

# ON THE LAND

CUYAHOGA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

LEADING CONSERVATION IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE



Spring/Summer 2014

## Soil Stabilization

Now that the snow is a distant memory, it is the perfect time to protect our soil resources to keep soil from migrating into our waterways. One of the easiest ways to do so is to cover the bare patches of soil with seed and mulch.

Covering bare soil with vegetation reduces erosion from wind and rain, increases infiltration of storm water, retains soil and soil nutrients and is one of the easiest ways to protect water quality. Covering bare soil is even more important on denuded slopes, on idle areas of construction sites, in areas near storm drains and especially in areas within 50 feet of a stream.

Whether installing a cover crop or grass seed, it is important to

loosen the soil and grade the site. Depending on the site, you may want to test your soil to determine if fertilizer is needed. After the seed is applied, consider topping the seed with straw mulch for extra protection.

For those working on construction sites of one acre or larger, your Ohio EPA General Construction Permit (OHC000004) requires temporary stabilization of exposed bare soil idle for greater than 14 days.

Seasonal tip: Water slowly, thoroughly and as infrequently as possible. Best times, early in the morning to minimize evaporation. To make every drop count, aerate the lawn and



*Seed, mulch and silt fence provides triple protection for reducing soil erosion.*

also consider the use of a drip irrigation system.

**Check out our website [www.cuyahogaswcd.org](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org) for more program information, timely tips and upcoming events.**

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 10 - Rain Barrel Workshop, Parma

July 15 - Rain Barrel and Compost Workshop, Richmond Heights

July 31 - Rain Barrel Workshop, Brooklyn

August 19 - Soil Health Through the Seasons, Twinsburg

August 28 - Green Cleaning Inside and Out, Rocky River

September 20 - Wildwood Stream and Wetland Cleanup, Cleveland

September 23 - Cuyahoga SWCD Annual Meeting, Brecksville

October 1 - Green Cleaning Inside and Out, Mayfield Heights

## STORM WATER PROGRAM STAFF

Cuyahoga SWCD assists communities with the implementation of their mandated Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System permits. The District's expanding program provides communities with professional assistance, which includes storm water pollution prevention plan reviews, field reviews of active construction sites and long-term operation and maintenance reviews of water quantity and water quality basins and technical site visits.

The four person staff includes Brent Eysenbach, Susan Bell, Eric Lance and Carla Regener, all of whom have experience in storm water management and best practices implementation.

The staff has expertise and experience in providing education and good housekeeping practices, plan reviews, comprehensive field reviews (site inspections), detailed reporting and technical guidance related to permitting, municipal ordinances, wetland delineations and urban

wildlife ecology, urban planning and GIS mapping.

For more information, contact Brent Eysenbach at 216/524-6580, ext. 11.



[www.cuyahogaswcd.org](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org)

## 2013 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

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

### ANNUAL REPORT 64 YEARS OF CONSERVATION CUYAHOGA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was established in 1949 as a political subdivision of the state of Ohio and organized in Cuyahoga County. The District operates under Ohio Revised Code 1515, with oversight by the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission and governed by five unpaid, locally-elected Supervisors. Funding for the Cuyahoga SWCD's work efforts was provided by Cuyahoga County, through agreements with local communities, state dollars, and special grants. The primary work efforts were delivered in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and numerous partners through conservation education, storm water pollution prevention and the SWCD's comprehensive watershed programs. Cuyahoga SWCD programs strive to promote current best management practices and the benefits of soil and water resources protection within Cuyahoga County, as well as within the Northeast Ohio region.

The 2013 conservation education theme "Taking Root for Clean Water" was the focus of this year's work effort. Working through cooperative agreements, the Cuyahoga SWCD assisted 25 communities with their mandated Clean Water Act requirements. The Cuyahoga SWCD offered specialized conservation education and technical assistance. This assistance, tailored to individual communities' needs, was provided on a voluntary and cooperative basis and resulted in a better understanding of conservation, environmental and pollution prevention and the implementation of best management practices that help reach clean water goals.

