



Conservation Education and Public Involvement
Watershed Programs and Stewardship
Storm Water Program and Technical Assistance



Janine Rybka, District Administrator

Mission

For those engaged in the development, management or education about land or water, Cuyahoga SWCD is the only organization in Cuyahoga County that elevates the **value and connectedness of soil and water resources** by providing stewardship, education and technical assistance that work to achieve healthy land, healthy water and informed residents.

SWCD Program

- County-wide conservation program
- Direct educational and technical assistance to 25 communities, county engineers related to Clean Water Act requirements
- Oversight and implementation of projects that help protect sensitive lands, water quality and help to restore habitat
- A focus on soils as an environmental and economic resource-- soil restoration, beneficial re-use of soils
- Regional educational efforts, focused on pollution prevention to protect Lake Erie



Protecting Sensitive Lands



Stakeholder Engagement



Restoration Projects



Water Quality Improvements

Program Connections

Education

- Rain barrels, Rain Gardens
- Stream Clean Ups
- Reducing the Effects of Pollution
- Northeast Ohio Regional Initiatives: *Harmful Algal Blooms, More Trees!*



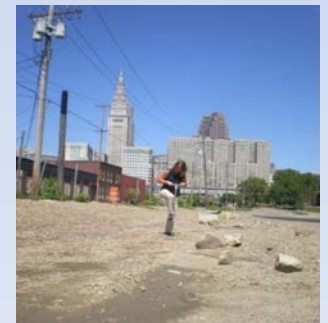
Watersheds & Stewardship

- Multi-Community and Multi-County Water Quality Efforts
- Stream Monitoring and Data Collection
- Restoration Projects for *wildlife, clean water and flood protection*
- Cover Crops for soil restoration and pollution prevention



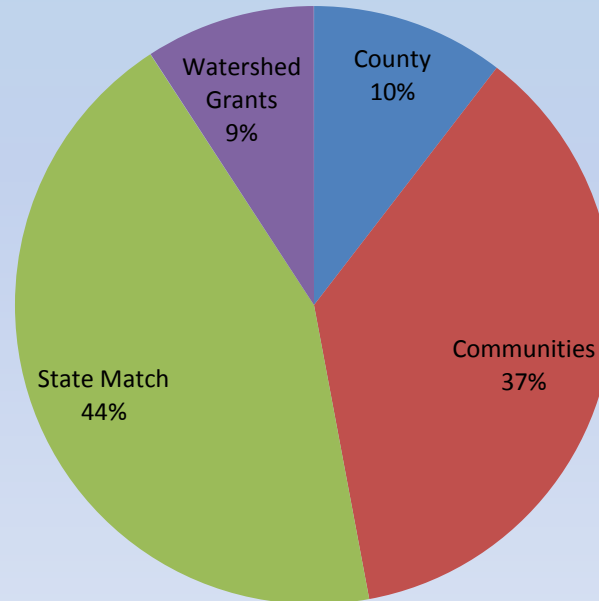
Storm Water Program & Technical Assistance

- Model for Municipal Compliance Assistance
- County Land Bank: *Soil assessments, rebuilding and reusing soil*
- Educational Assistance
- Water, Drainage, Erosion



BUDGET

Cuyahoga SWCD Revenues 2014
\$717,474 (not including small grants)



**Estimated
Expenditures 2014
\$717,213**

*Nine Professional and
Accredited Staff*

Conservative Fiscal Planning and
Oversight; Operating in the Black!

Healthy Land and Clean Water

2013 Successes

- 500 Rain Barrels, New Rain Gardens, 24 new Habitat Stewards, Municipal Green Infrastructure
- County Land Bank Partnership, Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Cleveland Metroparks-Rapid Field Assessments
- Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve-Remediation and Beneficial Reuse of Soils
- Improved Steam Banks, Water Quality, Habitat & Flood Storage
- Hundreds of Partners and Volunteers
- Lunch and Learn Sessions-Connecting Businesses to Conservation Partners Implementers
- Urban Agriculture Federal Cost Share Incentives



2014 Vision



- Compliance assistance to 25 communities
- Programs and projects to engage the public into taking action
- Collaboration to restore urban soils
- Landowner assistance related to erosion, drainage, forestry, streams and soils
- County and regional initiatives to protect Lake Erie
- New website; New communications tools & resource materials

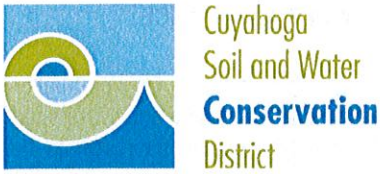




Cuyahoga Soil and Water
Conservation District

LEADING
CONSERVATION
SINCE 1949

Thank You!



DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

September 2013

Cuyahoga SWCD Mission

To promote conservation of land and aquatic resources in a developed environment through stewardship, education and technical assistance

CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Educational is the foundation of the entire Cuyahoga SWCD program. Whether through educational events, written materials, social media or technical assistance, the staff shares their knowledge and expertise to help protect, enhance and restore soil and water resources.

The crux of the Cuyahoga SWCD's Conservation Education Program is the implementation of the annual public involvement and public education program on behalf of 25 cities. The SWCD helps to keep communities in compliance with their Clean Water permits. Activities and programs are based on an annual theme and tailored to the needs of each city. Activities include the popular rain barrel and "green cleaning" workshops, written materials, special events, educational posters and more. Rain barrel workshops continue to be popular. Since 2008, there has been 120 rain barrel workshops and 3,000 rain barrels have been distributed through the workshops.

Collaboration with our many partners strengthens the staff's ability to extend the conservation message to all corners of the county. This year's partnerships included the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Habitat Stewards, which resulted in 24 newly certified stewards; the Earth Partnership for Schools, in partnership with the Cuyahoga Valley Conservancy and Cuyahoga Valley National Park, that trained teacher to use their schoolyard to create outdoor learning opportunities; and the popular Conservation Crusader program, which features environmental tidbits by WKYC weather personalities, as well as news segments on the Live on Lakeside program.

Everyone lives in a watershed and since watersheds cross city and county boundaries, so does pollution. The Northeast Ohio Public Involvement and Public Education and the Lake Erie Central Basin Work Groups consist of members from other soil and water conservation districts who collaborate on grant proposals and projects aimed at delivering consistent environmental education messages throughout the region, which has a much greater impact in reaching diverse audiences. This year's effort focused on the importance of reducing the overuse of fertilizers (nutrients), which promote the growth of harmful algal blooms, to protect Lake Erie

In addition to workshops and environmental events, the SWCD also shares information through the On the Land newsletter and website.

EUCLID CREEK AND ROCKY RIVER WATERSHED PROGRAMS

The Euclid Creek and Rocky River watershed programs are aimed at protecting, restoring and perpetuating healthy watersheds through watershed planning, public education and collaboration among the watersheds' many stakeholders. Charged with implementing the state-endorsed watershed action plans, the watershed program staff seeks funding and works with many stakeholders to address water quality issues and impairments in the watersheds through special projects, ongoing environmental education programs and events.

Three dams were removed on Baldwin Creek in the Rocky River watershed to create one mile of unrestricted fish passage and habitat improvements. Funding to remove the final dam was obtained, which will open 10 miles of stream for fish passage. Another stream restoration project is planned for Healy Creek. It will restore aquatic habitat and channel stability to 1000 feet of severely incised and eroding stream channel and provide increased flood storage through the creation of a floodplain adjacent to the creek. In addition, Protection & Restoration Plans were completed for the Upper East Branch and Plum Creek subwatersheds as updates to the Rocky River Watershed Action Plan.

The multi-county "Stopping Sediment at its Source" is ongoing. To date, the following best management practices (BMPs) have been installed: 1 grassed waterway, 14 acres zone tillage and 566 acres cover crops established in the Mallet Creek subwatershed. Other projects include, water quality monitoring conducted at 36 total sites in Abram Creek, Baldwin Creek, Busby Ditch, Coe Creek, Plum Creek (West), Plum Creek (East), Upper East Branch and the Main Stem of the Rocky River that will provide baseline data and track changes through time.

The Euclid Creek Watershed Program is equally robust. Rain barrel, composting and green cleaning workshops are just as popular as in other areas of the county. Environmental education programs, like the BioBlitz in the new Acacia Reservation, the sixth year of water quality monitoring at five sites along Euclid Creek, two watershed newsletters, and a riparian tree planting in Richmond Heights are just a few more of the programs that were provided so far this year.

Clean Ohio funding was received to help purchase 8 acres of streamside land in Richmond Heights that will be placed into a conservation easement.

The Army Corps of Engineers initiated a feasibility study for the East 185th Spillway Retrofit—the first step in providing an unobstructed channel for fish migration.

