

# ON THE LAND

CUYAHOGA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
LEADING CONSERVATION IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE



Spring 2013

## Practicing the 4Rs

Local newspapers are calling attention to the frightening rise in harmful algae blooms in Lake Erie. The algae growth is so bad it is negatively impacting drinking water, as well as the fishing and boating industries.

The cause of the increased algae growth is excess nutrients running off the land during rain events.

Traditionally, spring is a good time to apply fertilizers. To help reduce the impact of excess nutrients running off into Lake Erie, consider testing your soil first. The Cuyahoga SWCD has found that many of the soils in the county already have high levels of phosphorus. Applying more than the plant needs is a waste of money and leads to issues in Lake Erie. If you decide to use a fertilizer, then consider these tips:

- Do a soil test to determine what you grass or garden needs.
- 1) Select low or no phosphorous. Apply a product with an N-P-K formulation of 26-0-3.
- 2) Choose fertilizer that has "lawn or turf" on the label. "All purpose" formulations should be avoided for lawn use.
- 3) Read and follow label directions. Reduce spreader setting to that recommended on product label. Over application is not better!
- 4) Keep fertilizer off of walks and driveways to reduce loss to storm sewers and streams. Use drop spreader with deflector to keep fertilizer on lawn.

- 5) Mow lawn at the highest setting and leave the grass clippings, which are rich in plant-loving nitrogen on the lawn. Mowing high allows the grass to develop a deep root system that retains and uses water more efficiently.
- 6) Fertilize in spring after first cutting and in the fall after Labor Day and before Halloween. Only apply fertilizer when grass is growing enough to be mowed, and before dormancy.

### PRACTICE THE 4RS

The right source  
The right rate  
At the right time of year  
In the right place!

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### 15th Annual Big Creek Clean Up

June 1 at 9:00 a.m.

#### Annual Rocky River Clean Up

June 8 at 9:00 a.m.

#### Rain Barrel Workshop

June 25 - South Euclid

#### Rain Barrel Workshop

June 27 - Brooklyn

#### Rain Barrel & Compost Workshop

July 27 - Independence

#### Conservation Day and 64th Annual Meeting in Euclid Creek

Saturday, September 21  
Wildwood State Park

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

## Taking Root for Clean Water

### ***Did you know that trees provide many services beyond the beauty and curb appeal they lend to streets and properties?***

One of the most important benefits is the ability of trees to capture and hold storm water. This leads to a reduction in the volume of water rushing through the gutters and pipes following a storm. The result is less investment in expensive infrastructure (storm sewers) and cleaner water when the

runoff reaches rivers and lakes. Polluted urban storm water runoff (non-point source pollution) washes chemicals (oil, gasoline, road salts, fertilizers and other lawn chemicals) from hard surfaces, such as roadways and parking lots, into streams, wetlands, rivers and lakes. Drinking water, aquatic life and the health of our entire ecosystem can be adversely affected by this process.

**Trees act as mini-reservoirs, controlling runoff at the source.**

#### **Trees reduce runoff by:**

- Intercepting and holding rain on leaves, branches and bark.
- Increasing infiltration and storage of rainfall before it strikes the soil.
- Tree roots hold the soil in place and prevent sediment (another major component of non-point source pollution) from entering lakes and streams.





## CLEVELAND LAKEFRONT NATURE PRESERVE HAS RE-OPENED

The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority opened the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve on February 6, 2012, providing public access to this unique 88-acre urban wildlife habitat with beautiful lake and skyline vistas and wonderful birding opportunities.

When the Cuyahoga SWCD conducted the assessment of the 88 acre site, the results indicated that the site was safe for its intended use as a nature preserve. However, the assessment recommended capping a small area with high contaminant issues with clean soil.

This winter, soils from an active confined disposal facility to the west of the nature preserve were tested and re-used to cap the contaminated area. The work was completed in early April just in time for migratory bird season. The capped area will be seeded with a variety of native plants that will stabilize the soil and, once established, provide a restored habitat. There have been discussions about forming a stewardship program for the Nature Preserve to help with further habitat restoration efforts, which will provide opportunities for community volunteers to get involved.

The Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve is open daily, during daylight hours. Access to the Preserve is behind the Cleveland Lakefront State Park office at 8701 Lakeshore Blvd., east of Martin Luther King Drive.



## Noteworthy...

*According to the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, one percent of organic matter in the top six inches of soil can hold about 27,000 gallons of water per acre. Increasing organic matter increases the holding capacity for water making your land more resilient to extreme weather.*

## NRCS NEWS

Many people crave the taste of nutritious, fresh vegetables in the winter, longing for the return of warmer months and the next growing season. A hoop house, or high tunnel, can shorten the time without fresh produce because the area under the hoop house stays warm enough for plants to grow longer.

Hoop houses benefit the environment too. The plants grown in a hoop house need fewer pesticides and nutrients, which improves plant health and soil quality. Growing and consuming food locally improves air quality by decreasing fuel use for transportation.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Cleveland High Tunnel Initiative helps urban farmers and gardeners purchase hoop houses if they own or lease land in the Greater Cleveland area.

To apply for a hoop house, contact Urban Conservationist Al Norwood at 740-396-2519 or 216-524-6580, ext. 21. He will assist interested applicants through the application process.

## GARDEN KITS FOR SALE

Garden Kits come ready-to-plant! Each Garden Kit contains 32 plants of 10-12 different native species grown in a deep-cell tray. Kits are grown through Ohio Prairie Nursery.

Rain Garden (Sun)  
Rain Garden (Shade)  
Hummingbird/Butterfly (Sun)  
Monarch Café Garden

\$105/each

(one kit contains plants for approximately 100 sq. ft. of garden)

Call 216-524-6580, ext. 22



### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Patricia Carey  
Fred Cash, Sr.  
Kevin Kubovick  
Keith Linn  
Ruth Skuly, Chair

### DISTRICT STAFF

**Janine Rybka**  
*District Administrator*

**Jared Bartley**  
*Rocky River Watershed Coordinator*

**Brent Eysenbach**  
*Natural Resources Specialist*

**Todd Houser**  
*Storm Water Program Manager*

**Gloria Kestranek**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Shannon Mullins**  
*Storm Water Specialist*

**Claire Posius**  
*Euclid Creek Watershed Coordinator*

**Amy Roskilly**  
*Conservation Education Specialist*

**Lisa Vavro**  
*Storm Water Specialist II*

**Al Norwood**  
*Urban Conservationist, NRCS*

**Scott Kenreich**  
*District Conservationist, NRCS*

## Habitat Stewards can assist with your backyard!

National Wildlife Federation Habitat Stewards are trained and ready to serve as mentors in their communities, working to create landscapes that provide a welcoming home for wildlife. The Habitat Stewards have been trained on subjects such as butterflies, bird migration, pollinators, the current status of wildlife habitat in our country, site planning and habitat design. Call 216/524-6580, ext. 22 to find out how a Habitat Steward can help you!

# 2012 ANNUAL REPORT 2012 ANNUAL REPORT



## Conservation Efforts

Cuyahoga SWCD was established in 1949. The SWCD, which operates under Ohio Revised Code 1515, is governed by five locally-elected supervisors who serve on a voluntary basis.

The Cuyahoga SWCD's primary work efforts are focused on conservation education, storm water pollution prevention and watershed programs aimed at water quality improvements. Funding is received from local communities, Cuyahoga County, the State of Ohio and project grants. This year's highlights include:

- ◆ 266 acres of sensitive habitat lands are held in conservation easements
- ◆ 52 workshops and training sessions were provided for teachers, storm water professionals and civic leaders
- ◆ 67 public involvement and education programs, such as stream clean ups and school programs, were organized
- ◆ 68 community education and presentations were delivered
- ◆ A Lake Erie Central Basin Work Group was established to implement a regional pollution prevention program
- ◆ Cuyahoga SWCD was publicized in print and electronic media over 35 times
- ◆ The NRCS Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative provided funding to support urban agricultural programs
- ◆ Assessing soils, our *brown infrastructure*, and improving soil health aided urban agriculture and storm water pollution prevention efforts

More than 70,000 county residents were directly served through Cuyahoga SWCD's initiatives and technical assistance.

