

HAMILTON COUNTY

EST

1945

SWCD

ANNUAL REPORT

2020





Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District (HCSWCD) is a legal subdivision of the State of Ohio responsible for the conservation of natural resources within Hamilton County, Ohio. We have a special emphasis on soil and water with a focus on assisting landowners in planning and applying conservation practices on the land. HCSWCD is dedicated to the sustainable use of our natural resources and encouraging positive behavioral changes that produce a higher quality of life for our citizens. The District assists all Hamilton County residents, schools, and jurisdictions through our services and dynamic partnerships that continually provide innovative solutions for the challenges of our region.

About Us

Director's Greeting

Benjamin Franklin once said, "Out of adversity comes opportunity." There is no better word than adversity to describe what the US and the whole world experienced in 2020 as result of the pandemic. Early in the pandemic, the District and the staff were given two options. The first was to hunker down under the pressures of the pandemic and limit our services. The second was to rise to the challenge and reinvent everything we knew to provide unhindered conservation services to the residents of Hamilton County. We chose the latter. Through sleepless nights, long hours, and pages and pages of data came a new way to deliver every single program with the least amount of disruption.

Even as we approach what looks like the light at the end of the tunnel. We as a team stand stronger, taller, and more confident, ready to serve our community as it recovers from the pandemic. In the words of Zig Ziglar, "Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations. The best is yet to come."

- John Nelson

Vision

To be a dynamic leader in soil and water conservation, working to achieve the sustainable use of our soil and water resources on a local and regional basis.

Mission

We are 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.



Jane Wittke

Chairperson



Scott P. Huber

Vice Chairperson



John Mangan

Treasurer



Kara Schirmer

Secretary



Laura Boyd

Program Chairperson



Board of Supervisors

John Nelson

Executive Director



Susan Juriga

Administrative Assistant



Sara Fehring

Marketing & Outreach Coordinator



Gwen Z Roth

Education



Aaron Habig

Conservation Program Specialist



Chey Alberto

Urban Conservationist



Jim Gleason

Earthwork Technician II



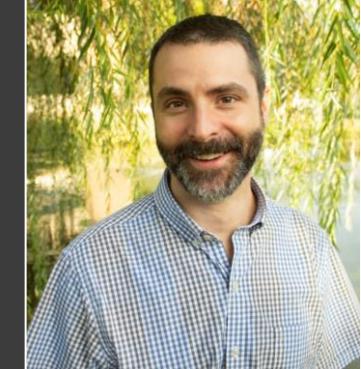
Olivia Maltry

Earthwork Technician



Adam Lehmann

Stream Specialist



Sarah Meadows

Public Involvement Coordinator



District Staff

Our Services

The District strives to be a leader in service delivery. We offer a range of industry specific services. Here is an overview of each area.



Landowner Consultation

The District prides itself on its historical roots. One of the traditional roles of the Soil & Water Conservation District is to provide landowner consultations. We continue to respond to our residents as they need help with agriculture, surface erosion, and streambank erosion.

Earthwork Permit & Enforcement

The Board of County Commissioners has entrusted the District to implement and enforce the Earthwork Regulations. Which ensure that minimal sediment leaves a construction site and also protects landowners from the risk of landslides.

Community Education

Our education focuses on children and adults alike. Our robust programs assess the community's needs and help improve the quality of life in Hamilton County.

Watershed Planning & Restoration

One of the District's goals is to take a holistic approach to improve stream health and water quality in our local watersheds, with the end goal of providing long-term solutions.

Community Involvement

As the adage goes, actions speak louder than words. That is exactly what we do in community involvement. We go beyond the words and help residents take action to improve the environment.

COVID-19 Pandemic Adaptability

2020 started as a normal year. In February, we celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday with over 250 participants at the Cincinnati Museum Center and harvested over 2,500 live stakes with 48 volunteers at Heritage Park. The year was going very well, until the Coronavirus Pandemic hit. Luckily, District staff didn't let the effects of COVID-19 slow them down. All departments re-evaluated their programs and produced alternative ways to offer services. Staff had to step out of their comfort zones to try new things. Virtual meetings became a staple and a method of communication to keep all involved.

