

# CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Winter Edition  
2011



## Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

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## Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's 66th Annual Meeting

### 2011 Conservation Awards

During this year's Annual Meeting, awards were presented to the Outstanding Conservationists:

#### URBAN CONSERVATION AWARD

for Water Quality and BMP's



The Green Township Board of Trustees

Tony Upton, Trustee, David Linnenberg, Vice Chairman, Tracy Winkler, Chairman, and Thomas J. Straus, Fiscal Officer received the award for water quality and post construction BMPs installed at Bicentennial Park.

#### CONSERVATION PARTNERS AWARD

Pharmaceutical Take Back program



Commissioner Monzel; Rick Patterson, Fairfax Police Chief; Annette Meagher, Public Relations Specialist; and Col. Charles Lindsey, Harrison Police Chief. Commissioner Monzel presented Col. Charles Lindsey and Police Chief Rick Patterson a proclamation for volunteering their time and vehicles to collect and transport all the materials from the 22 Pharmaceutical Take Back locations to an approved incinerator in the State of Indiana. They were also awarded the District Conservation Partner of the Year Award.

#### URBAN CONSERVATION AWARD

for Sediment Controls



Paul Coors, Production Manager for Ryan Homes pictured here with Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist. Paul received the award for implementation of sediment controls on individual lot constructions at Blue Meadows, Stone Ridge Estates and Summercrest Subdivisions.

#### CONSERVATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Gwen Roth, Education Specialist pictured with Ron Hochstrasser, Sycamore High School. Ron was recognized for his support of our local Envirothon competition and for being a steward of the environment and role model to his students. He runs the Environmental Club, plants trees, installed a rain garden at his school and runs the recycling program.

#### WATER QUALITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD Biological Surveys/Public Education



Stacie Martin, Jessica Truman, Joe Milanovich, Ph.D. USEPA, and Dave Gamstetter (not pictured) received the award for their work associated with the Ault Park and Stream Day-Lighting Project.



PROGRAMS & ASSISTANCE

AGRICULTURE & SOIL FERTILITY



CLASSROOM PRESENTATION



URBAN STREAMS



URBAN LAND, HOMEOWNER & EARTHWORK



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & PARTICIPATION PROGRAM



## Annual Meeting Continued....

On September 15, 2011, the District held its' 66th Annual Meeting at the new LEED GOLD certified Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) building located at 1035 Woodrow Street. Their new building has attracted nationwide attention and is the first within the City of Cincinnati designed and constructed to achieve the LEED Gold certification. Our guests enjoyed guided tours of the building prior to the banquet.



Steve Johns

Incumbent **Steve Johns** and new candidate **Scott P. Huber** were elected to the Board of Supervisors for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2012. Congratulations to these gentlemen. Thank you to Karen Ball and Dale Rack for also running for the Board.



Scott P. Huber

## Has Something Been Shooting at Your House??

### Holly Utrata-Halcomb, District Administrator

Have you noticed tiny black specks (1-2 mm in diameter) on your house siding, windows, downspouts and hanging baskets, which are impossible to remove? It is probably "shot gun" or "artillery fungus" (*Sphaerobolus stellatus*). The wet spring season created perfect conditions for this fungus to thrive this year. These black specks are mature spore masses expelled from fruiting bodies of a fungus. It has the ability to "fire" the glossy spores at shiny objects such as house siding, cars, windows, etc. The sticky spores defy all attempts at removal and can stain some finishes.



#### CAUSE



Artillery Fungus  
Unopened and Opened

This fungus develops in organic mulches and is typically a greater problem during spring and fall under cool, moist conditions. If organic mulches are used, old mulch should be stirred or loosened before distributing fresh mulch. There has long been speculation that mulches containing high carbon content (such as wood from ground tree limbs, wooden pallets, etc.) and a low pH are more likely to cause the problem. Cypress, cedar, redwood and pine bark mulch appear resistant to decomposition by the fungus and hence no problem occurs with the spores. Pennsylvania State University is currently conducting research on this problem. Trials involving mulch derived

#### EFFECT



from pure hardwood bark as well as mulch with varying levels of wood content relative to bark content are being examined.

