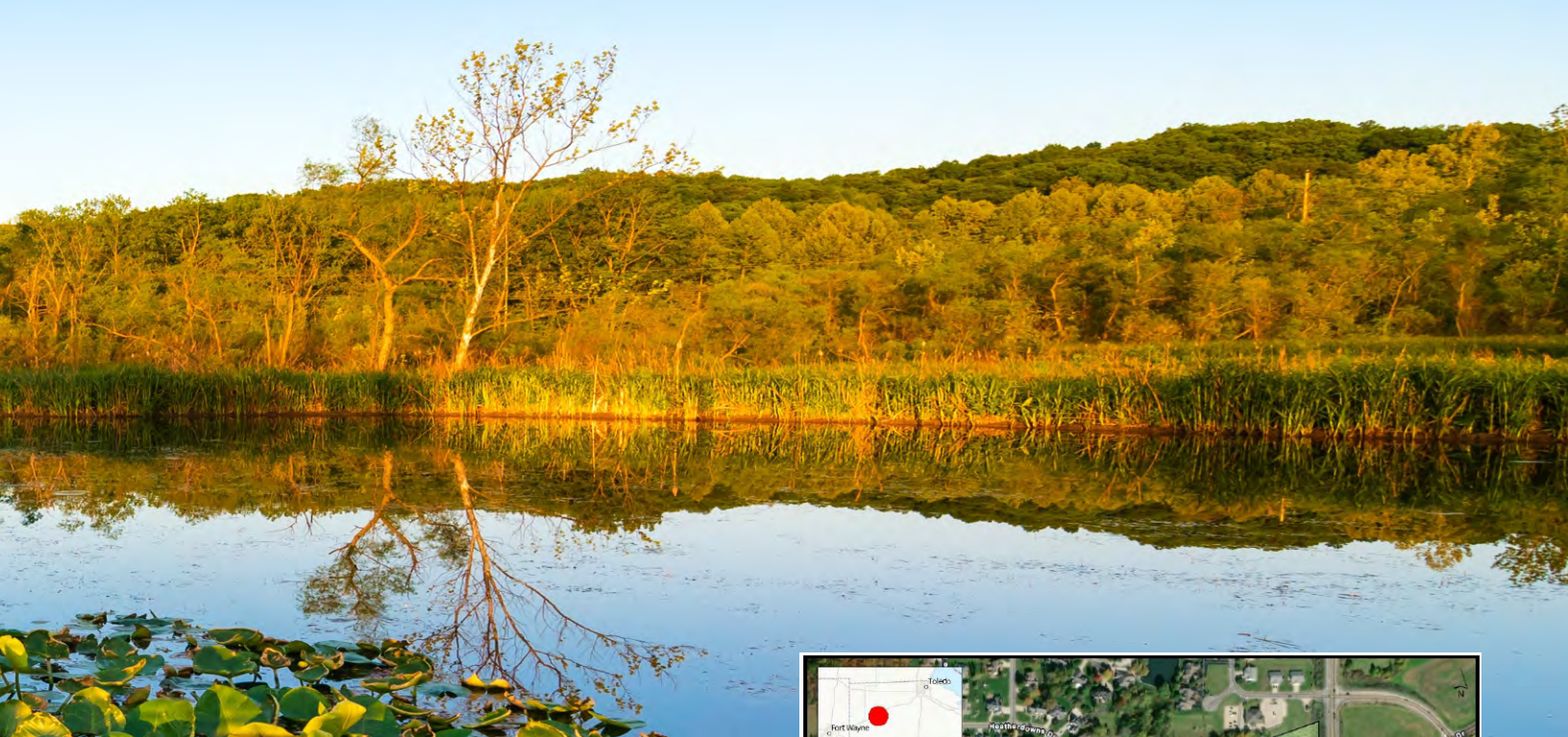
Wetlands reduce phosphorus runoff and offer additional environmental benefits by absorbing pollutants, slowing down the movement of water, offering a natural filtering process, and preventing the further movement of contaminated matter.

h2.ohio.gov

The project involves restoring a 40-acre site, currently farmed, to a 34-acre floodplain wetland and providing additional habitat restoration features on the remainder of the project site. The funding for the project comes from the H2Ohio Program, which is focused on restoring wetlands to enhance nutrient retention and assimilation and reduce nutrient loadings to Lake Erie (and eventually throughout the State of Ohio). Given its location in the landscape, this project represents a unique opportunity to achieve the H2Ohio program objectives and create a vibrant and inspiring place for the Defiance community to see firsthand how a site can be transformed to provide improved water quality habitat and aesthetic benefits.

