

# The Flood of 2006

## NATURALLY SPEAKING

LAKE METROPARKS

### Resource Management *We are all in this together*

By Stephen W. Madewell, Deputy Director

**T**he flood of '06 was an event of epic proportions. The U.S. Geological Services called it "a five hundred year flood event." While the normal and generally subtle effects of weather-driven erosion are occurring every day, it is unusual for Ohio to experience a storm that dramatically alters its landscape.

I recently participated in a resource management conference that included a session titled "Planning for Extremes," which addressed the increased intensity of storm events in the Great Lakes Region. Several studies since 1970 have shown that there is an increased frequency of heavy rain events in many parts of the country, and many scientists believe we should expect more unusual weather due to climate change.

***Whether you accept the position of climatologists or believe that climate change is nonsense, one thing is for certain: Increased amounts of asphalt, concrete and roofs, and decreases in open space result in increased flooding, erosion and degradation of habitat.***

The importance of managing rainwater becomes readily apparent after an event like this, especially in areas where there is significant alteration of the natural landscape. It is not just a matter of building bigger storm sewers to better handle increased stormwater runoff; there are additional challenges associated with preventing erosion, protecting habitat and preserving water quality.

Lake County created a Stormwater Management Department to assess and address the needs associated with stormwater management in communities across the county. Lake Metroparks established a stormwater management plan for its parklands and natural areas. The park district has a history of acquiring lands along waterways. Protecting this land protects valuable habitat for wildlife while also protecting the flood-carrying capacity for valleys and streams.

Water knows no boundaries – it simply flows downstream. Last summer's flood illustrates how our land use impacts the environment. We must be mindful of our actions; what we do always affects another. It is crucial for all of us to work together to address the challenges of resource management.

