

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

# Cuyahoga

## Soil and Water

## Conservation District

**Mission:** to promote conservation of land and aquatic resources in a developed environment through stewardship initiatives, education programs and technical assistance for *all* landowners.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the major sources of impairments to water quality in Ohio are due to modification and destruction of riparian and aquatic habitats and sedimentation from agriculture and construction. Because Cuyahoga County is the most developed of Ohio's 88 counties, impairments from agriculture are minimal; however, impairments caused by sediment-laden discharges from construction sites are an important issue. Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District's work efforts are focused on providing technical and educational assistance to all land owners, including communities and developers, to help protect natural resources and prevent pollution from degrading our recreational and drinking water. These efforts also help communities keep in compliance with federally-mandated water quality permits.

**Soil and water are the building blocks of life.** For nearly 60 years Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has used its technical expertise to advise land owners about drainage issues and effective methods of storm water pollution prevention. Each year we strive to share our expertise through a variety of programs, events, and site visits. With assistance from our federal partner, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the District continues to tackle sedimentation and erosion to protect water quality. Our efforts promote minimal standards and practices for natural resource protection and best management practices for storm water management, which directly impacts our quality of life in Cuyahoga County.

**Cuyahoga SWCD is not a regulatory agency.** Cuyahoga SWCD implements county-wide general assistance aimed at conserving and enhancing water quality, wildlife habitat, and protection of communities and homeowners. Working through collaborative agreements with communities, the Cuyahoga SWCD offers specialized assistance in

conservation education and technical assistance. This assistance, tailored to individual communities' needs, is provided on a voluntary and cooperative basis. Our efforts result in implementation of best management practices, a better understanding of storm water pollution prevention, improved ability to manage long-term storm water costs, and community compliance with federally-mandated storm water permit and clean water goals.

### 2007 Highlights

- Received funding to hire a Rocky River Watershed Coordinator
- Completed the Dike 14 Environmental & Ecological Risk Assessments
- Secured multiple grants for Euclid Creek land and water resources, dam removal, and conservation projects
- Co-lead an effort to reprint and distribute *Rain Garden Manuals* (10,000 statewide); Planted 8 rain gardens
- Secured funding for printing/laminating of outreach materials, including wetland maps and planning guidance for communities
- Completed the web-based educational tool *Life Depends on Water*, with support of an Ohio Environmental Education Fund grant
- Organized or participated in over 58 community programs and events
- Geo-caching for Conservation with scouts
- Cleveland Summer Youth Work Initiatives
- Secured funding for *Backyard Buffers*
- Workshops for engineers, municipal officials, including, *Ins and Outs of Post Construction Storm Water Management*
- *Backyard Habitat Stewardship* training
- Coordinated the NE Ohio Envirothon
- Sponsored four students to *Forestry Camp*

### Technical Assistance and Training

In 2007, Cuyahoga SWCD provided general technical assistance to communities to strengthen conservation efforts. The SWCD has collaborative agreements for services, related to NPDES Phase 2 storm water compliance, with 27 communities. Services include a comprehensive Public Involvement/Public Education and the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program that are integrated with watershed efforts throughout the county.

Assistance is provided to landowners or their representatives on a daily basis. That assistance includes review of historical aerial photos and soils information for property transactions, and general assistance about a variety of issues. In 2007, additional assistance was requested about oil and gas drilling. Staff handled 177 requests for assistance plus 250 office visits regarding soils and drainage issues, District programs, educational programs, technical and research requests. Educational tools and publications were also available for teachers to integrate into their classroom curriculum.

### **Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program Technical Assistance and Training**

Cuyahoga SWCD provides a timely and consistent approach through our Storm Water Program, which helps communities understand and meet the standards and practices required under the Clean Water Act. Cuyahoga SWCD has working agreements with 16 municipalities and the Cuyahoga County Engineer to provide storm water pollution prevention technical assistance. Services include a comprehensive Public Involvement/Public Education and the Storm Water Program that are integrated with watershed efforts throughout the county. Detailed recommendations related to erosion, sediment, non-sediment pollutant control and post-construction water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) are provided to assist both the community staff and site developers to keep Cuyahoga County clean and green. On-site compliance training, as well as more formal trainings for city staff, community leaders, and design professionals were also held.

In 2007, Cuyahoga SWCD's unique and comprehensive Storm Water Program provided the following community services: plan reviews (including preliminary, storm water pollution prevention, variance and mitigation plans) – 143; Construction site inspections and educational compliance reports – 1328; The Storm Water Program staff also conducted 60 (construction) on-site planning and compliance meetings and provided assistance at municipal storm water task force meetings.

The benefit of the plan review process is the implementation of post-construction water quality BMPs appropriate for site and soil conditions. Over 85 features that include bio-retention cells, storm water wetlands, enhanced water quality swales, and water quality filter strips have been installed or are listed on development site plans.

