

# CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT



SPRING 2015

A NEWSLETTER OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## THANK YOU GIRL SCOUTS!



Thank you Troop #47606 for reaching out to us and organizing the storm drain labeling event in Springfield Township. The girls learned about the impact of storm water runoff in their creeks and rivers before canvassing their neighborhood with literature and labeling approximately 35 storm drains. Several people in the neighborhood even stopped to ask them questions and to personally thank them. Good job girls!

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District



## 2015 POND CLINIC

Wednesday, April 8, 2015, 6 to 9pm  
Sharon Centre at Sharon Woods

- Pond Construction & Fish Stocking
- Aquatic Weeds & Aeration
- Legal Aspects - Water Gardens



**IT'S FREE!**

EXPERTS ON HAND

Call 772-7645 to Register

## Saving Rain For a Sunny Day

AN OHIO RIVER VALLEY RAIN BARREL ART PROJECT

RAIN BARREL ART BENEFIT AUCTION

APRIL 23, 2015 | 5:00 - 8:30 PM

FREE ENTRY TO THE ZOO AFTER 5:00 PM

GO GREEN GARDEN

CINCINNATI ZOO & BOTANICAL GARDEN

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:



SAVELOCALWATERS.ORG

Event Organized by:



## NATIONAL DRUG TAKE-BACK INITIATIVE

Visit our website or follow us on Facebook for date and drop off locations.



HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
 PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE  
 AGRICULTURE & SOIL FERTILITY | EDUCATION | URBAN STREAMS  
 URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT & EARTHWORKS | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS  
 22 TRIANGLE PARK DR. CINCINNATI OH 45246  
 PHONE: 513-772-7645 | FAX 513-772-7656 | WWW.HCSWCD.ORG  
 EDITOR: HOLLY UTRATA-HALCOMB | DESIGN: JOHN NELSON

# 2015 POSTER CONTEST

Did you know that about 75% of all flowering plants need help from pollinators in order to survive? This year's Poster and Essay contest theme is all about Pollinators! This is a perfect time for Hamilton County students to dive in and learn about the birds, butterflies, bees, bats and other pollinators that desperately need our help! Not only that, but participants will gain a greater understanding of plant needs, interdependence in nature and how humans impact their environment.

The contest is open to any Hamilton County student, grades K-12 for the poster and 3-12 for the essay. Winning students and supporting teachers at each age level (K - 2; 3 - 5; 6 - 8 and 9 - 12) each receive a \$25 Gift Card from Half-Priced Books during a special presentation at their school! Everyone depends on pollinators. Let's celebrate that during the 60th Annual Soil and Water Stewardship week April 26 - May 3, 2015.

