

# Conservation Spotlight

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District  
29 Triangle Park Drive, Suite 2901  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246-3411



Fall Edition  
2009

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## Farewell Steve Sandfort



Steve Sandfort, past District Supervisor of 18 years, passed away on May 23, 2009. The District lost a close friend and an avid supporter of conservation on that day. Among Steve's many accomplishments, he was the creator of Cincinnati's first forestry program. Steve was a Registered Forester and a Certified Arborist, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Forest Management from the University of Missouri in 1970. He worked for the Georgia Forestry Commission for 9 years, practicing urban and rural forestry in addition to public relations, which included a weekly TV show in Atlanta. He came to Cincinnati to guide the creation of the City's first urban forestry program. Steve then became Urban Forest Manager, and until his retirement in 2003, supervised the care and planting of trees along 1000 miles of streets.

Steve was an active member of numerous professional organizations, has spoken to groups all over North America, lectured on his beloved Ohio River steamboats, a published author, and he earned 4 national awards for his work. Steve served on the Hamilton County SWCD Board of Supervisors for 18 years. He helped guide the District's program into more urban areas of conservation. He also was a champion of Arbor Day—planning a tree planting ceremony with a local school each year. The District will honor Steve each year by naming the Arbor Day tree planting program after him.

Steve was an interesting fellow. He was well read, witty, and possessed an insatiable spirit of curiosity. We at the District will miss his comical e-mails and willingness to always lend a hand.

Our sincere condolences go out to Steve's wife Peggy and their daughter Melinda. If anyone wishes to send a memorial, Steve specified Operation Mend, c/o UCLA Hospital System, 100945 LeConte Ave. Suite 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1784. This project assists wounded veterans returning home from war.

## How's Your Well Water?

If you have your own well, instead of being served by "city water," please mark Friday, September 11 on your calendar. This is the date of the "Test Your Well" event at Cheviot's Harvest Home Fair. Between 4 and 9 p.m., private well owners may bring a water sample to the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District booth for a free, confidential nitrate screening that will be conducted by the Miami Conservancy District. While waiting for results, well owners may gather information about their well and ask local experts about their groundwater concerns. High nitrate levels are often associated with wells over 30 years old or less than 50 feet deep. Private well owners should have their well water tested annually for nitrate, bacteria, and any other potential contaminant of particular concern.

At the Harvest Home Fair, well owners will also have the opportunity to register for free arsenic testing. Arsenic occurs naturally in many wells in the region, especially deeper wells with high iron levels. This free service is available to residents of Hamilton County's Great Miami River Watershed courtesy of the Miami Conservancy District.

### **To collect your well water sample properly:**

- ◆ Pick up a sample bottle from Hamilton County SWCD or use any clean jar that seals tightly – Wash with hot soapy water, rinse well, and allow to air dry before collecting your sample
- ◆ Remove any screen or filter from your faucet.
- ◆ Run water for five minutes to clear the lines and bring in fresh water.
- ◆ Do not touch the lip of the jar, inside the jar, or inside of the cap.
- ◆ Fill the bottle and cap it snugly.
- ◆ Keep the sample refrigerated until tested.
- ◆ Collect the sample on the day it is to be tested.
- ◆ Please do not bring in tap water from a municipal supplier. It will always be negative to high nitrates.



For more information on how to draw a sample of your water for the September 11 Test Your Well nitrate screening at Harvest Home, please call the Hamilton County SWCD at 513-772-7645 or the Miami Conservancy District at 937-223-1278 x.3263.



# 64th Annual Meeting

You are invited to attend The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's 64th Annual Meeting. The event will be held on September 17, 2009, at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, 3400 Vine Street, Cincinnati, OH 45220. There will be limited guided tours of the green storm water practices at the Zoo. The events will start at 4:00 pm. The meeting, banquet, and awards presentation will start at 6:00 p.m. Come join us to learn about our organization and participate in our silent auction, and election for one supervisor that will serve a three year term starting January 2010.



Raffel's Catering, Inc. will prepare a scrumptious spaghetti and vegetable lasagna dinner.



