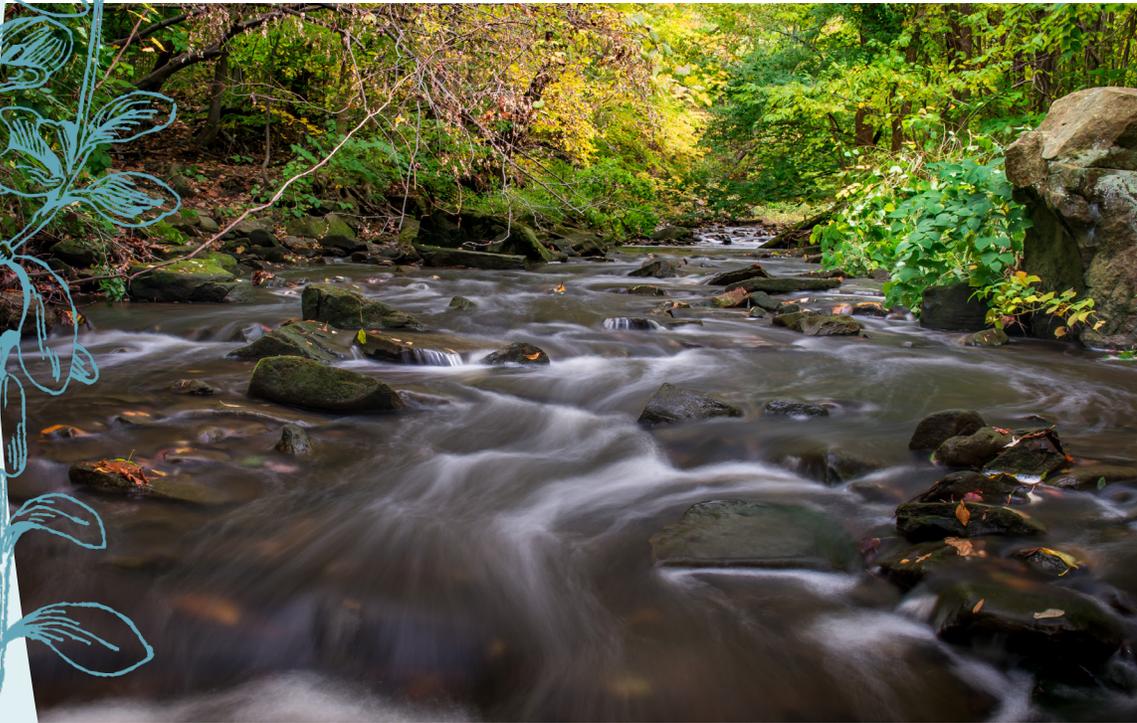


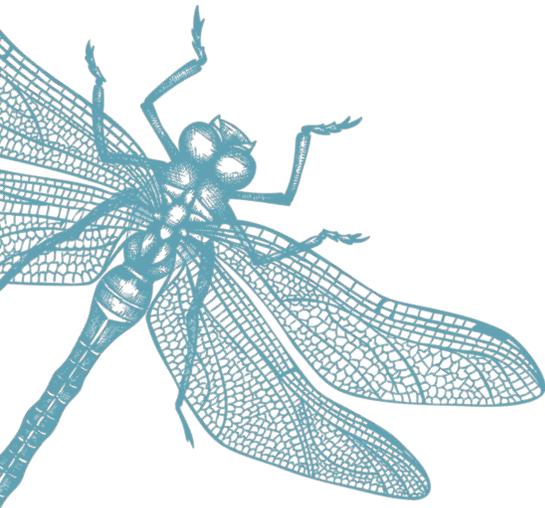


2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Ripples of Change
a year of community
engagement and growth

YOUR DOAN-ATION MAKES A BIG SPLASH



Your contribution plays a crucial role in advancing our mission to protect and restore the Doan Brook and its watershed. With your help, we can implement vital programs that enhance water quality, promote sustainability, and engage our community in environmental stewardship.

Thanks to donors like you, we have made significant strides this year in our restoration efforts and community outreach initiatives. Your investment not only supports immediate projects but also fosters a long-term commitment to preserving our natural resources for future generations. We are truly grateful for your partnership and dedication to our cause. Together, we can make a lasting impact on our watershed and the community we serve.

DBWP RESTORATION AND ENGAGEMENT WORK IS FUNDED IN PART THROUGH GRANT SUPPORT



2023-2024 DONORS

A. J. Lafave
Alexander S. Dowling
Alexandra Litofsky
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Andrea L. Schmidt
Ann Sherif
Barbar & Kurt Zoss
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Victoria Mills
Wendy Donkin
William & Catherine Annable
William & Margaret Lipscomb
William Katzin & Katherine Solender

2024: FOCUSED ON OUR ROOTS, PREPARING TO BLOOM

It's exciting to reflect on my first year as Executive Director of the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership (DBWP). Throughout 2024, I focused on enhancing our operations, including digitizing processes, developing evaluation metrics, and formalizing goals for the future, while seeking expanded funding. This year, we completed a strategic planning process, resulting in a five-year action plan to realize our restoration and program goals. We've strengthened partnerships by rekindling past collaborations and forging new connections. Our team has worked hard to improve our communication platforms, including newsletters and social media, and we have plans to boost citizen and partner engagement in 2025. We hosted numerous events with the help of dedicated volunteers.

