

Community Newsletter

January 2021

Black Fork River Ditch Petition Project

- Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Black Fork River clean-up project is nearing completion. These projects were planned and organized by members of the community.
- Phase 1 cleaned the section of the river from St. Rt. 13 to State Street and Phase 2 is cleaning the river from State Street to Mickey Road. The cleaning projects combined costs are approximately \$367,000.
- These two projects were very beneficial in cleaning and clearing the river but more work is needed and necessary to help with continuing efforts to keep the river flowing freely.
- To help with the cleaning efforts and to maintain the Black Fork River for years to come, the City of Shelby and rural community members together will be engaging in the efforts by filing a Ditch Petition with the Richland County Commissioners. The Ditch Petition will be requesting the Black Fork River be cleaned and maintained from Mickey Road to St. Rt. 13. The City of Shelby will be petitioning for the area of the river inside of the city corporation limits, while rural community members will be petitioning for the remainder of the river. The total petitioned area of the river is approximately 18 miles.
- A Ditch Petition is a legal process (Ohio Revised Code 6133) requested by a petitioner(s) for the cleaning and the annual maintenance of a waterway (ditch, tributary, stream, river) through an assessment process to all parcel owners within the watershed area. The petition is filed with the County Commissioners. There are approximately 11,000 parcels in the petitioned watershed area, involving approximately 80,000 acres.
- The petition will be requesting the river be cleaned and then maintained annually by removing felled trees, leaning trees, log jams, and debris piles. The clearing of the obstructions will allow for better drainage and reduce risk of flooding. It also improves safety by removing rotting logs and trash, allowing for recreational use of the water including boating, fishing, birding, wildlife watching and enjoying the natural views.
- More information to come as the petition process begins.