Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Celebrating 70 years of Urban and Rural Conservation

2015 ANNUAL REPORT
Who Are We?

Hamilton County SWCD was established in 1945 to assist agriculture landowners in reducing soil loss on their fields. The District has always been run by a publicly elected Board of five volunteer supervisors that serve three-year terms.

Another important role the District historically played was in developing farm ponds and lakes. Since Hamilton County has no natural lakes, farmers often had to make several trips a day to the nearest stream to haul water for livestock. Hundreds of farm lakes have been surveyed and sited by the District and our Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partners.

In 1992, the District took on the administration of the Hamilton County Earthwork Regulations that governs earth movement on development sites. This includes erosion, sediment control and hillside stability. In 2003, the District was asked to also be responsible for the Education, Community Involvement and Pre-Construction components of Phase II of the Clean Water Act that addressed non-point source water pollution.

What Can We Do For You?

Today, our highly trained SWCD Technical staff is available to address erosion, hillside stability, stream stability, water quality as well as storm water issues. We offer hands on training through our monthly water quality lab. You can also “make your mark” in your neighborhood by labeling your storm drains, alerting people not to dump their waste.

Our education department provides enjoyable speakers and programs for all age levels, from pre-school to seniors, on anything conservation. In addition, we have unique programs for High School students such as “Caring For Our Watersheds” that challenges students to come up with ideas on how to improve their local environment. The fun twist to this program is that the top 10 winners and thier schools not only win sizable cash prizes, but also money to actually implement their ideas.

The avid gardener can increase plant vigor and productivity with our soil fertility testing kit and fall cover crop program. Our newsletter, website, Facebook & Twitter pages and blogs are packed with timely news and information. If any of the above topics interest you or if you want to be added to our newsletter list, give us a call or signup online at www.hcswcd.org.

The Board and Staff are extremely grateful for the support and partnership we receive from our area residents, County Commissioners, Storm Water District, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio Soil & Water Commission. We are committed to provide our services with the same quality and integrity in the years to come.

Thank you,
Board of Supervisors
& Staff

2015 Board of Supervisors

Scott Huber
Colerain Twp.
Chairman

Denny Benson
Colerain Twp.
Vice-Chairman

Steve Johns
Hyde Park Cincinnati
Secretary

Pam Simmons
Newtown
Treasurer

Sam McKinley
Northside Cincinnati
Program Chair

Who Are We?
Education

432 school programs for 11,029 students
42 library programs for 869 participants
13 teacher workshops for 356 teachers
6 summer camps for 151 campers

Gwen Z. Roth - Education Specialist

“I enjoy teaching kids about the environment and showing them how much fun they can have in their own backyard, playground or park while learning about the environment.”

Sara Fehring - Education Assistant

“I truly enjoy creating an interactive learning experience that leaves students with a respect for the environment and the confidence to know that they can do the right things to make a difference, at any age.”
New Earthworks Permits Issued

Chey Alberto - Earthwork Technician CPESC

Steve Eberts - Earthwork Technician CESSW - IT

Dan Taphorn - Urban Conservationist CPESC

2,535 Site Inspections Performed

Plans Reviewed

Sediment / Erosion: 542
Geotechnical: 753

107 Complaints & Inquiries

“The development community faced challenging weather conditions this year, and we are very proud to see continued compliance with the Earthwork Regulations and the constantly changing environmental rules & regulations.”

- Dan Taphorn

“The increase in residential development at the end of the year is a positive sign for the economy. We will be busy ensuring compliance with the Earthwork Regulations via permitting and inspections.”

- Chey Alberto

“Education and training is critical to the Earthwork Staff. We continue to reach out to the development community to share innovative ideas and regulatory changes.”

- Steve Eberts
The Urban Streams Program provides services related to technical support, water quality monitoring, public outreach and storm water management project review. These services are available to land owners, businesses, universities, consultants, local jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations.

- Brian Bohl
Developed a gardening therapy curriculum for recovering vets and Cincinnati V.A. Hospital

3 Animal Waste Pollution Complaints

Wrote 28 Agriculture related articles, blogs, press releases.

Sold Prairie and Pollinator seed county-wide and offered a Prairie/Pollinator Workshop

80.94 lbs. of Cover Crop Sold.

Cover Crop Flyover Research Project for 450 Ag. Acres in Crosby Twp. and Harrison. The purpose is to determine the impact of cover crops on soil fertility and decreasing nutrient and sediment runoff into receiving streams. The projects was partly funded NRCS EQIP and Grant Funds. EQIP covered 97.3 acres of seeding and a Farm Bureau Grant paid $21,000 toward the seeding.

“Agriculture Activity is alive and well in Hamilton County. In addition to the 21,618 acres reported by USDA as food and fiber crops planted, our County has hundreds of community gardens, horticulture crops, hobby farms and small livestock operations. Our services encompass all of these land uses while educating the new operators on potential impact to the environment.”