Both Structural and Non-structural BMPs are worthy of consideration on development sites. The District also provided assistance to the County and communities about the benefits of non-structural BMPs, such as riparian and

wetland areas, which can help to protect and restore habitat in communities, and function to help attenuate storm water.

General assistance is provided on a daily basis to clients and landowners who visit the office to review historical aerial photos, review soils information, and to receive general assistance. In 2007, additional assistance was requested about oil and gas drilling. Staff handled 177 requests for assistance with soils and drainage issues, District programs, educational programs, technical and research requests. Over 250 clients visited the office to research property information for property transactions and environmental liability. Educational tools and publications were made available for teachers to integrate into their classroom curriculum.

### **Conservation Easements**

Conservation easements protect sensitive lands and are also great non-structural, post construction best management practices. The District holds conservation easements on 189.5 acres of sensitive wetland, stream and upland wildlife habitat areas. District staff inspects the easements on a regular basis to insure that the areas remain in a natural state and works with property owners to keep them that way. In 2007, Cuyahoga SWCD staff worked with an Eagle Scout candidate from Rocky River on a project entitled, "Geo-Caching for Conservation." The Scout and his partners collected data and noted problem areas related to some of the conservation easements held by the District. The data will be mapped for the benefit of the District and other county organizations working on sensitive land protection.

### **Public Involvement/Public Education**

Conservation education is the foundation of Cuyahoga SWCD's work efforts. From city leaders to the grass roots public, this perennial program reached diverse target audiences. Using multi-media, including a variety of events and activities, staff conducted or participated in 58 different programs or events, directly reaching 10,000 people. In addition, the quarterly *On The Land* newsletter reached an additional 8,500 people and the *Cuyahoga County Environmental and Emergency Contacts* brochure was mailed to 15, 238 homeowners. Public education included: speaker's bureau presentations to a variety of civic and professional organizations, professional, science-based teacher workshops on water quality and soils issues, skill-building workshops for professional engineers and storm water managers, and timely exhibits on storm water issues and solutions, just to name a few. Public involvement is the other part of the equation and key to natural resource protection. Cuyahoga SWCD offered a variety of educational and service-oriented activities for people of all ages. Activities included the annual survey, poster contests, storm drain stenciling, stream monitoring, conservation day, beach and stream clean ups, water

festivals, invasive plant pulls and vegetative surveys. Eight rain gardens were established in 2007.

### **Annual Meeting**

The 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election were held in September in Seven Hills. Keynote speaker Carl Skalak spoke about 21<sup>st</sup> Century Urban Farming practices he uses on his Blue Pike Farm in Cleveland. The 13 minute Cuyahoga SWCD video was featured. Election results were announced and Kevin Kubovcik was welcomed to the Board of Supervisors. Dorothy Hazel was recognized for her contributions during her two term tenure on the Board of Supervisors. Also recognized were: Lora Lee Smith, Volunteer of the Year, Mike Durkalec, the Conservationist of the Year, and Dr. Mike Nichols, the Educator of the Year who received the Roger Biemel Memorial Award. Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to Charlie Yingling and Adam Pullar for their work with the Cuyahoga SWCD on their Eagle Scout projects.

### **Envirothon 2007**

Cuyahoga County hosted the 2007 Envirothon with the gracious support of 26 public and private event sponsors. The event attracted 340 students representing 68 teams from school throughout Northeast Ohio.

### **Dike 14 Brownfield Assessment Project**

The Dike 14 Brownfield Assessment Project was completed on time and under budget! A \$200,000 US EPA grant that was awarded to the SWCD, on behalf of the Dike 14 Environmental Education Collaborative, was used to conduct an environmental assessment of a confined disposal facility on Cleveland's east lakefront. The environmental and ecological risk assessments indicate that only 5 of the 88 acres have ecological risk factors that will need to be remediated. Permission was granted by the US EPA to expend the remaining funds to conduct a background contaminant level study with assistance from the Ohio EPA. Results of the impending study will help pave the way for determining if beneficial dredge materials can be used to cap the 5 acre site, thereby getting the site closer to being open on a regular basis for environmental education and nature observation.

### **Euclid Creek Watershed**

Euclid Creek Watershed residents are benefiting from a host of actions being implemented by the Watershed Coordinator with the support of the Watershed Council, Friends of Euclid Creek, and the public involvement and technical committees, all of which meet on a regular basis. The Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) endorsed Watershed Action Plan is being implemented. The year's highlights include: The East Branch of Euclid Creek Dam Removal Project, with multiple

sources of funding, including, \$80,000 in grant funding for the design and engineering from U.S. Fish and Wildlife and ODNR Division of Wildlife, and funding for the construction portion which is being pursued from Ohio EPA WRRSP Program and the Ohio EPA 319 Grant Program, all in conjunction with and support by local partners from Cleveland Metroparks, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, City of Euclid and Cuyahoga County Engineer; Protection of 12.5 acres of rare Dusty Goldenrod wetland; continuation of the Euclid Creek Volunteer Monitoring program; and the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Euclid Creek Day.

