



cuyahoga

SOIL & WATER

conservation district

## 2018 Annual Report



*Marygrace, of Euclid, won the 2018 Poster Contest. The theme was "Watersheds, Our Water, Our Home."*

### "On the Road to Clean Water"

Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District's (SWCD) main program areas are:

- Conservation and Stormwater Education
- Natural Resources and Urban Agriculture
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Programs
- Watershed Protection Programs

Cuyahoga SWCD's mission is to advocate and implement best management practices for conservation of land and aquatic resources in a developed environment through education, stewardship and technical assistance.

### BIG NEWS

- Conservation programs, with an emphasis on stormwater pollution prevention and clean water, were delivered county-wide to 86% of the communities, reaching 99% of the population
- Funding from the Ohio Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil & Water Conservation was provided for an additional Watershed Coordinator
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program cost share funding for soil health and tree plantings was appropriated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- The Stormwater Program was named a "Program of Excellence" by the Ohio Stormwater Association
- The Conservation Education program was named "District of the Year" by the Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School won first place in the Area 2 Envirothon competition
- 75% staff completed Tree Stewards training; two graduated from the Tree Commission Academy
- The Big Creek Cleanup celebrated 20 years of stewardship in the 3rd largest tributary of the Cuyahoga River.

# CONSERVATION AND STORMWATER EDUCATION

In the effort to raise awareness and inspire positive changes in behavior, the 2018 education programs included environmental presentations, community and teacher workshops, tree plantings and stream cleanup projects and much more. Educational materials related to the annual theme were distributed throughout the county. One hundred fourteen programs and events were provided for all people. Activities included presentations to civic organizations, 43 school-related programs, 16 rain barrel workshops, nine stream or rain garden cleanups, 14 tree planting events, the poster contest, and three native plant/pollinator plantings.

Increasing awareness of environmental stewardship among today's youth is crucial to future sustainability efforts and exposure to conservation-related careers. More expansive outreach to schools has proven beneficial to students' understanding of environmental issues and the willingness to participate in activities such as storm drain stenciling, tree plantings, stream cleanups and the annual Envirothon competition. Two local schools competed in the Area 2 Envirothon. To help increase future participation, two mini Envirothon trainings were organized for 11 schools.

**Area 2 Envirothon Competition**-Funding was received from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and Western Reserve Land Conservancy to provide opportunities for schools with modest economic means to experience the Enviro-

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thon competition. For the first time ever, a Cuyahoga County school (Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School) won.

**Don't Drip and Drive Campaign**-Pollution comes from many sources and leaking oil is one. A "Don't Drip and Drive" message was shown during October at 31 Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) offices in Northeast Ohio (14 in Cuyahoga County). The campaign's goal was to raise awareness about stormwater runoff and provided tips for car care.

**Sensible Salting**-In November, an ad about the water quality problems linked to excess salt use, was shown in the regional BMV offices. This Sensible Salt campaign included a pledge to use less salt and participants received a coffee cup that measures the precise amount of salt needed for a typical urban sidewalk. Two Sensible Salting seminars were held for local service directors.



(From top left) Tree planting with Mayor Annette Blackwell in Maple Heights. Depave at Morning Star Baptist Church. Jacki Zevenbergen, stormwater education program manager, teaches a group of second graders. Students learn firsthand about soil quality.

## PROJECT GRANTS

Fifteen grant-funded projects are currently being implemented. Six projects were funded in 2018. Funds supplement program needs, outreach activities, restoration projects, pollinator plant and tree planting projects and workshops.

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a program that offers new opportunities for the NRCS, conservation partners and agricultural producers to work together to harness innovation, expand the conservation mission and demonstrate the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation. An expected \$77,000 investment will be made for

Cuyahoga County landowners to help restore soils and the urban tree canopy on private lands.



## STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION

The District implements stormwater pollution prevention programs in 18 communities and for Cuyahoga County. From stormwater pollution prevention plan reviews, to monthly inspections, and annual post construction facilities inspections, this program helped address pollution issues before, during and after construction. Staff routinely provided additional training and information to site managers and homeowners associations regarding best practices to ensure water quality protection. Each month, at least 185 sites are inspected. Stormwater pollution prevention plans were approved for 130 individual sites.

The Cuyahoga SWCD's Long-Term Operations and Maintenance program for (post construction) Stormwater

Control Measures resulted in 700 site inspections in 2018. The staff was also invited to provide presentations to local and regional organizations about implementing the program. A pond workshop was held to provide information to municipal staff and homeowner's association about the purpose and care of ponds.

Advocating for best practices is core to the District's mission. This year, the District teamed up with four companies to provide "Tool Box Talks." These programs put the service suppliers, practitioners, engineers and community staff in the same room to learn about products that are approved by the Ohio EPA for stormwater pollution prevention.

## WATERSHED PROTECTION

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, now called the non-point pollution source implementation plans (NPS-IS), the staff seeks funding and works with a variety of partners to address impairments in their watersheds through special projects, ongoing environmental education programs and events.

