

## **I. Introduction**

### **Purpose**

The intent of the Nimishillen Creek Watershed Action Plan is to:

1. Develop a plan to protect and/or restore the water quality of the Nimishillen Creek and its tributaries to meet state water quality standards and ensure the health and safety of watershed residents.
2. Raise public awareness, especially among the watershed's residents, of the pollution sources and solutions in the Nimishillen Creek Watershed.
3. Consolidate existing watershed information from previous reports and studies into a single user-friendly report; as well as, create a reporting format that can easily be updated when new information becomes available.

### **Fundamental Water Quality Goals**

1. Restore to state water quality standards the Nimishillen Creek and its tributaries.
2. Restore and protect the riparian corridor.
3. Reduce water quantity (flooding) problems in the watershed.

### **Watershed Issues Overview**

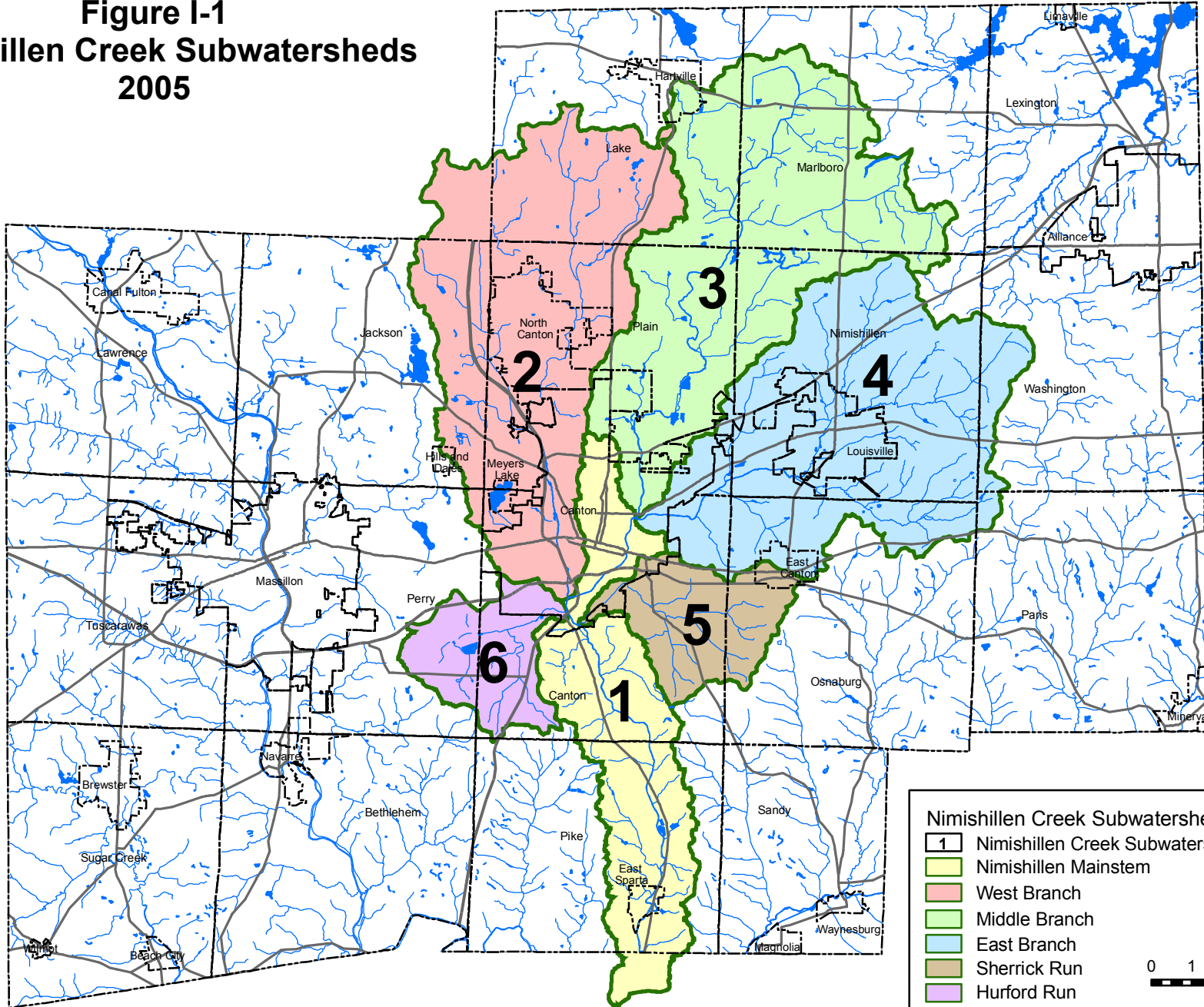
The Nimishillen Creek Watershed is located in a diverse portion of Northeast Ohio containing agricultural areas, suburban development, historic urban cities, and heavily industrial areas (Figure I-1). As would be expected with such a rich mix, issues affecting water quality in the watershed are equally diverse. Specific water quality issues and needed actions are discussed at length in the subwatershed plans located in Section VII; however, similar issues face many of the Nimishillen Creek basins. The primary issues to be addressed in the plan are:

- Promote Environment Education and Outreach
- Protect and Restore Riparian Corridors
- Reduce Pollution from Failing Wastewater Treatment Systems
- Ameliorate Impacts from Acid Mine Drainage
- Diminish the Impacts from Storm Water Runoff from Urban, Suburban, Agriculture, and Industrial Areas
- Protect and Restore the Floodplain

### **Updates and Revisions**

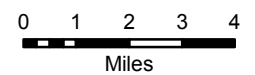
Maintenance and revisions of the Nimishillen Creek Watershed State Action Plan will be the primary responsibility of the Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization (NEFCO). NEFCO is the designated water quality planning agency for Stark and Summit Counties and conducts regional planning on various issues, including watershed management. Updates and revisions will be made as new or updated information becomes available, as projects are completed, and/or as the plan's goals are achieved.