- Holly Utrata-Halcomb
District Administrator

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):
Cover Crop Planting- 450 acres
Heavy Use Area- 100 sq. ft.
Honeysuckle Removal- 1 ac.
Spring Development- 1
Watering Facility- 1
Technical Assistance /Drainage visits- 31
Public Relations

Website: HCSWCD.org
11,681 Visitors
47,590 Sessions

SaveLocalWaters.Org
9,676 Visitors
16,108 Sessions

District Twitter
325 Followers
207 Tweets
11,800 Impressions

Facebook
District
Likes - 544
Reach - 48,715

SaveLocalWaters
Likes - 924
Reach - 79,844

Youtube
District
3,254 Views
13,602 Minutes Watched

SaveLocalWater
79 Views
84 Minutes Watched

Rain Barrel Art Project at the Cincy Zoo

12 Press Releases Published

Time Warner Cable
270 TV Spots
386,918 Reach

80 Radio Spots
424,621 Reach

“We take efficiency and quality very seriously, here at the District. We take pride in running our public outreach programs with quality, despite our limited resources. Our one goal is to educate our residents about the importance of our natural resources.”
- John Nelson
Public Education

August 14
- Nature Next Door Camp - 50 attendees
- Days in the Park - 4,500 attendees
- Taste of Colerain - 20,000 attendees
- Green Township Fun Day - 450 attendees
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 27 volunteers

September 14
- GCEE Ultimate Educator Expo - 400 attendees
- Mayerson Student Leadership Conf - 700 attendees
- Great Outdoor Weekend - 48 participants
- Annual Meeting - 100 attendees
- Glendale Street Fair - 640 attendees
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 32 volunteers

October 14
- Agriculture Education Day - 450 participants
- Who Works the Rivers? - 150 participants
- Project Underground Workshop - 13 participants
- Tree Sale Distribution - 400 participants
- XU Pre-service workshop - 22 participants
- Worm workshop - 22 participants
- Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI) Training Course (UC) - 10 students
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 38 volunteers
- Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River - 20 volunteers

November 14
- XU Pre-service workshop - 18 participants
- Wild about STEM Conf - 45 participants
- Fostering Sustainable Behavior - 200 Participants
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 33 volunteers
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 25 volunteers
- Prairie and Pollinator Program - 23 attendees
- Cincinnati Home and Garden Show Presentation - 18 participants

December 14
- NACD Webinar - 147 attendees
- NACD Webinar “Conservation Education in Urban Counties” - Nationwide
- HCESC podcast - 60 Participants
- Indian Hill Garden Club Soil Prepping Presentation - 24 attendees
- Farmer’s Forum - 53 attendees

January 15
- Buckeye United Fly Fishers Show - 135 attendees
- XU pre-service teacher workshop - 12 participants
- GUW/PLT teacher workshop - 29 participants
- Rain Barrel Artist Workshop - 55 participants
- Green Umbrella Presentation - 20 attendees
- Lower Great Miami River Water Quality Data Forum - 35 attendees
- Civic Garden Center Environmental Science PLC - 10 participants
- P&G Earth Day - 250 attendees
- Party for the Planet - 7,500 attendees
- Envirothon - 600 attendees
- Cincinnati State Earth Jam - 250 attendees
- Christ Hospital Earth Day - 200 attendees
- Touch-A-Truck (Blue Ash) - 250 attendees
- Earth Day at Sawyer Point - 6,000 attendees
- Caring For Our Watersheds Final Competition - 150 attendees

February 15
- Buckeye United Fly Fishers Show - 135 attendees
- XU Pre-service workshop - 18 participants
- Wild about STEM Conf - 45 participants
- Fostering Sustainable Behavior - 200 Participants
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 33 volunteers
- MU Pre-service workshop - 75 participants
- Cincinnati Flower Show - 575 participants
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 32 volunteers
- Civic Garden Center “Healthy Soil/Healthy Garden” - 14 attendees
- Cincinnati Children’s Home Soils and Soil Sampling - 39 participants
- Pond Clinic - 20 participants

March 15
- Home and Garden Show - 75,000 attendees
- Master Composter class - 15 participants
- State of the Mill Creek Watershed Forum - 50 attendees
- The Plant Sale at the Civic Garden Center - 600 attendees
- Weigel Elementary Earth Fest - 400 participants
- Public Employees

April 15
- Civic Garden Center Environmental Science PLC - 10 participants
- P&G Earth Day - 250 attendees
- Party for the Planet - 7,500 attendees
- Envirothon - 600 attendees
- Cincinnati State Earth Jam - 250 attendees
- Christ Hospital Earth Day - 200 attendees
- Touch-A-Truck (Blue Ash) - 250 attendees
- Earth Day at Sawyer Point - 6,000 attendees
- Caring For Our Watersheds Final Competition - 150 attendees

May 15
- The Plant Sale at the Civic Garden Center - 600 attendees
- Weigel Elementary Earth Fest - 400 participants
- Public Employees