Euclid Creek was one of four projects nationally to be awarded funding under the Estuary Habitat Restoration Cost-Share Program through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project includes the restoration of 5 acres of estuary wetlands at Wildwood State Park and restoration of the adjacent stream channel to increase and restore the near shore habitat refuge and nursery areas in Euclid Creek. Since May, the Euclid Creek Coordinator has been working with US Army Corps Buffalo District, ODNR and the City of Cleveland to coordinate funding, scope of work and project scheduling.

### **Rocky River Watershed**

Cuyahoga SWCD partnered with other watershed stakeholders, including the Cuyahoga Board of Health and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency to implement an Ohio EPA 319 grant. As work was nearing completion, Cuyahoga SWCD secured an ODNR Watershed Coordinator grant to hire a watershed coordinator. Staff assisted the Rocky River Watershed Council, coordinated multiple stream clean ups in the watershed, teacher workshops and outreach to schools. In the spring, a \$ 9,999 grant from the Lake Erie Protection Fund was award for the Rocky River Backyard Buffers program. Nearly 600 residents, who as a group own over 17 miles of stream, have asked to participate, so additional funding is being sought to honor all the requests. The Rocky River Water Festival in September attracted over 1500 participants.

### **Agricultural In Cuyahoga County:**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA coordinated and provided most of the speakers for the Equine Environmental and Liability Awareness Program workshop that was co-sponsored with the Cuyahoga Farm Bureau and Cuyahoga SWCD. Sixteen stable owners and stall renters participated in the workshop series.

### **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP):**

Four more county landowners have been working with the joint NRCS and District office in order receive federal Farm Bill funding to solve agricultural related natural resource problems. Two of them are working on timber

management assistance and two are working to solve manure and soil erosion related water quality issues.

**Volunteers**

Our volunteers are our best partners in conservation. Thanks to their support, the District has extended conservation education, watershed protection and storm water management programs throughout the county at events, activity assignments, program coordination, with workshops and special initiatives, and with public involvement activities. In addition to Cuyahoga SWCD Board and Associate Board members, support for programs was provided by various federal, state and county agencies, watershed organizations, watershed councils and *Friends* groups, various communities municipal staff, students, garden clubs, local universities, local businesses, youth groups, and citizen volunteers.

**Board of Supervisors**

The Cuyahoga SWCD Board of Supervisors is an elected board of volunteers who serve three year terms. The board is comprised of Cuyahoga County residents, who are interested in promoting and implementing conservation practices in the county. The Board of Supervisors share their time and talent to assist staff in program implementation.

Ruth Skuly..... Chair  
 Fred Cash ..... Vice Chair  
 Patricia Carey ..... Treasurer  
 Dorothy Hazel ..... Fiscal Agent  
 Aimee Lane..... Secretary

**Associate Supervisors**

Ivan Hack, Jr., James Kastelic, and James Weber.

**Cuyahoga SWCD & NRCS Staff (2007)**

Janine Rybka.....*District Administrator*  
 Todd Houser.....*Storm Water Program Manager*  
 Jared Bartley.....*Rocky River Watershed Coordinator*  
 Lynn Garrity.....*Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator*  
 Bernadette Hackett .....*Administrative Assistant*  
 Patricia Hughes..... *Urban Conservation Specialist*  
 Glenn Lingle.....*Urban Conservation Technician*  
 Amy Roskilly.....*Conservation Education Coordinator*  
 Lisa Vavro.....*Storm Water Specialist*  
 Jim Storer.....*District Conservationist, NRCS*

Cuyahoga SWCD is an equal opportunity employer and provider

**Program Support**

The Cuyahoga SWCD is funded by both public and private sources. Cuyahoga SWCD is grateful for the support from the Board of Cuyahoga County Commissioners and local municipalities, which enables us to leverage matching funds from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Soil & Water Conservation. In addition, grant funds are received to implement specific projects.

**Cash Basis Special Fund & District Funds**

<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Local Government	\$118,045.00
State Government	\$324,590.00
Federal Government	\$0.00
Sale of Products	\$1,043.00
All Other Revenue/grants	\$522,635.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$966,313.00</b>
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>	
Salaries	\$310,256.00
Supplies	\$4,512.00
Equipment	\$27,400.00
Contract Repairs	\$0.00
Contract Services	\$272,792.00
Rentals	\$6,000.00
Service Fees	\$0.00
Information & Education	\$0.00
Travel & Expenses	\$10,157.00
Advertising & Printing	\$27,926.00
PERS	\$42,448.00
Worker's Compensation	\$1,877.00
Unemployment Compensation	\$0.00
Hospitalization	\$0.00
Medicare	\$0.00
Product/Materials for Resale	\$3,884.00
Other	\$109,291.00
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$816,543.00</b>



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