I am deeply grateful to have been given the opportunity to guide this transitional year for the watershed. My work has been bolstered by our new Watershed Program Manager, Emily Kao, and our engaged Board and Executive Committee, especially Nancy Moore, whose support has been personally invaluable. I also want to acknowledge the many volunteers who invest their hearts, time, and resources into the stewardship of this watershed. I would like to note a few of our standout citizen watershed stewards: John Rode for his support of our paddling and fishing programs; John Reebel, a long-time cornerstone of our donation program; John Barber and Peggy Spaeth, organizers of Friends of Lower Lake; and Greg Van Niel, who leads restoration efforts in the Doan Brook Gorge. These volunteers exemplify the enthusiasm that drives our mission.

Mo Drinkard



STAFF

MAUREEN "MO" DRINKARD, PHD

Executive Director

Dr. Drinkard is a Riparian Ecologist who earned her Doctorate from Kent State University. Her childhood along the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio sparked a lifelong passion for aquatic ecology, environmental restoration, and conservation. Her ongoing research and professional interests include riparian, wetland, and watershed ecology, entomology, and sustainability.

EMILY KAO

Watershed Program Manager

Emily Kao is an environmental scientist and avid hiker and cross country skier. She studied environmental science at Cornell before joining the Doan Brook team. Emily is passionate about community engagement for climate resilience and environmental justice.

Mo (left) and Emily (right) at Take to the Lake

BOARD MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman – Darnell Brown, At-Large Citizen Representative

President – Nancy Moore, Councilwoman, City of Shaker Heights

Vice President – Karen Knittel, Assistant Planning Director, City of Cleveland Heights

Secretary – Laura Gooch, At-Large Citizen Representative & Engineering Consultant

Treasurer – Curt Witchey, At-Large Citizen Representative

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Joel Alpern – Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Holden Forests and Gardens

Chris Bongorno – Owner/Principal, Bongorno Consulting LLC; General Consultant, Holden Parks Trust/ University Circle Inc.

Peter Bode – President and CEO, Nature Center at Shaker Lakes

Gail Larson – Councilwoman, City of Cleveland Heights

Jeri E. Chaikin – Chief Administrative Officer, City of Shaker Heights

Stephanie Howse-Jones – Councilwoman, Ward 7, City of Cleveland

Ryan Lopez – Commissioner, Water Pollution Control, City of Cleveland

Roberta Muehlheim – Museum Ambassador and Associate Curator of Vertebrate Zoology, Cleveland Museum of Natural History

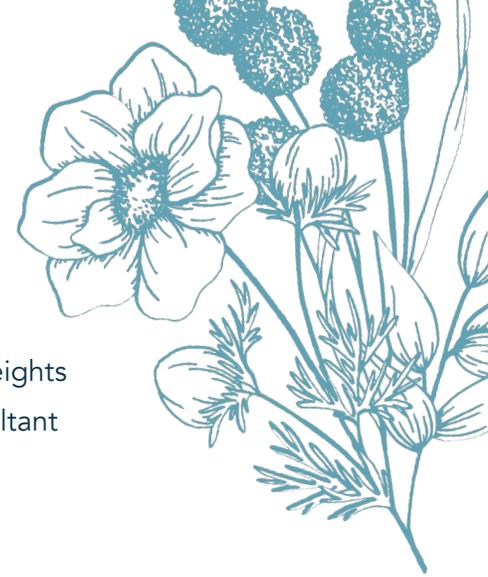
Alex Litofsky – At-Large Citizen Representative

Stacey Polk – At-Large Citizen Representative

Jennifer Lumpkin – At-Large Citizen Representative, Precinct 9V Committee Member, Founder + Principal, My Grow Connect, LLC

Greg Van Niel – Affiliate Trustee, Volunteer Representative, Friends of Doan Brook Gorge

Cisco Rivera – Affiliate Trustee, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District



NOWCORPS SERVICE MEMBERS



Catherine Zampedri

April - September 2024



Len Rincon Martinez

October 2024 - September 2025



Hayley Lalchand

October 2024 - September 2025

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Our events included our annual Family Fishing Day and Take to the Lake, stream clean ups, storm drain stenciling days, native tree plantings, invasive species removals, hikes all across the watershed, and a watershed tour by bicycle.

Many thanks to Watershed Program Manager, Emily Kao, our DBWP Volunteers, and our NOWCorps Service members who make these events possible.



This year, DBWP hosted 48 events, serving nearly 1,000 citizens, and supported by more than 250 volunteers offering more than 2,300 hours of support!

EVENT ATTENDEES BY CITY



151



SHAKER HEIGHTS

281



294

We had fantastic engagement and participation through targeted outreach efforts and the passionate involvement of our volunteers. These events not only foster community engagement but also serve as vital platforms for educating the public about environmental stewardship and the importance of protecting our ecosystems. While we still have room to grow, the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive, encouraging us to build on this momentum in the coming year. Next year, we will focus on enhancing attendance and engagement at our watershed and environmental public outreach events through expanded communication and relationship building.

MARKETING REACH



4,050

people on our email list



57

posts on social media



282

social media link clicks

	Reach	Contact interactions	Followers
	16,600	1,200	1,500
	983	403	122

POPULAR EVENTS

FAMILY FISHING DAY

We hosted another successful Family Fishing Day at Rockefeller Lagoon on September 14th this year, and it was a beautiful day for fishing! We had over 355 participants and gave away over 300 free fishing rods, 1,000 worms and at least 3,000 maggots. Prior to the event, we stocked the lagoon with bluegill and catfish, so it was a great day to bring home a catch! In addition to Family Fishing Day, we hosted 2 Fishing Workshops at Rockefeller Lagoon, and in total our fishing activities for this year benefitted nearly 500 people!



