

# CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

FALL 2016

Hamilton County  
Soil and Water  
Conservation District



Your Partner  
in Conservation  
Since 1945

A NEWSLETTER OF THE  
HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Help save the Monarch Butterfly Collect Milkweed Seed Pods



The Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) has to be one of the most amazing insects on the entire planet. Scientists know of no other insect that tackles a migration as long as that of the Monarch Butterfly and the most remarkable aspect of the migration is that it is not learned from a previous generation: adults do not teach it to their offspring within the same species. The Monarch Butterfly life cycle is very unique in that, the first, second and third generation typically lives for only four to six weeks. It is the fourth generation that makes the Monarch Butterfly life cycle unique. The fourth generation, often called the super generation, flies over 2,500 miles from southern Canada to the mountains of central Mexico. It spends the winter

in Mexico and once spring has arrived these same Monarchs begin their migration back north towards the United States where they will mate, lay eggs on milkweed plants and die, after living about 8 months! For decades, scientists have been fascinated with the extent and range of the Monarch Butterfly migration. But now, researchers are running out of time. Since the late 1990s, the population numbers and the overall winter acreage that Monarch Butterflies have inhabited in central Mexico have been in decline. During the winter of 2013-2014 scientists found the smallest number of overwintering monarchs. Researchers have determined many reasons for this population loss, including the decline of the common milkweed plant (*Asclepias syriaca L.*). Milkweed is essential to the life cycle of the Monarch Butterfly because adult females exclusively lay their eggs on the underside of milkweed leaves. The young caterpillars eat the leaves, ingesting cardenolides (toxic juices within the milkweed) without harming themselves, but making the Monarch distasteful to potential predators. So what can we do to save the decline of the Monarch Butterfly population? Join forces with the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI). The OPHI is a partnership between ODNR, ODA, Div of Wildlife, Monarch Joint Venture, OSU, Pheasants Forever and many others to educate citizens and create beneficial pollinator habitat. (Contd... Pg. 2)

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](http://WWW.HCSWCD.ORG)

EDITOR: HOLLY UTRATA-HALCOMB | DESIGN: JOHN NELSON

We are asking citizens to help us collect milkweed pods which will be sent to the state nursery where they will be separated, dried and used for future planting to help increase pollinator plantings around the state.

Tips for seed pod collection:

- o It is best to collect the pods when the seeds inside are brown. Do not collect pods when seeds are cream or white.
- o If the center seam of the pod pops with gentle pressure, it is ready to be picked.
- o Collect pods in a paper bag, plastic may cause the pods to rot. Store pods in a cool, dry area until you drop them off.
- o Drop the seeds pods off at the district office (M-F 8:00a - 4:30p) between September 1 and October 31. We will make sure they get to the State nursery where they can be planted in future pollinator plantings.

Other things you can do to help the Monarch Butterfly (and all our pollinators):

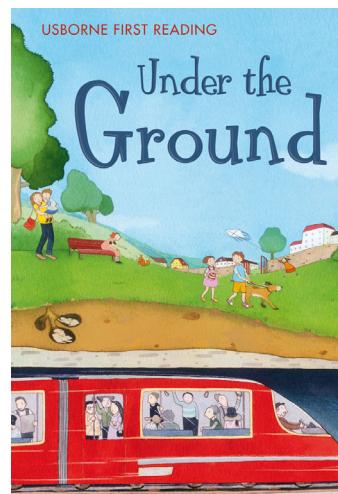
- o Use pesticides sparingly, if at all, in your garden.
- o Plant milkweed in your own yard.
- o Plant other nectar sources that help adult monarch and other pollinators.
- o Encourage your friends and neighbors to plant milkweed and butterfly gardens.



