



# Conservation Spotlight

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## Hamilton County SWCD 2001 Annual Meeting

The 2001 Annual Meeting was held at Union Central Life Insurance Company on Waycross Road in Forest Park, Ohio. The event began with a delicious buffet followed by a PowerPoint presentation on the District's annual accomplishments given by Holly Utrata-Halcomb, District Administrator. Patrick Karney, Director of Metropolitan Sewer District then provided a presentation on the Proposed Mill Creek Deep Tunnel Project. Most communities that drain into the Mill Creek have combined sewers, which pass both storm water and sanitary sewer water along to the treatment plant for processing. Currently, when we experience heavy rainfall, the treatment plants may reach capacity and be forced to divert this water directly to the Mill Creek without treatment. The Deep Tunnel would theoretically channel combined sewer overflow water into a holding tank until the demand for the treatment phase subsides. It would then route this water on to be treated. Mr. Karney received many questions on this fascinating method to improve our water quality.

**And The Winners Are.....**  
Each year at our Annual Meeting an election is held to select volunteer members for our Board of Supervisors. Each of our five Supervisors serve three-year terms on a rotating election basis. This year's winners were incumbent, Steve Sandfort and newcomer, Joe Allen. Joe was chosen as the District's Developer of the Year in 1996 and his election to the board reflects the changing times and new challenges facing our urban county. As the President of Development Planning, Inc. and as a Professional Engineer registered in the States of Ohio, Kentucky, Florida and Colorado he brings valuable technical expertise and experience. Congratulations to both Steve and Joe.



Joe Allen



Steve Sandfort

**Teacher of the Year** for 2001 is Judy Cox from Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy. Judy teaches 5th grade at CHCA. Judy has worked with the District for over 3 years, inviting us into her classroom numerous times to present various conservation topics to the students. She attended the *Make-A-Splash* water quality monitoring workshop last year and has developed a stream monitoring program for her students right on the school's property.

Judy has volunteered to lend her expertise to the District's Teacher Advisory Committee.



Gwen Roth, Judy Cox and Trisha Schroeder

*Keep up the good work, Judy!!*

*If you would like to nominate a teacher for our Teacher of the Year award for 2002, please call Gwen or e-mail her at [gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org](mailto:gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org)*

**Contractor of the Year** - Broshear Contractors Incorporated was chosen as the Districts Contractor of the year for 2001. The District recognized the efforts of Owner, Jerry Broshear and Director of Operations, Denny Benson at our Annual Meeting on October 23, 2001 at Union Central Life Insurance Company. Broshear Contractors puts in the extra effort by installing practices such as super silt fence; retrofitting storm water detention basins with a slow release riser pipe, and seeding idle areas as soon as grading activities are completed. Denny does a great job working with the District and always tries to keep us updated on the progress of their sites.

Congratulations to Jerry Broshear and Denny Benson for their efforts in protecting our soil and water resources.



Denny Benson and Jerry Broshear

## Big Tree Contest Winner

The purpose of the **Big Tree Contest** is to celebrate the beauty of our natural monuments. This year the White Oak was selected as our focus tree. The winner was Shirley Herzog of Boudinot Avenue. Her magnificent tree measures 87 feet in height and 245" in circumference. What a terrific centerpiece for Shirley's front yard!



District Supervisor., Steve Sandfort & Shirley Herzog

## Conservation Partner

Girl Scout troop #2352 and their leader, Mardi Hull, were the Conservation Partner Winners. In their endeavor to win the prestigious Girl Scout Silver Service Project Award, the girls committed 25 hours to the task of labeling every storm drain in Golf Manor. This task involved gluing plastic labels that read, "Dump No Waste – Mill Creek Watershed" onto the storm drain, while hanging information door hangers on surrounding homes regarding tips for healthy streams. Together the girls were able to label over 200 storm drains and, through informational door hangers, were able to teach every person in Golf Manor about how to keep our water clean. We thank these girls and their leader for their hard work and dedication to the field of conservation.

Pictured: Julia Anne Finn, Katerine Hull, Heather Haynes, Jessica Conroy, Leader Mardi Hull and District Supervisor, Karen Heyob.



## District Announces Two New Grants for Teachers

Hamilton County lost two enthusiastic and dedicated conservationists in 2001. Julius A. Odegard passed away on June 7, 2001. Julius served as the District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service for 30 years, spending a majority of that time at Hamilton Co. SWCD until his retirement in 1973. During those years, Julius was a one-man shop assisted only by a part-time secretary. He was a diligent worker—designing agriculture plans for farmers and also education programs throughout the County. Julius was a tireless promoter and worker on the District's tree packet program – a program many Districts then tried to emulate. The profits of this program went to fund education programs.

H. David Diebel passed away on October 13, 2001. Dave served on our Board of Supervisors from 1955 – 1985. He worked vigilantly to promote conservation throughout his life. He also served on the Ohio Reclamation Board of Review for 20 years. He received countless awards over the years

including Citizen of the year Award from Forest Park, Outstanding Contributions from National Wildlife Federation and Soil Conservationist of the Year from the League of Ohio Sportsman. We will miss both of these wonderful gentlemen and we certainly can say that the world and our County is a much better place because they graced us with their presence.