June 15
- Bugfest - 1,200 attendees
- Paddlefest Kids Expo - 7,000 attendees
- Paddlefest Music Festival - 4,500 attendees
- Sayler Park Festival - 200 attendees
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 32 volunteers

July 15
- Red, White and Blue Ash - 50,000 attendees
- Hamilton County 4-H Fair - 1,100 attendees
- Touch-A-Truck (Springfield Twp.) - 150 attendees
- Sycamore Days - 20,000 attendees
- Great Miami River Citizens’ Lab - 32 volunteers
- Cincinnati State Soil Fertility Program - 11 attendees
- Prairie and Pollinator Workshop - 55 participants
- Gorman Farm Thistle Control - 11 attendees
- County Commissioners update on SWCD - 9 attendees
Partnership, Efficiency, Effectiveness. These terms describe how Hamilton County agencies, specifically our SWCD, Hamilton County Health and Hamilton County Developmental Services work with the County Engineer to accomplish the USEPA’s mandated yet unfunded Phase II of the Clean Water Act. I frequently hear from other Ohio SWCDs that it is amazing how all our agencies coordinate and work so well together on this program. When asked what our secret is, I respond there are no egos involved. We simply get the job done in our area of expertise. Majority of the 49 jurisdictions in our County belong to the Storm Water District. We use economy of scale to reduce the administrative costs and avoid duplication of effort.

Our SWCD is in charge of three of the six required components. These are - Public Education of water quality, Public Involvement in showing residents how they can have a positive impact on water quality, and Pre-Construction sediment and erosion control. We have been involved in all three of these tasks for 23 years or longer. We have simply augmented our programs to speak to the EPA requirements. In addition to our experience, we are skilled at acquiring grants to help pay for our programs, thus reducing the cost to our landowners.

Agrium Inc. provides a $60,000 annual grant to support the “Caring For Our Watersheds” competition for High School Students. Hundreds of students submit ideas on how to improve water quality within our streams and rivers. The top 10 teams win cash prizes along with their school, just for the idea. They also receive a minimum of $1,000 each to actually implement their idea; empowering the student to make a difference!

Ohio Farm Bureau provided a $21,000 grant this year to help support the cover crop research project the District is conducting. Over 350 Ac. of farmland will be seeded this September to help improve soil quality, reduce erosion and improve water quality. Annual soil testing and monthly water quality monitoring will illustrate the effectiveness of this approach.

The Storm Water District supports its member jurisdictions by offering seriously reduced cost of soil fertility testing. Laboratory soil testing usually costs $12.00/sample. Due to cost-share, our members only pay $5.00/sample with a limit of two at that price. The goal is to put down only the fertilizer needed. This saves the landowner money and keeps excess fertilizer out of our streams.

These are just a few of the opportunities we offer about your water quality. If you are interested in learning how to conduct water quality sampling, participate in a stream clean up, or help educate others by assisting in staffing one of our many education exhibits, give us a call!

Administrator’s Note

Holly Utrata -Halcomb
District Administrator
## Financial Report 2014

### District Account

| January 1, 2014 beginning balance | 24,320 |
| Outstanding checks total for 2013 | (110) |
| Income | 18,486 |
| Expenses | 6,520 |
| December 31, 2014 ending balance | 36,176 |

### Special Account (Soil & Water Conservation)

| January 1, 2014 beginning balance | 298,359 |
| General Fund Subsidy | 207,823 |
| State Match | 183,924 |
| Other Revenue | 118 |
| Total Expenditures | 382,877 |
| December 31, 2014 ending balance | 307,347 |
| Less 20% Contingency Fund and Payroll Liabilities | 149,538 |
| Total | 157,809 |

### Special Account (Storm Water)

| January 1, 2014 beginning balance | 517,075 |
| General Fund Subsidy | 280,067 |
| State Match | 146,819 |
| Other Revenue | 1,640 |
| Total Expenditures | 549,161 |
| December 31, 2014 ending balance | 396,440 |
| Less 20% Contingency Fund and Payroll Liabilities | 227,247 |
| Total | 169,193 |

### Special Account (Save Local Waters)

| January 1, 2014 beginning balance | 88,014 |
| Collaboration Funding | 34,290 |
| Other Revenue | 50 |
| Total Expenditures | 54,632 |
| December 31, 2014 ending balance | 67,722 |

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This is an unaudited financial report for the period January 1, 2014 - December 31, 2014

Susan Juriga - Administrative Assistant

“Working for the District is a great opportunity to serve the community. The District offers Hamilton County many programs such as soil fertility testing, cover crops and recently affordable trees. I am proud to be working for Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District.”
Hamilton County Commissioners

The District sincerely appreciates the support we receive from the Hamilton County Commissioners: Commissioner Greg Hartmann, Commissioner Chris Monzel, Commissioner Todd Portune. We also appreciate the support we receive from the Hamilton County Storm Water District, ODNR-Division of Soil & Water Resources, the Ohio Legislature, the Ohio Soil & Water Commission and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

A Publication of:
Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District
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(513) 772-7645 | www.hcswwd.org

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

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