TAKE TO THE LAKE

We had a fantastic time at Take to the Lake on August 24, 2024, at Lower Lake in Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights. This event was started in 2013 as a memorial to avid paddler and early DBWP Board Member, Lester Stumpe. There was something for everyone this year: paddling lessons, kayak rentals, yoga, a hike, tables from community partners like the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, the Cleveland Heights Green Team, Cleveland Water Pollution Control, Cleveland Amateur Boat Builders, Wild Ones, Nature in My Backyard, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, and Kathy Smachlo with an engaging exhibit on plastics! We welcomed over 275 participants, and had so much fun spending the day on Lower Lake with our watershed community.



Photo by Robert Muller

48 in-person events

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Family Fishing Day | 6 Hikes |
| Take to the Lake | 1 Bike ride |
| 2 Fishing Workshops | 1 Fishing rod assembly |
| 2 Rain Barrel Workshops | 31 Native habitat stewardship days |
| 3 Stream Cleanups | |



Over 450 native trees, shrubs and plants planted

VOLUNTEERING IN THE WATERSHED

VOLUNTEER SERVICE HOURS

Volunteers working with DBWP and our programs (Friends of Lower Lake and Friends of Doan Brook Gorge) contributed more than 2,300 hours of service. This in-kind contribution is worth \$78,266!

2337

Total volunteer hours

FRIENDS OF LOWER LAKE

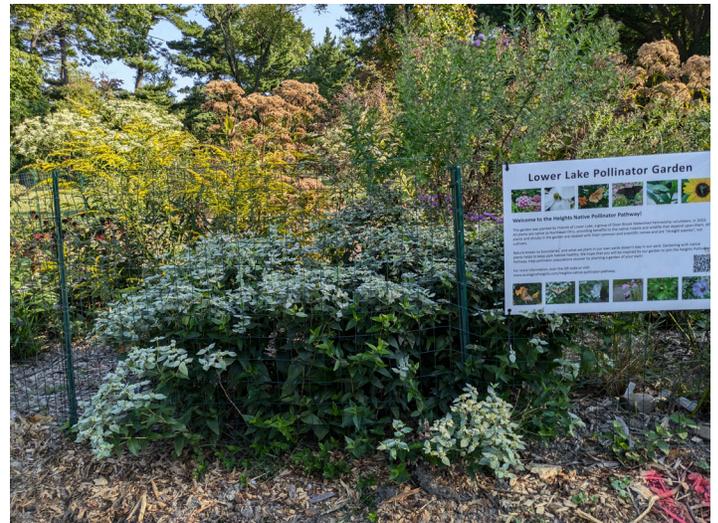
Friends of Lower Lake have been hard at work since 2018 and have made tremendous progress. They have 25 regular volunteers ages 16 to 83 working Sunday mornings from mid-April to mid-November removing invasive species and planting natives. In Spring 2024, Friends of Lower Lake planted 50 trees and shrubs and innumerable forbs. The **Leighton Garden**, organized by Sue Strauss, has been one of their most recent visible projects. Please join Friends of Lower Lake on a Sunday morning this Fall!

Leighton Garden Before



Photos by Peggy Spaeth

Leighton Garden After



ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS

Did you know that we can leverage the value of your contributed time as an in-kind match for grant applications? This helps us to show that our organization is contributing to the expense of projects and programs. So, thank you x2!

AN INCOMPLETE LIST OF UNUSUAL ITEMS FOUND AT STREAM CLEANUPS



75+

bags of trash



10

tires



2

electric
scooters



1

rug



1

grill



1

toilet

DOAN BROOK IMPACT AWARD

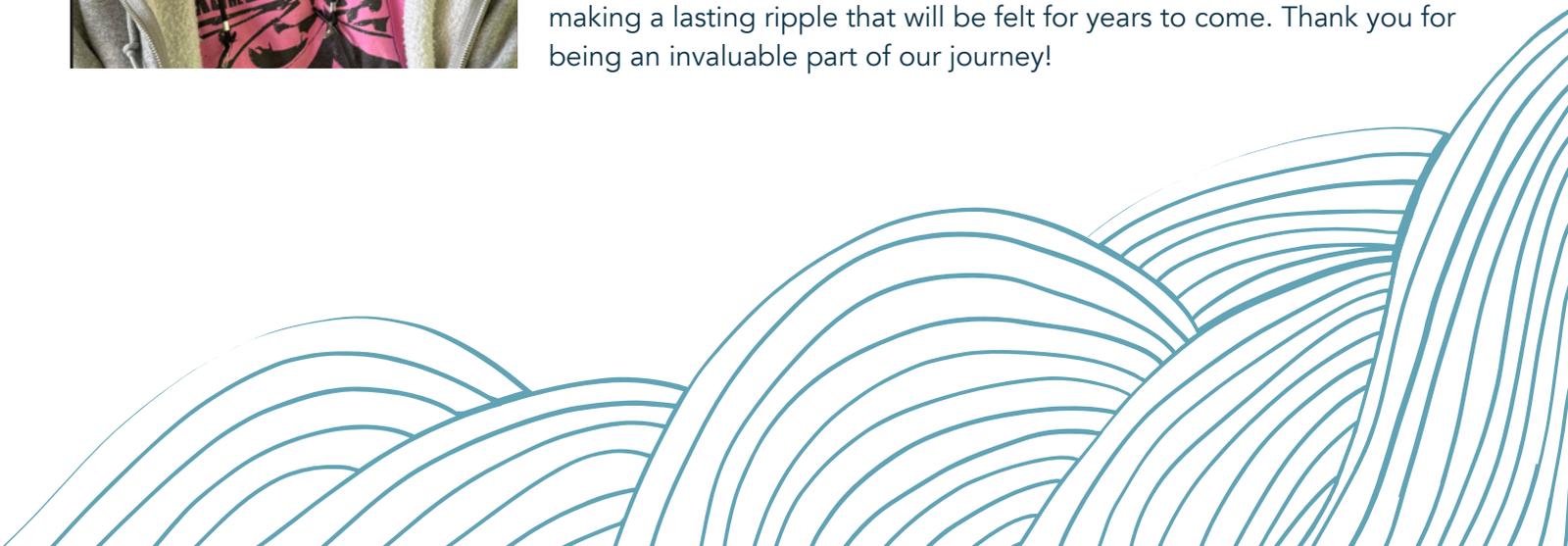
The Doan Brook Impact Award honors volunteers whose commitment and exceptional service have significantly advanced our mission to restore and protect the Doan Brook watershed. Through their leadership, advocacy, and hands-on involvement in various projects, these volunteers have not only contributed to the restoration of the Doan Brook but have also cultivated a legacy of stewardship that will benefit future generations. The Doan Brook Impact Award celebrates their invaluable contributions and serves as a testament to the power of community action in environmental conservation.