Images Courtesy: Franklin SWCD

## Bookworm Burrow Book Review

*Under the Ground* By: Anna Milbourne and Serena Rigliette



Have you ever wondered what lives and moves under your feet? Explore the world below your feet with two children as they dig deeper and deeper underground. This book does a great job of exploring what can be found underground starting with roots and small insects and moving all the way to dinosaur bones and diamonds.

This book is not text heavy and does a great job of illustrating all the things that can be found underground, whether they are natural or man-made objects. This book would be a great introduction for lessons on soil, fossils, insects and natural resources. If you would like your students to explore soil, worms, fossils and natural resources visit our website,

<http://www.hcswcd.org/educate.html>, and check out the programs we have to offer. The Education Department has several programs that can play off this book. The programs include Wiggly Worms, Bob & Otto, Fossils 101, Edible Soil and Cookie Mining.

For more classroom ideas and activities please visit the Bookworm Burrow tab on our website, <http://www.hcswcd.org/bookworm-burrow.html>

## It's Time to Get Your Creative Juices Flowing!

The 2016-2017 Hamilton County SWCD poster and essay contests are here! This year's theme is "Healthy Soils are Full of Life!" Take some time to get to know one of the most amazing components of our planet, soil! Check the website for additional information and submit your best work. <http://www.hcswcd.org/poster-essay.html>.



# 2016 Annual Meeting Highlights



It is our pleasure to announce that we had a very well attended and meaningful Annual Meeting in August. We were graced by the presence of many dignitaries. It was our pleasure to host Commissioner Todd Portune who spoke on the many challenges that Hamilton County faces in the area of conservation and water quality. District Administrator, Holly Utrata-Halcomb gave an annual report on the district's activities



## Congratulations to Our Newly Elected Board Members!



## Election Results

John Mangan and Kaniz F. Siddiqui, Ph. D. were elected to the Board of Supervisors. They will begin their terms in 2017.

and future plans. The financial report was read by Treasurer, Denny Benson, and the proceeding of the annual meeting was conducted by Board Chairperson, Sam McKinley.

We also wanted to recognize our award winners and silent auction sponsors. Dan Taphorn presented the 2016 Outstanding Urban Cooperator award to Greg Preston of Drees Homes for the installation and maintenance of Earthwork best management practices at Glendower Place subdivision. Dan also presented the 2016 Outstanding Urban Cooperator award to Garrett Fay of MI Homes for the installation and maintenance of Earthwork best management practices at Greenshire Commons' subdivision. Gwen Roth presented Steve Reinke of Symmes Elementary School with the 2016 Outstanding Conservation Teacher Award for his exceptional efforts in environmental education.

Holly Utrata-Halcomb gave the Outstanding Community Service Award to Joe Corcoran for creating the Veterans Homegrown Heroes of Ohio Garden.

We would like to thank all those who donated items to the Odegard/Diebel Silent Auction. We raised \$350 to help Hamilton County teachers educate their students on local conservation topics.

Thank you HCSWCD supervisors and staff, Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek, PNC Bank and Queen City Honey for donations to the auction.

Board of Supervisors  
Sam McKinley, Chairman  
Steve Johns, Vice-Chairman  
Pam Simmons, Secretary  
Denny Benson, Treasurer  
Scott P. Huber, Program Chairman

## District Staff

Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Administrator  
Susan Juriga, Administrative Assistant  
John Nelson, Public Relations Specialist  
Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist  
Chey Alberto, Urban Technician  
James Gleason, Urban Technician  
Alex Del Valle, Urban Technician  
Gwen Z. Roth, Education Specialist  
Sara Fehring, Education Assistant  
Adam Lehmann, Stream Specialist  
Carrie Gibbons, Program Assistant

## NRCS

John Williams, District Conservationist

# Some Jurisdictions will see a Change in Services

Todd Long, PE &

Ted Hubbard, PE, Hamilton County Engineer

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II program, managed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), was created by the 2nd Phase of the Clean Water Act as it addresses nonpoint pollution sources (NPS) - pollutants being introduced into waterways through storm water runoff. It was implemented after the NPDES Phase I program, which focused on permitting end-of-pipe discharges to waterways, indicated that water quality standards could not be achieved without addressing NPS in urbanized areas. Hamilton County, Ohio townships and municipalities in urbanized areas are subject to a requirements in a statewide NPDES Phase II permit issued to Ohio EPA by the USEPA.

