



ON THE LAND

FALL 2016

LAKE ERIE STARTS HERE - Winter Watershed Protection Tips

In spite of a long and warm Fall, the winter winds are sneaking into Northeast Ohio. Here are a few tips to protect your environment during the coming months.



SALT, ANIMALS AND SNOW

Road salt (sodium chloride) is most commonly used to remove ice from roads, parking lots and sidewalks. As snow and ice melt, road salt is carried into our lakes, streams and wetlands where just one teaspoon can permanently pollute five gallons of water. Use road salt wisely and keep your pathways safe by shoveling the snow during the storm

instead of waiting until the end. The more you remove, the less salt or chemical-deicer you will have to use and the more effective it will be when you do use it. Adding more won't speed up melting, follow label directions (1 cup per sq. yard) and spread salt a few inches apart for best results.

Remember, most salt stops working at or below 15 degrees. An alternative is to use small amounts of sand for traction, but remember, sand doesn't melt and can become a sediment pollutant if it washes into streams or storm drains.

Dispose of shoveled snow in vegetated areas and avoid dumping it into streets or streams. Gardens can better absorb snow melt than pavement, so in the next warm up, less polluted stormwater runoff will get into our streams.



Please protect my paws and Lake Erie!

Don't forget your animals! Cover their feet and/or wash them off after a walk. Contents in road salt can burn their paws. If you have nuisance wildlife, use non-toxic alternatives instead of chemical pesticides to reduce indoor and outdoor chemical use. Use boric acid, a low-toxicity mineral or bait boxes to keep winter wildlife out of your home versus chemicals that can have negative health impacts on humans, indoor pets and water quality.

Have a safe and happy winter knowing you are keeping the health of your watershed in mind. For more tips to keep your watershed healthy throughout the year, visit our website at www.cuyahogawcd.org

And the winner is.....

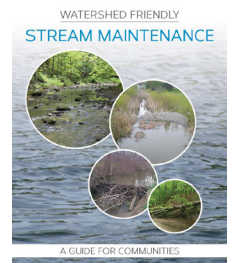
Recently the Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) reviewed over 50 completed grant projects from the years 2011 - 2015. Eleven were selected as outstanding projects. Two involved work done by the Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District staff. OEEF is publishing a booklet promoting the chosen projects to future applicants and the general public.

Cuyahoga SWCD's Rocky River Watershed Program was awarded \$16,031 to create a Watershed-Friendly Stream Maintenance Manual for communities struggling with stream issues such as eroding stream banks,

clogged culverts, and debris jams. The manual was distributed along with a series of workshops and field days. Find the manual at <http://www.cuyahogawcd.org/programs/watershed-friendly-stream-maintenance-guide-for-communities>.

The Northeast Ohio Public Involvement and Public Education (NEO PIPE) work group was awarded \$21,900 to create sets of banner displays and an accompanying brochure with stormwater pollution solution messages used across Northeast Ohio. Seven agencies from NEO PIPE collaborated on this grant including Cuyahoga SWCD.

Watershed-Friendly Stream Maintenance for Communities



From the Upper Reaches to Lake Erie's Beaches: A Banner Year for Nonpoint Source Pollution Solutions



EUCLID CREEK WATERSHED NEWS

Euclid Creek 2nd Annual Watershed Summit Recap

Although the program has been around for 16 years, our 2nd annual Watershed Summit on October 6 was a success with over 50 partners attending to hear about how the Watershed is doing in 2016. The purpose of the Summit was to gather the Watershed Council and Committee members, Friends of Euclid Creek (FOEC) members, partner agency representatives and the community to learn more about the program and to hear annual program highlights.

Mayfield Village's Mayor Bodnar welcomed the group to their brand new, beautiful Community Room and then updates were provided on the Euclid Creek Watershed Council, FOEC, and the Watershed Program. Jenn Grieser, keynote speaker from Cleveland Metroparks, discussed restoration efforts to convert Acacia Reservation from its former golf course life to a natural ecosystem and public park. This project is the largest restoration project to take place at the headwaters of the Main Branch of Euclid Creek. Restoration construction started on a section of Euclid Creek in October.



*Volunteer of the Year
award presented to
Mary K. Evans*

For the first time, an award was presented on behalf of the Euclid Creek Watershed Program partners to recognize Mary K. Evans, a volunteer who has contributed countless hours to the Euclid Creek Volunteer Monitoring Program. Mary K.'s volunteer water monitoring work began in 2006. With her chemistry and teaching background, she has been an invaluable resource to the monitoring program. She's helped train other volunteer monitors and, with the help from pal Lillian Houser, has monitored at the Highland Picnic Area site at Euclid Creek Reservation 132 times over the past 10 years, making 1,320 stream observations! Our Watershed Program would be nothing without dedicated volunteers like Mary K.

We hope to see you at our Watershed Summit in November of 2017!

**Friends of
Euclid Creek
Ready for the
Next 15 Years!**



Friends of Euclid Creek's 15 year anniversary has been impressive and fun to say the least. Not only did FOEC host seven hikes in the watershed, totaling 15 miles, but they sponsored the Day in the Life of Euclid Creek event and the 2nd annual Watershed Summit in 2016.

Organizationally, FOEC has had an outstanding year as well. FOEC recruited six new board members and thanked four board members stepping down for their considerable years of service to Friends.

With the new Board, a committee structure was implemented with committees for Conservation, Membership, Education and Fundraising. Members of the Board are chairing these new committees, but outside expertise and input is encouraged. So if you have interest in serving FOEC, but have limited time to commit to a Board position, serving on a committee would be a huge help and we welcome fresh ideas and expertise.

Email friendsofeuclidcreek@gmail.com if you are interested in serving FOEC.

ROCKY RIVER WATERSHED NEWS

Reforest the Rocky

The act of planting a tree has long been associated with caring for the earth. In the context of our mostly urban, suburban and agricultural Rocky River Watershed, that simple act is especially important. No matter where they are planted, trees provide tangible environmental benefits – they regulate temperature, enhance air quality and capture and slow rain water, reducing runoff. Trees planted in the riparian zone next to creeks and rivers deliver even more benefits. Their roots hold soil in place, anchoring streambanks, and they shade the creek, keeping water temperatures in a suitable range for aquatic critters. Essentially, a vegetated riparian buffer protects people and property from the creek while protecting the creek from human activities on the land.

The resiliency that trees provide to our urban ecosystem will continue to increase in importance as we adapt to the changing temperature and precipitation patterns

associated with climate change.

And because the best time to plant a tree was 20 (or perhaps 40) years ago, it is also important to maintain and protect existing forested areas, as much as possible, for the health of our watershed and our communities.



Troop 192 from St. Francis de Sales Church in Parma planted trees in the riparian zone adjacent to Baldwin Creek this Fall.

*"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now"*
Chinese Proverb

**THANK YOU FROM
CUYAHOGA SWCD
AND ON BEHALF
OF THE MONARCHS**

From Sept. 1 - Oct. 30, soil and water conservation districts across Ohio collected common milkweed seed pods. These seeds will be processed and prepared for planting. Our collection container was overflowing! Thank you!



CUYAHOGA SWCD 67TH ANNUAL MEETING

On October 19, 2016, Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District held its 67th Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election at the Ohio Aerospace Institute in Brookpark, OH. This event was co-sponsored by the Rocky River Watershed Council.

Two candidates ran for one open seat on our Board of Supervisors. Congratulations to Whitney Long on her election to the Board. Thank you to Howard Maier for your service on the board for the past three years.



*Whitney Long
will serve on the
Board of Directors
from 2017 - 2019*



*Jared Bartley,
Rocky River
Watershed
Coordinator*

Rocky River Watershed Coordinator Jared Bartley provided updates on water quality and watershed planning in the watershed, and presented on recently completed projects and initiatives. Educator of the Year, Colleen Sliwinski, a Biology and Environmental Science teacher at Fairview High School, and her students, gave a presentation about their involvement with the Coe Creek Streambank Restoration project. Students were involved with pre-and post-project monitoring, riparian reforestation and the development of interpretive signage.



*Colleen Sliwinski
and her students
from Fairview
Park High School*

CONSERVATION HEROES

A highlight of the Annual Meeting each year is presenting the awards to our conservation heroes. Congratulations and thank you for being a champion for our environment.

COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR

BROOKLYN CENTRE NATURALISTS

Brooklyn Centre Naturalists have become part of the National Wildlife Federation's efforts to inspire Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future and in an ongoing effort to connect today's youth with wildlife. They are passionate about using natural and sustainable practices to grow a variety of native plants, which provides beneficial habitat to animals, especially to pollinators. Brooklyn Centre Naturalists has invited the public to assist in activities that improve the neighborhood's aesthetics.



*Janine Rybka and Representative
Bill Patmon with Cooperators of
the Year, Gloria Ferris and Sharon
Martynowski from the Brooklyn
Centre Naturalists.*

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

COLLEEN SLIWINSKI - Fairview Park High School

Roger Biemel Education Award

Colleen promotes sustainable practices to her students and has engaged them in diverse learning styles that are practical, thought-provoking and engaging to increase understanding of their connection to the Rocky River watershed's health and that of the environment. Her students conduct stream monitoring on Coe Creek, a tributary to the Rocky River to assess the water quality and current conditions of water that flows directly into Lake Erie.



*Verna Biemel with
Educator of the Year,
Colleen Sliwinski*

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

LEE GASE

Lee is a committed leader and role model dedicated to protecting the county's natural resources. He has been a strong and steady voice for the environment with his involvement with Friends of Euclid Creek, Greenwood Farm and currently serves on the Westlake Green Team. Lee was instrumental in collecting historical information to allow for naming one of Euclid Creek's tributaries and he works unselfishly for clean water, wildlife and the protection of natural resources in Cuyahoga County.



*Conservationist of the
Year, Lee Gase, with
Elizabeth Hiser and
Janine Rybka*

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Or get on our email list by sending your email to:

aroskilly@cuyahogaswcd.org

HELP FOR URBAN FARMERS

Oh, the challenges associated with urban agriculture: No previous “farming” experience, tired, worn out or maybe contaminated soils, challenges obtaining permits for the land or water, variable weather and no blueprint for success.

Most people probably don’t equate Cuyahoga County or Cleveland as a hub for agriculture, and no wonder. When the Cuyahoga SWCD was established in 1949, Cleveland’s population was nearly 1 million and the county was 50% developed. In 2016, the population has plummeted to fewer than 400,000 and thousands of vacant lots are scattered throughout the city’s core.

Fortunately, Clevelanders are tough and industrious. Thanks to local and national initiatives, urban agriculture pioneers seized the opportunity to buy or adopt vacant parcels to expand community gardens and to develop urban farms. The federal USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service’s funding for the Seasonal High



*Justin Husher
and a sample of
Mexican sour
gherkins*

Tunnel initiative was instrumental in encouraging beginning farmers to work the land. To date, 80 high tunnels have been built, however some are much more productive than others and guidance is needed.

This past spring, the Cuyahoga SWCD applied and was awarded grant funds from the National Association of Conservation Districts to aid nascent urban agriculture initiatives. Justin Husher, himself an urban farmer, was hired to provide guidance to beginning farmers. Justin farmed two vacant lots on Cleveland’s west side and sold thousands

of pounds of colorful, fresh produce. His bounty included varieties of tomatoes, peppers and squash, as well as specialty items like ground cherries and Mexican sour gherkins. Old Husher’s Farm doesn’t exist at this time, but growing is still a passion, as Justin has established paw paw groves here and in Athens, Ohio.

Justin has degrees in botany and business management. That combined with his growing skills and experience will serve him well in his new role. He has a great challenge and opportunity to provide a tool kit that will help beginning farmers. Over the next few months, Justin will have his boots on the ground. He is already meeting with stakeholders and future collaborators to get a better understanding of the needs and identify gaps in current programs that can be filled to help urban agriculture in Cleveland to thrive. Welcome Justin!

cuyahoga
SOIL & WATER
conservation district