## Conservation Education and Public Involvement

The 2012 outreach strategy was "Household Habits for Healthy Waters—Clean Storm Water Starts at Home." Our programs included messages about how basic household objects, such as cleaning products and pet waste, can impact water quality. Workshops were held to promote and encourage money-saving, watershed-friendly lawn and landscape practices. General watershed education about how our actions on the land directly affects the quality of our water were conveyed to the public through workshops, presentations, newsletters, Facebook and website postings, public events, banner messages and educational materials that were distributed throughout the county.

Cuyahoga SWCD held twenty-six rain barrel workshops in 2012. These popular "make it and take it" workshops got citizens involved in preparing their rain barrel—and provided an opportunity to qualify for storm water credits from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District.

This year the second rain barrel art program was held. Local artists painted twenty-one barrels that were then displayed in various locations and later auctioned to the public. Proceeds from the auction helped to support financial scholarships for students attending the Ohio Forestry Camp.



## Storm Water Program

Cuyahoga SWCD staff provides guidance on better planning, design, construction and maintenance of water quality best management practices (BMPs) and soil quality improvements based on Clean Water Act responsibilities and Federal Farm Bill programs. To achieve these goals the staff works with builders, designers, contractors, elected officials, local government staff and landowners to improve implementation of good erosion and sediment control and post construction water quality BMPs.

In addition to reviewing storm water pollution prevention plans, providing comprehensive field reviews and assisting landowners, the staff initiated the popular Tool Box Talks. These lunchtime seminars featured local businesses that offer recommended materials and services that can be used before and after construction to aid in water quality protection.

There were 170 storm water pollution prevention plans reviewed and 1,195 comprehensive field reviews done in 2012, which helped to insure that construction sites were in compliance with the storm water rules.

Soil health was another program focus in 2012. Healthy soil provides wonderful habitat, better growing conditions, and helps to absorb and filter polluted storm water. Staff provided assistance to the Cuyahoga County Land Bank by assessing soils on vacant properties and also provided assistance related to re-purposing urban soils for agriculture. Information about the benefits of utilizing cover crops was presented at the summer Conservation from the Ground Up workshop and the SWCD is conducting a field test outside of its office in Valley View.



# 2012 ANNUAL REPORT 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

## **Euclid Creek Watershed Program**

Initiated in 2002, the Euclid Creek Watershed Program continues to provide programs and services to the communities within the watershed. Working with the diverse group of committed stakeholders that includes the Euclid Creek Watershed Council, Friends of Euclid Creek, the Cleveland Metroparks, local colleges, the communities and their residents, the program's successes in 2012 included:

- ◆ Ongoing citizen-volunteer stream monitoring at five sites and updated water quality information posted on the web
- ◆ Six rain barrel workshops and a composting workshop held jointly with the Cuyahoga Solid Waste District
- ◆ The first *Green Cleaning for Inside and Out* workshops were held in Highland Heights and South Euclid
- ◆ Stream and lakefront clean ups and invasive plant pulls were coordinated as well.

Most of the construction for the Euclid Creek wetland restoration project in Wildwood State Park, which was funded through a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant, was completed. Volunteers assisted in planting native vegetation with additional work done in April and May of 2013.



The watershed program was also engaged in efforts to support two ecologically sensitive properties: One in Highland Heights and one in Richmond Heights. Funding from the Natural Resources Assistance Council will help protect the beautiful Richmond Heights property. All watershed efforts are supported with funding from the watershed communities, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Ohio EPA, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Soil & Water Resources and project grants.