**Figure I-1  
Nimishillen Creek Subwatersheds  
2005**



**Nimishillen Creek Subwatersheds**

- 1** Nimishillen Creek Subwatersheds
- Nimishillen Mainstem
- West Branch
- Middle Branch
- East Branch
- Sherrick Run
- Hurford Run



Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization, 2005

### **Nimishillen Creek Watershed Partners**

Originally formed in 2002, The Nimishillen Creek Watershed Partners is a voluntary group consisting of Nimishillen Creek stakeholders with the mission “to promote the restoration of the Creek’s water quality to fishable, swimmable standards and the protection of the Creek corridor.” Stakeholders involved with the watershed partners come from various sectors, including citizens, local/elected government officials, the business and industrial community, park districts employees, farmers, teachers, and students. Membership is open to individual, family, or organization that subscribes to the purposes of the watershed partners. The Nimishillen Creek Watershed Partners’ officers are listed below, but a general list of the Partners members are not listed due to privacy concerns. Contact the Watershed Partners Secretary for more membership information. The Watershed Partners is not a 501(c)3 organization and has no immediate plans to become this type of nonprofit organization.

#### **Structure**

The Nimishillen Creek Watershed Partners adopted bylaws in June, 2004 (Appendix B). Members nominate and elect a Core Committee to direct the groups activities. Up to fifteen members can be elected to the Core Committee with at least five Committee members being residents of Nimishillen Creek Watershed. They can appoint non-voting members from state, federal, or regional agencies to serve on the committee. Core Committee members are elected to a four-year term.

The Nimishillen Creek Watershed Partners also elect officers from the Core Committee members. The Chair must be a Nimishillen Creek Watershed resident, while the Vice-Chair and Secretary can be any member of the Core Committee. All officer positions are serve a two-year term. A treasury will be appointed by the Core Committee should it become necessary.

#### **Current Officers**

Chair: Michael Miller, North Canton Resident  
Vice-Chair: Pam Feagler, Earth Action Partnership  
Secretary: Eric Akin, NEFCO

### **Development of the Action Plan**

The Nimishillen Creek Action Plan is the continuation of efforts started by NEFCO in the 1990s to develop the Nimishillen Creek Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP). The CWMP was divided into four phases and included a riparian zone analysis, land use/land cover data, information on potential pollution sources, an general action plan, and a home sewage treatment system plan. The first two Phases of NEFCO’s plan were completed in 2000, Phase III was finished in 2001, and the fourth Phase in 2003. The CWMP was developed with considerable input and guidance for local and statewide stakeholders.

However, an update Nimishillen Creek CWMP was needed to reflect the current watershed planning standards, new water quality programs, and information that has become available since its completion. Specifically, the action plan portion of the

CWMP (Phase III) was completed prior to the new watershed action plan endorsement standards from Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The previous NEFCO plan was also completed prior to new regulations such as the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Program Phase II, Ohio EPA's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program, and NEFCO's water quality monitoring efforts.

This report is a stand alone plan that consolidates information from the previous phases of the Nimishillen Creek CWMP, includes new programs and regulations, and provides the most up to date information about the watershed. This Action Plan was completed with continued input and review from Nimishillen Creek stakeholders.

The Action Plan has been accepted by the NEFCO General Policy Board consisting of government officials from Stark, Summit, Portage, and Wayne Counties. Their resolution is included after the title page. The Nimishillen Creek Watershed Partners will officially endorse the plan once it has been fully endorsed by the State. The Watershed Partners and the Watershed Coordinator will then solicit endorsement from the municipalities and townships within the Nimishillen Creek Watershed.

Lastly, this report was intended to be released at the same time or after the completion of the TMDL report in order to utilize their findings to better guide implementation of water quality improvement actions. However, the TMDL sampling was delayed due to flooding in 2003 and 2004 and the final report is not due out until late 2006 or 2007. Therefore, it was decided to complete the Action Plan without the TMDL findings, but update the plan where needed once the TMDL is completed by the Ohio EPA.

### **Education, Marketing Strategies, and Outreach Goals**

The education strategics are clearly described in the Subwatershed Plan portion (Section VII) of this plan. In general, education will be target to people who can provided the greatest benefit for stream protection and restoration. That would include such stakeholders as riparian landowners, elected officials, and educators. This will include getting stakeholders "hands-on" experience with watershed work through activities such as creek clean-ups and volunteer water quality monitoring.

A marketing strategy was not developed for inclusion in this plan. One will be developed in the future if needed.