We all learned new skills and new ways to provide outreach, and while it wasn't easy, I think it certainly has been wonderful to work with such a dedicated staff. While we look forward to returning to in-person programming soon, we won't leave all those new skills behind. Look for new and exciting programming from the District in the future (as well as some of the tried and true). – Gwen Z Roth



Public Relations

Websites

Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District
Your Partner in Conservation Since 1945



HAMILTON COUNTY Storm Water District
513-946-7000



Save Local Waters



www.hcswcd.org
Visitors – 8,600
Pageviews – 21,549

www.hcswd.org
Visitors – 1,409
Pageviews – 4,846

www.savelocalwaters.org
Visitors – 9,588
Pageviews – 19,616

Social Media

Hamilton County SWCD & Save Local Waters

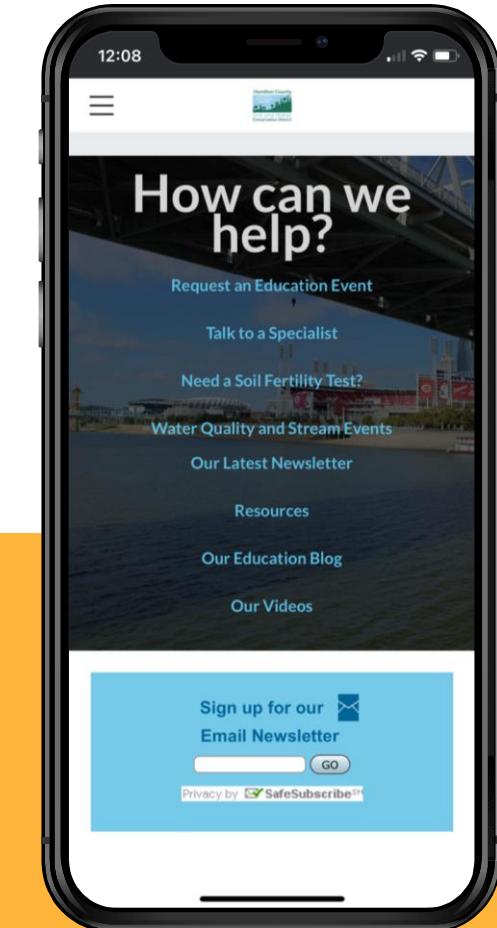


Total Impressions – 141,469
Total Reach – 115,609

Hamilton County SWCD & Save Local Waters



Total Videos – 40
Total Views – 7,377



Rain Barrel Art Project

The Rain Barrel Art Project is a collaboration with Save Local Waters. This project invites local artists to paint rain barrels. Which are then displayed at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, where tens of thousands of visitors interact and view the rain barrels. At the end of the display period, the barrels are auctioned off, and the proceeds assist in environmental education.

Number of Entries Submitted

251

Barrels Painted

38

Funds Raised

\$6,677



Areena Goon, North Adams High School





Education is at the core of all our services. We take pride in reaching people of all ages.

Community Education and Involvement

Sean Connery once said, "there is nothing like a challenge to bring out the best in man," and I would have to agree. 2020 was certainly a challenge for all, and we at the District were no exception. After closing our office to the public and cancelling all our in-person programming, we had a new challenge: How will we keep educating and supporting all our wonderful teachers? Well, I think we answered those questions and pulled together to bring out the best in us. We moved some of our programs to Zoom, we developed videos to post on our social media channels, we partnered with other organization to expand our reach, and we worked with surrounding SWCDs to develop a website filled with resources for teachers including lesson plans, student activities, virtual field trips, and so much more. – Gwen Z Roth

Number of Education Programs & Participants

69 / 1,555

Number of Public Events & Participants

9 / 1,165



James Merrick, K-2nd grade poster contest winner.

Caring For Our Watersheds

HCSWCD

Caring For Our Watersheds is a program that empowers high school students to imagine, develop and create solutions in their local watersheds. The program promotes watershed awareness and stewardship, values student ideas, and offers support when turning theoretical ideas into action.



The top ten winners are awarded monetary prizes (from \$300 - \$1,000) and are given up to \$1,000 to implement their project.

“What can you do to improve your watershed?”

Number of Students Involved

296

Number of Proposals Submitted

135

Number of Schools Involved

18

Watershed Planning & Restoration

The mission of the District's stream conservation program is to restore and maintain the ecological integrity of Hamilton County's local water resources. The District fulfills this mission by offering watershed planning and restoration, resident consultation, and public education and involvement opportunities to residents and organizations in Hamilton County.

Number of Landowner
Consults

36

Number of Great Miami River
Water Samples Collected

789



Trash Collected During Clean
Sweep of the Great Miami
River

25 Bags / 80 Tires



In spring 2020, with several local partners and many community volunteers, HCSWCD harvested and distributed over 2,800 live stakes.