## **Rocky River Watershed Program**

Initiated in 2007, the Rocky River Watershed Program continues to provide programs and services to the communities within three of the watershed's counties. Watershed stakeholders include the Rocky River Watershed Council, Medina and Lorain SWCDs, Cleveland Metroparks, local colleges, the communities and their residents. The program's successes in 2012 included:

- ◆ Water Resources Restoration Sponsorship Program funding was used for the removal of three low head dams on Baldwin Creek, to facilitate better access to fish and help to improve water quality
- ◆ Water quality data, generated by the stream monitoring program and funded through a Coastal Management Assistance Grant, provided information for the development of protection and restoration plans for Plum Creek watershed in Medina County and the Upper East Branch watersheds in Medina County
- ◆ The Ohio Environmental Education Fund provided funding for the development of a watershed-friendly stream maintenance guidance manual to assist communities in addressing stream maintenance concerns.

Both the Euclid Creek and Rocky River watershed programs implemented public involvement and public education programs to assist communities in meeting their Clean Water Act requirements. As part of that effort, numerous programs and events, such as the rain barrel workshops and three river clean ups, were sponsored by the watershed program, which attracted more than 750 people, ranging from students to municipal staff, to Rocky River watershed programs to learn about water quality and watershed health.

Rocky River watershed efforts are supported with funding from the watershed communities and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Soil & Water Resources and Coastal Office and project grants from ODNR, Ohio EPA and the Great Lakes Commission.

## **Staff Time Allocated to Projects and Initiatives**

- Administrative & Funding-Overall administrative duties, funds development and reporting (14%)
- BMP Implementation (technical program)-Assistance to communities, including plan and field reviews, on-site compliance assistance and training, development and redevelopment projects and special land-based initiatives (38%)
- Public Involvement & Public Education-Individual community education programs, speaker's bureau, workshops and activities to engage the public (7%)
- Watershed Program Implementation-Project planning and watershed action plan implementation (27%)
- County-Wide Program Implementation-Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve, conservation easements, landowner assistance, county-wide educational programs, events, materials and services, other watershed technical assistance and GIS mapping (8%)

## **Read more.....**

**To view the entire  
2012 Cuyahoga SWCD  
Annual Report go to:**

**[http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/  
resources-publications.htm](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/resources-publications.htm)**

## 2012 Conservation Awardees

Al Penko, Conservationist of the Year

Heather and Andrew Blonsky, Volunteers of the Year

Steve Warner, Cleveland Heights High School,  
Educator of the Year



## Board of Supervisors 2012

Ruth Skuly, Chair

Fred Cash, Vice Chair

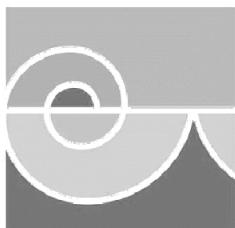
Patricia Carey, Secretary

Kevin Kubovcik, Fiscal Agent

Keith Linn, Central Basin Project Liaison

## Associate Supervisors 2012

Kathleen Bradley, Dorothy Hazel,  
Tom Marsalis and Jim Weber



Cuyahoga  
Soil and Water  
Conservation  
District

## Cash Basis Report 2012

REVENUES	DISTRICT FUND	SPECIAL FUND
Local Government		373,173
State Government		305,000
Federal Government		
Sale of Products/Materials	20,841	
All Other Revenue- grants, interest, services	1,498,006	
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>1,518,847</b>	<b>678,173</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries		405,498
Supplies (office & program supplies)	4,096	2,137
Equipment (auto, computers)	2,010	6,116
Contracts for Services	1,022,779	18,642
Rental (office)		18,000
Travel Expenses (staff, board training)	1,297	3,584
Advertising & Printing (newsletter)	1,576	736
PERS		56,706
Worker's Compensation		2,779
Unemployment Compensation		2,424
Hospitalization		92,856
Medicare		
Product/Materials for Resale	19,698	
Other (postage, printing, county indirect fees, insurance, phone, internet, dues)		
	23,811	21,987
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>1,075,267</b>	<b>\$637,220</b>
<b>Total Receipts Over/(Under) Expenses</b>		
	443,580	\$40,954

Cuyahoga SWCD board and staff thanks all of its funders and conservation partners for their support. Funding for SWCD services was provided in part by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Soil & Water Resources, Cuyahoga County, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and local municipalities. Projects were supported by grants from the Great Lakes Commission, Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation, Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Ohio EPA, ODNR-DSWR, US EPA- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and project grants.