Cuyahoga SWCD was fortunate to receive a subsidy from Cuyahoga County that helped to expand the community outreach efforts throughout the county with creative new programs and technical assistance, including expanded partnerships with other county agencies, watershed

partners, and state and federal partners. Local volunteers and seasonal interns added to the productivity of the SWCD's programs.

The five elected Supervisors and four Associate Supervisors provided essential guidance to the SWCD, and none more important than the update to the Strategic Plan. Their input has helped to establish priorities for the next few years. Those priorities are to:

- Advocate for and provide urban soil and water conservation services and programs
- Achieve Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) targets for impaired local watersheds, as well as providing significant assistance in meeting the bi-national targets to be established for the conservation of Lake Erie
- Establish and maintain strategic alliances to advance soil and water conservation
- Expand the organizational capacity of Cuyahoga SWCD
- Increase community and stakeholder awareness of Cuyahoga SWCD.

### Conservation Education Program

The crux of the SWCD's Conservation Education Program is the implementation of the annual public involvement and public education program for 25 communities that assists those communities with their requirements under the Clean Water Act. Throughout the year, District staff promoted the message about how trees and plants, from their rain-intercepting canopies to their soil-stabilizing roots, naturally manage storm water, protect water quality, provide enhanced habitats for birds and pollinators and restore degraded urban and suburban soil systems. Programs, events, the SWCD's



#### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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#### DISTRICT STAFF

Janine Rybka  
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Claire Posius

*Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator*

Carla Regener

*Storm Water Specialist*

Amy Roskilly

*Conservation Education Specialist*

#### NRCS STAFF

Lynette Harmon

*District Conservationist*

Al Norwood

*Urban Conservationist*



*The Euclid Make-it-Take-It rain barrel workshop*

On the Land newsletter, plus other educational materials all highlighted the theme. Other storm water pollution prevention strategies were promoted through the still popular "make-it-and-take-it" rain barrel workshops, the hands-on Green Cleaning workshops and the Composting workshops held in collaboration with the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District.

## 2013 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS 2013 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Rounding out the year was the popular "Taking Root for Clean Water," event at the West Creek Watershed Stewardship Center. Sponsored by the Northeast Ohio Public Involvement Public Education (NEO-PIPE) work group, the event attracted 128 participants from around Northeast Ohio for a fun and informative program about watersheds, storm water and the benefits provided by native plants and trees.

### Public Involvement

Talk may be cheap, but action is priceless! This year, more than 150 volunteers were actively engaged in activities such as the Big Creek Clean Up, storm drain stenciling in the Porter Creek watershed, native planting at Shaker Lakes, a rain garden project in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Parma Community School's Canon Envirothon Team. The Rocky River and Bay Village *Green Teams* also got involved in hometown environmental efforts.

### Conservation Crusader

Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state often work with each other to promote good conservation practices. The Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Northeast Ohio are especially active and supportive of providing unified and consistent messaging to the public.

One regional effort was the popular Conservation Crusader program, which promotes conservation messages and provides environmental tips through WKYC's weather personalities, the Live on Lakeside program and on the WKYC Weather Web Page. Cuyahoga SWCD staff contributed content material and appeared numerous times on Live on Lakeside, which is broadcast throughout the Northeast Ohio region. Live on Lakeside, along with the environmental information on the WKYC Weather Web Page provides information to diverse audiences in the region.



### Green Isn't Always Good

#### A Lake Erie Central Basin Initiative

Fortunately, the preponderance of harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie, last seen in 2011, was greatly diminished in 2013. The Lake Erie Central Basin Work Group, a collaborative work group of seven soil and water conservation districts, secured funding to develop a set of educational materials that explain why "Green Isn't Always Good." These materials, printed in English and Spanish, promote nutrient reduction strategies that can be employed at home and on public properties. The bookmarks, posters and brochures will be distributed in 2014 as part of a two-year initiative to further heighten awareness of how excess nutrients affect water quality, especially in Lake Erie.



