Protecting our Streams & Wetlands

A Resident's Guide to Community Policies

Contents

> ### *A note on this guidebook:*
>
> This guidebook is meant for anyone who wants to learn more about their home watershed and ways to protect our land and waters for the present and the future. Each section has graphics, figures, definitions, and ways to learn more. This was created as a complement to public workshops but can be utilized on its own as well. We hope you use it as a jumping off point into watershed protection.

SECTION 1 – LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

What Is a Watershed?

We can define a "watershed" as any area of land that drains to a particular waterbody. That means all of the water that runs off and downhill will eventually reach a stream, river, lake, etc. Sometimes rain and snowmelt flow over land to these water bodies, sometimes it goes underground to the water table, often times it goes through storm drains to the nearest creek. No matter which way the water goes, it's picking up anything from the land along the way. Rain will carry all sorts of things from the land into the creek or river nearby. Nutrients, sediment, pollutants, trash, grass clippings, etc. can all be washed into a nearby waterbody by rain (also called "stormwater").

Watershed – n. an area or region drained by a river, river system, or other body of water

We are ALWAYS in a watershed, even when we're not in view of a river or lake, everything we do on the land will affect the water downstream.
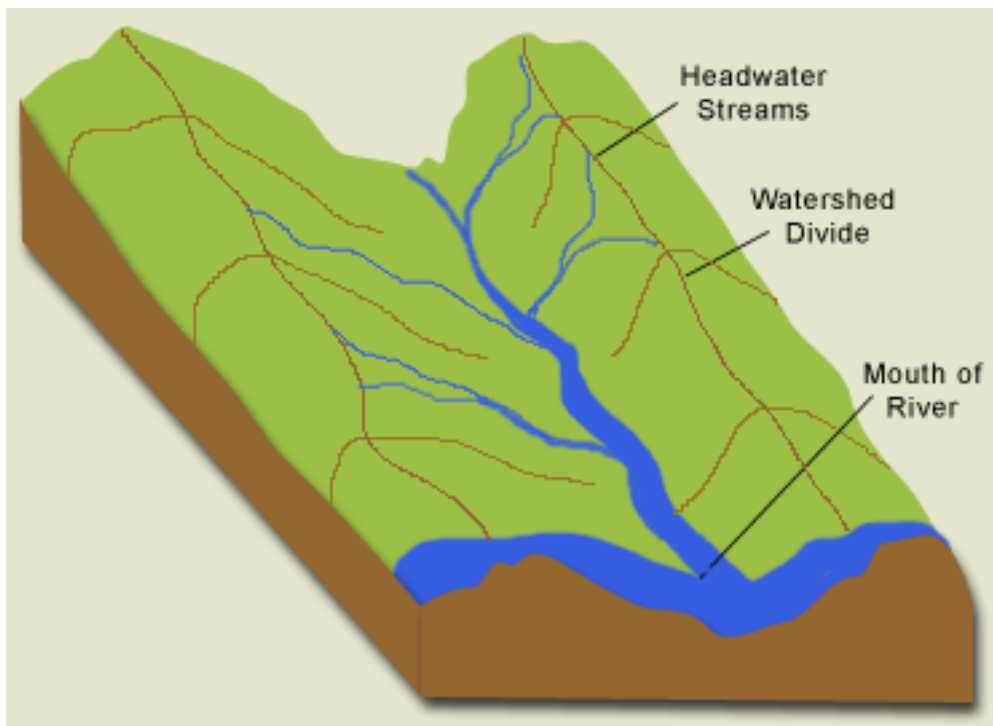
Figure 1: A basic view of a watershed

So which watershed do you live in?

Figure 2 below shows the major watersheds in the Central Lake Erie Basin. You'll notice that the Cuyahoga River Watershed is broken down into several "sub-watersheds". Even these can be broken down further still into smaller sub-watersheds of tributaries.