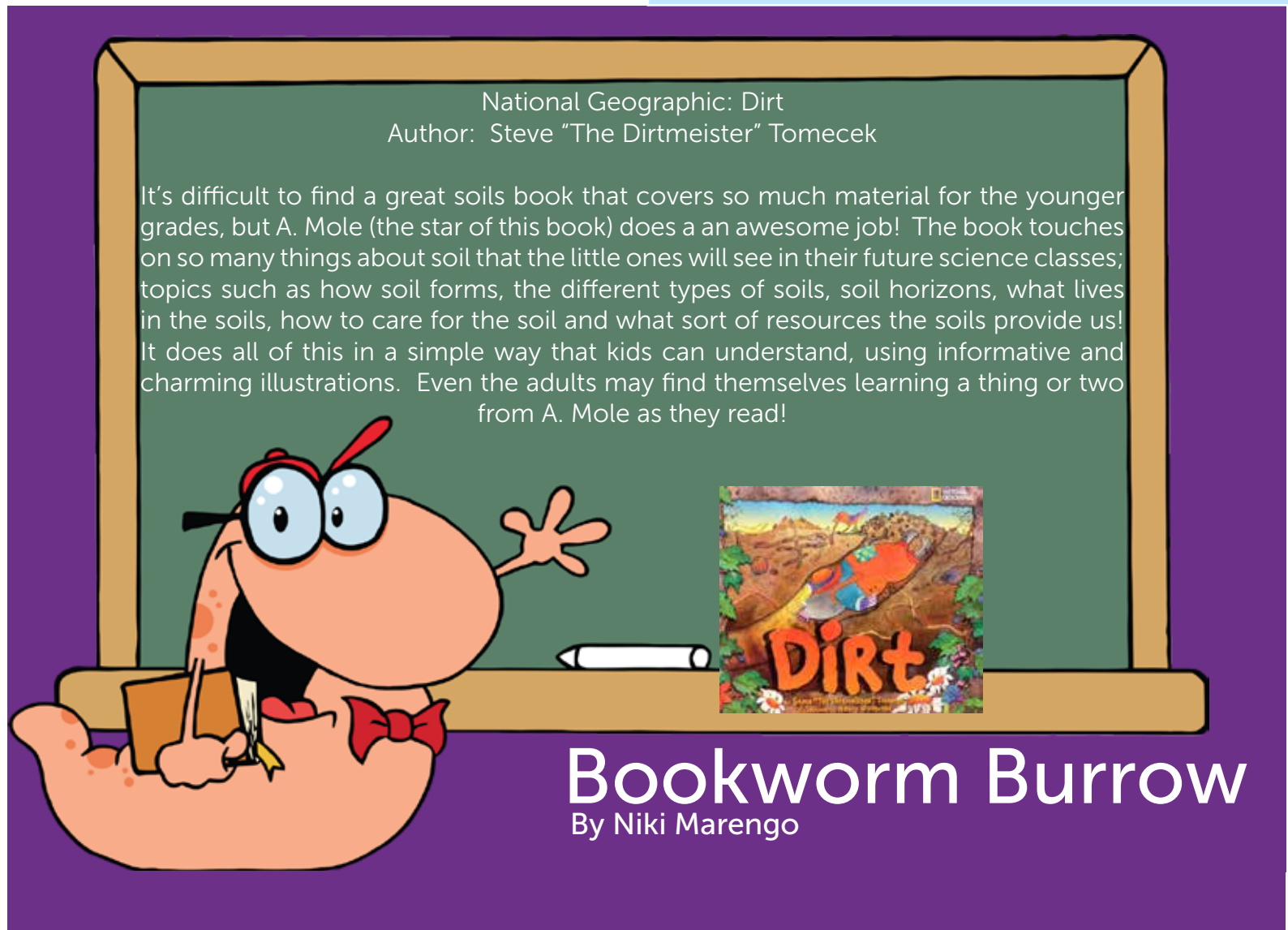
# CELEBRATE EARTH DAY WITH US!

Every day is a great day to celebrate the Earth and its fabulous resources. We hope you come and join us during the following events:

Blue Ash Earth Day; April 22 4:00p - 7:00p  
Earth Jam at Cincinnati State; April 23 11:00a - 1:00p.  
Earth Day at Sawyer Point; April 18 noon - 5:00p.  
Party for the Planet at The Cincinnati Zoo;  
April 23 4:00p - 8:30p.

If you can't come celebrate with us, here are some things you can do in your own neighborhood:

- Plant a tree.
  - Use your own bags, not just at the grocery store. Try it next time you go to the mall. You may get a few sideways glances, but you can feel great knowing that you are doing your part.
  - Buy locally produced food whenever possible. Think of all the gas you and the delivery trucks can save.
  - Donate usable items to a friend or charity instead of throwing them away.
  - Make your own environmentally friendly cleaning products.
  - Learn to make your own fertilizer - compost!
  - Make sure you are using the right amount of yard chemicals.
- Have your soil tested. Call the office for a kit.



National Geographic: Dirt  
Author: Steve "The Dirtmeister" Tomecek

It's difficult to find a great soils book that covers so much material for the younger grades, but A. Mole (the star of this book) does a an awesome job! The book touches on so many things about soil that the little ones will see in their future science classes; topics such as how soil forms, the different types of soils, soil horizons, what lives in the soils, how to care for the soil and what sort of resources the soils provide us! It does all of this in a simple way that kids can understand, using informative and charming illustrations. Even the adults may find themselves learning a thing or two from A. Mole as they read!

**Bookworm Burrow**  
By Niki Marengo



# FARMER'S FORUM ON COVER CROP

Holly Utrata-Halcomb

A Farmer's Forum on Cover Crops was held January 21, at the Butler SWCD with 38 farmers in attendance. Attendees learned about the 4R's of fertilizer application & heard an update on the Hamilton Co. SWCD Research Project on Cover Crops. Special guests, Mike Hall, Administrator from

Crawford SWCD and Eric Niemeyer of Max Cover Crops presented on a new technique for seeding cover crops using a converted High Boy Sprayer into a seeder. This seeder can be contracted for fall seed application in 2015. The cost is comparable to aerial seeding.