This year's big news is the near-completion of the Wildwood Stream and Wetland Restoration Project. Funded through a \$1.4 million grant from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the project provides new aquatic and terrestrial habitat, wetland areas and added flood storage in the lower Euclid Creek. Teams of volunteers were helpful with planting native plants on the site. The project has been featured on Live on Lakeside and on a number of tours for planners, public officials and the general public.

STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION PROGRAM

Erosion and sediment control was the genesis of soil and water conservation districts. The staff provides guidance on better planning, design, construction and maintenance of water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) and soil quality improvements based on Clean Water Act responsibilities and Federal Farm Bill programs--with a special focus on erosion and sediment control. Staff works closely with builders/designers, contractors, elected officials, local government staff, and landowners to improve implementation of good erosion and sediment control and post-construction water quality BMPs for development, redevelopment and public infrastructure projects throughout Cuyahoga County.

Recently, there has been a national focus on the importance of healthy soils and the Cuyahoga SWCD staff is working to part of the trend. Staff is working to demonstrate that degraded urban soils can be improved by investigating the use of cover crops on urban soils and employing rapid field assessments to help landowners determine their best course of action for helping aging urban areas evolve. Distressed and vacant properties are increasingly viewed as opportunities for urban agriculture, landscaping, and storm water infiltration and treatment. Rapid field assessments (RBI) have been conducted for the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County Land Bank, on several long-term O&M monitored projects with plant-soil system BMPs, and on the Cuyahoga Valley National Park's reclamation projects within Cuyahoga County.

Most of the Storm Water Staff efforts are focused on providing technical assistance to communities related to their Clean Water Act mandate. So far this year, the staff has reviewed 154 storm water pollution prevention plans and conducted 686 comprehensive field reviews related to those plans on developing or redeveloping sites of one acre or larger. Staff has also done operations and maintenance reviews of 136 water quality best management practices on 99 sites.

Education is also a key element of the storm water program. This year three Tool Box Talks were held. These well-attended mini-seminars, targeted to storm water coordinators and engineers, provide businesses an opportunity to promote goods and services that can be used as best management practices for storm water management. Presentations included alternative BMP solutions, advanced drainage systems and seed-based solutions for erosion control.

Staff also provided training related to soils and storm water guidance to Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park volunteer naturalists, the Cuyahoga Department of Public Works staff and Cleveland Metroparks staff. Inter-district cross-training and professional development was provided to the Mahoning and Lorain SWCD staffs. The staff is also working with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to identify opportunities to assist in better planning for storm water reduction.

GENERAL LAND OWNER ASSISTANCE

The Cuyahoga SWCD's work impacts 75% of the county's population through the Public Involvement and Public Education and Watershed Programs and impacts 60% of the county's population through its storm water pollution prevention program. Assisting landowners—the general public is also an important service that the SWCD provides.

Each year, the SWCD fields calls from the public on a variety of conservation topics and the staff provides information to assist the public. At times, the SWCD staff will conduct on-site technical guidance on issues related to drainage, soils, erosion, flooding, land protection and natural resources. This year, to date, 20 on-site visits were made.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve (Dike 14)-Staff collaborated with the Cleveland Cuyahoga County Port Authority, Cuyahoga County Development, Ohio EPA and US EPA to obtain funding and beneficially reuse dredged material to cover the five acre area on the nature preserve that was identified as having higher contaminants than the rest of the site. The area was capped with 40,000 cubic yards. The area was seeded with native plants, which entirely cover the area.

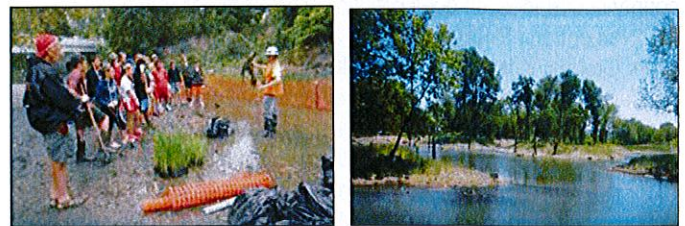
Conservation Easements- the SWCD holds conservation easements on 268 acres of land in 13 communities. Easements protect sensitive wetland and streamside areas.

Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative-The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provided cost share dollars for landowners to purchase hoop houses that will aid in urban agriculture initiatives. Since the initiation of the High Tunnel program, 22 federal cost-share contracts have been issued and 14 High Tunnels have been installed, mostly in the City of Cleveland.

COMING SOON

The Cuyahoga SWCD website is being overhauled. Check us out at:

www.cuyahogawcd.org



Watershed volunteers help plant wetland plants at the Wildwood Wetland Restoration site.