

# CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

SPRING 2017

A NEWSLETTER OF THE  
HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## HCSWCD IS MOVING TO A NEW LOCATION!

### New Address

A lot of you are familiar with our location at the Triangle Park Drive offices, and have visited at this location for years for your conservation needs and soil fertility test kits.

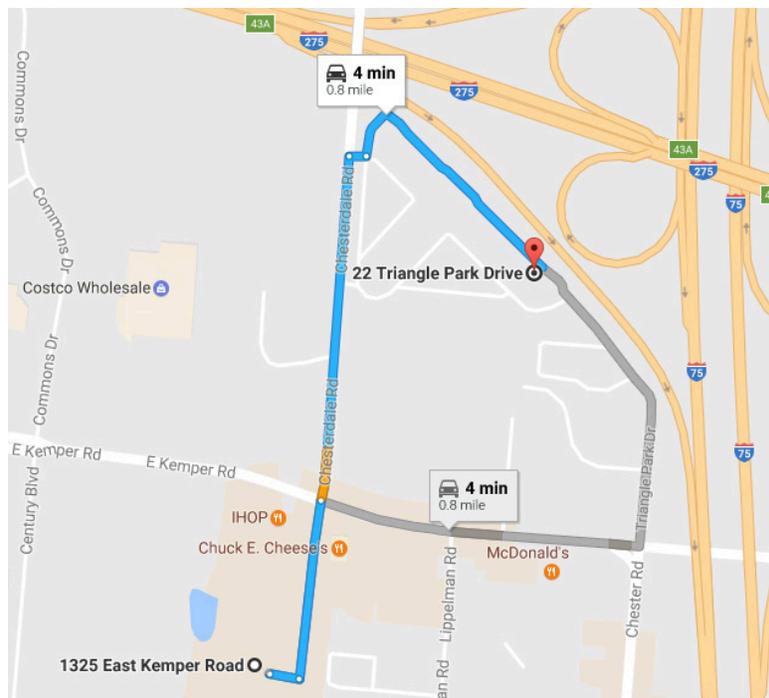
With mixed emotions we'd like to announce that we are moving to a new location not far from where we are located. We will be moving to the Kemper Pond Office Park, located on East Kemper Road. Starting May 25th, our new address will be:

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District  
Suite 115, 1325 E. Kemper Road.  
Cincinnati, OH 45246



### More Room

The staff is excited about the move as we have outgrown our current location, and are kind of bursting at the seams. The new location will not only offer us more office space, but more storage for our always interesting brochures, giveaways, and education tools that we use in the classrooms,



as well as our exhibits. We are also going to get a bigger conference room to host our ever engaging meetings, and a large workshop area that could easily fit a hundred people. As the name suggests, the new location also has a sizable pond. The management has told us that we can use this pond for various training exercises and displays.

We are excited about the move, and a little nervous too. Please be advised that our phone lines and email access will be intermittent during the move (May 24 & 25). Kindly pardon our slow or late responses during this time. Once we are all settled in, we hope to host an open house, so our residents can come and see our new facility. Keep a lookout for the open house in our next edition.

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

# 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:

- Earth Jam at Cincinnati State; Thursday, April 13 11:00a - 1:00p.
- Earth Day at Blue Ash; Wednesday, April 19 4:30p - 7:30p
- Party for the Planet at the Cincinnati Zoo; Thursday, April 20 5:00p - 8:30p.
- Earth Day at Summit Park; Saturday, April 22 noon - 7:00p.
- Earth Day at Washington Park; Saturday, April 22 noon - 5:00p.

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

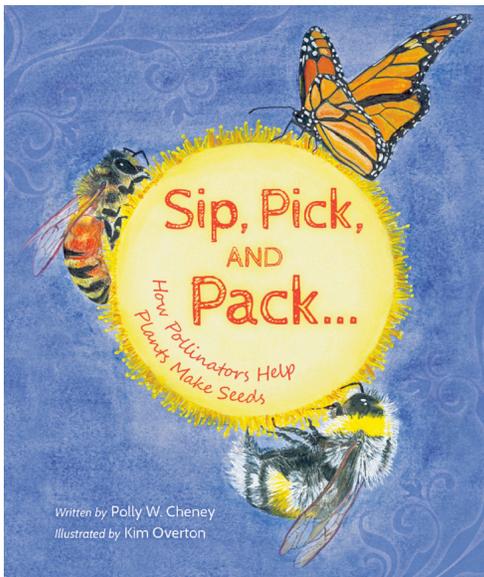
- Plant a tree.
- Use your own bags, not just at the grocery store. Try it next time you go to the mall. You may get a few sideways glances, but you can feel great knowing that you are doing your part.
- Buy locally produced food whenever possible. Think of all the gas you can save as well as the delivery trucks.
- Donate usable items to a friend or charity instead of throwing them away.
- Make your own environmentally friendly cleaning products. Visit: [TakeBackYourHome.org](http://TakeBackYourHome.org)
- 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.