Promoting and implementing nutrient reduction strategies was a hot

button issue throughout Ohio. To locally address the issue, the Cuyahoga SWCD teamed up with its conservation partners to further promote nutrient reduction in both the urban and rural areas. Two workshops were held in 2013. A nutrient reduction workshop was held for local officials in collaboration with the Western Reserve Resource Conservation and Development Council and Ohio Environmental Council. Cuyahoga SWCD also teamed up with the Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau to raise awareness about nutrient management issues with farmers in the four-county area.

#### The Four R's

Whether you operate a farm or care for your backyard, practiced the 4Rs to manage nutrient runoff and to help protect Lake Erie. When applying fertilizers remember:

- **Right fertilizer source** at the
- **Right rate**, at the
- **Right time** and in the
- **Right place!**

## Storm Water Pollution Prevention

As a non-regulatory public agency, the Cuyahoga SWCD Storm Water Program is focused on developing and implementing better methods to help guide planning, design, construction and maintenance of water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs). The SWCD's specialized technical education and assistance in the areas of soil quality, soil survey techniques, drastically-disturbed land rehabilitation, and repurposing distressed, urban lands for agriculture, urban forestry, and storm water management continue to play an important role in the county.

The increase in local development is apparent by the increase in the work performed by District staff. This year staff provided the following:

- Review of preliminary plans, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans, best management practice plans, farm and soil quality management plans - a record of 243 reviewed.
- 1,123 Comprehensive field reviews of active construction sites were conducted throughout the year.
- Staff also increased efforts in reviewing 655 water quality and water quantity basins throughout the county to help elucidate long term operations and maintenance (O&M) needs.
- Staff reviewed and provided guidance related to minimizing erosion for one timber harvesting plan.
- Rapid Field Assessments, which help identify soil conditions and soil quality rehabilitation needs, were conducted for the Cuyahoga County Land Bank, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Lee Harrison Farm (in collaboration with Mahoning SWCD), Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and as part of the long-term O&M reviews.



## 2013 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS 2013 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Landowner Assistance

Wet weather results in numerous calls to the Cuyahoga SWCD. District staff provided more than 154 hours of guidance to landowners on issues related to drainage, soils, erosion, flooding, and land protection of sensitive areas. Staff also provided on-site technical assistance to 43 landowners.

### Conservation Easements

The Cuyahoga SWCD holds conservation easements on 266 acres of land in 13 communities. These easements protect sensitive wetland and streamside areas. Staff conducted field inspections to ensure that the easements remain protected and in their natural state, and if not, the staff works with property owners to restore the areas affected by unapproved changes. Field inspections also provided opportunities to meet with landowners to explain the purpose of the conservation easements and the importance of protecting the land.

### Conservation Awards 2013

- Avon Standard, Cooperator of the Year
- Dorothy Hazel, Conservationist of the Year
- Joe Newman, Volunteer of the Year



### Seasonal Interns 2013

The 2013 interns provided assistance with research, stream monitoring and conservation education efforts, which succeeded in helping staff meet the annual program goals. Thank you!

**Wade Peerman, Special Projects**  
**Joe Higgins**  
**Maura Brett-Eiger**

### Watershed Programs

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, the staff seeks funding and works with partners to address impairments in their watersheds through special projects, ongoing environmental education programs and events.

Nasty weather may have wreaked havoc with the Euclid Creek Watershed Program's \$1.3 million Stream and Wetland Restoration project, but the project partners prevailed and the project was completed on time and under budget. Funded through a US Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant, the project created a 2.3 acre wetland and additional habitat along Euclid Creek, just upstream of Lake Erie in Wildwood Reservation. Hundreds of volunteers assisted in three planting efforts. In total, 150 trees, 950 live stakes, 710 small upland and wetland plants were planted.