If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting and wish to vote by absentee ballot, the appropriate forms will be available on our website <http://www.hcswcd.org/>. Only people attending the Annual Meeting can vote at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. Open voting will be available on September 17, 2009 from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Hamilton County Soil and Water District's office, 29 Triangle Park Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45246. You have three options for voting:



1. Those attending the Annual Meeting on September 17, 2009 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
  2. At the Hamilton County SWCD office from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on September 17, 2009.
  3. Vote absentee by requesting the proper forms on our website or call our office.
- Absentee ballots must be returned to the District office no later than or 2:00 p.m. on September 17, 2009.

## RSVP – Please respond by September 9, 2009

Please detach and make check/money order payable to: Hamilton County SWCD and return to 29 Triangle Park Drive, Suite 2901, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246-3411.

**There is limited seating for this event. Please send your reservation request in early!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner cost is: per adult \$7.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and per child \$5.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

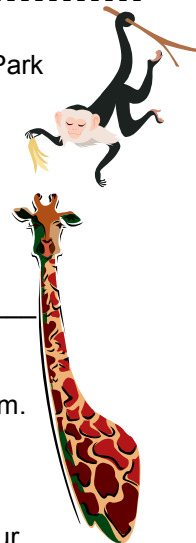
**Prepayment is required. Money will not be collected at the door.**

Two guided tours are available of the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. The first tour will begin at 4:15 pm. If you are interested in the tour, please circle the tour time you prefer.

**4:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.      or      5:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.**

The Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden entry instructions and dinner tickets will be sent upon receipt of your reservation request form. Seating is limited, please send your request in early!

**Deadline to make reservations is September 9, 2009.**



## OHIO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION ELECTION LEGAL NOTICE

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission will have an election of Supervisors of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District to be held in accordance with Chapter 1515 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Residents or landowners, firms, and corporations that own land or occupy land in Hamilton County and are 18 years of age and older may vote for Supervisor. A non-resident landowner, firm or corporation must provide an affidavit of eligibility, which includes designation of a voting representative, prior to casting a ballot (available on the District's website.)

There are three ways an eligible voter can cast a ballot: (1) at the annual meeting if you are attending, which will take place September 17, 2009 from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.; (2) At the Hamilton County SWCD office from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on September 17, 2009, or (3) Vote absentee by requesting the proper forms. The absentee request forms are posted on our website <http://www.hcswcd.org/>. Absentee ballots must be returned to the District office no later than 2:00 p.m. on September 17, 2009, at the following address: *Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, 29 Triangle Park Drive, Suite 2901, Cincinnati, OH 45246 - phone number: 513-772-7645.*

One (1) Supervisor will be elected. Nominees are: Denny Benson      Nigel Chalkley

## 2010 Candidates



**Denny Benson** has been employed for 31 years as Director of Operation at the Broshear Contractors, Inc., a site development contractor, located in Ross, Ohio. Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District named Broshear Contractors, Inc. "Contractor of the Year" in 2001 for their accomplishments in soil and water conservation erosion and sediment control practices. In 2006, Broshear Contractors, Inc. was presented the "Move Ohio" award for their conservation efforts in constructing the Green Heron Wildlife Sanctuary and Wetland Habitat Park in Ross, Ohio. Denny has been a member of the Ohio Valley Development Council since 2003. He also serves on the Executive Committee of the Ohio Contractors Association and was Chairman of the Executive Committee in 2002. Denny is also President of the Board of Directors of the One Way Farm, a homeless shelter for teenage children located in Fairfield, Ohio. Denny resides in White Oak with his wife who works for the Cincinnati Public Schools, daughter who attends the University of Cincinnati, and son who attends St. Xavier High School. After being elected to the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2006, Denny presently serves as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors in 2009.