## BOOK WORM BURROW A BOOK REVIEW OF *SIP, PICK, AND PACK... HOW POLLINATORS HELP PLANTS MAKE SEEDS* WRITTEN BY: POLLY W. CHENEY ILLUSTRATED BY: KIM OVERTON

Sara Fehring

We have come across a wonderful book by local author Polly W. Cheney, *Sip, Pick, and Pack... How Pollinators Help Plants Make Seeds*. This book does a great job of grabbing the reader's attention with



its beautiful illustrations and similes. Polly was able to take the complex topic of pollination and weave it into a story enjoyable for readers of all ages. By the end of this story you will be asking yourself how you can help our native pollinators.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OFSWCD ANNUAL MEETING



Staff & Supervisors with Rep. Ingram, Rep. Reece, & Sen. Wilson



Staff & Supervisors with Sen. Thomas

A team from Hamilton County, including two of our newest supervisors attended The Ohio Federation of Soil & Water District's Annual Meeting in Columbus. We were delighted to meet our law makers during the Legislative Reception.

# YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT A CENTURY BETWEEN '100-YEAR FLOODS'

**Sarah Kitsinis**

For 32 consecutive hours, 31 inches of rainwater fell on the state of Louisiana. More than 60,000 homes were damaged in the August 2016 flood event.

Later that same month, Cincinnati had what is known as a "100-year storm event". About 4.4 inches of rain fell within a few hours, flooding roads and areas such as Norwood.

But what does that mean, exactly?

The terminology is used as a confusing attempt to "simplify" the definition of a flood that statistically has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. On average, that works out to be once every 100 years, but a major flood can happen at any time.

A 1,000-year flood - as some are calling the Louisiana downpour - is even less likely, having a 0.1% chance of occurring in any given year.

This is not to say that a 100-year flood or storm event can only happen once every century; it's that the odds of that happening are rare. There could be two 100-year flood events that happen within 10 years of each other.

According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) site, "a hydrologist would rather describe this extreme hydrologic event as a flood having a 100-year recurrence interval."

A "recurrence interval" references the probability that the event in question will be equaled or exceeded in any given year. For example, assume there is a 1 in 50 chance that 5 inches of rain will fall in a certain area in a 24-hour period during any given year. Which means a rainfall totaling 5 inches in a consecutive 24-hour period is said to have a "50-year recurrence interval".

Still scratching your head? Here is a chart put

Recurrence intervals and probabilities of occurrences		
Recurrence interval, in years	Probability of occurrence in any given year	Percent chance of occurrence in any given year
100	1 in 100	1
50	1 in 50	2
25	1 in 25	4
10	1 in 10	10
5	1 in 5	20
2	1 in 2	50

together by the USGS:

Note: A 100-year storm does not always cause a 100-year flood event. But the thought process behind the terminology is the same!

## HAMILTON & BUTLER SWCD JOINT 2017 POND CLINIC

Hamilton County SWCD and Butler County SWCD will be hosting a FREE pond clinic on June 1, 2017, 6:00p to 8:30p at Sharon Woods located at 11450 Lebanon Road. The clinic will have local experts present educational sessions about aquatic weed control, water gardens, pond construction, and fish stocking. Door prizes will also be handed out! A valid permit is required to enter any of the Great Parks of Hamilton County. The cost for Hamilton County residents is \$3/day or \$10/year, for other visitors it is \$5/day or \$14/year. For more information, please contact Chey Alberto at 513-772-SOIL. We look forward to seeing you there!



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 Adam Lehmann, Stream Specialist  
 Carrie Gibbons, Program Assistant

NRCS  
 John Williams, District Conservationist  
 Michaela Mulligan, Soil Conservationist

# BACKYARD RIPARIAN BUFFERS

Carrie Gibbons and Adam Lehmann

Residential neighborhoods can be a major source of stream pollution. Rainwater flowing over roads, driveways, and yards, picks up sediments, lawn chemicals, automotive fluids, and anything else that is dropped, spilt, or applied to the ground. Contaminants washed-off by rainwater are delivered to near-by streams. Fortunately, many types of pollutants that are toxic when delivered to streams as concentrated stormwater runoff can be harmlessly degraded by plants and soil organisms if the stormwater is able to soak into the ground.

If you have a stream running through your property (large or small) you have an opportunity to have a significant impact on improving water quality and wildlife habitat in your community. "Riparian buffers", permanent strips of vegetation established along streams, remove pollutants by slowing down rainwater runoff (by physically blocking the flow) and speeding up the process by which rainwater soaks into the soil (with large, deep root systems). This process of slowing down runoff and increasing soil infiltration, also provides major flood control benefits downstream.