There are many ways to find out which watershed you live in. The Central Lake Erie Basin Collaborative's website can be a great place to start. Or if you live in Cuyahoga County, the Greenprint Viewer is an interactive map which has a watershed "layer". Using Google Maps to find a river/creek/etc. with a label near your home is another option.
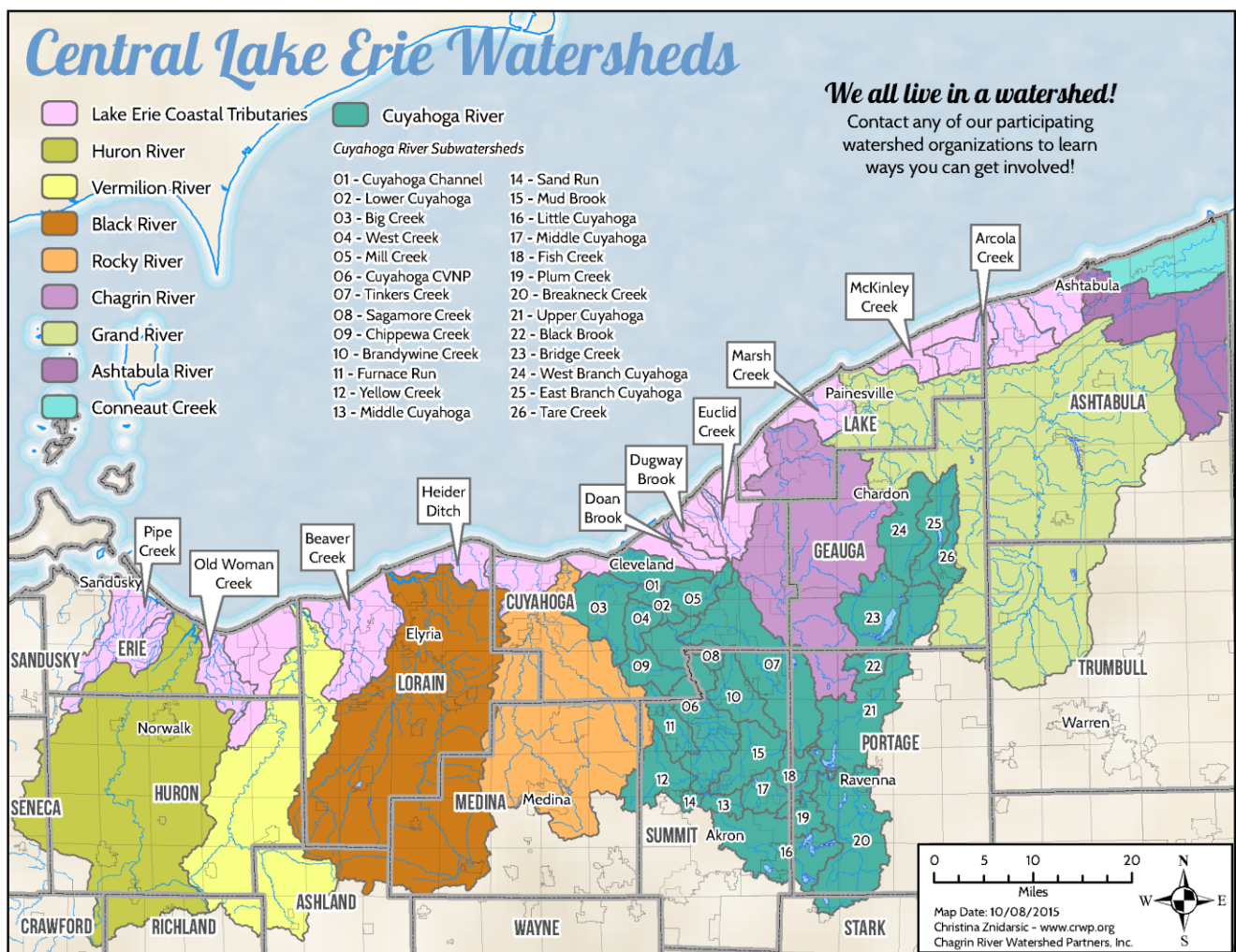
Figure 2: A map of the watersheds in the Central Lake Erie Basin

What Is a Riparian Zone and Why Is It So Important?

Now that we know what a watershed is, let's focus on an important section of a watershed called the "riparian zone". This refers to the area directly next to and/or alongside a waterbody. **Figure 3** gives us a visual taken from the publication "Life at the Water's Edge".

Riparian – adj. of, relating to, or situated or dwelling on the bank of a river or other body of water

Figure 3: An aerial view of a riparian zone. Source: Life at the Water's Edge

In a healthy watershed, riparian zones are often made up of floodplains and wooded wetlands. During heavy rains, a creek will naturally rise out of its channel and spread out into its floodplain. Floodplains and wooded wetlands consist of saturated soils and flood-tolerant trees and vegetation. When naturally vegetated and appropriately sized, these areas (also called buffers) can limit streambank erosion, reduce flood size flows, filter and settle out pollutants, and protect aquatic and terrestrial habitat, as shown in **Figure 4**.
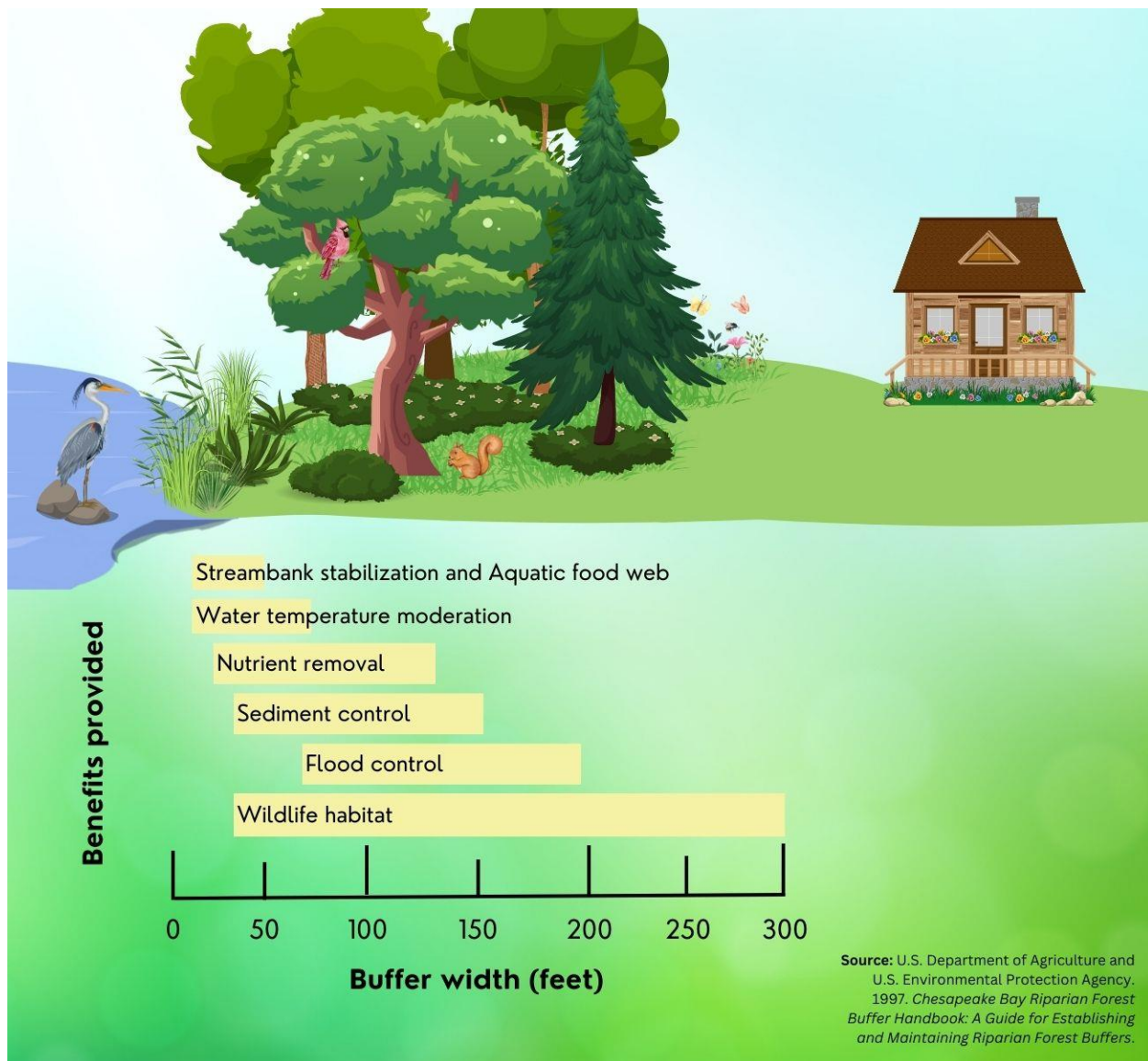
Figure 4: USDA and USEPA graphic showing the benefits provided at various buffer widths.