#### Other Euclid Creek watershed highlights include:

-West Creek Conservancy was awarded a Clean Ohio grant and arranged in-kind donations of nearly \$13,000 and provided valuable assistance in regard to the land acquisition negotiations to protect an 8-acre forested property along Redstone Run in Richmond Heights. To further help preservation efforts, the Friends of Euclid Creek established a Land Conservation Fund and organized its first fundraiser for the Redstone Run property, raising \$13,500 in the first year. Last fall, 42 volunteers helped remove debris and planted 40 large trees and shrubs on the beautiful property on this headwaters tributary to Euclid Creek's east branch.



*Richmond Heights High School students help plant trees at the Redstone Run site planting day last October.*

-Tagging on to this year's "Taking Root for Clean Water" theme, watershed efforts included planting 150 trees along Claribel Creek in Richmond Heights.

### Native Plant of the Year Campaign 2014

Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership for Biodiversity (LEAP) volunteers are in the fourth year of their annual regional native plant educational campaign. LEAP volunteers work with nurseries and landowners to promote widespread use of native plants. Native plants are better suited to our local environment usually perform better and attract many desirable birds, bees, butterflies and other beneficial wildlife. [www.leapohio.org](http://www.leapohio.org)

#### 2014 Plants of the Year

**Common Witchhazel**

**Black Gum**

**Foamflower**

Native plants also help reduce soil erosion, require less fertilizer and watering, promote native regional biodiversity, thrive in natural conditions and connect people to nature!



# CASH BASIS REPORT 2013

REVENUES	Special Fund
Local Government	\$538,141.00
State Government	\$353,503.00
Federal Government	
Gifts & Contributions	
Sale of Products/Materials	
Rentals	
Farm Harvest Income	
All Other Revenue	
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$891,644.00</b>
DISBURSEMENTS	
Salaries	\$433,797.00
Supplies	\$9,622.00
Equipment (auto, computers)	\$5,994.00
Contract Services (rent)	\$16,632.00
Rent	\$18,000.00
Training & duty related travel	\$5,276.00
Advertising & Printing	\$706.00
PERS	\$60,716.00
Worker's Compensation	\$1,533.00
Unemployment Compensation	\$.00
Hospitalization/flex benefits	\$118,082.00
Medicare	\$6,151.00
Product/Materials for Resale	
Reimbursement-State Refunds	
Other (postage, insurance, indirect, phone, internet, publications, dues, meetings)	\$37,242.00
Net transfers to Special Fund	
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$713,242.00</b>

## Water in Your Yard?

### Homeowner Tips for Better Drainage

In Cuyahoga County's very urban environment, water moves quickly across the hard surfaces of our homes, parking lots and lawns as it seeks a path of low resistance and the lowest points on its (eventual) way to Lake Erie. During heavy rains, the land, the pipes and the streams can quickly get overloaded causing the water to back up in streets, yards and basements. Unfortunately, some drainage issues may require professional solutions, such as drains or extensive landscaping. Some of the following options may provide the relief you need:

- ◆ Keep gutters clean
- ◆ Check and clean your downspouts
- ◆ Keep road ditches, swales and culverts free of debris
- ◆ Improve the soil for better infiltration or create a rain garden
- ◆ Grade your property away from your home, but not onto your neighbor's property (check with your city engineer)
- ◆ Storm sewers are only for storm water - make sure they are free of sediment and debris. If not, inform your city's service department

## Tree Trimming, Urban Wildlife and Biodiversity



Biodiversity of flora and fauna and the importance of our urban forests is a timely topic. The ability to enhance and restore the natural environment has many wonderful benefits, including benefits for urban wildlife.

SWCD Storm Water Specialist, Eric Lance has a special interest in wildlife ecology and he reminds us that, in the urban environment, trees are an important source of food and shelter for wildlife, especially in the spring. He also notes that while most animals nest in the spring, some species may also have broods in mid-summer and they count on urban forests to provide food and shelter.