JOHN REEBEL

The 2024 Doan Brook Impact Award Recipient

We are proud to present the First Annual Doan Brook Impact Award to John Reebel, whose unwavering dedication and tireless efforts have profoundly enriched our donation campaign and supported our organization in many other ways. For years, John has meticulously tracked donations, ensuring every contribution was acknowledged with heartfelt thank you letters that strengthened our community bonds. His commitment not only enhanced our fundraising efforts but also inspired countless others to engage in our mission. John embodies the spirit of service and commitment at the heart of our Doan Brook Impact Award, making a lasting ripple that will be felt for years to come. Thank you for being an invaluable part of our journey!



WATERSHED SCIENCE & RESTORATION



HEALTHY URBAN TREE CANOPY GRANT

Doan Brook Partnership, in partnership with Bartlett Tree Experts, is taking care of Cleveland's mature tree canopy! Through strategic planning via a tree inventory and management plan, Doan Brook has been awarded a Healthy Urban Tree Canopy Grant from Cuyahoga County to preserve and protect mature trees in Rockefeller Park. These trees are a mix of ash (vulnerable to emerald ash borer), oaks (vulnerable to oak wilt), elms (vulnerable to Dutch elm disease), and sycamores (vulnerable to anthracnose) for protection from pest and disease impacts. These tree preservation services (along with forthcoming root and soil care and planting) will provide much needed plant health care and ensure future canopy for a critical greenspace corridor.

This project is funded by the Healthy Urban Tree Canopy Grant (Cuyahoga County Planning Commission) and Holden Parks Trust, and will be completed with support from Holden Forests and Gardens and the City of Cleveland at a total value of \$98,309.19.



The maintenance of older trees is critical to ecosystem health. Mature trees provide significantly more environmental benefits like increased carbon sequestration, better shade, improved air quality, and enhanced biodiversity than young trees.



Photos by Chad Clink of Bartlett Tree

RAIN GARDENS

INCREASING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Next spring, we plan to work with Chagrin River Watershed Partners to install a rain garden at the Daniel E Morgan School located in the Hough neighborhood in Cleveland. If your school is in the watershed and might be interested in a rain garden or native plants on your campus please contact Emily at kao@doanbrookpartnership.org.

SUNBEAM RAIN GARDEN

In October, we partnered with Chagrin River Watershed Partners to install a rain garden at the Sunbeam school in the Larchmere neighborhood of Cleveland's east side. Rain gardens help to collect rainwater and allow it to slowly seep into the ground. This helps to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and can help to decrease the likelihood of combined sewer overflows.



SUNBEAM RAIN GARDEN PLANTS

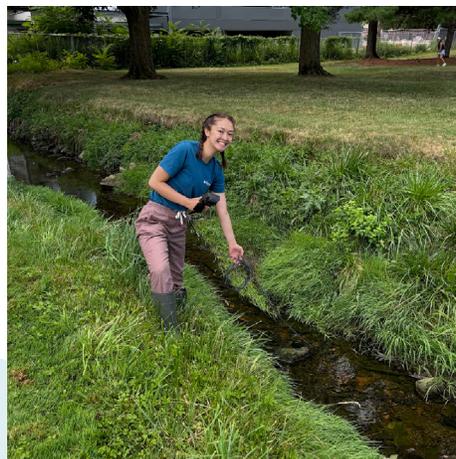
Scientific name	Common name	Bloom time	Bloom color
Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	June - Dec	
Echinacea purpurea	Purple Coneflower	July - Aug	
Amsonia hubrichtii	Threadleaf Blue Star	April - May	
Heliopsis helianthoides	Early Sunflower	June - Aug	
Rudbeckia triloba	Brown-eyed Susan	July - Oct	
Ilex verticillata	Winterberry, male	June-July	
Fragaria virginiana	Wild Strawberry	April - May	
Carex grayi	Grey's sedge	May - Oct	
Lobelia siphilitica	Blue Lobelia	July - Sept	
Coreopsis lanceolata	Lanceleaf Coreopsis	June - Aug	
Symphyotrichum laeve	Smooth Aster	Sept - Oct	
Polemonium reptans	Jacob's ladder	April - June	

Original plant list and table provided by Kaylee Acres Eclov of Chagrin River Watershed Partnership

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

As a member of the Lake Erie Volunteer Science Network, we receive water quality monitoring equipment through Cleveland Water Alliance to collect water quality data at 15 sites along the Doan Brook from April to October. This was our first year participating in the network, and we learned so much about water quality monitoring, volunteer data collection, and so much more from members of the network.