But what happens when a riparian zone doesn't have a functioning floodplain or habitat? What if the riparian zone instead includes buildings, roads, houses, etc.? Stormwater runoff and river overflow still needs to go somewhere, and this is where we start to see impacts like flooding and erosion.

Healthy, vegetated riparian zones should range from a minimum of 25 feet to 300 feet depending on the size of the area of land draining to the river or stream. This width should apply to both sides of the stream.

What We Do Impacts Our Watersheds

Even when we're not directly in the riparian zone, we're always in a watershed. That means we're always having an impact on the watershed too, for good or for worse! Everything you do will have an effect downstream. You can help increase biodiversity, increase habitat, and reduce your stormwater impact right on your own property.

Here are ways you can make a positive impact:

Native Tree Planting

Native Garden Planting

Cleaning up after your Pet

Installing a Rain Barrel

Removing Invasive Species

Reducing your lawn/ impervious surfaces

These examples aren't your only options of course, but they're a great way to get started. There are tons of resources available to help you choose native species, identify invasives, install a rain garden etc., Some are listed in the **Resources** section of this guidebook.

Use the space below to make note of anything you're interested in doing on your own property:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

These are some things we'd advise against:

Planting Nonnative/ Invasive Species
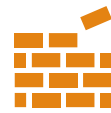
Using Excess Fertilizer

Using Excess Salt (for deicing)

Cutting down Trees (healthy, native)

Mowing to the Edge (of a waterway)

Adding Impervious Surfaces

If you're worried about these negative impacts to our waterways, there are plenty of ways to reduce the impact and/or find alternatives. Take all of these with a grain of salt (just a grain!). Some nonnative species aren't invasive and won't cause ecological harm, and sometimes there is good reason to cut down a tree or add impervious surface to your property. These aren't all bad, all the time, but there are ways to consider the environment when making decisions.

Use the space below to make note of anything you'd like to do differently on your property:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

We advise against the above examples since they can lead to impairments in our local waterways. The Ohio EPA maintains data on current impairments and related sources of those impairments which you can find online (see **Resources**). We've listed some of them below:

Common Impairments:
- Sediment and siltation (from erosion, etc.)
- Nutrient enrichment (excess nutrients)
- Bacteria such as *E. coli*
- High salinity (too much salt)
- Aquatic habitat and flow alterations
- Fish passage barriers

Common Sources
- Suburban nonpoint source stormwater runoff
- Riparian vegetation removal
- Channelization of streams (straightening or hard armoring)
- Failing on-site sewage treatment systems including septic systems
- Dams and road culverts
- Livestock access to streams
- Excessive salt application to roads

How Can I Find More Information About My Local Watershed?

We encourage you to utilize public resources to find out more information about your home watershed. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency is a great starting point. They've developed a resource called "How's My Waterway" which will tell you the identified impairments and sources for the watersheds in Ohio. The Ohio EPA collects data on the state's water resources regularly, and the data is available publicly online. Ohio EPA's website is also where you can find out if a watershed has a Watershed Action Plan, Balanced Growth Plan, and/or Nonpoint Source Pollution Implementation Strategy Plan (NPS-IS Plan). More about these different plans in **Section 2.**

Your local watershed group and/or watershed coordinator is another great place to find out how your home watershed is doing. In Northeast Ohio, you can find your local watershed group by visiting: centrallakeerie.org. They are often the folks who have put together plans like the ones listed above, and often have data collection programs utilizing citizen scientists. Depending on the organization, those data may be on the organization's website, or on a site like Water Reporter. Links are included in the **Resources** section.

