

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

FALL 2018

Hamilton County
Soil and Water
Conservation District



A NEWSLETTER OF THE
HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Last Paper Copy of Conservation Spotlight

Beginning January 2019, The District will only be distributing our "Conservation Spotlight" Newsletter in digital format. Budget constraints are dictating this change. Over the past 10 years, our County General Funding has declined by 54%. By going digital with the newsletter, we can save over \$5,000/year.

If you do not have access to a computer or email, you may stop by our office and we will print off a copy of the newsletter for you.

This change will bring on some positive opportunities for increased communication with you, our newsletter subscriber! If an event or current issue should arise, we can send out information

immediately. The News may be in a briefer format, but more frequent.

There are three options for signing up for the digital newsletter.

1. Send your email address to:
susan.juriga@hamilton-co.org
 2. Call our office at 513-772-7645 and provide your email address
 3. Go to our website at www.hcswcd.org, scroll to the bottom of the page to sign up for the newsletter
- As always, all of our newsletters and publications can be accessed on our website at:
<https://www.hcswcd.org/newsletters-and-publication.html>

Ohio NRCS Announces New EQIP Application Deadline

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced Friday, October 19, 2018, as the deadline to submit applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Ohio.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program which helps producers make conservation work for them. Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while also improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, you can voluntarily

implement conservation practices, and NRCS co-invests in these practices with you.

To participate in USDA conservation programs, applicants should be farmers or farm or forest landowners and must meet eligibility criteria. Applications signed and submitted to NRCS by the October 19 deadline. For more information visit:
www.nrcs.usda.gov



Farewell Carrie!

We had to bid farewell to Carrie Gibbons our Program Assistant who has been with the District since 2012. Carrie is moving to Athens, Ohio to be close to her family and friends.

HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE
AGRICULTURE & SOIL FERTILITY | EDUCATION | URBAN STREAMS
URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT & EARTHWORKS | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS
1325 EAST KEMPER ROAD, SUITE #115 CINCINNATI OH 45246
PHONE: 513-772-7645 | FAX 513-772-7656 | WWW.HCSWCD.ORG
EDITOR: HOLLY UTRATA-HALCOMB | DESIGN: JOHN NELSON

Prep Your Lawn and Garden for Winter



Clean Up!!

Collect leaves - If you don't mulch leaves while mowing, rake leaves so they don't smother the grass.

Clean up the yard - Pick up fallen fruit. Remove dead annuals. Cut back spent perennials.

Leave some plants alone - While it's good to cut back some perennials, some can be left in place for winter interest. These include ornamental grasses and thick-stemmed plants such as Russian sage, taller sedums, and mums.

Start a compost pile - All those fall leaves make a great addition to the green kitchen scraps your household creates. The mix of brown and green materials speeds up the composting process.

Water well - If you have a dry fall, water plants until the ground freezes.

Pond maintenance - If you have a pond, remove fallen leaves and drain the water by 25 to 50 percent.

Lawn

Take a soil fertility test - Fall is one of the best times to adjust your soil pH. Go to:

<https://www.hcswcd.org/soil-fertility.html> for information

Aerate and reseed turf - Fall is a great time because you won't be walking on the soil plugs that are removed in aeration. You can use a manual aerator or rent a slit/seeder to do both jobs.

Spread compost - This is especially useful after aerating a lawn because the compost can fill the gaps where the plugs were removed. Fall rains will help work the beneficial microbes and nutrients further into the soil.

Deal with weeds - Remove by hand with a dandelion tool or spot treat with a broadleaf herbicide. This is most important with perennial weeds such as dandelion and ground ivy.

Fertilize - OSU recommends fertilizing in late August and again late Sept. Grass is a cool season crop and roots grow best in the fall.

Plant Away!!

Add color - Plant cool-season flowers such as pansies and mums and foliage plants such as ornamental kale.

Think bulbs - Fall is the time to plant spring-blooming flower bulbs such as crocus, hyacinth, grape hyacinth, daffodils, and tulips.

Think bulbs - again. Garlic and shallots can be planted now for harvest next summer.

Plant away - Fall's cooler temperatures and more abundant moisture are perfect for helping recently planted (or transplanted) trees and shrubs adjust before resuming growth next year

Restore plant vigor - Fall is a good time to divide spring and summer-blooming perennials. Look for those that have a lot of fresh, vibrant growth around a less-vigorous center section. Break them into clumps with a sharp spade or root saw, then replant in separate holes.