Parameters Measured: Dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH, conductivity, salinity



RESTORATION AT THE DOAN BROOK GORGE

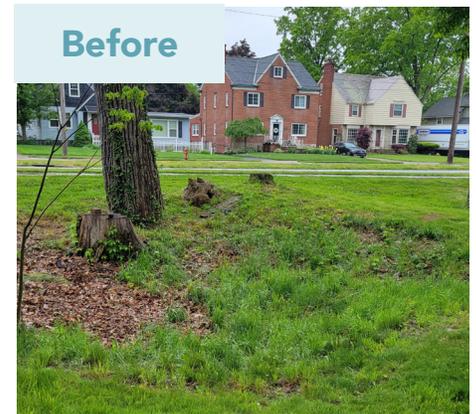
The small, but mighty, volunteer group, Friends of Doan Brook Gorge, continued their invasive species remediation work in 2024, moving eastward along the south side of the brook and north of Fairhill Road. Since 2021 the group has been systematically removing invasive shrubs, trees and vines, and planting native species in their place, funded by grants and donations.

REMOVED AND REPLACED

The invasive species removed include buckthorn, Japanese honeysuckle, privet hedge, and porcelain berry vines. Roughly 275 trees and shrubs have been planted since 2021 (with an estimated 110 in 2024), including oaks, birches, dogwoods, serviceberry, witch hazel, hornbeam, black cherry, and a wide variety of others. The objective of the project is to improve the ecological health of the watershed and the downstream areas through which the brook flows.

COMMUNITY FOCUS

In 2024, seeing that the next target area was adjacent to a neighborhood with little access to other green space, the team began to include those residents in the project. The aim is both to improve their access to nature and to involve them in the work. Community workdays were held, areas along Fairhill Road were beautified with native trees and shrubs, and trails and trail entrances were made more welcoming. Two new flower beds were created along the sidewalk and filled with native pollinator plants by a group of middle school students. The team will continue to make the natural areas more attractive and navigable for those who live and work nearby.



Photos by Greg Van Niel

DOAN BROOK GORGE RESTORATION MAP



NEORSD STREAM AND DAM RESTORATIONS



LOWER SHAKER LAKE DAM RECONSTRUCTION

Pre-design for the project will wrap up in 2024. Detailed design of the project will begin in early 2025 and will continue into 2026. The Sewer District anticipates that construction efforts will begin in early 2027 and last up to two years. Continue to look for ways to participate in the detailed design phase in 2025. For more information, please visit:

www.neorsd.org/lowerlake

RESTORATION AT HORSESHOE PARK

The project is currently in detailed design, which will be completed sometime in 2025. The next public meeting will take place in Spring 2025. The Sewer District anticipates that construction efforts will begin in early 2026. For more information, please visit:

www.neorsd.org/doanbrook

Photos by Peggy Spaeth

DESIGN PLAN FOR HORSESHOE PARK

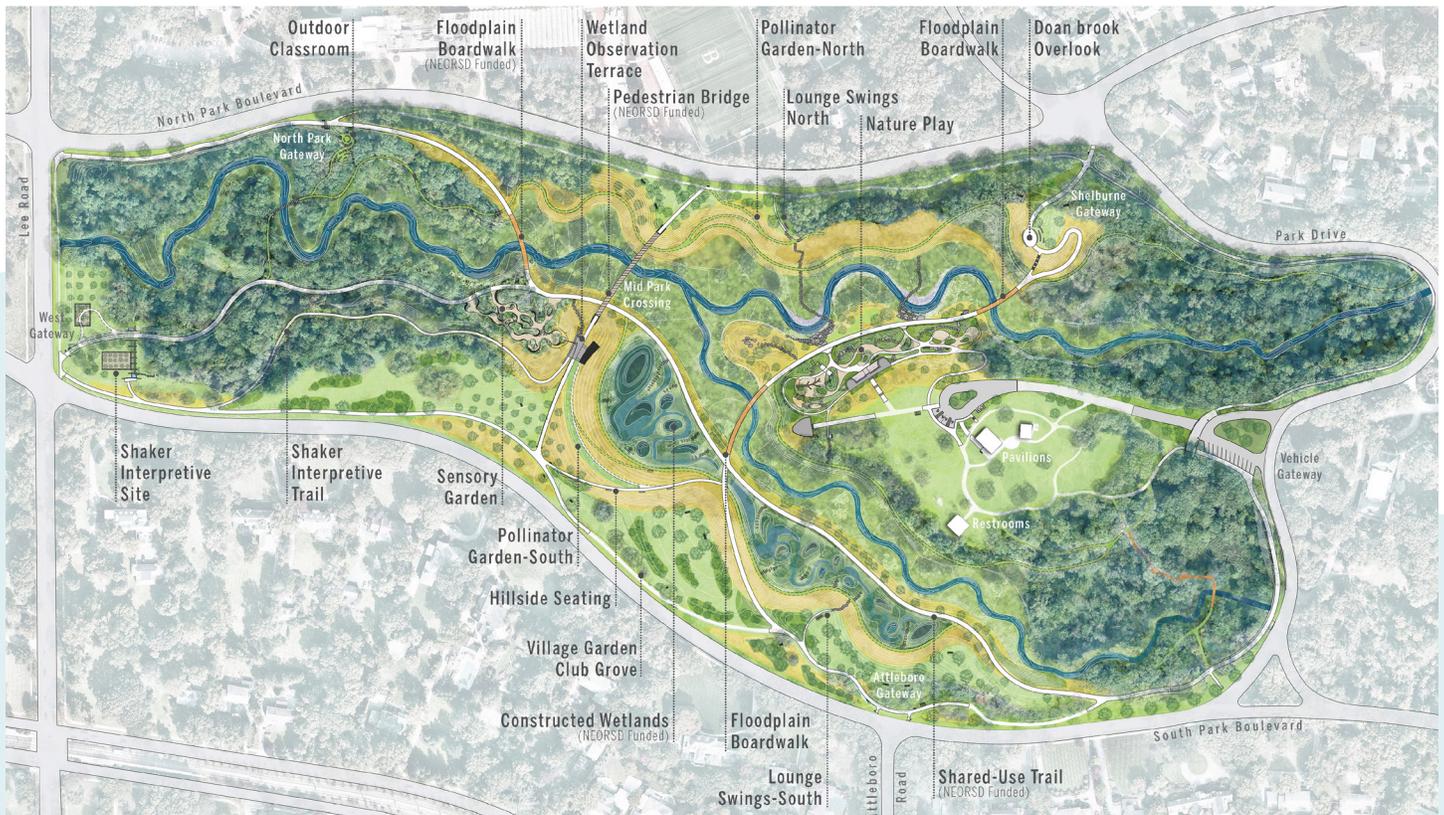
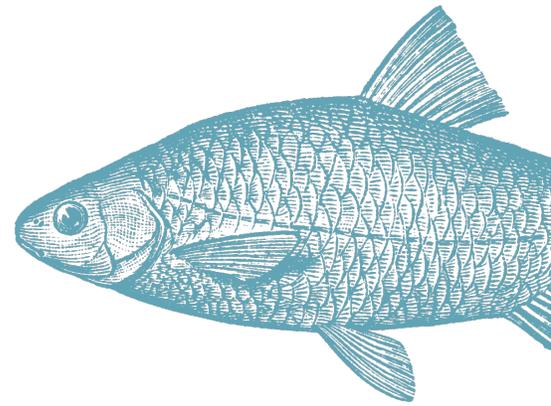


Photo credit by NEORSD

eDNA FISH ANALYSIS

In August 2024, we worked with partners to complete an eDNA analysis of the fish population in the entire watershed! Environmental DNA (or eDNA) analysis is a technique that examines DNA that organisms have shed into the environment. It can be used to identify species, assess biodiversity, and monitor the presence of invasive species. Water samples were taken at our 15 regular water quality monitoring stations and eDNA was filtered out of each water sample for analysis. The DNA samples will be analyzed this winter. Keep an eye on our newsletter and social media for the results!



USACE ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

DBWP was approved for the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Planning Assistance for States program to complete an Ecological Assessment of the Doan Brook Watershed from Ambler Park to Lake Erie. USACE proposes to initiate a study to assess current habitat quality in the affected reach of Doan Brook, identify opportunities for restoration, and develop a framework that will allow DBWP to prioritize actions based on costs and potential ecological uplift. We plan to use the information from this survey to help inform future restoration decision-making and to pursue funding for restoration of the Doan Brook throughout Rockefeller Park. This is an incredibly comprehensive assessment valued at more than \$230,000 for which Doan Brook received a 100% cost-waiver.



Photo by Robert Muller

WATERSHED HERO AWARD

The Doan Brook Watershed Hero Award celebrates individuals, groups, organizations, or collaborators who have made extraordinary contributions to the mission of restoring and protecting the Doan Brook watershed. This award honors those who have generously shared their time, resources, or expertise, significantly advancing our efforts and fostering community engagement. Their heroic actions inspire others to participate in the mission, creating a positive ripple effect throughout the community. The Doan Brook Watershed Hero Award recognizes these outstanding contributions, acknowledging the vital role they play in ensuring a healthier, more sustainable watershed for future generations.

GREG VAN NIEL

2024 Watershed Hero Award recipient

It is our great pleasure to announce our esteemed awardee of the 2024 Doan Brook Watershed Hero award, Greg Van Niel. This recognition honors his exceptional dedication to the restoration efforts at the Doan Brook Gorge. Through tireless and unwavering commitment, he has led the charge in removing invasive species that threaten the ecosystem found at the gorge, allowing native flora to begin to thrive once again.

In addition to his vital work in invasive species removal, Greg has meticulously planned and planted a diverse array of carefully selected native trees and plants, enhancing the biodiversity and resilience of the gorge. His vision and efforts in creating and maintaining trails have opened up this beautiful natural area for community use, encouraging residents to connect with and appreciate the environment around them. Greg's passion and leadership have truly transformed the Doan Brook Gorge, making it a model for stewardship and community engagement. Please join me in celebrating his remarkable achievements!