The last session of the Forum was a panel of farmers – David Vollmer, Butler County; Bruce Goodwin, Warren County and Ernie Hatfield, Clermont County, sharing their experiences. Ernie Hatfield brought a poster of how he attached a seeder to his combine so he could sow cover crops as he harvested his corn and soybeans!

Cover crops are becoming an exciting new trend in farming. If you are interested in trying some out this fall, contact Holly at the District office by June 30th. Purchasing the seed in bulk and the applicator as a group is the least expensive way to go!



## MEET THE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Niki Marengo

Each year Gwen and I struggle with choosing JUST ONE Teacher of the Year for our annual meeting in September. So many teachers that we work with go above and beyond in not only transforming students, but also their peers and school neighborhood. In 2013 we had selected Julie Christner from Hilltop Elementary in Wyoming for her environmental education skills, for making her classroom a mini-science museum and for just being fabulous in general.

This past year Julie went and TOTALLY exceeded our expectations. Julie had noticed some erosion issues on the school property and she never thought the job to fix it would be too challenging for her students - she has total faith in their skills. Instead she saw these erosion issues as an opportunity for her 4th grade students to assess a real-world problem and for them to engineer and build a solution for the school that would have a lasting impact in the community. Little did she know how much her principal would like the idea!

Hilltop decided to get all of the grades and teachers involved, from the first graders testing the soil and ground temperature, the kindergarten and second graders who filled a trench with gravel and the third graders who helped to cover the trench with soils. But the fourth graders! They were the true workers

on this project, with Julie leading the way; they assessed the problem, had guest speakers from Ohio Utilities Protection Service (Call Before You Dig!) and our office (thanks Dan Taphorn), created models, proposed solutions and made a safety video before starting to dig the trench. Soooooo, this year Gwen and I decided to nominate Julie for teacher of the year for all of the Ohio Conservation Districts, and guess what? She won!

We are thrilled to have such an amazing teacher in Hamilton County and are so excited to watch as she is presented with the Ohio Teacher of the Year award at the all Ohio meeting in Columbus on February 24th. Congrats Julie!



# 2015 SPRING GARDEN COVER CROP & POLLINATOR SEED SALE

## Crimson Clover

Plant in the spring between rows of vegetable plants as a pathway to limit weeds and add nitrogen to the soil. Mow clover when seed heads begin to form.

## Fall Cover Mix

This mix includes seven plant species that grow quickly, fix nitrogen, provide organic matter, suppress weeds and is winter killed. The plants include Flax, Phacelia, Nitro Dicon Radish, Oats, Mung Beans, Cow Pea and Pearl Millet. Best time to plant is late August or early September. Inter-planting between row crops works well.

## Pollinator Mix

Honey Bees are fighting a battle for survival. Pesticides, mites, viruses and malnutrition are among the reasons our bees are in decline. Help the bees and add beauty and function to your garden by using this pollinator mix developed especially for Hamilton County landowners. This blend is made up of regionally adapted open pollinated native wildflowers and grasses. It

provides nectar and food sources for numerous pollinators and larva. Wildflowers were selected to continuously bloom and provide forage areas all season long, while grasses add diversification, structure and habitat to round out the mix. Provides a safe habitat for all regionally important pollinators.

## Soil Testing

Soil test kits are available from the District office year round. If you want to test your soil before the seed pick up dates, come by the office. You may call or visit our website and have a test kit sent to you by mail for an additional \$1.50/kit. Processing time to receive your test results is 1 – 2 weeks.

Hamilton County Landowners may purchase up to two kits/address for \$5.00 ea. Additional soil test kits can be purchased for \$12.00 ea. This is also the rate for out of County residents. Please place your mail orders using the below order form and make checks payable to HCSWCD.

Orders may also be placed online by going to [www.hcswcd.org](http://www.hcswcd.org).

**Deadline for orders: April 3, 2015.**

Orders must be picked up at our office on the following days:

April 28 & 29 – 8:00am – 4:30pm

April 30 – 8:00am – 6:00pm

(Knowledgeable staff available all day on April 30 to answer any questions)

## ORDER FORM

Fall Cover (Plant between Aug. 15 & Oct. 1)

1/2lb	1lb	5lb	10lb	total
x\$5	x\$6	x\$21	x\$31	

Crimson Clover (Plant in the Spring)

1lb	5lb	10lb	total
x\$6	x\$21	x\$31	

Soil Test Kit

HC Resident	Non-Resident	total
x\$5	x\$12	

Pollinator Mix (Plant in the Spring.)