Since spring and summer are also prime times for pruning and landscaping. Here are some considerations for the health, safety and enjoyment of both man and animal:

- ◆ Before cutting the tree, take a look to see if there is wildlife already present or living there. If so give them a chance to grow up and move out before you start pruning. Some species of birds (especially raptors) nest in hidden tree cavities, so don't forget to check both limbs and trunks thoroughly before trimming or removing.
- ◆ If possible, trim trees in the winter months to completely avoid the possibility of damaging a nest. It's also a healthier time for the trees because the sap has gone down and trees will be in their dormant phase.
- ◆ Help promote biodiversity. Plant native plants!
- ◆ After the work is done, get outside and learn about what lives around you and more about how you can help conserve our rich urban biodiversity and species richness.



[www.cuyahogaswcd.org](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org)

# Euclid Creek Watershed News

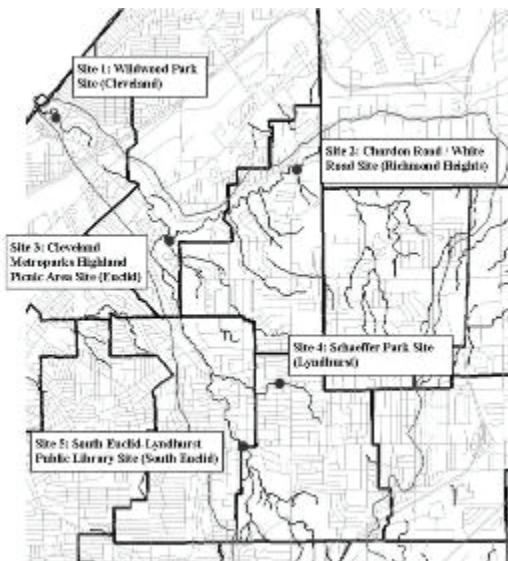
## HOW CLEAN IS THE CREEK?

In 2006, a group of local universities, agencies and watershed enthusiasts formed a citizen water monitoring program in Euclid Creek. Volunteers collect water quality data at five sites (see map below) within the Watershed to record changes in the waterways over time and to identify contaminants and problems in the watershed. Both chemical and physical monitoring is conducted at each site monthly, and over the years 27 volunteers have participated in the program, resulting in over 2000 observations about the creek.

Nutrient levels, turbidity, dissolved oxygen concentration, conductivity, temperature and pH are examined. The methods used are selected based on guidelines provided by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). An analytical review of the data has just been released in a volunteer monitoring program update report.

Findings show that water quality is not meeting OEPA standards due to urban development in the watershed and polluted storm water runoff getting into our creeks and streams. Since Euclid Creek is composed of over 50% residential land use, homeowners can positively impact the health of the Creek.

- ◆ Nutrient levels (phosphorous and nitrogen) are high in the creek and can be reduced by using less fertilizer on lawns and by picking up pet waste.
- ◆ Conductivity levels from road salt are also very high in the creek and residents can help by reducing salt use or switching to safer alternatives. Many communities in the watershed have passed *sensible salt ordinances* to focus salting efforts strategically on intersections, hills and bends in roadways, thus reducing salt use and the impact on our waterways, while saving money.



## Final Planting in the Euclid Creek

*Volunteers plant wetland native species at newly restored Wildwood Park Wetland and Stream Restoration project site*



## UPCOMING WATERSHED ACTIVITIES

### Euclid Creek Watershed Council Meeting

Thursday, July 10, 8:00am-9:30am, Acacia Reservation-Cleveland Metroparks; Topic: Acacia Restoration Plans. rsvp required

### Rain Barrel Workshop & Compost Seminar in Richmond Heights

Tuesday, July 15, 6:30-8:30pm, Greenwood Farm, Richmond Heights. Registration required by July 7.

### Friends of Euclid Creek Monthly Meeting – Mid-Summer's Night Social @ the creek, Greenwood Farm

Wednesday, August 6, 6:30pm-8:30pm, 264 Richmond Road, Richmond Heights; Topic: Short meeting followed by tour of ecologically valuable riparian property

### Wildwood Stream and Wetland Cleanup

Saturday, September 20, 10:00am-noon, Wildwood Lakefront Reservation, Cleveland.