**Nigel R. Chalkley** was born in Hull, North Yorkshire England. He has lived in the USA for close to 20 years. He has a diverse background including many years in the horticultural fields from Head Groundskeeper at the famous Glastonbury Abbey in Southern England, a fruit and vegetable farmer in Southern France to Head groundskeeper and horticulturalist for a large guest house in the Pyrenees Mountains of France. Currently, he is the Vice President of Operations with the Cincinnati Horticultural Society. This organization is behind the World famous Cincinnati Flower Show. Nigel is also an active member of the Izaak Walton League River Conservation Group helping to keep our rivers beautiful. Nigel is an avid outdoorsman and can be found on the little Miami River kayaking or riding the bike trails with his sons. Nigel has traveled all over the world and lived in many small communities and major cities. He understands the importance of good communication, strong working relationships, and partnerships between landowners, developers, and conservation organizations.

## Earthwork News

**Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist, Chey Alberto, Nate Sturm, Urban Technicians and Robert Sheets, Geotechnical Engineer**

### Earthwork Regulations

At long last the revised Hamilton County Earthwork Regulations have been passed by the Board of County Commissioners. The Earthwork Regulations went into effect on June 15, 2009. There have been many changes to address the requirements of the Phase II NPDES Permit issued by the Ohio EPA effective April 21, 2008, through April 20, 2013, as well as local issues regarding ground water protection for sole source aquifers in portions of Hamilton County.

Clean hard fill sites located within sole source aquifer zones of Hamilton County will only be able to accept soil as fill. There are coordination requirements for the Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permits, the Ohio EPA's 401 Permit, and local planning and zoning regulations. The Earthwork Regulations apply to the twelve townships of Hamilton County and the erosion prevention and sediment control provisions will be adopted by thirty municipalities throughout Hamilton County.

The development of the Earthwork Regulations was a collaborative effort with input from the Technical Advisory Committee of the Hamilton County Storm Water District, the Home Builders Association of Greater Cincinnati, and the Ohio Valley Development Council. Review and input was also solicited from the Hillside Trust and the Sierra Club.

The District will be providing training on the Earthwork Regulations over the next several months. The training will be broken into several sections: plan development and submittal requirements for engineers, implementation and inspection requirements for developers and contractors, and plan review and inspection requirements for municipal jurisdictions. For copies of the revised Earthwork Regulations please contact Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist at (513) 772-7645 ext. 16 or send an e-mail to [dan.taphorn@hamilton-co.org](mailto:dan.taphorn@hamilton-co.org)

# Ag News

John Williams, D.C. -NRCS

## Hamilton County Park District Receives Floodplain Easement Funding through USDA-NRCS

The Hamilton Co. Park District has applied for and tentatively been awarded funding for conservation easements on five (5) areas of their flood prone Parks and Preserves. The Easement funding will be utilized for not only the acquisition of 720.1 acres of floodplain areas, but also will be used to help establish almost 80 acres of native grasses, trees, and other vegetation that encourages wildlife habitat. The five areas that will potentially be under this USDA Easement program are Shawnee Lookout, Martin Marietta-Smith, Richardson Preserve, and the Miami Whitewater Forest's Southeast corner and Northern Area. This Easement Program funding was developed through President Obama's Stimulus Plan.

## New Adventures for NRCS Soil Conservationist, Jeff Barnes



Jeff Barnes has been the Soil Conservationist for the Butler and Hamilton County NRCS/SWCD offices for almost 5 years. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, Jeff was reassigned to the Darke Co. NRCS office in Greenville, OH to continue his training as a Soil Conservationist. Jeff says, "Serving the customers and working with the staffs in both Butler and Hamilton Counties has been a pleasure for me". Jeff has been a tremendous asset to both offices and will definitely be missed. Jeff started his new assignment on July 20, 2009.

## Horse & Pasture Management School

August 13, 2009

4H Hall—Ag. Center

Clermont County Fairgrounds, Owensville, Ohio

### Agenda

5:30 - 6:00 PM Registration , Visit Exhibits

6:00 - 6:25 PM "Be a Good Neighbor"  
Maintaining Water Quality  
Lori Hillman, NRCS

6:25 - 6:55 PM "Fence Law Updates"  
Latham Farley, OSU Extension

6:55 - 7:25 PM "VET TALK"  
Kelly Liming, DVM



7:25 - 7:40 PM Break and Door Prizes

7:40 - 8:45 PM "Small Acreage Pasture"  
Establishment & Renovation  
Bob Hendershot, NRCS

8:45 - 9:00 PM "Ask the Expert"  
Panel of Presenters

Complete Evaluation—and get a prize!  
9:00 PM Adjourn

If you would like, bring in a flake of hay for evaluation by Bob Hendershot. Please, one flake per person or family.