Plant cover crop seed to grow your own fertilizer - Growing Trade Pet and Plant, 3840 Spring Grove Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45223, Phone: (513) 541-1321 has seed available locally.

Monarch Butterflies are in the House

We have had an exciting summer here in the office rearing Monarch caterpillars and I want to share with you some pictures!



A little background information for you: I absolutely find Monarch Butterflies to be one of the most amazing animals on our planet. They have such a unique life cycle and migration story. Since it's a cycle, we'll start the story in the winter, where Monarchs spend the winter months gathered in

forests located in the mountains of Central Mexico. Once spring arrives, they begin to fly north toward the United States, mate and lay eggs before dying. The egg will then hatch into a caterpillar, where it will grow for a couple weeks eating only Milkweed, a plant that is toxic to most other animals. After a few weeks as a caterpillar, the Monarch will form a chrysalis and transform into an adult butterfly, a process which takes about 10-14 days. The adult butterfly will then continue its migration northward where it will mate, deposit eggs on the milkweed plant and die. This process continues for 3-4 life cycles until late summer, early fall when the Monarchs are triggered by daylight and



temperature changes to complete the journey back to Mexico, sometimes traveling more than 2,000 miles! This 4th generation of Monarch Butterflies is often called the Super Generation because they can live as an adult for up to eight or nine months. Most adult monarchs in the summer live for only 3-5 weeks - yes, weeks! This super generation, will return to the same overwintering sites in Mexico (where they have never been) and spend the next several months before beginning the journey north, mating, depositing eggs and dying - beginning the cycle all over again!

For the last several decades, the Monarch's population numbers have decreased and many scientists believe this is due to a lack of milkweed plants as well as habitat fragmentation and weather

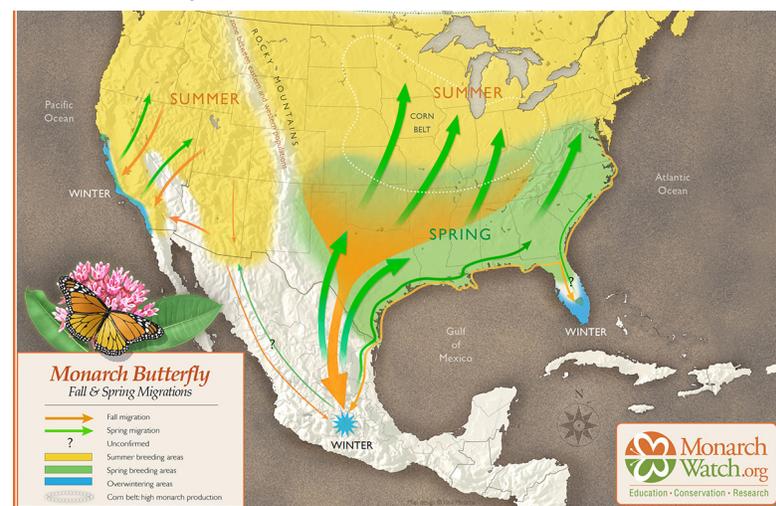
phenomena. In December, scientists will do their annual count of the overwintering population and we will know more about the Monarch's overall population health.



This year we reared several Monarch caterpillars and got to see first-hand the transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis to adult butterfly. Everyone in the office got in on the excitement and we shared several pictures on our Facebook page. I also bought a tagging kit from Monarch Watch (www.monarchwatch.org) and 'tagged' several of our butterflies before we released them. Tagging a butterfly involves placing a very small sticker on the underside of the hind wing. This sticker has a 6 digit code that scientists (and citizen scientists) are able to use to track the migration patterns of Monarchs. Scientists have found tagged Monarchs in the overwintering grounds in Mexico that were tagged in Canada! Let's hope some of ours are found in Mexico too!

For your part, you can certainly help the Monarch Butterfly by doing a few simple things around your home:

1. Go pesticide free around your yard and flower garden where butterflies might feed.
2. Plant milkweed. Milkweed is the only plant where female Monarchs will lay their eggs.
3. Collect your milkweed seed pods and give them to the District every fall. The seeds will be harvested and used in habitat restoration sites around the state.
4. Participate in citizen science programs through projects like Monarch Watch, Monarch Joint Venture, Project Monarch Health or others.