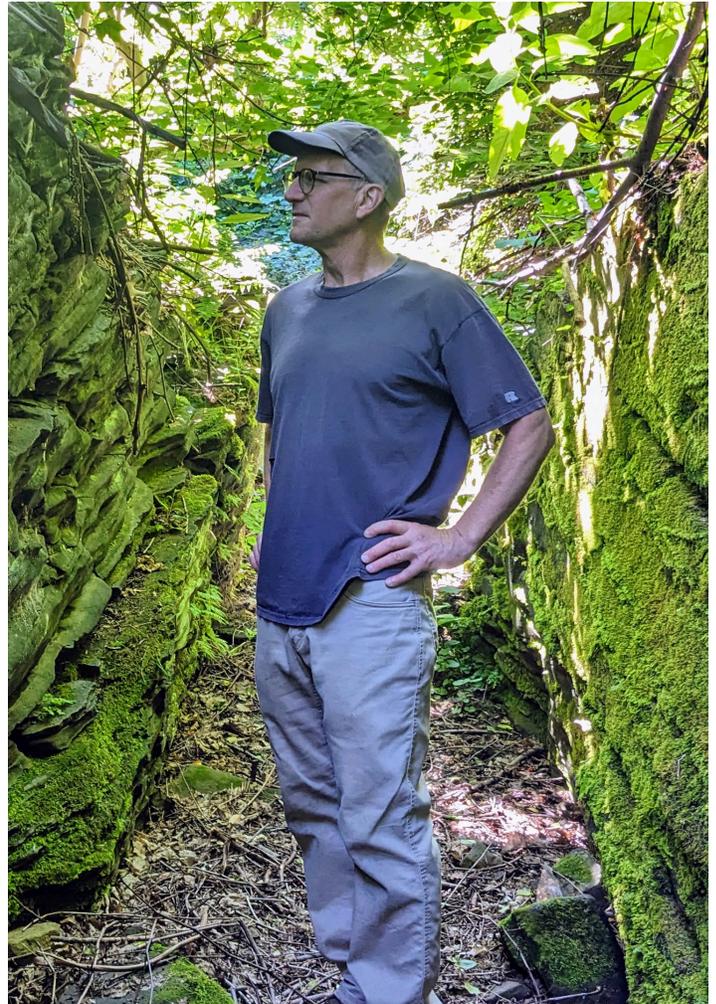
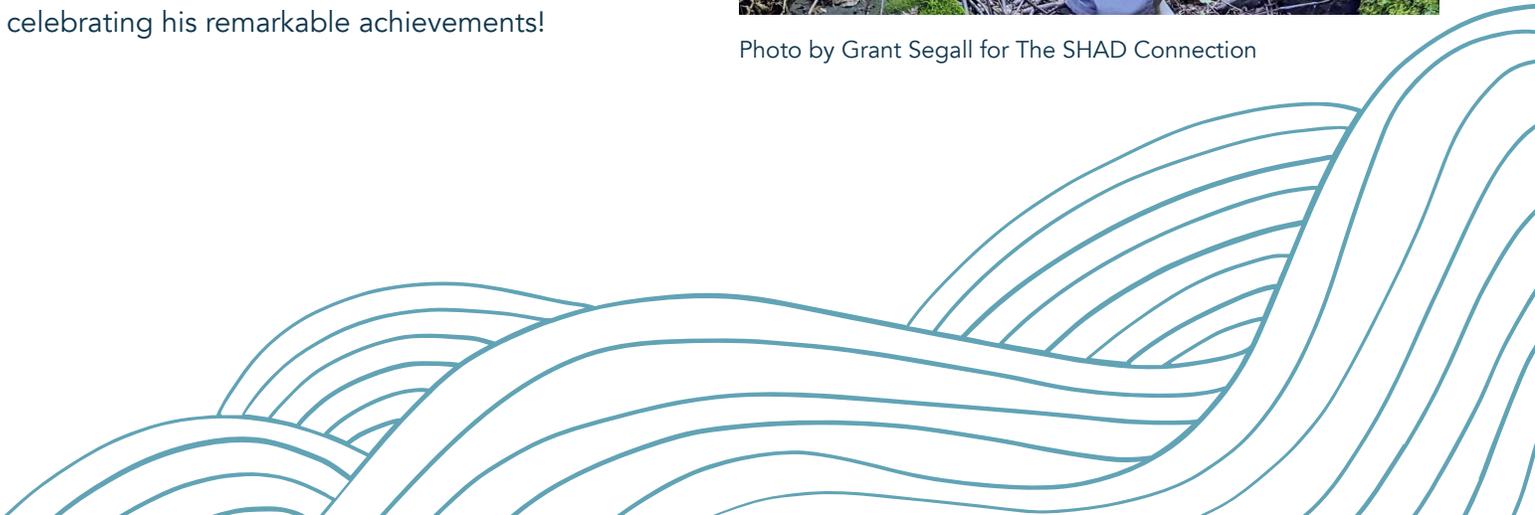