\_\_\_\_ Registration @ \$10.00 each      \_\_\_\_ \*Horse Nutrition Booklet - \$8.50      Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Name/Address/City and Zip Code plus check or Money Order payable to:

Clermont SWCD

P.O. Box 549

Owensville, OH 45160

\*Horse Nutrition Booklet - Contains information on forage for pasture and hay, poisonous plants (including color pictures), feeding factors, and diseases related to nutrition. By Dr. Robert Kline, OSU Extension. **Ohio Extension Bulletin # 762**

FOR QUESTIONS, CALL Holly Utrata-Halcomb at the Hamilton County Soil and Water District Office - 513-772-7645

## TREE CITY USA RECOGNITION!

Congratulation to Columbia Twp. and Administrator, Mike Lemon for being named the first township in Ohio to earn Tree City USA recognition! With two ISA Certified Arborists on staff, the Township annually removes hazardous trees, prunes, and replants in their right-of-ways, as well as creating beautiful garden gateways to their Township. Wendy Van Buren, ODNR Urban Forester stated "I would consider my job done if all communities had a program like Columbia Township."

The Township joins 248 other Ohio Tree City USA communities. Those communities within Hamilton County include: Amberley Village, City of Cincinnati, Forest Park, Greenhills, Lockland, Mariemont, Springdale, Terrace Park, and Wyoming.

For more information, go to <http://ohiodnr.com/tabid/5445/Default.aspx>



# Education Corner

Gwen Roth, Education Specialist and Cheryl Reinke Peck, Education Assistant

## 2009 GCEE Ultimate Educator Expo "LEEDing the Way to a Greener Future"

Tuesday, September 15, 2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden



This is a fun, free evening for teachers to learn about the resources provided by the Greater Cincinnati Environmental Educators (GCEE). GCEE members provide programming to both formal (K-12) and non-formal audiences (youth and adults).

Come learn about all the resources that GCEE members have to offer. For more info and to register, log on to [www.cetconnect.org/ultimateeducatorexpo](http://www.cetconnect.org/ultimateeducatorexpo)

## UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

### Water and Waste: A Waste Management Field Trip and Workshop (\$10)

**Thursday, November 5; 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.** Designed for 4<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. This combination workshop is a powerhouse of relevant information, up-to-date environmental lesson plans, and previews of field trip opportunities for your students. The focus is water treatment, sewage, municipal solid waste, and storm water management. Tours include the MSD wastewater treatment plant and Rumpke landfill. Contact Gwen at the District office for more information, 513-772-7645.

### Nature Recycles: Make and Take Classroom Worm Bin (\$10)

**Thursday, October 22; 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.** Designed for all level of educators. Learn the essentials of vermicomposting. Using red worms and microorganisms to break down organic matter, students can bury their lunch scraps and harvest vermicompost in 3-4 months. Participants will receive an instruction book, worm bin, and activities. Contact Gwen at the District office for more information, 513-772-7645.



### Can You Dig It? Soils Workshop (\$10)

**Friday, October 23; 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.** All activities are correlated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade State Science Academic Content Standards. Come learn the rock properties, erosion, soil development, and soil layers. Participants will receive soil samples, activity book, and tons of ideas for use in the classroom to teach about rocks and soils. Contact Gwen at the District office for more information, 513-772-7645.



### Water Education for Teachers (\$10)

**Thursday, October 1; 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.** All activities correlated to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade State Science Academic Content Standards. Come learn how water exists in the air in many forms, how water changes state, the forces of erosion, and information about weather patterns. Participants will receive an activity book and oodles of ideas for classroom use. Contact Gwen at the District office for more information, 513-772-7645.