This research has also looked at cleaning products to remove the artillery fungus spores from aluminum and vinyl siding. Complete removal requires substantial effort and possible damage to siding. Try one of these first on an inconspicuous spot: Bleach-White, White Wall Tire Cleaner, Castrol Super Clean and Turtle Wax Purple Muscle All-Purpose Cleaner. These cleaners have been proven most effective on vinyl siding in experiments, while Turtle Wax Foaming Wheel Cleaner and Planet Solutions brand cleaners were most effective on aluminum siding. Check with your automotive store for these cleaners.

## 2012 Small Farm Conference and Trade Show

The Ohio State University Small Farm Program announces two Ohio Small Farm Conferences. Both conferences will include 30-40 different seminars taught by Extension professionals and industry leaders focusing on the following areas:

- Farm Management, Forages & Pasture
- Aquaculture
- Livestock - exotic & traditional
- Natural Resources
- Horticulture - fruits & vegetables
- Organic Production

### Opening Doors to Success

SW Ohio Small Farm Conference & Trade Show  
Friday & Saturday, March 9 & 10, 2012  
Wilmington College Campus, Wilmington, Ohio

### Living Your Small Farm Dream

NE Ohio Small Farm Conference & Trade Show  
Saturday, March 31, 2012  
RG Drage Career Center, Massillon, Ohio

For more information,  
call 937-382-0901 or email [nye.1@osu.edu](mailto:nye.1@osu.edu)

## Planning for Spring Lawn and Garden Magnifico!

**When:** February 23, and March 1, 2012 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Location:** Hamilton County SWCD Office  
22 Triangle Park Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45246

**Cost:** \$10.00 includes one soil fertility test kit per participant

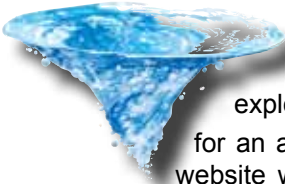
This class will help you to plan your best lawn and garden strategies so you will hit the ground running come spring! Soil fertility testing, turf management, annual flower and vegetable plant selection, design, preventative disease and pest control will all be covered in these two hour classes.



Register by calling 772-7645 and sending your fee to Hamilton County SWCD

# Find Your Watershed!

There is a new resource that will help you identify and explore your watershed. The Regional Storm Water Collaborative (of which Hamilton County Storm Water District is a partner) has developed a tool located on the [Project Earth](http://prjearth.squarespace.com/watershed-tour/) website. Go to <http://prjearth.squarespace.com/watershed-tour/>. Click on "Find Your Watershed" in the left hand column and enter your zip code to explore your watershed. Take the Watershed Tour for an aerial view of the Great Miami Watershed. This website will also provide tips on how we all can save money and protect our watershed through our individual choices and actions.



A watershed is the area of land where all of the water drains and flows to the nearest river, lake or stream. Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. They cross county, state and national boundaries. Did you know the bottom 2/3rds of Ohio drain to the Ohio River? In the continental US, there are 2,110 watersheds; including Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico, there are 2,268 watersheds.

Track and calculate how your conservation actions help the environment by going to <http://www.GreenUmbrella.org>



## Agriculture

John Williams, District Conservationist NRCS



## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides assistance to farmers who face soil, water, air and natural resources threats on their land. The Butler and Hamilton County Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office is now accepting applications for the 2012 EQIP program. The purpose for this program is to help landowners or producers improve their farming operation through the use of conservation planning and practices. The EQIP program can also help those who have pasture related farming operations and woodlands (bush honeysuckle problems). Through the use of this program, NRCS cannot only help with the technical aspect of the farming operation, but can sometimes provide a financial incentive for installing best management practices.



In order to apply for the EQIP program, you and your operation must meet a few eligibility requirements. First, the farm needs to be eligible for governmental programs. This eligibility process needs to be determined by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Secondly, you have to show a profit or loss from the farm operations totaling at least \$1,000.00 or have filed a Schedule F in the previous tax year. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact John Williams, District Conservationist at 513-887-3720.