To honor both of these gentlemen, the District is setting up two \$250.00 Education Awards for Teachers that will be awarded annually in September. The District, Supervisors and staff have committed the initial seed money for the grants. **If anyone would like to make a donation in either Julius' or Dave's honor, please send it to our District office.** Details for applying for these grants will appear in our next issue of "Conservation Spotlight".

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## The Clean Ohio Conservation Program – Open Space & Watershed Conservation

A newly formed committee called the Natural Resources Assistance Council held its first meeting on November 14, 2001 to determine policies and procedures in the distribution of approximately 2.2 million dollars to public entities and non-profits in Hamilton County for the acquisition of open space and for the protection and enhancement of riparian areas. This funding will be available for four years commencing in 2002. This 11-member committee is formed to duplicate the Ohio Public Works Districts, of which, Hamilton County makes up District 2, in accordance to House Bill No. 3.

The members of the committee are as follows:  
Chairman – Ron Miller, Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission  
Vice Chairman – Jon Brady, Hamilton County Park District Secretary – William Brayshaw, Hamilton County Engineer  
Paul Beck, Hamilton County Township Association  
Willie Carden, Cincinnati Park Board  
Ken Grob, Hamilton County Farm Bureau  
James Garges, Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ray Hodges, Hamilton County Municipal League  
Terry Hankner, Ohio Association of Realtors  
Eric Russo, The Hillside Trust  
Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Hamilton County SWCD

A sub-committee is currently developing the scoring methodology and should have it posted on the NRAC website- [www.hamilton-co.org/engineer/nrac.htm](http://www.hamilton-co.org/engineer/nrac.htm) by December 30,2001.  
For general information, go to [http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/clean\\_ohio.htm](http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/clean_ohio.htm)

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

### An Alternative to Silt Fence

by Dan Taphorn

Studies by Department of Transportation from California to Maine show that compost berms and blankets are a more effective erosion and sediment control than silt fence. Silt fence is used on nearly 100 % of the construction projects in the U.S., but there are some basic problems with its use. Silt fence is usually not installed correctly (i.e. not trenched in or not installed on the contour), requires diligent maintenance, and is designed for areas with small watersheds. In 1993, Bill Stewart of Portland, Oregon, conducted research, which showed surprising results using compost in a number of erosion applications including a “barrier” at the toe of the slope (essentially a filter berm) on a local roadway that had extremely steep slopes. The research showed how the silt fence was in containing solids. On a 34 percent slope, the total settleable and suspended solids that passed through the silt fence was 32ml/L and 26,000 ml/L, respectively versus the compost barrier (made from mixed yard trimmings) at 2.6ml/L and 1300ml/L, respectively. The study by Bill Stewart cited in this article was used from an article by Rod Tyler, Bio Cycle Magazine January 2001.

The District has been working with contractors and developers to test the effectiveness of using composted wood chips. The wood chips which are usually generated during the clearing process and either buried or hauled off the site are proving to be a very effective erosion and sediment control. By constructing berms from 18 inches to 36 inches high (depending on the steepness and length of the slope) at the toe of the slope the berms are proving to be very effective. On longer steeper slopes a series of berms is recommended. The composted wood chips are irregular in shape and bind together thus preventing them from washing away. When the wood chip berms are used in conjunction with a wood chip blanket (1 inch layer of wood chips) the erosion and sediment control capabilities is increased dramatically. The wood chip blanket minimizes impact erosion and helps slow down the runoff water. As with silt fence it is important to construct the wood chip berms on the contours and to make sure the ends are turned back up the slope 4 to 5 feet. Note: Wood chip berms should not be placed in areas of high concentrated flow; a sediment trap or basin should be used for these applications. After all earth disturbing activities are completed and the site is being prepared for stabilization the wood chip berms can be graded in with the topsoil. The composted wood chips provide beneficial organic matter and help retain moisture to aid in the establishment of vegetation. While the District has not done any hard research on actual numbers like Mr. Stewart of Portland, Oregon preliminary field results seem to be very good. The contractors and developers we have worked with are pleased with the results and find the wood chip berms to be one more tool in gaining compliance with the Earthworks Regulations.

The District is not calling for a ban on silt fence. Silt fence can be an effective sediment control practice when it is installed per the design guidelines and maintained properly. We are always exploring effective erosion and sediment controls and feel that the composted wood chips are an effective control practice that requires less maintenance and does a better job than silt fence on steep slopes. If the wood chip berms are installed properly they can last the life of the project with little maintenance besides removing the accumulated sediment. While they may be a little more costly to install this cost is regained in maintenance cost and better erosion and sediment control.