1oz. (covers 200sqft.)	total
	x\$8

Grand Total	\$
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Name:.....

Phone:.....

Email:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Hamilton County Resident?

... Yes ... No

Mail completed forms and checks to:

HCSWCD

22 Triangle Park Dr.

Cincinnati, OH 45246

All orders must be prepaid.

Order forms must reach us by April 3, 2015.



# CONSTRUCTION SITE INSEPCIONS

Chey Alberto

On a recent informal survey by the International Erosion Control Association (IECA) of its members about the top reasons why companies are fined under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II, incomplete or no inspections ranked third on the list. Both the Ohio EPA Construction General Permit and the Hamilton



County Earthwork Regulations mandate that at a minimum, all sediment and non-sediment

pollutant controls at a construction site must be inspected weekly and within 24 hours after any storm event greater than one half inch of rain per 24 hour period and a record be made of the inspection. At a minimum, the inspection report must include:

1. The inspection date
2. Names, titles and qualifications of personnel making the inspection
3. Weather information for the period since the

last inspection

4. Weather information and a description of any discharges occurring at the time of inspection.
5. Location(s) of discharges of sediment or other pollutants from the site
6. Location(s) of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that need to be maintained
7. Location(s) of BMPs that failed to operate as designed or proved inadequate for a particular location
8. Location(s) where additional BMPs are needed that did not exist at the time of inspection
9. Corrective action required

These inspections will reveal if the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan is working properly or if practices require repair or maintenance, if practices fail to provide their intended function or when practices indicated on the plans are not installed. The Earthwork and the Construction General Permits also prescribe timelines for addressing issues found during these inspections.

It is the District's experience that developers and contractors that conduct the required self-inspections on their construction sites tend to have a good level of compliance. Inversely, most violations occur on sites where nobody is

conducting these inspections.

Records of these inspections must be kept at the site and must be provided to the District upon request. The permit holder must also maintain these records for three years following the filing of the Notice of Termination for the permit.

It is important to note that these inspections are different than the inspection conducted by the District. Hamilton County as an owner and operator of storm sewers is an MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer) Community and is required to comply with the 6 minimum control measures to improve water quality coming out of its storm sewers and infrastructure. One of these measures is the pre-construction component which makes sure that construction sites within its jurisdiction are implementing the erosion and sediment control practices or the stormwater pollution prevention plan. The District's inspections are being done to comply with this requirement.



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Denny Benson, Vice-Chairman  
Steve Johns, Secretary  
Pam Simmons, Treasurer  
Sam McKinley, Program Chairman

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Susan Juriga, Administrative Assistant  
John Nelson, Public Relations Specialist  
Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist  
Chey Alberto, Urban Technician  
Steve Eberts, Urban Technician  
Gwen Z. Roth, Education Specialist  
Niki Marengo, Education Assistant  
Brian Bohl, Stream Specialist  
Carrie Gibbons, Program Assistant

#### NRCS

John Williams, District Conservationist  
William Cook, Soil Conservationist

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Hamilton County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
22 Triangle Park Dr.  
Cincinnati, OH 45246  
(513) 772-7645  
[www.hcswcd.org](http://www.hcswcd.org)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Board Meeting - March 10th, 2pm

Last Date for Cover Crop Sale Orders - April 3rd  
(see page 4 for details)

Pond Clinic @ Sharon Woods - April 8, 6pm to 9pm  
(see page 1 for details)

Board Meeting - April 14, 2pm

Rain Barrel Art Project Auction - April 23rd, 5pm to 8:30pm  
Free entry into the Zoo after 5:00pm  
(see page 1 for details)

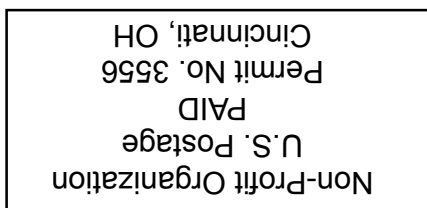
Cover Crop Sale Pickup - April 28 & 29, 8am to 4:30pm  
Cover Crop Sale Pickup - April 30, 8am to 6:00pm

Board Meeting - May 12, 2PM

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



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