## FARMBILL WORKSHOP

The Butler and Hamilton County's Soil and Water Conservation Districts in partnership with the National Resource Conservation Service will be conducting an Annual Farmbill Workshop during the month of January or February in 2012. The two evening workshops will discuss the programs of CRP, EQIP and WHIP. We are currently lining up speakers for this meeting and hope to have our Farmbill Wildlife Biologist, Erik Lewis and our Service Forester, Patrick Miglioizzi attend the meeting to give a presentation on their respective areas of concentration. We will also be discussing the Water Quality Credit Trading Program, and updates on the CAUV Program. If you are interested in learning more about these programs, please check our website [www.hcswcd.org](http://www.hcswcd.org) for updates or contact the District Conservationist, John Williams, at 513-887-3720 for further workshop details.





# EDUCATION CORNER

GWEN Z. ROTH, EDUCATION SPECIALIST  
AND NIKI MARENGO, EDUCATION ASSISTANT



## Annual Poster & Essay Contests 2012 Theme: Soil to Spoon

*Deadline for these contests is March 2, 2012*

Do you know that all of our food, in some way, comes from the soil? All entries are to make connections between the earth and our stomachs! The theme must be written on the poster/essay submittals or entries. The contest is open to public, private or home school students within Hamilton County.



- Category by grade: K-2 (poster only, no essay); 3-5; 6-8; 9-12
- Any media may be used to create a flat or two-dimensional poster (paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers or paper). No photographic images
- Poster size must be between 8.5" x 11" and 22" x 28". Essay must be between 300-500 words and on 8.5" x 11" paper. Both must be the work of the individual student
- Entries completed by students will score better than those designed, drawn and colored with adult assistance
- Include on the back of poster or end of essay: the student's name, grade level, teacher's name, school name, address, phone number and the teacher's e-mail
- Maximum of 5 posters and/or essays per sponsoring teacher
- All entries become property of Hamilton County SWCD

*Winning students in each category and their sponsoring teacher will each receive a \$25 gift card to Half-Price Books and special recognition in our newsletter!*

## SANDFORT RECYCLED TREE-MANIA SCULPTURE CONTEST!



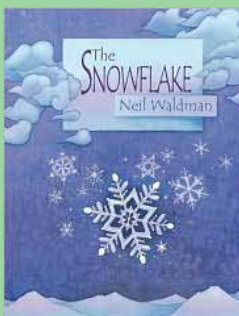
*Covedale Elementary  
2011 Winner!*

In honor of Arbor Day, we are encouraging students to build a recycled sculpture of anything related to trees! **The winning school will have a tree planted at their school!**

- Sculpture must be tree or tree-related
- Sculpture must be made from recycled materials
- Only one entry per school
- Sculpture no larger than 3'x3'
- All entries become property of Hamilton County SWCD



## Book Corner



The Snowflake: A Water Cycle Story  
Author: Neil Waldman

Follow a snowflake on its journey through the water cycle; including treatment plants, oceans and to our taps. Waldman uses beautiful prose and water color art to show the potential of a drop of water around the world, through the seasons of the year.

*The Hamilton County Soil and  
Water Conservation District's  
Family Wish You and Your Family  
a*



*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year!*





# Caring for Our Watershed Contest



Are you a 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade student in Hamilton County? Do you want to win \$ for yourself and your school? Do you care about your environment? Then this contest is for YOU!!!

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, Environmental Education Council of Ohio and Agrium, Inc. invite you and your students to participate in the 2011-12 Caring for our Watersheds program (CFW). CFW is both an environmental proposal contest *and* a project funding opportunity for high school students.

CFW asks students to submit a proposal that answers the question, **“What can I do to improve my watershed?”** Students research their local watershed, identify an environmental concern and come up with a realistic solution.

- Ten finalists will present their ideas and win up to \$1,000 cash rewards for themselves and matching rewards for their schools. Schools also receive \$100 for every ten completed proposals submitted
- Students can work individually or in teams up to 4 members
- In addition to cash rewards, there is also \$10,000 (\$1000 per project) available for students to implement their projects.
- ALL finalists are eligible for these “mini-grant” implementation funds.