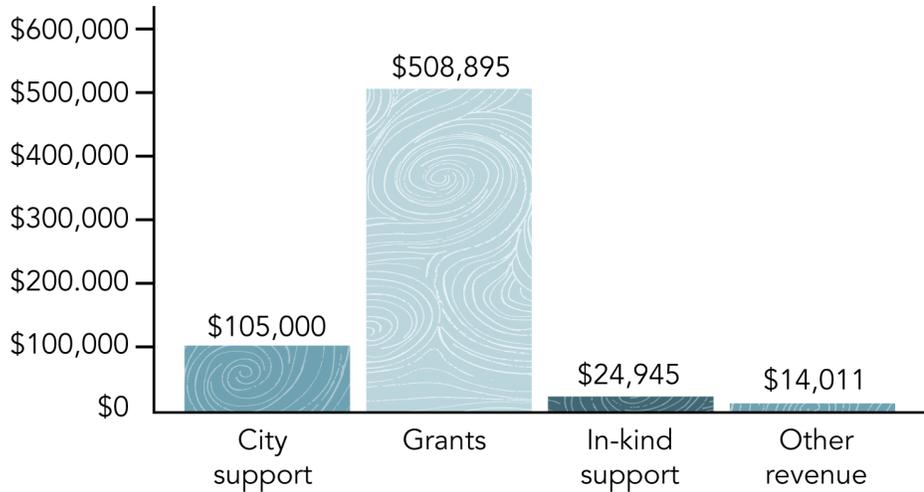
Photo by Grant Segall for The SHAD Connection



THE EBB AND FLOW OF THE PARTNERSHIP

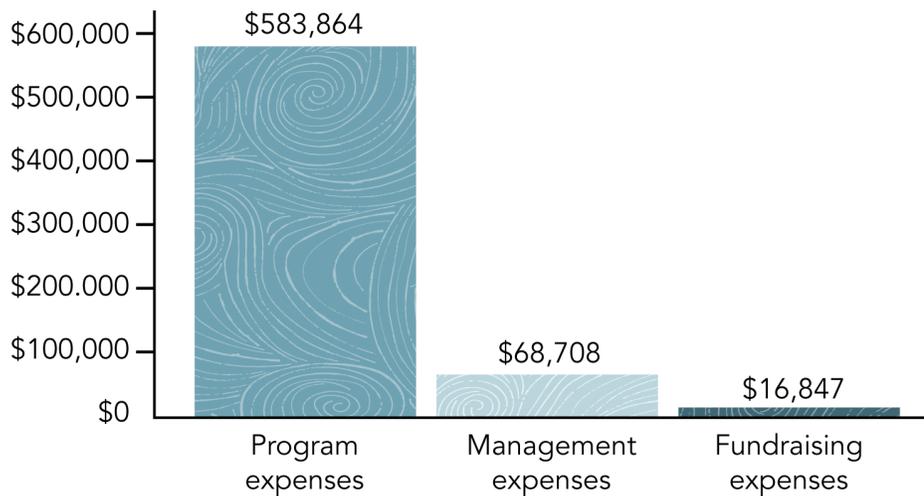
2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUE & SUPPORT



Total support
\$652,851

EXPENSES



Total expenses
\$669,419

2023/2024 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

In our 2023/2024 Annual Campaign, 163 donors gave \$23,763 with an average donation of \$145. These dollars directly translate into action in the watershed. We maintain low office expenses and overhead and have a small staff of 2 full-time employees supported by interns or NOWCorps service members and a small army of beloved and appreciated volunteers. Our unrestricted fundraising goal for 2025 is \$40,000. We are seeking donations, grants, and partnerships to bolster our existing programs and expand several areas of important work identified in our strategic planning process. We expect to release our 2025-2029 Strategic Plan in early 2025.

2024/2025 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN FUNDING PRIORITIES



Support operations to maintain a strong staff

Dynamic staffing needs throughout the year are met by hiring local, rising interns and part-time staff offering opportunities for early career environmentalists while ensuring our program and restoration needs are met.



Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management

Support rain garden installation and native plant infilling in existing beds at watershed schools. Support staff time to write grants for permeable pavers, native trees and plants, and other stormwater mitigation for public spaces in the watershed.



Doan Brook Stake Out

We have proposed a 5 year plan to use live stakes to stabilize and protect all appropriate streambanks of the brook with thousands of native trees and shrubs to improve our climate resiliency



Watershed Education Outreach

We received a small grant in 2024 to initiate environmental education programs in watershed schools and we hope to purchase more supplies for in-class activities and take home information for families.



Water Quality and Science

We initiated a comprehensive water quality testing program in 2024 sampling physicochemical parameters at 15 locations. We still need additional sampling equipment and gear including waders to keep our staff safe during Combined Sewer Overflow events and to test for *E. coli* and other pathogens in our watershed.



Community Access to Programs

Many of our programs require program fees in order to offer the program, but our team has worked hard to reduce or remove fees for many programs. We are seeking funds to bolster our program budgets so we can offer more programs for free to watershed residents.



MAKE A DOAN-ATION TODAY

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Thanks to your support, we have made significant strides toward our restoration and outreach goals this year. Your investment not only supports immediate projects but also fosters long-term preservation of our natural resources. Our goal for 2025 is to raise \$40,000 to enhance existing programs and expand our efforts.

Please consider making a contribution to our annual campaign. DOAN-ations can be made at www.doanbrookpartnership.org/donate/. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference and brings us closer to our goals.

DONATE TODAY



CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

	Ecosystem Champion \$5,000	Watershed Steward \$2,500	Brook Guardian \$1,000	Headwaters Advocate \$500
Named as a sponsor on ALL DBWP events (48 in 2024)	✓			
All Family Fishing Day marketing materials (350 Event T-shirts)	✓	✓		
All Take to the Lake marketing materials (50 Volunteer T-shirts)	✓	✓		
Appreciation post in monthly newsletter and social media post	✓	✓	✓	
Invitation to 6 annual Board of Trustees Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo and website on DBWP website and in Annual Report	✓	✓	✓	✓

BECOME A SPONSOR





Developed by
Dr. Mo Drinkard & Emily Kao

Designed by
Lupine Studios

Cover photo by
David Perelman-Hall