## 2010 ENVIROTHON

High School teachers, get your students ready. The 2010 Area IV Envirothon is just around the corner, literally! Butler and Hamilton Counties have teamed up to host the event at the Voice of America Park in West Chester on Tuesday, May 4, 2010. For all the times we had to drive forever, **now it's in our backyard!** Help us have a strong Hamilton County presence at the event and send a team to the state competition.

The Envirothon tests students' knowledge of aquatics, soils, wildlife, forestry, and a current environmental issue. This year's issue is: *Groundwater Protection Through Urban, Agriculture, and Environmental Planning*.

For more info about the event, go to [www.areaivenvirothon.org](http://www.areaivenvirothon.org). To register or for more information, contact Gwen at the District office, 513-772-7645.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Ron Hochstrasser and Sycamore High School teams 1 & 2 for driving all the way to Logan County for the 2009 competition. They are wonderful group!!

## NEW SCHOOL PROGRAMS

One new program we would like to highlight is our NEW Water Resources Program. Thanks to a generous gift from Procter & Gamble, we have received several PUR water filtration packets. We have developed a lesson to reach students about drinking water availability throughout the world. As they are learning about drinking water resources, they purify a contaminated sample of water to drink. You may now call Gwen at 513-772-7645 to register for 2009-2010 programs.

We are currently working on new programs for the 2009/10 school year. Please check our website for newly added programs. If you have ideas on programs you would like the Soil and Water Conservation District to develop, please call Gwen at the District's office, 513-772-7645.



**Board of Supervisors**

Denny Benson, Chairman  
Nate Holscher, Vice-Chairman  
Craig Abercrombie, Secretary  
Sam McKinley, Treasurer  
Steve Johns, Program Chairman

**District Staff**

Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Administrator  
Susan Juriga, Adm. Assistant  
Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist  
Chey Alberto, Urban Technician  
Nate Sturm, Urban Technician  
Gwen Z. Roth, Education Specialist  
Cheryl Reinke Peck, Education Asst.  
Brian Bohl, Stream Specialist  
Annette Meagher, Public Relations Specialist  
Robert Sheets, Geotechnical Engineer

**NRCS**

John Williams, D.C./NRCS



**Mission Statement:** A public organization committed to assisting the citizens of Hamilton County through education, technical assistance and leadership to be stewards of our soil and water resources.

*All District programs are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.*

**Additional Upcoming Events**

**Fremont Cup Canoe Race** - August 22, more info. at <http://www.riversunlimited.org/> - a flyer can be found at <http://geocities.com/fremontcup/>.

**Harvest Home Fest** - September 11, 12 & 13. Volunteers needed for this event! Stop by & see our booth!

**Great Miami River Days Festival in Hamilton** - September 12-13. Educational water quality event - more info. at <http://www.greatmiamiriverdays.org/>.

**Ultimate Educator Expo** - September 15 , 2:30 - 6:30 p.m. (see article)

**Green Landscaping Workshops in Anderson Township**

**Green Landscaping Presentations** - Five workshops for \$10 every Wednesday from September 16 through October 14.

**Soil fertility kits will be available for sale on September 30th session of Soil Testing and Sustainable Plants for the Landscape.**

For more information and to register, please contact Anderson Township, 513-688-8400 or email Steve Sievers at [SSievers@andersontownship.org](mailto:SSievers@andersontownship.org)

**Please contact Gwen Roth for more information on the following workshops.**

**Water Education for Teachers** (10/1/09) 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (\$10) includes activity book and oodles of ideas for classroom use.

**Worm Workshop** (10/22/09) 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. \$10 includes bin, books, and lesson plans.

**Can You Dig It? Soils Workshop** (10/23/09) 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (\$10) soil samples, activity book, and tons of ideas for use in the classroom

**Water and Waste Workshop** (11/5/09) 9:00 a.m. –3:30 p.m. \$10 includes field trip, lesson plans and two curricula.

**GO GREEN!!** –“Conservation Spotlight” can be delivered via e-mail. This alternative will help save paper. If you are interested in changing your subscription to e-mail, contact [holly.utrata-halcomb@hamilton-co.org](mailto:holly.utrata-halcomb@hamilton-co.org) or call us at 772-7645.

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