## CFW Important Dates



**Proposal Entry Deadline:** Friday, February 3, 2012

**Final Competition:** Saturday, March 10, 2012

Visit [www.caringforourwatersheds.com](http://www.caringforourwatersheds.com) for more details. If you are interested, please contact [gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org](mailto:gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org) or 513-772-7645.

**Note: CFW Ohio is only open to 9th and 10th grade students who live in Hamilton County, Ohio.**



## EARTHWORK

DAN TAPHORN, URBAN CONSERVATIONIST; CHEY ALBERTO, URBAN TECHNICIAN;  
BRIAN BLAKE, URBAN TECHNICIAN AND ROBERT SHEETS, GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER



## Southwest Ohio Erosion and Sediment Control Field Day



Rain Garden at the Green Township Bicentennial Park

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Southwest Ohio Erosion and Sediment Control Field Day was held on October 5, 2011, at the Nathaniel Green Lodge in Green Township. The Field Day is a collaborative effort between the Hamilton, Butler and Warren County Soil & Water Conservation Districts and Clermont County Storm Water Management. Over 70 attendees participated in several presentations from various suppliers regarding erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMP's). Participants toured two sites; Green Township's Bicentennial Park to see alternative storm water management practices such as permeable concrete, rain gardens and con spans which is alternative to using traditional culvert over regulated streams. The second site was Mercy Hospital, where participants saw sediment basins and mulch berms. The focus was on the permitting process as it relates to the Army Corps of Engineers 404 Nationwide Permits. Chris Habel, Attorney with Frost, Brown and Todd, spoke in regards to the proposed changes of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination Permit and the Ohio EPA's 401 Permit.

## NEW URBAN TECHNICIAN



Brian Blake started with the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District in September.

He has joined the Earthwork staff in ensuring construction projects are in compliance with the Earthwork Regulations and assist residents with drainage and erosion issues. Brian grew up in Hamilton County and studied at The Ohio State University. At Ohio State, he majored in Agricultural Engineering with a special interest in soil and water. While at Ohio State, he worked with the Branch County, Michigan Drainage Commissioner and other students on sedimentation problems across an entire watershed. He also traveled to South Africa where he worked with the City of Cape Town Municipal Housing Office and the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal to preserve their limited water resources given the poverty and extreme population density. Outside of work, he enjoys running and competing in triathlons, going camping and playing guitar.

# Upcoming Events

## Board of Supervisors

Sam McKinley, Chairman  
Steve Johns, Vice-Chairman  
Denny Benson, Secretary  
Craig Abercrombie, Treasurer  
Peter Mallow, Program Chairman

## District Staff

Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Administrator  
Susan Juriga, Administrative Assistant  
Annette Meagher, Public Relations Specialist  
Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist  
Chey Alberto, Urban Technician  
Brian Blake, Urban Technician  
Robert Sheets, Geotechnical Engineer  
Gwen Z. Roth, Education Specialist  
Niki Marengo, Education Assistant  
Brian Bohl, Stream Specialist

## NRCS

John Williams, D.C./NRCS



*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year!*

- December 13** - 2:00 p.m. Board Meeting - at District office
- December 26** - Office Closed in observance of Christmas Day
- January 2** - Office Closed in observance of New Year's Day
- January 10** - 2:00 p.m. Board Meeting - at District office
- February 2** - Caring for Watershed proposal deadline (see page 5)
- February 14** - 2:00 p.m. Board Meeting - at District office
- February 23 & March 1** - Planning for Lawn and Garden Magnifico! (see page 6)
- March 2** - Deadline for Poster, Essay and Sculpture Contest (see page 4)
- March 10** - Caring for Our Watershed Finals
- April 19** - Party for the Planet at Cincinnati Zoo
- April 21** - Earth Day at Sawyer Point

**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.*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Permit No. 3556  
Cincinnati, OH



Hamilton County Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
22 Triangle Park Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45246-3411