



DITCH PETITION UPDATE from your Jerusalem Township Trustees:

David Bench

Beau Miller

Mark Sattler

Dear Jerusalem Township Residents,

The Lucas County Engineers are implementing a new process referred to as “Ditch Petitioning.” So far, there are two ditch watershed areas in Jerusalem Township that fall under this mechanism:

- Niles Ditch Drainage Area Improvement Project (<https://co.lucas.oh.us/3481/Niles-Ditch>)
- Wilhelm Ditch Drainage Area Improvement Project (<https://co.lucas.oh.us/3482/Wilhelm-Ditch-Drainage-Area-Map>)

When no ditch petition process is in place, sole responsibility for maintenance of the ditches falls on the adjacent landowners. Most of these landowners may not have the equipment or the knowledge to properly maintain the ditches. If the ditches are not maintained, they could contribute to poor drainage and even unnecessary flooding for property owners throughout the entire watershed. However when ditches are properly maintained, everyone in the watershed area benefits from proper drainage and reduced risk of flooding.

It is important to understand that drainage is a private property matter. Public funds cannot be used to correct private property problems except in an emergency. Further without a petition, the County Engineers are not permitted to access the adjacent landowner's private property to maintain the ditch.

Ditches are actually drainage infrastructure and like any infrastructure, will fail if not properly maintained. A drainage assessment is more like a utility bill than a general tax. It is collected to ensure our drainage infrastructure is maintained in good operating condition for everyone's benefit. The funds collected from a particular ditch petition can ONLY be used to maintain that ditch.

Our predecessors made an investment in the drainage infrastructure to enable a quality of life to exist where they lived. It's important we ensure that investment is maintained for our successors.

A helpful analogy is that our ditches are like our roadways. The ditches take everyone's drainage to its ultimate outlet (Lake Erie). Imagine if everyone who lived on a road was responsible for any and all maintenance on that roadway for the portion right in front of their property. If there's a pothole in front of their property, they have to fix it. If there is a water main break, they have to fix it. If a massive tree falls over the road in a storm, they have to remove it. What if the people living there didn't have the means to maintain it? What if their attitude was: “Why should I spend a significant portion of my money to fix this problem if everyone else benefits but doesn't help pay for it? What if one person decided that filling the potholes with stone was good enough? That is a system that would eventually fail, creating problems for everyone. We cannot allow our drainage infrastructure to fail due to disrepair.

9501 Jerusalem Road Curtice, Ohio 43412

419.836.8921

www.twp.jerusalem.oh.us

The ditch petition process allows the Lucas County Engineers to assume long-term responsibility for ditch maintenance. These Engineers are Stormwater experts who will conduct an assessment of the ditch watershed area to determine the need for improvement, the proposed timeline, and the estimated costs of such. A plan would be developed to address the biggest problem areas first. Once the ditch problems (if any) are corrected, the costs of the work would then be allocated over all the property owners in the entire watershed (who all benefit from good drainage). The costs would be spread out over many property owners to keep the cost per resident very low.

In addition, your Jerusalem Township Trustees will be kept informed by the Lucas County Engineers. We Trustees have the ability to influence the timeline as well as apply Stormwater monies and other funding sources to help fund the ditch improvements.

This Ditch Petition process will actually help to keep the ditches in our Township properly maintained at the lowest possible cost.

We will continue to provide updates to you as information is available. If you have questions, please feel free to contact any of your Trustees. Our contact information is on the Township Website at: <https://twp.jerusalem.oh.us/township-directory/>

Thank you for your support of this process.

9501 Jerusalem Road Curtice, Ohio 43412

419.836.8921

www.twp.jerusalem.oh.us