In 2003, the Hamilton County Stormwater District (HCSWD) formed a co-permittee district comprised of Hamilton County townships and municipalities subject to the NPDES Phase II permit requirements. All affected municipalities were invited to join – seven did not, including Cheviot, Forest Park, Harrison, Loveland, Milford, Reading, and Springdale. More recently, a few of the co-permittees have elected to leave the District - Cleves, North College Hill, Norwood, St. Bernard, Woodlawn, and Wyoming. The City of Cincinnati has also notified the District that they will discontinue their membership. Those who leave the District are no longer eligible to receive District-provided benefits, and must provide the services necessary for the permit requirements for themselves.

The District, which is funded by a fee based on impervious surfaces using a single family unit (SFU) model, provides compliance assistance with the following six minimum control measures (MCM) identified in the Phase II program:

- MCM1 – Public Education and Outreach
- MCM2 – Public Involvement and Participation
- MCM3 – Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- MCM4 – Construction Site Runoff Control
- MCM5 – Post Construction Storm Water Management
- MCM6 – Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping

Many of these services are provided by partner agencies including the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, Hamilton County Public Health Department and the Hamilton County Department of Planning and Development.

HCSWD currently charges \$3.68 annually per SFU for base services which cover MCM 1, MCM2, and MCM6 requirements plus annual report, budget and billing file development, and administrative/technical support. Co-permittee members can elect to pay for additional services under MCM3, MCM4 and MCM5 with a maximum fee per SFU of \$8.13 for all services. Co-permittees are responsible for meeting permit requirements for any of these services that they do not select. These are among the lowest annual fees for any municipal or co-permittee district in the state.

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a district partner agency and provides a majority of the base services including:

- **MCM1 Services** (which must reach 50% of the district population):
  - Classroom presentations,
  - Community presentations,
  - Interactive displays at individual community fairs and events,
  - Library and scout programs,
  - Multimedia ads on radio, and television, and
  - Social media.
- **MCM2 Services:**
  - Soil fertility testing at a \$7.00 discount per testing kit,
  - Supplies for watershed signage,
  - Fact sheets and guidance on installing best management practices such as rain gardens,
  - Rain barrel art program,
  - Stream clean ups,
  - Participation in the Great Miami Water Quality Lab, and
  - Storm drain labeling.

The SWCD currently receives funding from the Hamilton County Storm Water District, the Hamilton County General Fund, and from the state. In light of the departure of some jurisdictions from the district and the recent unreliability(contd... Pg. 5)

associated with state funding for MCM1 and MCM2 activities, some adjustment to services to Hamilton County municipalities is necessary. Accordingly, municipalities not associated with the Hamilton County Storm Water District will see some SWCD services either curtailed or offered at a higher unit cost. Anticipated changes in service include:

- Just 25 classroom programs slots will be held for non-member storm water jurisdictions beginning in August 2017 (to reflect the 25% of classroom funding received from the General Fund),

**Beginning October 1, 2016:**

- Non-member jurisdictions will pay the full price (\$12.00) for each soil fertility test kit, as opposed to member jurisdictions - \$5.00.
- Community education displays will only be provided to storm water district members, and
- Any other services such as storm drain labeling and watershed signage will be provided at the cost of the materials.

Questions related to these changes should be directed to your local jurisdictions.

## Upcoming Teacher Workshop



We will be partnering with the Butler SWCD to present a joint Project WET and Wonders of Wetlands teacher workshop for Grades 1-8 on Saturday November 5 from 9:00 - 3:30p. Registration

costs and details can be found on our website. If you are interested, please contact Gwen for more information at: [gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org](mailto:gwen.roth@hamilton-co.org).