Section 1 Discovery Sheet

Do some research about the watershed you live in. Fill out the below questions to help you prepare for Section 2 of this guidebook.

Your Home Watershed

What is its name? _____

Where does it lead? _____

How large is it? (square miles) _____

What are its major tributaries? (if any) _____

Watershed Organization

Does your watershed have a nonprofit/organization focused on it?   **Y / N**

If yes, what is it called? _____

What is their website? _____

Who is the main contact/watershed coordinator? _____

What is their email/phone number? _____

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Watershed Health

Is there data on your watershed on How's My Waterway?   **Y / N**

If yes, when was it collected? _____

What are the listed impairments? _____
_____

What are the listed sources? _____
_____

Note or any data you could find, or other thoughts:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION 2 – COMMUNITY PLANS AND POLICES

Section 1 was a primer on watersheds, watershed health, and local impacts. We even gave some examples of actions you can take on your own property to be a good neighbor and advocate for your home watershed. All of those individual actions really do add up, but what can we do on a larger scale to protect streams and rivers? Many of the same suggestions still apply to a township, a village, a city, and even a region. This section will discuss plans, ordinances, and policies that affect entire communities.

What Role Do Local Communities Play in Watershed Protection?

There are state and federal laws that regulate direct impacts to stream channels and wetlands (like the Clean Water Act/Rule), but none that regulate riparian zone protection. That means it's up to local communities to decide what happens in these areas by way of local laws called ordinances. Community planning and zoning are additional tools that local communities can use to protect these sensitive areas so they can continue to function well. Check out examples of community plans in **Appendix 1**.

As communities grow and develop, inevitably they'll need to build more roads, schools, restaurants, businesses, etc. where forests and prairies once grew. They'll need to make sure their storm drains, culverts, and other infrastructure can handle the water running off new impervious surfaces since it's no longer being absorbed into the ground. But development doesn't need to happen purely at the expense of healthy watersheds, both can coexist. Let's remember the pressures of development and the role that intact riparian zones can play:

Development Pressure	Riparian Benefits
Increased impervious surfaces	Less streambank erosion because root systems hold soil and sediment in place
Added sources of stormwater pollutants	Minimized downstream flooding impacts
Increased flooding and flood impacts	Pollutants filtered and settled out from stormwater
Increased erosion and water quality problems	Protected habitat and cooled waters
Increased infrastructure costs and resident complaints	Increased property values

Community Planning

"Community planning" can feel like a nebulous phrase, and indeed it can mean a great many different things. A community may develop a variety of plans to serve the needs of its residents. The desire for a particular plan depends on each community, so some communities may have some plans but not others depending on local needs and history. **Table 1** details plans used by watershed organizations and their partners and where to find them.

The community planning process creates a dialogue between local elected officials/decision makers and community members. Typically, an advisory committee may be formed to help lead the process and obtain stakeholder input.

You are a stakeholder in your community and watershed! You can get involved by attending your community's regular council and planning commission meetings, volunteering to serve on an advisory committee, participating in public planning meetings or focus groups, collecting information and input from your neighbors, and spreading the word about how others can become involved. More about how to do that in **Section 3**.

It takes all sorts of perspectives, knowledge, and experience to create community plans and policies that benefit the entire community. You don't need to be an expert on public policy to have an invaluable voice in shaping what your community looks like and how it functions. It can be hard to know where to look though when policy and planning aren't part of your every day.

> *The goal of __community planning__ is to "maximize the health, safety, and economic well-being of residents in ways that reflect the unique needs, desires, and culture of those who live and work within the community." (American Planning Association, "What is Planning?")*

We encourage you to reach out to your local watershed organization and your local officials to learn more about the plans in **Appendix 1**, and beyond. If a community states it has such a plan, but it's not listed on the community's website, call and ask if it can be added. If you're having trouble locating a certain ordinance, city hall should be able to direct you. The **Section 2 Discovery Sheet** will help guide your search too.

Connecting Plans to Ordinances

Whereas a comprehensive plan is a non-binding guide for future land use, ordinances are locally binding laws that regulate the use of land in the present. Sometimes a collection of ordinances influences the "zoning" of a community, or what types of things can go where. This can help make sure that a loud airport doesn't get built near a preschool, or that roads have lower speed limits on residential streets. Effective use of zoning can create more inclusive, equitable, and affordable neighborhoods. In addition to guiding the use of land through zoning (**Figure 5**), a community's ordinances also address things such as public safety and a wide variety of other matters generally not already covered by state or federal laws.