Woody vegetation rooted in stream banks is

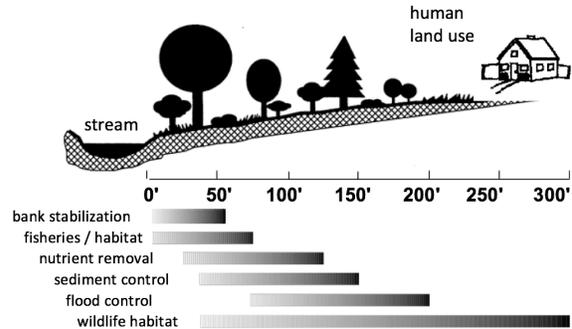


indispensable for controlling streambank erosion. Streambank erosion undermining public and private infrastructure (e.g. fences, building, and roads) is a major problem in Hamilton County. Establishing a riparian buffer can go a long way to stabilizing eroding streams on your property.

In addition to the benefits that these landscape features impart on water quality, flooding, and streambank stability, riparian buffers also provide critical habitat for wildlife. Aquatic wildlife depend upon riparian buffers for shade/ water temperature control, in-stream cover/refuge,

and energy inputs (leaf litter and woody debris). Terrestrial wildlife utilize riparian buffers for primary habitat, food sources, safe access to streams, and as corridors connecting habitats.

So how wide should a riparian buffer be to realize the benefits described above? The



effectiveness of riparian buffers can vary by the steepness of the land sloping down to the streams and how well your soils absorb water (wider buffers should be used in areas with steeper slope and slower soil infiltration rates); however, some general rules of thumb are displayed in the figure above (modified from the Connecticut River Joint Commissions' "Living with the River" series).

For more details about establishing a riparian buffer see the fact sheets in the series Riparian Buffers for the Connecticut River Watershed that can be found at [www.crtc.org](http://www.crtc.org). If you are interested in establishing a riparian buffer on your property contact HCSWCD's Stream Specialist for technical assistance ([adam.lehmann@hamilton-co.org](mailto:adam.lehmann@hamilton-co.org) or 513-772-7645).

## TREE SALE AND COVER CROP SALE

The information and order form for our Annual Tree Program and Cover Crop Sale will be in the summer edition of Conservation Spotlight.

You can expect the summer edition in Early June. In the meantime, feel free to call us at (513) 772-7645 with any questions you may have. Soil Test Kits are available online and at our office throughout the year.

# LOCAL ARTISTS PAINTING BARRELS

Local artists have been selected to paint rain barrels as part of the fifth annual Rain Barrel Art Project, an initiative designed to educate the community about water conservation and pollution caused by storm water runoff.



The Rain Barrel Art Project is a joint effort of SaveLocalWaters.org and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. As part of this initiative, community members throughout the Ohio River Valley submitted artistic designs to beautify otherwise dull rain barrels. Fifty of those designs were selected, and the submitting artists now are painting them on rain barrels that will be displayed at the Cincinnati Zoo's Go Green Garden through April and auctioned off during the Rain Barrel Art Benefit Auction on April 20, 2017. New this year,



bids also will be accepted online via eBay. "Rain barrels are a great tool for conserving water and saving money, but some people are reluctant to use them because of their usually plain, unappealing appearance," said John Nelson, a representative of SaveLocalWaters.org and a Public Relations

Specialist. "We believe that turning rain barrels into beautiful works of art will make them more desirable, so we're pleased to collaborate on this event to raise awareness and encourage the use of rain barrels throughout the region."

The painted rain barrels will be auctioned off on April 20, 2017, during the zoo's Party for the Planet event, with proceeds benefitting conservation education in the Ohio River Valley. "The zoo is thrilled to be hosting the rain barrel event once again. As the 'Greenest Zoo in America,' we are always looking for ways to inspire our community to take action that can impact the environment in positive ways," said Sophia Turczynewycz, the Zoo's Sustainable Communities Advocate.



For more information regarding the Rain Barrel Art Project or SaveLocalWaters.org, contact John Nelson at 513-772-7645 or visit [www.savelocalwaters.org](http://www.savelocalwaters.org).

## About SaveLocalWaters.org

SaveLocalWaters.org is the creation of the Regional Storm Water Collaborative of Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky, an organization focused



on sharing resources to better leverage mass media and raise awareness concerning water quality issues in the Ohio River Valley. The collaborative is composed of storm water districts, municipalities, and soil and water conservation districts in Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky. Together, we can keep our waterways clean and healthy.

**Follow us on social media!**

WEBSITE



NEWSLETTER



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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 at District Office - April 11th, 2pm

Rain Barrel Art Project Auction - April 20th, 5pm to 8:30pm  
Free entry into the Zoo after 5:00pm  
(see page 5 for details)

Earth Day at Summit Park, Blue Ash  
April 22nd, noon - 7:00pm

Earth Day at Washington Park  
April 22nd, noon - 5:00pm

Board Meeting at District Office - May 9th, 2pm

District Office Moving - May 24th & 25th

Pond Clinic @ Sharon Woods- June 1st  
(see page 3 for details)

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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