PROJECT NEED

The problems of Lake Erie and the Maumee River drainage are well known from a watershed perspective and include excessive nutrient loadings. These nutrient loadings (dissolved reactive phosphorus, nitrogen, etc.) stimulate seasonal Microcystis blooms in Lake Erie. The presence of the HAB (hazardous algal bloom) poses a public health risk and impacts economic activity by deterring vacationers and area residents from the Western Basin when blooms are prevalent. In response to these problems, the State of Ohio has initiated the H2Ohio program, which focuses on working collaboratively with the farming community to reduce nutrient loadings by applying a range of best



East River Drive Wetland Concept

Proposed Project Schedule

Winter 2022:

Engage *Biohabitats* as Design/Build Firm
biohabitats.com

Spring/Summer 2022:

Conceptual Design, Permitting & Public Outreach

Fall 2022:

Plan Approval & Potential to Begin Construction

Winter/Spring/Summer 2023:

Stream Restoration & Wetland Creation

2024/2025:

Active Maintenance during Establishment Period

2026 and Future:

Ongoing Maintenance

management practices. In addition, conservation groups, Park Districts, and communities, like the City of Defiance, can apply for grant funding to implement wetland restoration projects that achieve the H2Ohio program goals. At the same time, the program is an opportunity for participants to leverage the funds to create community open space and ecologically beneficial amenities and opportunities for public education to understand better the problems occurring in Lake Erie.

The City of Defiance has been an advocate for bringing citizens back to its waterfront. In recent years, it has been working collaboratively with other communities in the upper Maumee River Watershed to educate citizens on watershed and natural resources stewardship benefits. Participating in the H2Ohio program is an example of the City of Defiance's continued leadership to solve water quality problems and advance initiatives for the community's health, welfare, and safety.

PROJECT GOAL

The primary design goal for the project is to convert agricultural land into a wetland/riparian complex with an improved hydrologic connection to the Maumee River. With restored hydrology, the system will increase nutrient uptake, reduce sedimentation and erosion, increase wetland habitat and improve riparian habitat.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

empowering our community to take action

Land to Lake provides articles and resources to help keep the community motivated and informed of many ways they can help, throughout the year, to clean up our local water supply and improve our natural environment.

Encouraging Native Plants

Native plants are vital for beneficial insects and pollinators. As an added benefit, they are smart choices for low-maintenance landscaping. Our Native Plants section includes articles, links to resources for native plants and seeds, and a printable guide for Ohio gardeners.

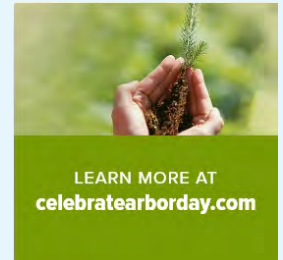
Promoting Recycling

Recycling is one steps a community can take toward maintaining a cleaner environment. The City of Defiance recycling program handles plastics and paper. The Land to Lake Recycling Guide provides information and local resources for recycling appliances, electronics, metals and more.

Offering Natural Solutions

From leaving leaves, to composting, to smart lawn care, Land to Lake is committed to bringing relevant information to our readers about how small actions can have big impact.

Find all of these topics and more at:
landtolake.com/make-a-difference



LEARN MORE AT
celebratearborday.com

Land to Lake promotes local, regional and national organizations who share our goals of conservation and preservation of our natural environment.

Actions in Defiance County have an impact on the water resources of Lake Erie.

“Lake Erie Updates” provide our readers with access to on-going information on lake conditions.