Ordinances are an important outcome of community planning efforts. Rather than sitting on a shelf in planning document, an ordinance continually benefits a community after it is passed. An ordinance does work for the community every day.
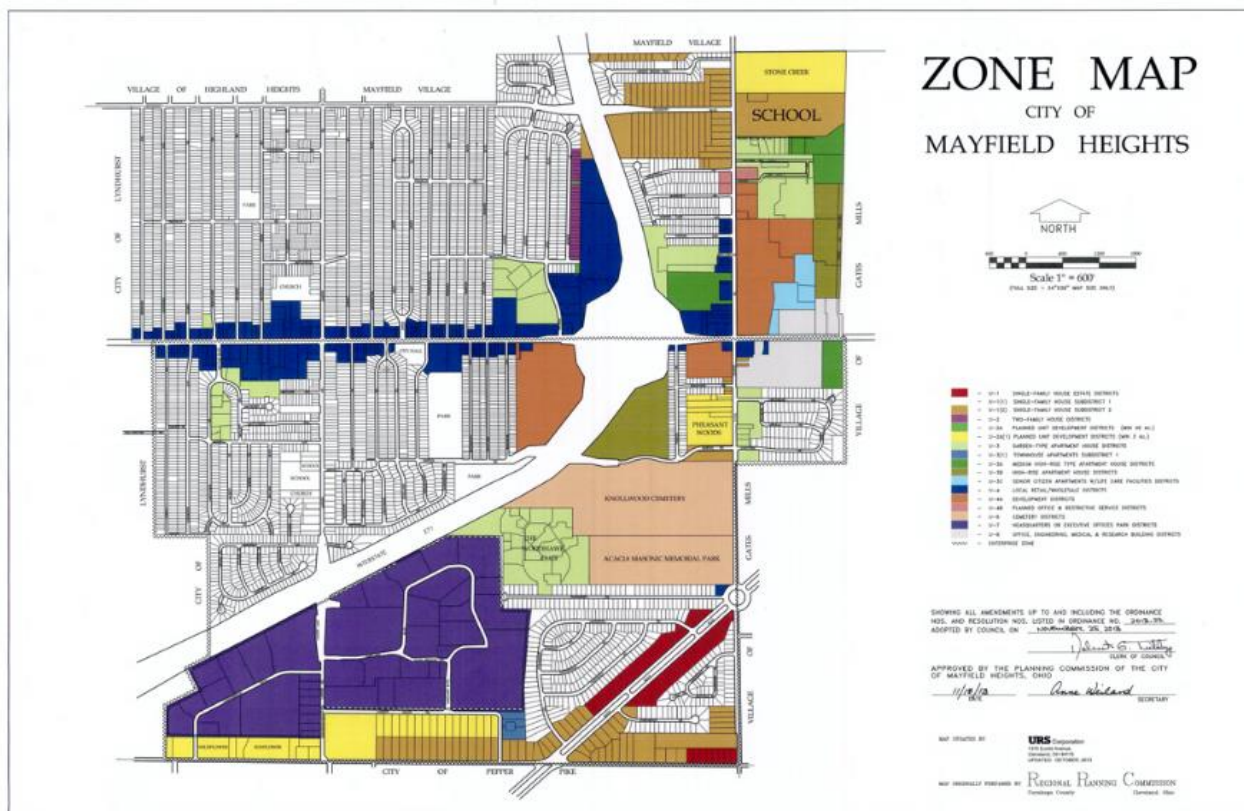

Figure 5: City of Mayfield Heights zoning map (2013)

Figure 6: *City of Highland Heights' Comprehensive Stormwater Management Codified Ordinance*

So, what do local ordinances look like? The example in **Figure 6** probably looks overwhelmingly dense and confusing. Legal language can appear this way at first, but don't let that deter you from understanding the local policy governing how your community functions. We'll talk more in **Section 3** about your role as a resident in how ordinances get carried out day to day in your community.

Where Can I Find My Community's Ordinances?

Municipalities in Ohio must "codify" their ordinances by making them available in one place and organizing them, usually by subject. Most communities provide a link to their codified ordinances on the community's website, and many communities use an online library service which provides the codified ordinances on a single website and allows the public to search for key words and phrases. A couple examples of commonly used code library services in northeast Ohio include American Legal Publishing or Municode.

How Do We Use Ordinances to Protect Watersheds?

When riparian zones are lost to construction and development, we lose their functionality too. This often requires significant investment in engineered structures to partially replace the lost riparian function (see **Figures 7 & 8**), but protecting riparian areas helps maintain these at no direct cost to residents and communities. There are other great options for land protection like purchase or easements, but protecting riparian areas though zoning is FREE. And unlike a plan that makes recommendations, an ordinance has enforcement power.

Communities can spend a lot of money on costly solutions for stream issues (such as streambank stabilization projects) or prevent the issue in the first place by protection through ordinance.

Figure 7: Gabion baskets (pictured) and other hard-armoring solutions are sometimes used to address eroding streambanks, but these solutions are costly and prone to failure. The best solution would have been to site the home further away and not clear land up to the stream. Photo source: Chagrin River Watershed Partners.

Figure 8: Another example of a costly hard-armoring structure used to prevent erosion that ultimately increased erosion.
Photo source: Chagrin River Watershed Partners.

What Is a Riparian Setback?

The functions of riparian areas, including flood control and erosion control, directly affect public health and safety, establishing the legal linkage for local governments to exercise their zoning authority. Riparian setback specific ordinances that are designed to establish distances from water resources where building and other soil disturbing activities are prohibited unless the applicant obtains a variance (or exception) from the local community.

> *The setback is a common zoning tool used to limit land uses and structures within a designated area. A community's ordinances may require setbacks for side yards, rear yards, roads, riparian zones, wetland buffers, or other areas.*

Riparian setbacks should follow community land development patterns and natural resource management goals. Riparian setbacks should also include provisions for communities to examine the combined impact of all setbacks (side yard, rear yard, riparian, etc.) on a subdivision or a parcel and make reasonable adjustments to ensure existing lots remain buildable and to maintain lot yields from new subdivisions to the extent possible.

