



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet for Zink-Heldman and Geiser Ditches

1. What is the purpose of the view and first hearing?

The view is the opportunity for Board of Lucas County Commissioners and the Lucas County Engineer to see the existing condition for the proposed improvement and to hear proof offered at that time by any owners affected by the proposed improvement. The Lucas County Engineer will prepare a preliminary report which includes a preliminary design and cost estimate, comments on the feasibility of the project, and an opinion as to whether the benefits of the improvement is likely to exceed the preliminary costs.

At the first hearing, the Board of Lucas County Commissioners hears the preliminary report of the Engineer as well as any evidence offered by benefitting landowners. At the First Hearing, the Board may approve the petition if they find that the improvement is necessary, conducive to the public welfare, and is reasonably certain that the costs are less than the benefits.

2. What is cost to benefitting property owners?

The costs of design and construction for the widening and cleaning of Zink-Heldman and Geiser Ditches will be paid from a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant and the Lucas County Stormwater Utility Fund. Current policy provides for costs associated with maintenance of the ditch also to be paid by the Stormwater Utility Fund. **There will be no costs assessed to owners for design and construction of this project.**

3. Why is the County proposing this project?

The project was initiated by drainage complaints from land owners not draining properly. In addition, this project will permit Lucas County to replace several culverts which are in need of upgrade. Lucas County investigated the problem and found the ditches to be silted significantly in several places blocking positive

drainage. Geiser Ditch in particular requires brushing to allow for access and prevent blockage of the ditch.

4. Why petition the project?

The Ohio Revised Code requires the petition ditch process to place privately owned ditches under public maintenance to allow expenditure of County funds. The petition process provides a permanent easement on the ditch which allows Lucas County to maintain public investment.

5. What is the Maintenance Base Assessment?

The Maintenance Base Assessment is based on the value of the whole project using methods according to Ohio Ditch Petition Law. The Maintenance Base Assessment is used to apportion costs associated with design, construction, and future maintenance.

Example: If we have \$100,000 total in Maintenance Base Assessment and your Maintenance Base Assessment is \$1,000. If future maintenance activities on the ditch were to cost \$2,000 a year, the maintenance assessment for this property would be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Property Maintenance Base } (\$1,000)}{\text{Total Maintenance Base } (\$100,000)} \times \text{Maintenance Cost } (\$2,000)$$

This results in a \$20.00 assessment for that year.

It is current policy to pay maintenance assessments for properties within the area subject to Lucas County's MS4 permit from funds generated by the Lucas County Stormwater Utility Fee.

6. Is there any possibility of being assessed for maintenance of Zaleski Ditch:

After completion of the project, Zink-Heldman and Geiser Ditches will be placed on a ditch maintenance program. Property owners could be assessed to maintain Drennan Ditch in good working condition. It is current policy to pay maintenance assessments for properties within the area subject to Lucas County's MS4 permit from funds generated by the Lucas County Stormwater Utility Fee. It should be noted that future requirements may result in these funds not being available. If this occurs, any future maintenance activities would be subject to assessment.

However, typical assessments for maintenance after construction are relatively small ranging from \$10 to \$20 per year.

7. I do not live on either Zink-Heldman Ditch or Geiser Ditch or near these ditches. Why am I in the assessment area?

The Ohio Petition Law requires any benefitting landowners of the watercourse to be subject to assessment for design, construction and maintenance of the ditch as property owners benefit by having a drainage system to receive runoff from properties in the watershed. Without a drainage system to remove and transport runoff away, properties in the watershed would be subject to flooding and other damaging aspects of runoff. Therefore, all property owners have some benefit.