Cooper Creek Collaborative

The Cooper Creek Collaborative is a partnership of organizations and community members who have come together to restore this urban watershed. Cooper Creek, like urban/suburban creeks throughout the region, is impacted by *urban hydrologic alteration*. As a result, it dries out between rainfalls, and suffers from frequent erosive flash-flows during rainfalls. The Collaborative takes on the daunting task of naturalizing flows in the creek by focusing early efforts on a one square mile *Demonstration Watershed*. With the combined efforts of our multiple partner organizations, a dedicated volunteer base, and the District's leadership, the Cooper Creek Collaborative is demonstrating how to restore naturally flowing streams to urban and suburban landscapes.

Projects and Initiatives

- Stormwater Basin Retrofits: 6 Funded (to be installed in 2021)
- Experimental Storm Sewer Filtration System: Installed and treating 170-acres in 2020
- Green Infrastructure: 1 Rain Garden Installed in 2020
- Urban Tree Canopy Restorations: 250 trees funded (to be planted in 2021)
- Instream Wood Installation: Demonstration Project Funded (to be installed in 2022)

WWW.COOPERCREEK.ORG



Several of the Collaborative's member organizations worked together to design and install a rain garden at Deer Park High School. The rain garden was funded by a Duke Energy Grant received by Green Umbrella. This rain garden will serve as an educational tool for science teachers and will keep runoff generated by three tennis courts from the creek.

Earthwork Permit & Enforcement

Number of Projects

597

Number of Inspections

3,847

Number of Permits

337

Sediment & Erosion
Reviews

1,112

Average Monthly
Inspections Per Site

1.3

Number of
Geotechnical Reviews

939



The District's Earthwork team regularly visits construction sites to make sure they are compliant with local and state regulations. They also respond to complaints and queries from landowners across Hamilton County.

Technical Assistance & Complaint Responses

HCSWCD

	Drainage	Erosion	Fill	Landslide	Pond	Other	Total Inquiries & Complaints
Amberley Village	1						1
Anderson Township	12	18	2	3		2	37
City of Blue Ash	2	1					3
City of Cincinnati	3	1				1	5
Colerain Township	4	5	4	1	2	3	19
Columbia Township	1			1			2
Crosby Township	1	1			1		3
City of Deer Park	1						1
Delhi Township	2	2	1	2		2	9
Village of Elmwood Place				1			1
Village of Evendale	1				1		2
Village of Glendale	1						1
Village of Golf Manor	1						1
Green Township	21	9	5	3	1	3	42
Village of Greenhills	1						1
City of Harrison	1						1
Harrison Township			1		1		2
Village of Indian Hill	1	2		1	1		5
Village of Lockland	1						1
City of Loveland	1			1			2
City of Madeira	1						1
Village of Mariemont	1						1
Miami Township	4	3			1		8
City of Montgomery	1						1
City of North College Hill	1						1
City of Norwood						1	1
City of Sharonville		1					1
City of Springdale			1				1
Springfield Township	1	4	2	1	1		9
Sycamore Township	2	3					5
Symmes Township	4	4	2				10
Village of Terrace Park	1						1
Whitewater Township		2	4		1	3	10
City of Wyoming		1				1	2
Total Type	72	57	23	13	10	16	191

The table to the left shows technical assistance and complaint responses for drainage, erosion, fill, landslide, pond, and other related questions.

Total Number of Responses

191



Soil Testing & Agriculture

The District assists with agriculture, forestry and land management issues, and administers the pollution abatement program. In addition, the District partners with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to offer landowners assistance with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding. Low-cost soil fertility testing is offered through PennState Extension.



In 2020, the District partnered with NRCS and the City of Cincinnati to develop the Cincinnati High Tunnel Initiative. High tunnels allow producers to grow food year-round. On December 16, 2020, the first program high tunnel in Cincinnati was installed in Avondale.



Number of Soil Test Kits Analyzed

108

Number of Approved High Tunnels

4

Number of Pollution Complaints

251

Number of Funded EQIP Practices

15

Natural Resources Conservation Service EQIP Practices

In 2020, 15 EQIP practices were completed on a total of 34.6 acres with a total payment of \$19,192. Practices included high tunnel systems, cover crops, brush management, structures for wildlife, conservation cover, and a nutrient management plan.

2020 Financial Report

HCSWCD

District Accounts	
Beginning Balance	\$58,732
Ending Balance	\$77,369
Special Accounts	
Beginning Balance	\$734,129
Ending Balance	\$866,209
Other Accounts	
Beginning Balance	\$57,257
Ending Balance	\$135,517

The following line items have not been listed in this

2020 financial report:

1. Combined statements of receipts,
2. Combined statements of disbursement, and
3. Changes in the fund balances.

A detailed financial statement including the line items
can be requested or found in the cash basis report on
the District website.

The financial reporting period for
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020 is pending audit.

Your Partner in Conservation



All district programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or disability.



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www.hcswcd.org