Commonly allowed uses (with/without a conditional use permit) within a riparian setback:

Recreational Activity

Removing Damaged/Diseased Trees

Planting with Native Species

Stream Crossings

Streambank Stabilization Projects

Landscaping (in accordance with community)

Commonly prohibited uses within a riparian setback include:

Construction

Dredging

Dumping

Fences & Walls

Roads & Driveways

Disturbing Natural Vegetation

A community may allow prohibited uses already in place within the setback, also called **non-conforming uses**, to continue if they were already established before passing the ordinance AND as long as the use is not changed or enlarged. For example, a shed located in a riparian setback at the time of the ordinance adoption may be allowed to stay **given the shed is not enlarged or expanded.** If the shed is substantially damaged by a flood or some other cause and abandoned for more than six months, the shed may not be restored or re-established.

Exceptions To the Rule

Variances, or exceptions, for prohibited uses within the setback may be granted by the community if they decide it is impractical or excessively difficult to uphold the allowable use. For example, if a developer plans to build a home on a residential property and must encroach into a setback to install the driveway, then a variance for the driveway may be granted.

In granting any variance, the community should consider the potential harm or reduction in riparian functions that may be caused by a proposed structure or use. The community may choose to require special conditions for the variance to be granted, such as requiring a gravel driveway instead of hardscaping or requiring the installation of native plants to improve the vegetated buffer between the driveway and the riparian setback.

Either way, granting a variance requires a vote at a public meeting where members of the public can voice their option, more on that in **Section 3**.

Chagrin River Watershed Partners has a model, or template, riparian setback ordinance which can be tailored to fit the needs of individual communities. In this model, setback widths vary from 25 to 300 feet from either side of the stream and are extended to the edge of the 100-year Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain and to the outer edge of any wetlands abutting the riparian corridor. The larger the waterway, the wider the setback generally. Refer to **Figure 4**. The model ordinance is available at CRWP's website: https://crwp.org/riparian-setbacks/ Over 80 Ohio communities have adopted riparian setbacks.

The recommended distances are:

Watershed Size	Setback Distance
<0.5 sq. miles	25 feet
0.5-20 sq. miles	75 feet
20-300 sq. miles	120 feet
>300 sq. miles	300 feet

Wetland Class	Setback Distance
1	Not mandatory
2	75 feet
3	120 feet

Figure 9: Recommended setback distance based on watershed size, Cuyahoga SWCD

If a community is interested in adopting a riparian setback ordinance, the adoption process is typically initiated by the community's engineering department or stormwater committee, but can be initiated by other like council, the mayor, or planning/zoning commission. We'll talk more in the next section about what role residents can play in the adoption process.

Section 2 Discovery Sheet

Do some research about community plans that exist where you live and your local ordinances. Fill out the below questions to help you prepare for Section 3 of this guidebook.

Check off the plans you find for your community/watershed:

☐ **Comprehensive or Master Plan**

Where is it located? (add link or physical location) _____

When was the plan written or most recently updated? _____

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ **Watershed Plan**

Where is it located? (add link or physical location) _____

When was the plan written or most recently updated? _____

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐   Other Type of Plan: _____

Where is it located? (add link or physical location) _____

When was the plan written or most recently updated? _____

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐   Other Type of Plan: _____

Where is it located? (add link or physical location) _____

When was the plan written or most recently updated? _____

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐   Other Type of Plan: _____

Where is it located? (add link or physical location) _____

When was the plan written or most recently updated? _____

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

Where can you find your community's ordinances? (add link) _____

_____

Fill out the below table to help you prepare for Section 3 of this guidebook.

Does your community have an ordinance that establishes a setback along streams or around wetlands?	
If yes, in what chapter of the codified ordinances can the riparian or wetland setback requirements be found?	
When was this ordinance adopted or last updated?	
What width setback is required? Does the setback vary according to factors such as stream size, drainage area, or wetland quality?	
For riparian setbacks, does the setback apply to both sides of the stream?	
Where does the setback begin? (e.g., ordinary high-water mark of the stream, stream centerline, outer edge of delineated wetland, etc.)	
What activities are allowed within the setback?	

What activities are allowed within the setback with a conditional use permit?	
What activities are prohibited within the setback?	
Is the setback extended to the outer edge of the 100-year floodplain along the stream or river?	
What community department is responsible for enforcing the ordinance?	
Has the community made a riparian setback guide map available for residents and landowners? Where is this map located?	
Are variances allowed? What are the criteria for a variance to be granted?	

How does the ordinance apply to non-conforming structures within the setback?	
What triggers the inspection of a riparian or wetland setback by the community?	
Are there penalties for violation of the setback ordinance? What are the penalties?	
Is either a County Soil and Water Conservation District, a local nonprofit watershed organization, or other type of professional expert noted as a resource for the community in its enforcement of the riparian or wetland setback ordinance?	

Notes: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 3 – PUBLIC MEETINGS

Overview

Probably the most common and consistent public meeting is the community council meeting. These meetings are held on a regular schedule, often monthly, and ensure the practical functioning of a community. They may feel formal, but you can think of them as simply a scaled-up family meeting where you decide who's doing what, how much to spend on certain items, and your plans for the future.