The scope of projects includes stream restorations, volunteer water quality monitoring at a total of 29 sites, stream assessments to gauge erosion and to help identify areas for future restoration projects, streamside tree plantings, watershed outreach through education and activities such as stream cleanups, and annual progress meetings to raise awareness of watershed issues to stakeholders.

Euclid Creek's watershed is 24 square miles and encompasses parts of ten communities in Eastern Cuyahoga and a portion of Lake County. Compelling stakeholders to get involved is as challenging as it is rewarding.

The Rocky River Watershed drains a 294 square-mile network of neighborhoods, farms, forests, parks, roads and stream stretches from Medina to Lake Erie, and includes parts of Cuyahoga, Medina, Lorain and Summit Counties, including all or part of 32 municipalities and townships.

**Western Cuyahoga Lake Erie direct tributaries**-The District received a three-year grant for a watershed specialist to assist the Euclid Creek and Rocky River watershed programs. A watershed specialist was hired to assist the current watershed program managers in seeking additional funding for other concerns identified in the Watershed Action Plans and NPS-IS, in addition to managing current projects to benefit Lake Erie and new projects in the Cahoan Creek watershed.

Watershed staff is currently implementing 11 grant-funded projects.

*Engaging the community through environmental activities.*



*Planting native trees.*

## CLIMATE RESILIENCY

### *More Trees Please*

The many benefits of a healthy tree canopy have become more important as rain events and storm intensity increases. Cuyahoga SWCD continued to advocate for protecting and restoring the urban tree canopy. The District, a member of the Cleveland Tree Coalition, offered three Tree Huggers workshops and provided 17 tree planting events to educate and engage the public. Funding from DuPont, Dominion/Western Reserve Land Conservancy, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District helped the District expand opportunities for tree planting programs. Staff also has been trained as Tree Stewards and completed Tree Commission Academy.

# NATURAL RESOURCES/URBAN AGRICULTURE

Only 1% of the land in Cuyahoga County is farmland, but there is an interest in improving soil and plant health throughout the county. Three workshops that focused on urban agriculture were provided, as was agriculture-related technical assistance to ten landowners. These efforts augmented the District's continued promotion and support of tree planting, pollinator gardens and rain gardens. Seventy-five percent of the staff have completed Tree Steward

Training and the SWCD is committed to doing what it can to help reestablish tree canopy. Small scale grants and projects are helping the public better understand soil health and planting methods.

Staff also provided resource information, reports and on-site technical assistance, especially in regards to drainage, accelerated erosion and planting, throughout the county.

## FUNDING

Cuyahoga SWCD works primarily to assist local governments with their Clean Water Act mandates. Funding is provided through memoranda of understanding and special project grant funding. Cuyahoga SWCD also benefits from funding from Cuyahoga County, the State of Ohio and local communities. Additional grants are obtained to support watershed projects and augment educational projects.

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Staff actively participates and contributes to county-wide initiatives related to good conservation and natural resources protection in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. The SWCD's involvement has provided opportunities to expand programs and develop many collaborative projects.



**Staff:** Janine Rybka, Jared Bartley, Ellen Brown Armstrong (not pictured), Brent Eysenbach, Elizabeth Hiser, Justin Husher, Jaimie Johnson, Kelly Parker, Carla Regener, Amy Roskilly, Megan Smith, Chris Vasco and Jacki Zevenbergen

**Cuyahoga SWCD Board:** Ruth Skuly-Chair, Jeremiah Swetel, Rachel Webb, Whitney Long Jones & Sherri Lippus

**Associate Board:** Kathleen Bradley & Howard Maier

**Interns:** Joe King



*Caroline Kelemen was elected to the board for the term ending in 2021*

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

As green infrastructure continues to proliferate in the landscape, there will be workforce development opportunities for maintenance and monitoring jobs. In collaboration with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and other partners, a work group has begun to assess the demand for trained professionals, and the skills, qualifications and certifications needed to develop a successful green infrastructure workforce program.

## CASH BASIS REPORT - 2018

Revenue	District Fund	Special Fund	Totals
Local government		719,665	719,665
State Match		370,578	370,578
State Government grants		142,969	142,969
Sales	22,306		22,306
Other Revenue	76,893		76,893
Total Cash	99,199	1,233,212	1,332,411
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Salaries		661,664	661,664
Supplies	7,859	3,602	11,461
Equipment	2,616	20,733	23,349
Contract Services	10,363	24,096	34,459
Rentals		46,200	46,200
Service Fees	529		529
Information/Education	21,888		21,888
Travel and expenses	4,108	5,641	9,749
Advertising/Printing	576	31,157	31,733
OPERS		91,735	91,735
Hospitalization		121,458	121,458
Medicare		9,300	9,300
Products for Resale	18,862		18,862
Other	25,826	32,064	57,890
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,627</b>	<b>1,047,650</b>	<b>1,140,277</b>
Receipts Over Disbursements	6,572	185,562	192,134