



ON THE LAND

WINTER 2019

We've Come A Long Way in 70 years

At the end of its 70th year in operation, the Cuyahoga SWCD has never been better. From our committed board to our passionate staff of professionals, programs have evolved from the early days of primarily landowner assistance, to increased education through on-site assistance, speakers programs, events and opportunities for public engagement.

During the last thirty years, the Cuyahoga SWCD has had a seat at the table, providing technical assistance and support to initiatives like the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (water quality improvements), National Pollutant Discharge & Elimination System (NPDES), Life at the Water's Edge (stream stewardship), the municipal stormwater management programs (stormwater pollution prevention), urban agriculture, sustainability and tree planting.

Throughout the years, we could not have sustained our programs without the help of our fabulous partners - from local, state and federal governmental partners, colleges and universities, businesses, churches, schools, local civic associations, and the people of Cuyahoga County. Today we offer targeted programs to 52 communities in Cuyahoga County and we are seeking ways to work with every community.



This anniversary years efforts have been amazing: the Cuyahoga Healthy Urban Tree Canopy Program, Master Rain Gardeners Program, N.U.T.S. Program, Watershed Champion Program, additional communities, floating wetlands, hundred of volunteer hours, a new SWCD video, stream restoration and reconnected flood plain projects, inspection of 3500 construction and post construction sites, myriad school programs, 50 blog posts, great media coverage, soil restoration projects, urban agriculture workshops, rain barrels, green yards and healthy homes workshops, pollution prevention pledges, tree plantings, stream cleanups and storm drain stenciling.

As our 70th year winds down, we are putting the finishing touches on a new Strategic Plan, which is being fostered through a county-wide survey and with brainstorming

by the board and staff. Our goal is to develop a plan that drives tough choices and accountability deeper into the organization to truly help Cuyahoga County shed its Rust Belt moniker and evolve into the Green Belt.

The Cuyahoga SWCD board and staff are extremely proud to celebrate more than 70 years of leading conservation in the most urbanized county of the state. We are dedicated to the future through advocating for and implementing programs and projects that benefit our soil and water resources, and the people of Cuyahoga County!

Master Rain Gardener

This summer Cuyahoga SWCD hosted its first Master Rain Gardener workshop. This in depth 5-session course is based on the successful program from Washtenaw County, Michigan.

The course aims to build a community of rain garden experts. Instructors taught students to design, dig and plant their own rain garden. Classmates worked together in class and online to solve problems with rain gardens in their own yards. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/neomasterraingardeners/>)

We are very excited about the results so far:

- 29 participants completed the course
- 8 new rain gardens have been installed
- 6 existing rain gardens have been updated
- 3 public rain gardens have been adopted and/or rehabbed by 6 volunteers
- Several students complimented the enthusiasm and knowledge of the instructors.



Master Rain Gardeners Cuyahoga County Class

"The class is both informative and fun. The speakers for the various topics are knowledgeable and are willing to work with the students one-on-one."

Master Rain Gardener Student



Master Rain Gardener Mark B.'s rain garden in action after one inch of rain

Thank you to our partners at Cleveland Metroparks Stewardship Center, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office, Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District, Chagrin River Watershed Partners and NEO PIPE for helping bring this inaugural course to Cuyahoga County.

We will be partnering with Mayfield Village to host the course in May 2020. In addition, we will partner with Chagrin River Watershed Partners to host an online course. Registration is now open for the 2020 in-person course: www.cuyahogawcd.org/events.



Cuyahoga SWCD is N.U.T.S. for Trees

On October 1, Colleen Berg started serving a 1-year AmeriCorps term with Cuyahoga SWCD as part of the Northern Ohio Watershed Corps (NOWCorps) program, which is coordinated by Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners. AmeriCorps is a National Service program that places members in communities throughout the country with a goal of helping others and meeting critical needs in the community.

Originally from Guyana, Colleen's background in forestry and nursery management will be utilized as she assists Cuyahoga SWCD with the implementation of our new Native



Colleen Berg

Urban Tree Starters (N.U.T.S.) program. She will also assist with volunteer water quality monitoring programs and stream stewardship efforts in the Rocky River, Euclid Creek and Cahoon Creek/Direct Lake Erie Tributaries watersheds. Welcome Colleen!



Why N.U.T.S.?

Perhaps you have seen stories in the news recently about Cuyahoga County's efforts to begin to restore its declining tree canopy – which now sits at 37% and falling. Through participation in the N.U.T.S. program,

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Cuyahoga SWCD 70th Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election Wrap-Up

On October 21, the Cuyahoga SWCD board, staff and 61 stakeholders celebrated 70 years of growth and success at our Annual Meeting. Dr. Scott Hardy, OSU Extension Educator spoke on "Green Infrastructure and Clean Marinas: Managing Runoff at the Land-Water Interface." Each one of the Cuyahoga SWCD staff introduced themselves and continued to showcase their best 2019 efforts. Four candidates ran for the Supervisor position open for the 2020-2022 term. Congratulations to Draye Luton who was elected. Thank you to all of the candidates who took an interest in serving on the board.



Draye Luton and Janine Rybka



Nafessah Walker (friend accepting on her behalf) - Volunteer of the Year



www.cuyahogaswcd.org

Conservation heroes are people who work for conservation and/or who have provided significant assistance to help the SWCD meet and exceeds its annual goals. The board and staff are happy to recognize the people below for their commitment to conservation. All of the Conservation Heroes were recognized by County Executive Armond Budish.



Dolores Watson - Conservationist of the Year



Rust Belt Riders - Cooperator of the Year



Brian Patrick, Principal of Willoughby Eastlake School of innovation (Elizabeth Hiser accepting on his behalf) - Educator of the Year



Ruth Skuly - Special Recognition

Ruth Skuly was elected to the Cuyahoga Board of Supervisors in 2000. For 19 years, many of which she has as board chair, Ms. Skuly has shared her time, knowledge and passion for science and her administrative expertise with the Cuyahoga SWCD board and staff. Ms. Skuly has also served for 16 years as an Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Area Director. She has co-led the development of multiple strategic plans and has guided the SWCD through 19 years of growth. Ms. Skuly's commitment was praised by the City of Cleveland's Mayor Jackson and Cuyahoga County's Executive Armond Budish.

Check out our new Cuyahoga SWCD video at www.cuyahogaswcd.org/about/mission



We are social butterflies!
Follow us on Facebook at Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District and on Instagram at [cuyahogaswcd](https://www.instagram.com/cuyahogaswcd)

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or get on our email list by sending your email to:
aroskilly@cuyahogawcd.org

Envirothon

The 2020 Area 2 Envirothon will be held on April 30, 2020 at Kent State University - Salem Campus. Envirothon participation is an important resume builder for students – especially those interested in environmental, agricultural, science education or ecological careers. Last year, a Cuyahoga County team, Brecksville Broadview Heights High School went all the way to the State competition.

The regional competition is free, lunch is provided and some funds will be available for transportation, substitute teachers or other costs. Don't miss this great opportunity for your students.

**[www.cuyahogawcd.org/
programs/envirothon](http://www.cuyahogawcd.org/programs/envirothon)**

Camp Canopy Scholarship Fund

We are so proud to be able to offer scholarships for Camp Canopy! For each camper, it costs \$375 for a full week at this amazing camp. We could use your help! Please consider making a donation to our Camp Canopy Scholarship Fund. Every amount helps!

www.cuyahogawcd.org/programs/camp-canopy

Camp Canopy dates June 14-19, 2020!

Scholarship information will be posted in February 2020.

N.U.T.S. continued

students throughout Cuyahoga County will have the opportunity to contribute to these important efforts.

The N.U.T.S. program aims to restore tree canopy in Cuyahoga County by involving students in the processes of collecting, germinating, and sprouting tree seeds and nuts, and then planting these trees in the community.

Almost all aspects of the program are customizable to meet classroom needs, and are available to schools in Cuyahoga County free of charge.

Additionally, many aspects of the program can be correlated to state education standards through the use of the Project Learning Tree curriculum.

To find out more about the program and how your school can get involved, visit the program web page at www.cuyahogawcd.org/programs/nuts.