Most meetings of a governing body are conducted under a system called "parliamentary procedure" which is used by college fraternities, city councils, and Congress alike. This is where we get phrases like "I move to…" or "Seconded…" and "all in favor say Aye". Parliamentary procedure is guided by a keystone text called "Robert's Rules of Order" which is simplified into a small book appropriately titled "Robert's Rules of Order – in brief". There's no need to be intimately familiar with parliamentary procedure for you to attend and participate in public meetings but leafing through "In Brief" can help make the formal language feel less alien.

At any given city council meeting, you can expect to see regular people in attendance, and additional folks depending on the agenda topics at hand. Regulars would include the mayor, city council members, clerk of council, department chairs/directors, and members of the public. The meeting will have a defined flow to it based on the agenda. Typically, agendas have a set order and predictable items:

Call to Order
Roll Call
Approval of last meeting's Minutes
Public Comment
Chair/Director Reports
Old/Unfinished Business (continued from the last meeting)
New Business (new items to discuss)

The business sections of the agenda are where most "motions" happen, these are the items that are voted on. Decisions about adopting or amending ordinances, granting variances, etc. happen here. Once a motion has been introduced, there is usually a period of time for discussion by the members of the council. This is when they'll consider all of the information that they have to make a decision, including the information heard during the public comment section.

How Do I find Out About Meetings?

Ohio is governed by a set of laws collectively known as "Sunshine Laws" that detail who is required to maintain public records, what a public record is, and how to make sure they are available to the public. See the **Resources** section for more information.

Public bodies, such as local governments, are required to provide consistent reasonable notice for public meetings and provide a record of their minutes within a reasonable timeframe.

It's important to remember that even when meetings are public, you probably won't be getting a direct invitation from your mayor or council to your email or calendar. You'll have to seek out meetings proactively, and there are a few usual places to look. Many communities post their meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes on their main website, physically at city hall, and/or in the community newsletter. If your community has a digital or print newsletter, subscribing to that publication will likely provide reminders about public meetings. Calling your local community hall or mayor's office is another way to find out when and where meetings are.

Providing Public Comment

Maybe you've accessed this guidebook because you want to know more about watersheds, or about your community's policies, and maybe you even want to come to a public meeting and be a part of the democratic process. You do not need to provide public comment to have a reason to go to a public meeting, it is your right as a community member to attend and listen in. Even if you do provide public comment, you do not need to be an expert or authority on a subject to speak! Your perspective and questions are valuable on their own.

As we reach the end of this guidebook, we'd like to give you a bit of information about what to expect and how to engage at a public meeting if you choose to do so. We've also provided a basic template of an "elevator speech" for you to customize.

Where am I going?

Anyone attending a public meeting should be familiar with the meeting location and venue, how to get there, and how to access the building. Public meetings ought to be publicly accessible, so the venue is more than likely ADA compliant and can be navigated with mobility aids. It might be worth checking out local public transportation options and parking accommodations ahead of your first visit.

What do I say?

Some public meetings may ask or require you to submit your comments ahead of the meeting in writing. If you're speaking in-person, your comments may be subject to a time limit such as three minutes. It's helpful to understand the rules ahead of time either through the community's website or by speaking with someone in city hall. It may also be helpful to write down what you'd like to say ahead of time to ensure it fits within any time limits, and that you include all your keys points. Be prepared to answer questions from the members of the public body (council, mayor, commissioners, etc.), but also know that they may not have additional questions for you.

Oftentimes, you'll be asked to state your name and address for the record when you begin speaking, and you may be asked to speak into a microphone for a recording. During your comments and/or during questions after, try to address any member of the public body by their title when known.

Other Considerations:

While you probably don't need to wear anything particularly formal to a public meeting, any outfit you wear ought to be comfortable and decent. You may want to wear layers in case the temperature in the building is outside your comfort zone.

Knowing the agenda ahead of time is helpful in knowing when public comment will be and/or if there are topics being discussed that interest you. If the council is discussing an ordinance, or debating a variance, those will be listed on the agenda.

Consider if there are any other barriers to your participation. Will you need an ASL interpreter? Will you need to bring children? If the meeting is during a typical meal hour, are you allowed to bring food with you? Know before you go!

Example "elevator speech"
Hello, my name is John Smith. I live at 123 Anywhere Street in Anywhere Town. I'm here to voice some suggestions for our community's new Tree Canopy Plan which is on the agenda today. I was glad to see that the City is creating this plan and is in favor of more tree planting throughout the community. As the City is drafting this plan, I want to express my hope that native trees are included on the list of approved species, and harmful invasive species are not. Native trees have many benefits to the environment, and they require less watering and maintenance once established. I brought some information from our county soil and water conservation district if anyone is interested. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today, thank you.

Section 3 Discovery Sheet

Find out when your local government meets and if there are any special committees/commissions you might be interested in. Fill out the below questions to help you prepare to attend a public meeting.

Your Local Council

What is your community's website? _____

Does your community have a newsletter? _____

When does the council meet? (e.g., second Tues., 7 pm) _____

Where do they meet? (address)_____

Where are agendas posted? (website/physical) _____

What other committees interest you? _____

When/where do they meet? _____
_____

Think of a friend/family member who would go with you_____

Contact Information

This information may be helpful when attending a variety of public meetings or finding out about them. Some may not be applicable to your community.

