

Why am I involved with the Wolf Creek Project?

- Your property is located within the watershed of Wolf Creek.

What is a watershed?

- A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that drains off of it goes into the same place—a river, stream or lake.
- The State of Ohio is divided into 2 major watersheds (Lake Erie and Ohio River). Each of these watersheds is divided into smaller watersheds. Some of the significant ones in this area are the Portage River, the Sandusky River and the Maumee River. Each of these watersheds is divided into even smaller watersheds. The Portage River has many smaller watershed areas that feed into it. Wolf Creek is one of these. 2 of the other smaller watersheds that feed into the Portage River are located on either side of the Wolf Creek watershed area. They are Sugar Creek and Nine Mile Creek. Both of these watersheds have major portions of their watershed area currently paying into Ditch Maintenance for projects similar to this one.

Where is Wolf Creek located?

- The upper end (highest point in the ditch) of this project is at the intersection of State Route 300 and Sandusky County Road 85 (north of Gibsonburg). This area is the drainage outlet for the east part of the Village of Gibsonburg and some of the surrounding area. It travels toward the Portage River in a generally northerly and easterly direction crossing under State Route 300, crossing under US 20 east of State Route 51, crossing under the Ohio Turnpike, turning along the south side of Elmore-Eastern Road in Ottawa County near State Route 590 and crossing under State Route 590, then heading toward the Portage River where it ends about a mile west of State Route 19 near Oak Harbor.

How does my water get to the project area?

- If you are in the watershed area, your water gets to Wolf Creek (and eventually to the Portage River and Lake Erie) through many different pathways. The most visible and obvious way is through surface drainage. This includes water that drains off of yard areas, roofs, driveways, parking areas, streets, agricultural and undeveloped land areas, out of quarries and pond areas to name a few. The water travels to the project as sheet drainage across the ground, is collected into swales, ditches, catch basins and storm sewers, overflow pipes, etc. until it reaches Wolf Creek.

Water also travels in the watershed through underground permeable soil and rock fissures and is collected and moves underground. This water moves up and down and is the water that enters the streams or channels in the watershed through the sides and bottom of the channels. This also includes water collected by underground field tiles which aid in removing the subsurface water more efficiently. Once in the channel or drainage system, this water joins the water drained from the surface and travels to the outlet of the stream.

This assessment seems really high. If this passes will I have to pay these high assessments forever?

- This initial “**construction**” assessment is a ONE-TIME fee. If the project passes and gets awarded to the contractor, they will construct it according to the plans and the project will then be put on permanent maintenance. The cost that is being charged to the watershed this time is primarily the cost of construction, plus payment for the development of the plans, mailings, and first year’s maintenance for the project. This initial “**construction**” assessment is always high. Once the project is put on permanent maintenance,

Ditch Maintenance will collect from the properties in the watershed, annually, around 2% to 4% of the original cost of the project (“**maintenance**” assessment) through the property taxes. This money will go into a pot of money to be used specifically for this project and the ditch will be maintained by Sandusky County Ditch Maintenance forever. They will do yearly inspections, periodic spraying for brush and other problem plants, maintain tile outlets, maintain or add rock channel protection as needed, periodic channel cleaning and reshaping as needed, and also seeding areas that need it. If a tree falls in the channel, a section of ditch bank slips into the channel, or any other problem arises, a simple phone call can be made to Sandusky County Ditch Maintenance and the issue will be investigated and resolved, as needed.

Is this the first notice that I have received about this project?

- The initial notice for this project was sent out in February of 2015. The view and first hearing for this project took place in March of 2015. The initial notice was sent out to all of the property owners who were determined, at that time, to be in or near the watershed of the project area. At the first hearing, a portion of the ditch that was not included in the original petition was added to the project (to take it all the way to Sandusky County Road 85 at State Route 300). At the first hearing, Commissioners from Sandusky and Ottawa Counties approved the project to go into the planning stage. The planning stage includes the survey, determination of the overall watershed, owner interviews (they are contacted, as needed), categorization of the types of drainage for each property, calculating the amount of brush/trees that need to be removed, channel design, evaluation of drainage structures along the project, engineering and plan development, environmental evaluation, plan approval by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, estimating the overall project cost and the estimated assessments for all property (private and

government entities) involved in the project. The next notice that would be sent out (by law) is for the final hearing which is the notice that was received in August of 2022. This notice also includes an estimated assessment for each property in the watershed.

How can I voice my opinion when I can't make the hearing?

- The best way is to do it in writing. You can submit an email to garcia_theresa@co.sandusky.oh.us and jsommers@co.sandusky.oh.us OR mail a letter to:

Sandusky County Commissioners
622 Croghan St.
Fremont, OH 43420

Make sure you let them know that it is regarding the Wolf Creek
Petition Project #143