## Great Miami River Cleanup

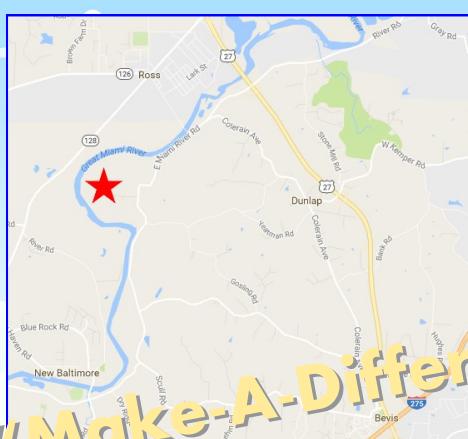
**Saturday, October 22 9 am—12 noon**

### Heritage Park

Colerain Twp, 45252  
in Hamilton County  
11405 East Miami River Rd

Volunteers can cleanup on foot in the park or in kayaks/canoes on the water. Kayak/canoeists must contact us to confirm details prior to the event.

Free T-shirt      Free bottled water  
Garbage bags & gloves provided



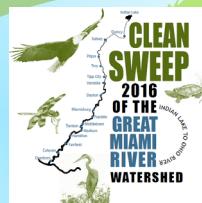
Register Online:

[www.GreatMiamiRiverCleanUp.org](http://www.GreatMiamiRiverCleanUp.org)

Or Contact the Site Coordinator:

Adam Lehmann, Hamilton County SWCD, 772-7645 x 15

Cargill  
MillerCoors  
American Rivers  
Rumpe  
Cox Media Group, Ohio  
Butler Co. Storm Water District



Butler Soil & Water Conservation District  
City of Fairfield  
Hamilton to New Baltimore Ground Water Consortium  
Miami Conservancy District

**Say "Hi" to Adam and Jim**

While we were saddened to say bye to our Stream Specialist, Brian Bohl and Urban Tech, Steve Eberts, we are happy to announce we have two new highly talented individuals joining our team.



**Adam Lehmann** is our new Stream Specialist, he will responsible for the water quality related work done here at the District. Adam received bachelor's degrees in geography and environmental science from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio in 2006. After graduation, he worked as a research scientist for USEPA, studying watershed management and headwater stream ecology. While working for USEPA, he earned a Master's degree in environmental science from Miami University.

**James (Jim) Gleason**, our new tech will help developers in Hamilton County to stay in compliance with the Earthwork Permit. Jim was born and raised in Hamilton County. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2012 with a B.S. in Geology and a B.S. in Environmental Studies. After graduation, he interned at UC and the Mill Creek Watershed Council where he is also part of their volunteer water quality monitoring program. Currently, he is attending Cincinnati State pursuing a degree in Stormwater Management.



## Follow us on social media!

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Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
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Cincinnati, OH 45246  
(513) 772-7645  
[www.hcsowcd.org](http://www.hcsowcd.org)

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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Board Meeting - Oct. 11th @ 2:00pm - Dist. Office

OKI-Regional Conservation Council's Tour - Oct 21st  
(email: [kenton@nkcd.org](mailto:kenton@nkcd.org) for more info.)

Great Miami River Cleanup - Oct. 22nd (More info. on page 5)

Project Wet Teacher Workshop - Nov. 5th (More info. on page 5)

Board Meeting - Nov. 8th@ 2:00pm - Dist. Office

Veterans Day (Office Closed) - Nov. 11th

Rain Barrel Art Project Opens for Entries - Nov. 15th.  
(Visit [SaveLocalWaters.Org](http://SaveLocalWaters.Org) for more information)

Thanksgiving Days (Office Closed) - Nov. 24th - 25th

Board Meeting - Dec. 13th@ 2:00pm - Dist. Office

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