### Green Cleaning Workshop for Inside and Out in Mayfield Heights

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 6:30pm-8:00pm, Ross C. DeJohn Community Center; Workshop Cost: Free, but participants will have the opportunity to make two green cleaners to take home and try for \$10; Registration required by September 30.

For more information about Euclid Creek Watershed programs and events or to register, contact Claire Posius at 216/524-6580x16 or email [cposius@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:cposius@cuyahogawcd.org). Information can also be found on the Euclid Creek Watershed website.



# SAVE THE DATE

## Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District's 65th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Cuyahoga Valley Career Center

8001 Brecksville Road - Brecksville, OH



*Join us for a special "farm to table" event, with support from the Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau and the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center students who will create and serve appetizers made with locally-grown produce and vegetables.*

**Presentation by John M. Schlichter, Deputy Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture**  
 Conservation Heroes Recognition - Supervisor Election

With support from the Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau, NEO Restoration Alliance and local farmers

## SUPERVISOR ELECTION 2014

A Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor represents county residents in soil and water conservation and natural resources management. Supervisors set the District's policy, provide guidance to staff, and assist on projects. The Board consists of five supervisors who serve for three-year terms on a voluntary basis. Supervisors participate in monthly and special board meetings, and attend area and state meetings. This year, candidates will be nominated to fill two open positions. Potential candidates are expected to have experience relevant to the District's goals. The qualities of a potential supervisor include:

- Widespread knowledge of natural resources in the county
- Complement the existing make-up of the district board so that all geographic, educational, and land-use interests within the district are represented
- Leadership ability and willingness to share time and talent

The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates. Qualified residents, 18 years of age or older, may also petition to be on the ballot. Information about the petition process can be found at [www.cuyahogawcd.org](http://www.cuyahogawcd.org)

## ROCKY RIVER WATERSHED NEWS

Learn more about stream teams in Abrams Creek, Baldwin Creek, Plum Creek and the Upper East Branch, plus all of the activities, such as rain barrel workshops and stream clean ups, by logging onto the [MyRockyRiver.org](http://MyRockyRiver.org) website.

Coming soon: Annual Summer Picnic, Wednesday, July 23, 4 p.m. at the W.J. Green Lodge Picnic in the Cleveland Metroparks Mill Stream Run Reservation.

*Students from Mrs. Fredmonsky's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class at Brook Park Memorial Elementary School show off the results of their efforts during the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Berea Streamside Cleanup on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Over 40 volunteers helped clear trash from in and around Coe Lake, Baldwin Creek and the East Branch of the Rocky River.*



## ON THE LAND

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*Conserving land and aquatic resources in a developed environment through stewardship, education, and technical assistance.  
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# Soil Health Through the Seasons

**Tuesday, August 19, 2014**

**6:00pm - 8:00pm**



**Speakers:**

**Alec McClennan**, Good Nature Organic Lawn Care - "How to Naturally Manage Your Lawn"  
**Ann Brandt**, Walnut Creek Seeds, LLC - "Using Cover Crops to Optimize Soil and Control Weeds"

Free and open to the public! This program is for anyone interested in obtaining a chemical free lawn and optimizing soil health at their home, municipal lawn, landscapes, and gardens. Homeowners, landscapers, public officials, parks staff, community planners and economic development managers will all learn practical tips to improve soil and water quality in their community.

**Twinsburg City Hall - 10075 Ravenna Road - Twinsburg, OH**

To register, contact Linda Schneider at 330/722-9321.

**Each registrant will receive a soil test kit, cover crop seeds, and a bag of seed balls!**

Event hosted by the Northeast Ohio Public Involvement Public Education (NEOPIPE) work group with funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources/Division of Soil and Water Resources in cooperation with the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Campaign.