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**Doan Brook...A small, seemingly insignificant, creek in the midst of a city. Hardly worthy of mention, much less of a book all its own. And yet, Doan Brook has claimed the attention of the people around it for over two hundred years. It has been a focus of the community ever since 1799, when Nathaniel Doan settled his family by the stream and built a tavern at a ford. The village around Doan's tavern on the brook rivaled the city of Cleveland for more than one hundred years. A few miles upstream from the tavern, the North Union Shakers made their living from the brook and saw the reflection of God in its natural beauty. Later, as Cleveland grew, philanthropists recognized the Doan Brook valley as the perfect place for a line of parks to provide respite for harried city folk. They gave the Doan Brook parks as a gift to the people of greater Cleveland. Later still, the brook's neighbors rallied to defeat a planned Interstate freeway that threatened to replace the peace of those parks with the roar of traffic.**

Today, Doan Brook remains an oasis in the heart of the city. Parks line its banks from Lake Erie to Shaker Heights. Migrating birds pause along the stream, and deer browse in the underbrush. Hikers explore its valley while strollers enjoy the lakeshores. But the brook is no longer as it was when Nathaniel Doan came here, or even as it was when the philanthropists first gave us the parks that line its banks. The growth of the city has chipped away at the parks and sullied the stream. There are few fish left, and the lakes sometimes stink in summer. It is rarely wise to wade or swim in the brook's polluted water. We were given the stream as a gift, but it is threatened by our very presence around it. We must deflect the threat if we are to pass on the gift.

This handbook is the story of Doan Brook and its watershed. That story is one not only of human settlement, but also of the stream's relationship with the landscape and city around it and of the creatures that make their lives along it. The story of the brook's past and present ends with a question: What can we do now to preserve and restore what we have been given? The *Handbook* begins to answer that question

by outlining some actions that we can take and suggesting ways that we can make restoration of the brook a reality.

Not everyone who picks up *The Doan Brook Handbook* will read it cover to cover. Some may be more interested in the watershed's history, others in its biology or geology, others in the possibilities for the stream's restoration. Appendices give detailed information about the brook for those who wish to dig deeper. Our hope is that the *Handbook* will help many people enjoy and appreciate what the brook has to offer and, even more, that it will serve as a common foundation for all those seeking to preserve and restore Doan Brook.