Office	Primary Contact/Name	Phone Number	Email Address
Mayor			
Mayor's Office/Assistant			
Council President			
Your Council Rep (by ward)			
Clerk of Council			
Planning & Zoning Department			
Building Department			
Engineering Department			
Service Department			
Stormwater Committee			
Tree Commission			
Floodplain Manager			
City Arborist			

Appendix 1: Examples of community or watershed scale plans

Plan	What it Does	Where to Find it	Example
Comprehensive Plan (sometimes called a Master Plan)	• Creates a blueprint for what the community wants to achieve in the future and aligns this blueprint with available resources. • Assesses whether current policies or actions reflect long-term goals. • Helps with decision-making around land use, services, and capital improvements. • Managing a community without a comprehensive plan is like "building a home without a proper blueprint." *(Ohio Balanced Growth Program, "Linking Land Use and Ohio's Waters Toolkit")*	Contact your community's Planning and Zoning Department or visit their website.	City of Cleveland Heights' Master Plan can be found at: https://www.clevelandheights.gov/1064/Master-Plan
Watershed Balanced Growth Plan	• A "framework for coordinated local community decision making about how growth and conservation should be promoted by local and state policies and investments across watersheds." *(Ohio Balanced Growth Program)* • Identifies Priority Conservation Areas (natural areas for protection and restoration) and Priority Development Areas (areas targeted for development or re-development in order to maximize efficiency and reduce watershed impacts).	Ohio Balanced Growth Program's website: https://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/	*Chagrin River Watershed Balanced Growth Plan* (2009) can be found at: https://crwp.org/watershed-planning/
Tree Canopy Plan	• An assessment of the tree canopy coverage currently present in in a community and goals to maintain and increase tree canopy coverage in the future. • A tree canopy plan may recommend updates to community regulations such as tree removal or landscaping requirements.	Contact your community's Parks & Recreation or Planning & Zoning departments or visit their websites.	*Cleveland Tree Plan* (2015) can be found at: http://www.clevelandtrees.org/cleveland-tree-plan/

| Watershed Plans or Other Natural Resource Plans | • Inventories the health of local streams and set goals and strategies for maintaining or improving the health of streams and other water bodies.

• A watershed plan can focus on watersheds at multiple scales, such as a large basin-wide scale (e.g., the Lake Erie Watershed) or smaller sub-watersheds within a larger watershed (e.g., the Euclid Creek Watershed).

• Watershed plans may focus on a particular type of watershed challenge. In Ohio, watershed plans focused on non-point source pollution are called **9-Element Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategies (or NPS-IS Plans).**

• Watershed plans often cross multiple community boundaries and planning may be initiated by a nonprofit organization, soil and water conservation district, or regional planning entity.

• Many communities may have comprehensive stormwater management plans, sometimes as required to meet state stormwater requirements.

• A community may have other plans to meet its specific needs, such as wildlife management plans. | Contact your community's Planning & Zoning or Engineering departments or visit their websites.

Contact your local watershed organization or county soil and water conservation district or visit their websites.

Watershed plans: https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/surface-water/reports-data/endorsed-watershed-action-plans

NPS-IS Plans: https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/surface-water/reports-data/approved-nine-element-nonpoint-source-implementation-strategies-in-ohio | Euclid Creek Watershed NPS-IS Plan: https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/surface-water/reports-data/approved-nine-element-nonpoint-source-implementation-strategies-in-ohio |

Resources

"Adoption Process for Best Land-Use Regulations." Chagrin River Watershed Partners. December 2009.
https://crwp.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/08/adoption_process_best_land_use_regulations_february2010.pdf

American Legal Publishing
https://www.amlegal.com/

Central Lake Erie Basin Collaborative
https://centrallakeerie.org/

"Community Riparian and Wetland Guidance: Putting all the Pieces Together." Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District.
https://crwp.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/08/riparian_wetlands_guide_book.pdf

Cuyahoga County GreenPrint Viewer
https://gis.cuyahogacounty.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=ccpcgreenprint

How's My Waterway?
https://mywaterway.epa.gov/

"Life at the Water's Edge" Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District
https://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/files/resources/lifeatwatersedge.pdf

"Linking Land Use and Ohio's Waters Toolkit." Ohio Balanced Growth Program.
https://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/local-land-use/01-ohio-waters-toolkit

"Model Ordinance for the Establishment of Riparian Setbacks." Chagrin River Watershed Partners, March 2008.
https://crwp.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/08/Model_Ordinance_CRWP_Mar_2008_Riparian_SB.pdf

Municode Library
https://library.municode.com/

Northeast Ohio Master Rain Gardener
https://neomasterraingardener.org/

NPS-IS Plans
https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/surface-water/reports-data/approved-nine-element-nonpoint-source-implementation-strategies-in-ohio

Ohio Balanced Growth Program
https://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/

Ohio Sunshine Laws
https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Legal/Sunshine-Laws

"Rain Garden Manual for Homeowners" Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District. 2006.
https://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/files/resources/raingardenmanual-oldversionforwebsite.pdf

Roberts, Henry Martyn. Robert's Rules of Order. Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1998.

Water Reporter
https://www.waterreporter.org/

Watershed Action Plans
https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/surface-water/reports-data/endorsed-watershed-action-plans

"What is Planning?" American Planning Association. https://www.planning.org/aboutplanning/

"Why Riparian Setbacks?" Chagrin River Watershed Partners. January 2006.
https://crwp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/why_riparian_setbacks_jan_2006.pdf

Use this page for any additional notes: