



ON THE LAND

WINTER 2022

Welcome Kristin Hall, Cuyahoga SWCD's new Executive Director

It is an incredible honor for me to step into the role of Executive Director at the Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). This is a role that aligns perfectly with my passion for the natural environment and sustainability, my background in municipal government, and my love of working with and for people.

To introduce myself, I am a life-long Cuyahoga County resident, growing up in Brookpark and attending John Carroll University for my undergraduate degree in Biology. This is where my interest in ecology and natural systems was first sparked, and what ultimately led me to pursue a master's degree in Environmental Science from Cleveland State University, with a focus on stormwater management in urban environments.

In 2010, I started working for the City of Cleveland Mayor's Office of Sustainability and was fortunate to work on a wide range of sustainability projects, programs, and policies over my 11+ years there. I was promoted to Director of Sustainability in 2017, where I continued to help advance sustainability and climate action initiatives within Cleveland's municipal operations and throughout the community.

My favorite projects were those that got me out in the community and



Kristin Hall cleaning a storm drain

allowed me to see the direct impacts of my work. I naturally gravitated towards projects focused on green infrastructure, waste reduction and recycling, and trees and green space, and I am proud to say I helped secure and manage more than \$7 million in federal, state, local, and private grants which supported this work.

When the opportunity arose to join Cuyahoga SWCD as Executive Director, I couldn't pass it up. Having worked with a number of staff at Cuyahoga SWCD over the years, I was very familiar with the great work they do in the community. This role will allow me to tap into my science background, while building on the leadership and strategic planning skills I developed at the City. I am particularly excited about the chance to get out in the field and

hopefully get my hands dirty (doing a tree planting or stream cleanup, of course!)

In the few months I've been here, I am constantly impressed at the volume and diversity of work Cuyahoga SWCD does. From pre- and post-construction stormwater inspections, to school programs and stream restoration projects, there is no shortage of work around here and Cuyahoga SWCD does an awesome job of staying on top of it all. I've commented multiple times on how much we do as a District and how organized the office is.

I absolutely cannot talk about how great Cuyahoga SWCD is without recognizing my amazing predecessor, Jan Rybka. In her 20 years at the District, Jan was able to turn an understaffed and budget-less organization into a stable and sustainable leader in the conservation space. At Jan's retirement party she mentioned that I will bring a new "energy" to the role. While I'm excited to take the helm, the energy Jan brought to Cuyahoga SWCD is leaving some VERY big shoes to fill.

As I settle into my new role as Executive Director, I am looking forward to getting to know our staff and scope of work better so I can provide support in achieving

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Cuyahoga SWCD's mission. I hope to elevate and prioritize equity in the work we do and implement sustainable practices and policies wherever possible. I am also excited to meet with elected officials, community leaders, and service directors in the communities we serve to understand their priorities when it comes to soil and water conservation and make sure we are taking these into account in our work.

I look forward to leading a new chapter at Cuyahoga SWCD. I feel truly grateful for the many wonderful people and organizations I have had the opportunity to work with, and am very excited for all of those I have yet to meet.

Kristi Hall

Board of Supervisors



Congratulations to Caroline Kelemen (*left*) and Anton Kreiger (*right*) on their re-election and election to the Cuyahoga SWCD Board of Supervisors in October 2021.

Cuyahoga SWCD Supervisors are elected to a three-year term as public officials. They are respected conservation leaders elected by county residents to represent them in charting the course for soil and water conservation and natural resource management in Cuyahoga County. Board meetings are held monthly.

www.cuyahogawcd.org/events

Welcome, Tim and Audrey



Cuyahoga SWCD welcomes our new Education Program Specialist, Tim Becker. Prior to joining us, Tim worked as a bilingual teacher in the New York City Department of Education. He taught all subjects in the 4th and 5th grades in both Spanish and English with a focus on environmental education.

"All children deserve a chance to explore the natural world around them. As the Education Program Specialist here at Cuyahoga SWCD, I will combine my experience as an educator with my enthusiasm about the natural world to invite all the kids of Cuyahoga County into that adventure. In order to reach more children, I am hoping to develop Spanish language programming, among other projects." - Tim Becker

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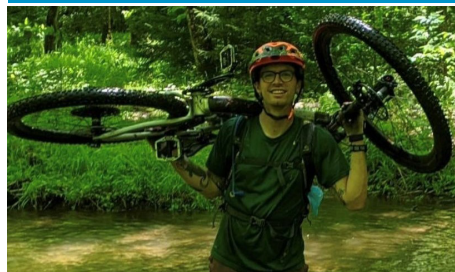


Cuyahoga SWCD welcomes our new AmeriCorps NOWCorps member, Audrey Atzel. Audrey is a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard and is a graduate student at Cleveland State University working towards a Master's in Environmental Science. She has experience volunteering with Cleveland Metroparks as part of the Watershed Volunteer Program as well Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Previously, she was a Biological Science Technician with the National Parks Service specializing in plants.

"I am excited to join the Cuyahoga SWCD team as an AmeriCorps member, and to expand my breadth of knowledge into water quality, environmental education, and volunteer management activities." - Audrey Atzel

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Welcome, John



John Timmons is the Regional Watershed Manager for the Central Lake Erie Basin for the State of Ohio under the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). Cuyahoga SWCD is hosting John for the duration of his position.

The ODA Watershed Program is a Statewide Watershed Planning & Management Program, authorized by House Bill 7. Its purpose is to improve and protect the state's watersheds through planning, management, and engagement in local, regional, and state level conservation activities.

John has bachelor's and master's degrees from Ohio University in Civil Engineering and loves to write, paint, ride bikes, run and rock climb.

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You want native plants? We've got native plants!

You want native seeds? We've got native seeds!

You want roots and corms? We've got roots and corms!

You want to know what we mean by roots and corms? In short, the dormant part of the plant. A corm is like a bulb.

You want native trees/shrubs? We've got native trees/shrubs!

Cuyahoga SWCD Native Seed, Plant, and Tree/Shrub Sales



Visit our website for information and to order!

www.cuyahogawcd.org/programs/native-seed-plant-and-treeshrub-sales



The Importance of Ohio's Native Plants

Native Plants are completely adapted to our growing conditions in Ohio, having evolved over thousands of years to thrive in our climate. They are comfortable with the amount of rainfall we receive, to our unique soils, our hot humid summers and our cold winters.

Because of this, native plants often grow better in our gardens than non-native plants. And once established, native plants typically require less water and less maintenance than many non-native



plants. The primary reason native plants are important is that they are a source of food for our native bees, butterflies, insects, caterpillars, birds, and all wildlife.

Wildlife such as bees and butterflies need the sweet nectar and pollen from flowers for survival.

Native caterpillars need tender plant leaves for survival and some birds eat seeds produced by plants later in the summer. In these examples, wildlife feeds directly on plants. The wildlife that do not eat plants directly, feed on insects or other animals that typically feed directly on plants. Plants are critical to the survival of all wildlife!

Article by Ohio Native Plant Month

For more information, visit

www.ohionativeplantmonth.org



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Five in-person classes over a six-week period.

www.neomasterraingardener.org



Poster Contest - Healthy Soil: Healthy Life

Cuyahoga SWCD sponsors an annual poster contest for Cuyahoga County students in grades K-12. The 2022 poster contest theme is "Healthy Soil: Healthy Life."

Awards will be given for 1st and 2nd place in the following grade categories: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. Winners in each grade band will advance to the state competition.

Linking art and creative thinking with science, the poster contest provides K-12th grade students the chance to develop and share their thoughts and ideas about natural resource issues. Students are encouraged to use the poster to creatively express their ideas on how conservation improves



the environment. Teachers may use this contest to correlate with National Visual Arts standards for all grades and it's a great way for teachers to instill in their students an appreciation for the environment and an awareness of the need to protect our natural resources.

Only about 10% of Earth's land surface has suitable soil for producing

our food supply, housing, cities, schools, hospitals, air to breathe and more. Our healthy life above ground depends upon healthy soil below our feet. It is vital that we practice good soil conservation so don't treat your soil like dirt!

**Register your class
by April 1**

cuyahogaswcd.org/Events

(click on April 1)

**Submissions are due
to Cuyahoga SWCD
by Earth Day,
April 22**

Take the Envirothon Challenge in 2022!



The Northeast Ohio Regional Envirothon competition will be held on April 28, 2022 at Kent State University-Salem Branch. Envirothon tests student's knowledge of soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology and a current environmental issue.

Envirothon is designed to stimulate, reinforce, and enhance interest in the environment and natural resources among high school students. We are looking for teachers and students who are interested in forming an Envirothon team (applications due March 17) and sponsors to defray Cuyahoga County school's transportation costs for this event. This event is organized by

county Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Ohio.

Five regional Envirothon competitions are conducted around Ohio each spring. The top four teams from the regional competitions progress to the Ohio Envirothon which will be held at Lake Erie College in Painesville on June 5-7. The top-scoring team in the Ohio Envirothon is eligible to compete in the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon which is held this year at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio on July 24-30.

Envirothon is financed by grants, individuals and company sponsorship, and donations from local businesses. In Ohio, Envirothon

is sponsored by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Natural resource and environmental specialists from many agencies, organizations, colleges, universities, park districts and businesses devise the Envirothon questions and staff the various testing stations.

For more information, go to www.envirothon.org.

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**[www.cuyahogaswcd.org/
Programs/Envirothon](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/Programs/Envirothon)**

Sponsorships for Camp Canopy

Calling all high school students in Cuyahoga County! Cuyahoga SWCD is offering registration sponsorships for Camp Canopy from June 12-17, 2022, held at Camp Muskingum in Carroll County. Incoming freshman through graduating seniors (up to age 19) are eligible to apply.

In addition to learning about forestry and wildlife, Camp Canopy participants enjoy campfires, kayaking, climbing, archery, volleyball and other recreational activities. Over the past fifty years, Cuyahoga SWCD has sponsored more than 100 students to attend Camp Canopy. This camp is a unique experience that will expose students to the great outdoors and to possible careers in forestry, conservation and natural resource protection.



Applications for scholarships due to Cuyahoga SWCD by April 8, 2022.

Sponsorship covers the cost of camp along with meals and programs (\$375 value). Scholarships will be awarded April 15, 2022.

www.cuyahogaswcd.org/programs/camp-canopy

"This week was an absolute blast. The classes were educational and helped me understand the different jobs when it comes to forestry and wildlife. I've always loved to be outdoors, and now I'm thinking of the jobs I could go for in the future. My favorite part of this week was being able to meet so many other kids that were eager to learn and also have fun. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to go to camp. Wouldn't have been able to do it without you."

- Savanna S., 2018 Camp Canopy

Conservation Career Expo

On February 15, 2022, Cuyahoga SWCD welcomed 140 students to the Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio (ESCNEO) for a Conservation Career Expo. The students from eleven different high schools, visited 15 exhibitors, all from conservation fields, to learn about what they do, what their agency does and what path they can take to work in that career.

The Expo connected students from communities that are historically underrepresented in conservation. ESCNEO hosts the First Ring Schools Collaborative, an association of 16 school districts that surround the city of Cleveland. It was established to help school districts address the interrelated challenges related to poverty, mobility, diversity, and the achievement gap.

www.escneo.org

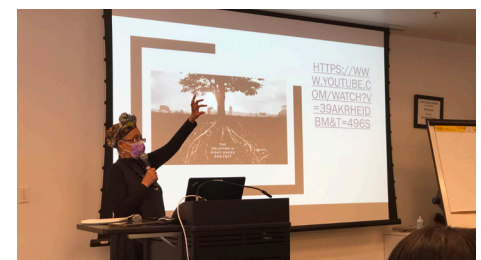


ODNR Division of Forestry - working with chainsaws (above) and fire protection while on the job (below)



Holden Arboretum talks trees

Thank you to ESCNEO for hosting the Conservation Career Fair and helping with logistics, to Veronica Walton, our keynote presenter who addressed the students about "digging deep" to find your career path, and to all the exhibitors who took time out of their schedules to be there for the students!



Veronica Walton encourages students to "dig deep"

Interested in learning more about Cuyahoga SWCD's school programs?

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Backyard Buffers Program

Enrollment is now open for the 2022 Rocky River and Euclid Creek Backyard Buffers Programs, presented by CSWCD in partnership with Friends of Euclid Creek and Rocky River Watershed Council.

Anyone who owns streamside property in the Euclid Creek or Rocky River Watersheds is eligible and encouraged to enroll, though participation may be capped once all the supplies are reserved.

Program participants will receive a free kit of native trees and shrubs to plant along their backyard streams to establish forested riparian, or streamside, buffers. Seedlings will be available in late March or early April for spring planting. If you live near the creek keep an eye out for a brochure being mailed to you with details on how to enroll!

This is a great opportunity for residents to get directly involved in the preservation of the Euclid Creek and Rocky River Watersheds, which span parts of Cuyahoga, Medina,

Lorain, Summit and Lake Counties.

Riparian areas are the land alongside a stream or river that directly affects - or is affected by - the water. These areas are the closest to the water and are at the most risk of flooding. Healthy riparian buffers contain trees, shrubs, and other plants that protect both the stream and the streamside property.

Many of our riparian buffers have been cleared to make additional space for lawns, houses, fields, and roads. Properly maintained riparian buffers stabilize stream banks, decrease peak storm flows, filter nutrients and sediment from stormwater, provide essential habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife, and increase property values.

The program will distribute both bare root seedlings and live stakes in Rocky River Watershed and bare root seedlings in Euclid Creek Watershed.

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Bare root seedlings are young trees and shrubs that have their roots intact but have been de-potted; they can be replanted easily in small holes and transplanted while dormant.

Live stakes are dormant, live woody cuttings of a species with the branches trimmed off. Live staking performs an important function in creating a root mat that stabilizes the soil by reinforcing and binding soil particles together. Stake establishment also provides habitat for wildlife. Dormant stakes/live cuttings of willow stakes or a mix of willow and red-osier/silky dogwood stakes should be installed on any area of bare soil along the streambank in areas of full sun to part shade. In shady areas, ninebark and elderberry live stakes will serve better. Pilot holes at least half the length of the stake or post should be created using similar diameter rebar, broomsticks or garden stakes. Posts and stakes can be installed as densely as one per square foot of exposed streambank.



Live stakes installed along a headwater stream



Bundle of bare root seedlings



The same live stakes two months after installation

The Backyard Buffers Program is made possible through a grant to the Friends of Euclid Creek from the Western Reserve Land Conservancy/Dominion Energy Watershed Grants Program as well as funding from Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District Watershed Partner Service Agreements.



Euclid Creek Watershed Program
Rocky River Watershed Council



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Euclid Creek Watershed Program
RRWC

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www.centrallakeerie.org

Annual Reporting: A time for reflection and planning

Annual reporting! The phrase sends shivers down the spines of stormwater managers everywhere like the icy February winds when most finally sit down to complete the task. Taking a pause from operations to dig out the receipts of the past year and counting all the work that was done can seem like a drudge for most but can be downright dreadful for some.

It does not have to be that way though. With a little bit of advanced planning, the use of organizational tools, and help from your program partners the annual reporting can stop being a chore and instead be a time to celebrate your stormwater program achievements and plan exciting new opportunities for the forthcoming year.

The process starts with actually reading the MS4 permit, yes.... cover to cover; and understanding what the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) will expect you to report back on. Next, determine if a different department in your municipality or an outside agency assists with the implementation of one of the Minimum Control Measures (MCMs). Ensure they



know what data needs to be collected or recorded and put them to work compiling the relevant portions of the annual report. Break up the data collection into easily manageable chunks by requiring supporting departments to report back to you on a monthly or quarterly basis. This will reduce the effort spent pulling the data together at the end of the year.

Tools such as attendance logs, complaint trackers, enforcement escalation reports, and workorder tickets are most useful when continuously updated. It is better to spend five minutes updating the necessary log regularly than hours sifting through emails and workorder closeout slips at the end of the year. By routinely checking on the status of the different elements of the stormwater program you may uncover mid-year trends that will

help improve the program.

With data and reportable metrics having been collected throughout the year, either by yourself or supporting departments, you are prepared to compile the annual report. Pour a warm beverage, review the reporting requirements, review any permit changes that may have been published, make note of programmatic friction areas that were identified throughout the year and get it done. With all the free time you have from not having to dig up year- old metrics you can spend some time thinking about stormwater program enhancements. A tree planting or planning a storm drain stenciling event may be in order. If you are feeling especially ambitious you can review your municipal ordinance and make sure that required detention volumes meet or exceed current climatological rainfall intensities.

Regardless of what you think of annual reporting, prior planning and routine check-ins will make your life easier.

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We're on the air!

We're hitting the airwaves on March 1 on Eco Speaks CLE. Hosted by Diane Bickett (former Director of the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District) and produced by Greg Rotuno, Eco Speaks CLE is where the eco-curious can explore the unique and thriving environmental community in Northeast Ohio.

Diane asked Cuyahoga SWCD and Good Nature Organic Lawn Care to talk about the importance of native plants, why you should incorporate them into your gardens,



why and how to shrink your lawn, and how to care for your existing lawn organically, including spring maintenance tips, proper mowing heights and properly feeding the soil so it can feed the plants. This will be the eighth Eco Speaks CLE episode



*Diane Bickett, Amy Roskilly-Cuyahoga SWCD,
Alec McClennan-Good Nature Organic Lawn Care*

and can be found on where you listen to your podcasts.

Episode airs March 1, 2022
www.ecospeakscle.buzzsprout.com

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CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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Did you know?



- Spreading more salt does not improve deicing.
- One 12 ounce coffee cup full of salt is enough to cover about 10 sidewalk squares.
- There should be about 3 inches between salt granules
- Be sure to sweep up any excess salt.
- Road salt (sodium chloride) only works above 15 degrees F.
- Salt works best when it is applied before the snow falls or right after snow is removed from your driveway or sidewalk.
- One teaspoon of salt **permanently** pollutes 5 gallons of water.

Love the newsletter, but hate the paper?

Contact Amy Roskilly
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We can put you on our broadcast email list that includes an electronic version of our newsletter and other conservation news!

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn at Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District and on Instagram at cuyahogaswcd.



www.cuyahogaswcd.org
#lakeeriestartshere