** A Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) is defined as a publicly-owned system used solely for conveying storm water; including storm drains, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches and man-made channels. The MS4 conveys water directly into surface water, such as rivers and streams.*



BLAZING THE TRAIL Through Defiance

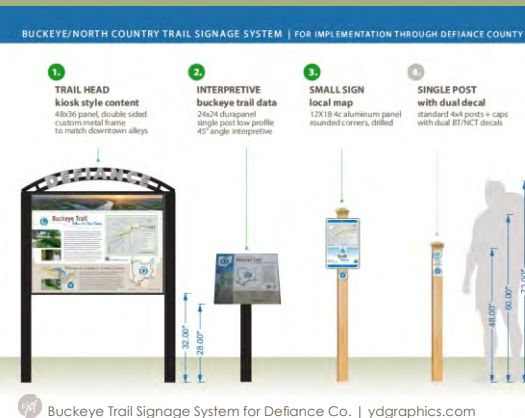
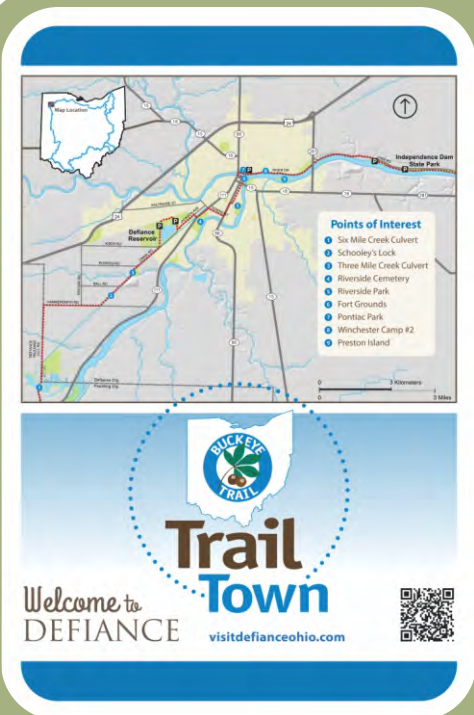
Ohio's Buckeye Trail (BT) was first envisioned in 1958 as a hiking trail to connect Lake Erie to the Ohio River through the rugged hills of eastern and southern Ohio. The BT has evolved into a large loop trail around the entire state of Ohio. More than 1,400 miles now connect wooded footpaths, abandoned railroads and canal towpaths, back roads, riversides and lake shores, within both rural and community settings connecting many of Ohio's most beloved public lands and trail towns. The BT provides an intimate way to experience Ohio's wonderful scenic and historic diversity.

The BT is marked along its length by painted blue blazes. The trail is open to all hikers, made possible by Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) volunteers and the partnership of many federal, state, and local agencies, and private land-owners. The BT is enjoyed as a popular local hiking destination by millions of Ohioans as well as a long distance "thru-hike" by the more adventurous.

The North Country National Scenic Trail is the longest in the National Trails System, stretching 4,700 miles across eight states from North Dakota to Vermont.

The Trail traverses through more than 160 federal, state and local public lands, including 10 National Forests, four areas of the National Park Service, and over 100 state parks, forests and game areas. It winds along three of the Great Lakes, past countless farmlands, through large cityscapes and vast prairies, over many rivers and streams, and through the famed Adirondacks. The North Country Trail also shares routes with the Buckeye Trail through Defiance County, from the Defiance Paulding County Line Road, along Canal Road, through town and eastward through Independence State Park.

In 2021, Defiance County and the City of Defiance worked with the BTA to develop a comprehensive plan for adding blazes and implementing a new signage system along the trail, throughout Defiance County. The new signs will be installed Spring 2022.



If you could follow  a drop of rain...

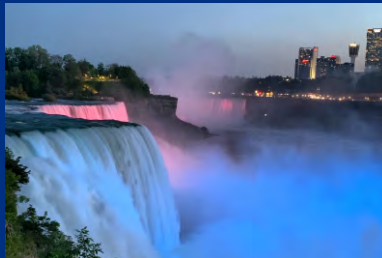
falling in Defiance,
you would soon find
yourself in the
Maumee River,



traveling through
Maumee Bay and
Lake Erie,



over the
Niagra Falls,



through
Lake Ontario,
the St. Lawrence
River,



and out to the
Atlantic Ocean!



 everydropcounts