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## County-wide Town Meeting First of its Kind In Hamilton County

On January 12, 2002, Hamilton County residents will embark on a journey to change the county's future. The 1,000-person Countywide Town Meeting will ask residents to help the county prioritize goals and strategies for the county's future. This meeting is the centerpiece of public involvement efforts for Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission's Community COMPASS (Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategies). Community COMPASS, the first comprehensive plan for Hamilton County since 1964, will identify a vision for the county that all can agree on and will create a strategy for implementing that vision.

Using wireless computers and wireless polling keypads, the Countywide Town Meeting makes this a one-of-a-kind event for planning in Hamilton County. The fusion of the traditional New England Town Meeting and wireless technology from the 21<sup>st</sup> century allows citizens from all parts of the county to come together, have their voice heard, and develop a unified vision for the entire county.

In October, residents shared their ideas and concerns about the county with others at eleven Community Forums. Over 1,700 ideas were gathered and later categorized into topical areas for goal writing purposes. By the end of the Countywide Town Meeting, the highest priority vision elements that engender the greatest commitment from the participants will be identified, a consensus will be built behind the vision and values, and major obstacles or barriers that need to be overcome to accomplish the vision will be identified.

Hamilton County residents and those who work in the county who are interested in the Countywide Town Meeting or in Community COMPASS, please check our website for more information or to register for the Countywide Town Meeting at [www.communitycompass.org](http://www.communitycompass.org) or call (513) 946-4505.

## Education Corner

Education Specialist: -Gwen Roth

Education Assistant: -Trisha Schroeder

### Envirothon 2002

#### Calling all High School Teachers!!!

The Envirothon is a competitive, outdoor, academic event for high school students. The Envirothon tests students' knowledge of soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology and a current environmental issue (CEI). The CEI this year is Introduced Species and Their Effect on Biodiversity. In addition, the Envirothon encourages cooperative decision-making and team building.

Interested schools may enter up to two teams (3-5 members per team with alternates). The deadline for entering the number of teams is Friday, February 15, 2002. The deadline for entering the individual members of each team is Friday, April 5, 2002. Please call Gwen at 772 - 7645 by February 15, 2002 to register the number of teams from your school.

This year's competition will be held on Tuesday May 7, 2002 at the Voice of America property (Butler County). Last year over 110 teams competed from 18 counties. The top four five-member teams continue on to the State Envirothon held in June. State winners compete in the national competition.

Study materials will begin being posted on the Internet in February. Please visit the website at [www.go-concepts.com/envirothon](http://www.go-concepts.com/envirothon). I hope you join us for the 2002 Envirothon!!

#### Macroinvertebrate Teaching Kits and Kick Nets For Sale

The Hamilton SWCD teamed up with ODNR-Division of Soil and Water Conservation and Greenacres Foundation to promote and sell Macroinvertebrate Teaching Kits for \$35 each. Each kit contains 21 specimens of commonly found macroinvertebrates, one empty one-ounce jar, a laminated Stream Quality Monitoring (SQM) identification card, and a plastic carrying case. Each specimen comes in a one-ounce jar preserved with alcohol and glycerin. The jars are labeled with letters that correspond to a laminated key in the lid of the kit. In addition to the kits, we have some additional homemade kick nets for macroinvertebrate sampling available for \$25 each. Proceeds from the sale of the kits and nets will be used to support the annual Make A Splash Teacher Training Workshop. For an order form or more information call or email Gwen Roth at 772-7645 or [gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org](mailto:gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org).

### A River of Ideas: Focus the Flow

Plan now to join fellow interpreters next spring to explore a **RIVER OF IDEAS** and learn how to **FOCUS THE FLOW**. The National Association for Interpretations' Region 4 (Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Ontario) will hold its Spring Workshop in southwest Ohio, just north of Cincinnati, at the Kings Island Conference and Resort Center. Mark your calendars now for **March 18-22, 2002**. Concurrent sessions will include new hands-on techniques for teaching old favorite topics like butterflies, making prehistory come alive, historical perspectives on our eastern forests, and new research on learning and effective education.

For registration materials, contact Clare Thorn at (513)-231-8678 ([clare.thorn@rcc.org](mailto:clare.thorn@rcc.org)) or Chris Carroll at (513) 761-4313 ([chris.carroll@rcc.org](mailto:chris.carroll@rcc.org)).



### Wild Seed Fund Mini-Grants

The National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats Program provides materials and teacher training workshops for educators and school communities interested in creating or restoring wildlife habitat on their school grounds. In 2002, NWF is able to offer fifty \$250 mini-grants to schools across the country. To be eligible, you must be in the initial phases of a Schoolyard Habitats project, plan to use the site for educational purposes, and certify your Schoolyard Habitats site with the National Wildlife Federation by March 15, 2003. The deadline for applications is January 15, 2002.

Applications can be downloaded at [www.nwf.org/habitats/schoolyard/index.html](http://www.nwf.org/habitats/schoolyard/index.html)

### Reminder-Teachers

**Look for grant opportunities in the next addition of the "Conservation Spotlight" newsletter.**