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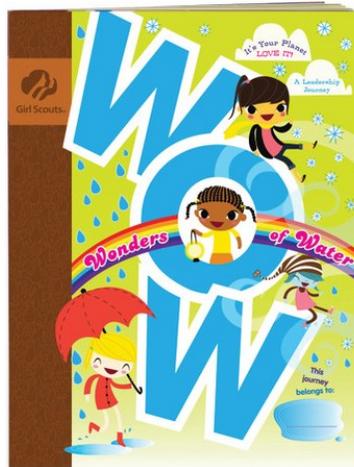
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WOW! Wonders of Water Journey Workshop

January 26th, 2019

9:30 am - Noon



Complete three of the nine required sessions of the WOW! Wonders of Water Journey in 2 1/2 hours with help from the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District. All activities are fun, interactive and hands-on.

Session 1: Loving Water

Session 2: "Green" Tea for a Blue Planet

Session 3: Water for All

Registration is limited to the first 30 participants. To register please call (513.772.7645 ext. 25) or email (sara.fehring@hamilton-co.org) Sara Fehring.



Make a splash in your class with

Project WET!

Saturday, February 23, 2019

9 am – 3:30 pm

Fernald Preserve

7400 Willey Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013

Grades 1- 8

This workshop is not just for science teachers; these multidisciplinary programs place special focus on incorporating reading, writing, math and social studies while teaching about water resources through hands-on, investigative and easy-to-use activities.

The interdisciplinary activities are effective tools for integrating student knowledge of water resources through the study of real-life scenarios, simple models and simulations that provide strong foundations for STEAM and Service-Learning programs.

Cost: \$25. Attendees will receive a nationally recognized curriculum and other resources for their classrooms. Registration Deadline: Friday, February 8, 2019.

Sara Fehring at 513-772-7645
 Sara.Fehring@hamilton-co.org

Register online at: www.hcswcd.org/WET



Congratulations to Our Newly Elected Board Member!



Jane Wittke was elected to the Board of Supervisors. She will begin her term January 2019. Jane Wittke managed planning projects for water quality, ground water protection, storm water impacts and other environmental issues in the greater Cincinnati area for more than 37 years before retiring in 2016 from OKI, the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments. She has frequently collaborated with soil and water conservation districts, including Hamilton County, with health departments, community groups, drinking water and waste water treatment providers, and with environmental managers and elected officials at the local and state levels. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in speech and communications from Miami University and Northern Illinois University, which have helped her work with groups ranging in size from 3 to 300 to get things done. The American Society for Public Administration honored Jane with one of its first regional public service awards in 1998 and repeated the honor in 2015, and the National Ground

Water Association awarded her a life-time membership in 2012 for her work in ground water protection. Jane hopes to continue making a difference by serving on the board for Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Congrats to All Our Award Winners (Left to Right)

Dr. Tracy Alley, Madeira City Schools - Outstanding Conservation Teacher

Susan Lawrence and Meggie Bierkan(not pictured) - Community Outreach Award

Roger Wade, Cintech Construction - Outstanding Urban Cooperator

Neal Ramsey for Irene Light, Great Parks of Hamilton County - Conservation Partner of the Year

Tom Boeing, Ohio Valley Forestry Fellowship - OVFF - Outstanding Stream Cooperator



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Hamilton County
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1325 E. Kemper Rd. #115
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(513) 772-7645
www.hcswcd.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Board Meeting - Oct. 9th @ 2:00pm - Dist. Office

Last Day for Milkweed Pods - Oct. 27th (More info. on page 3)

Veterans Day (Office Closed) - Nov. 12th

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

Rain Barrel Art Project Opens for Entries - Nov. 19th.
(Visit SaveLocalWaters.Org for more information)

Thanksgiving Days (Office Closed) - Nov. 22nd - 23rd

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

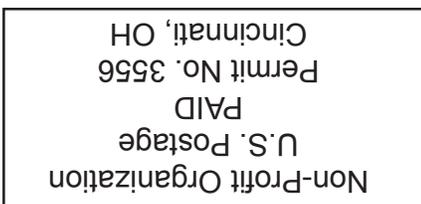
Christmas (Office Closed) - Dec. 24th - 25th

Please note this is the last paper copy of Conservation Spotlight.
See page 1 on how to continue receiving this service.

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



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Conservation District
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