

# SCHOOL STREAM MONITORING PROGRAM

During 2023, program partners hosted five stream monitoring events with three high schools and one elementary school, with a total of over 300 students participating. The events took place in Cleveland Metroparks' Memphis Picnic Area where the two main branches of Big Creek converge. The site is ideal for comparing how differences in land uses for the East Branch and West Branches of Big Creek affect water quality.

In May we hosted Maple Heights High School students on two different dates. In September we hosted Lakewood High School students, new to the program. In October we hosted another set of Maple Heights High School students one day, and two new schools together on another day – Berea High School and East Cleveland Elementary School students. In December, follow-up classroom sessions by BCC staff were held with Maple Heights High School students.

The program introduces students to watershed stewardship and the application of science, technology, and engineering with professionals in the field. It combines monitoring of the biological, chemical, and physical characteristics of the two branches of the creek with site tours examining the natural and man-made environments within the park.



Maple Heights High School students at chemical stations



Berea High School students sorting and scoring macroinvertebrates

The program is funded by a General Motors Community Impact Grant, awarded annually to Big Creek Connects. The GM Parma Plant's environmental "E-Team" assists the students with studying chemical parameters of water samples, while Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District staff assists with their assessing stream habitat, and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District staff guides their identification of macroinvertebrates.

Cleveland Metroparks, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and West Creek Conservancy staff lead the students on the site tours. Big Creek Connects staff and board members coordinate the program and help fill in any gaps. Program partners are looking forward to another full set of outings beginning in May of 2024.

Lakewood High School group photo



East Cleveland Mayfair Elementary and Berea High School group photo

