Why am I involved with the Sugar Creek Project?

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

What is a watershed?

- A watershed is an area of land that channels rainfall and snowmelt to ditches, creeks, and rivers, and eventually to reservoirs, bays or the 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. Sugar Creek is one of these. The Sugar Creek Watershed has major portions of their watershed area currently being maintained by Ditch Maintenance for projects similar to this one.

Where is Sugar Creek located?

- The upper end (highest point in the ditch) of Sugar Creek is located in the Eastern part of Wood County. Sugar Creek runs north and east into Sandusky County. Sugar Creek is the drainage outlet for the west part of the Village of Gibsonburg and some of the surrounding area. It travels toward the Portage River in Ottawa County. The part of Sugar Creek that this project involves starts at Woodville Township Road 115 in Sandusky County and goes north and east to the end of Sugar Creek at the Portage River in Ottawa County.

How does my water get to the project area?

- If you are in the watershed area, your water gets to Sugar 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 Sugar 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.

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

- The initial notice for this project was sent out in December of 2016. The view and first hearing for this project took place in January and February of 2017. 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, Commissioners from Wood, 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, determining locations and sizes log jams and silt bars to be removed, 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 will be sent out (by law) is for the final hearing. This notice will also include an estimated assessment for each of your properties in the watershed.
- Even if you didn't receive a notice, you could still be in the watershed. Letters get lost and things happen when you are sending out this many notices.

This is the first notice that I have received about this project.

- I did not own my property in 2016. -When selling the house, the previous owner should have disclosed that this project was a possibility. There was a second notice sent out in 2023 to remind everyone of the project.
- I did not receive the first notice. -Sometimes people misplace them, don't open them, or even forget about them. We do our best due diligence to make sure that everyone is notified.

What is next?

- The FINAL HEARING. The Final Hearing is set for November 4, 2026. All property owners affected by this project were sent a notice of the hearing and a construction assessment. The assessment will only be due if the Commissioners vote in favor of the project. At the FINAL HEARING the Joint Board of County Commissioners will determine if the project is feasible, conducive to public welfare, and the benefits

of the project will outweigh the cost of the project. After the Joint Board decides to be in favor of or against the project, there will be a 30 day time period for appeals to be filed. If the project is approved by the Joint board and there are no appeals, construction can start on the project. Assessments can be paid, if desired, and if they are not paid in full the remainder will be added to your taxes in payments for the interest percentage and number of years the Joint Board of Commissioners decide at the hearing. If the Joint Board dismisses the project and there are no appeals, the Construction Assessment is no longer any good and does not need to be paid. However, any costs associated with the project can be assessed to all the owners in the watershed if the Joint Board so decides. In this case, there will be another letter sent out to the owners in the watershed informing them of the new cost that is owed. If a person does not pay by a certain date, then that assessment will be added to their tax duplicate for as many years as the Joint Board decides.

How often do I have to pay? How does the assessment work?

- The initial "**construction**" assessment that you received in the mail for this portion of Sugar Creek 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, all 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 (this is a "**maintenance**" assessment) through the property taxes. These assessments 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.

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 mglotzbecker@sanduskycountyoh.gov and jsommers@sanduskycountyoh.gov 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 Sugar Creek Petition Project #162