*Cuyahoga SWCD is an equal opportunity employer and provider.*

# Euclid Creek Watershed News

## Wildwood Wetland and Stream Restoration Project Update

The Wildwood Wetland and Stream Restoration Project located in Wildwood State Park in Cleveland is almost completed. Volunteers have planted over 2,700 native plants from small plant plugs to dormant native tree cuttings called 'live stakes', to wetland plants harvested from nearby Singer Lake Bog in Summit County. A group of Hawken School 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, volunteers from the neighborhood, Friends of Euclid Creek, Arcelor Mittal employees, and West Creek Watershed Stewardship Center volunteers participated in two planting events held in September and November. The goal is for these native plants to thrive and outcompete the invasive plants in order to provide a more diverse habitat for wildlife, birds and butterflies.

Within the stream channel, several stream bank bends were stabilized and the main channel was diverted so that water during normal flow moves through the secondary oxbow channel (now the main channel), but in storm events, water flows over the diversion channel and the entire wetland area, functioning like a floodplain. As luck would have it, the project was put to a major test when Hurricane Sandy sent raging waters through the project site in early November. The project area held up amazingly well, allowing the waters to flow into the wetland complex and over the diversion channel with minimal damage.

A public celebration of the project is taking place on Wednesday, July 10th from 5:00pm-7:00pm at the Wildwood Pavilion.

The latest information can be found on the Project Website at: [www.cuyahogaswcd.org/EuclidCreekFiles/EC\\_LacustrineRefuge.htm](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/EuclidCreekFiles/EC_LacustrineRefuge.htm).

*This project is funded through a USEPA - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant.*

## Native Plant of the Year Campaign 2013

Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership for Biodiversity (LEAP) volunteers have been in the third 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.

Visit [www.leapohio.org](http://www.leapohio.org) for more information.

## Land Conservation Opportunities

The Friends of Euclid Creek in partnership with the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District (Cuyahoga SWCD) and the West Creek Conservancy is actively fundraising to protect two sensitive properties in the Euclid Creek Watershed.

Good News! Clean Ohio Funds were received for the purchase of a beautiful wooded property on the East Branch of the Creek in Richmond Heights. However, additional funds of \$9,000 are needed to help with the final closing costs, survey, and land stewardship fees and \$11,000 is needed to cover maintenance costs.

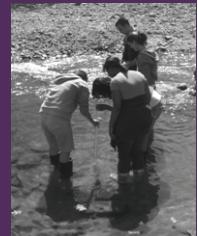
Please consider sending a donation earmarked for this conservation project. Friends of Euclid Creek; P.O. Box 21384, South Euclid, 44121.

To donate online, go to the following website: [http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/EuclidCreekFiles/FriendsofEuclidCreek\\_Support-Us.htm](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/EuclidCreekFiles/FriendsofEuclidCreek_Support-Us.htm) (and click on Donate button)

## Euclid Creek Volunteer Opportunities

### Become a volunteer monitor! Anyone can do it!

Have fun learning about the creek and help collect data vital to better understanding conditions in Euclid Creek.



### Rain Barrel Workshops are scheduled at a location near you.

### If you are looking for other volunteer opportunities in the Euclid Creek watershed, visit:

[www.cuyahogaswcd.org/EuclidCreekFiles/EuclidCreektheHomepage.htm](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/EuclidCreekFiles/EuclidCreektheHomepage.htm) and click on the *Get Involved/Watershed Resources* tab on left side.

Or contact: Claire Posius, Watershed Coordinator  
216-524-6580 x16 or at [cposius@cuyahogaswcd.org](mailto:cposius@cuyahogaswcd.org)

### The native plants chosen for 2013 include:

- ◆ **Swamp Milkweed**-an important food source for monarch butterflies
- ◆ **Northern Bayberry**-the highly fragrant fruit provides winter interest in the landscape
- ◆ **Switchgrass**-A good alternative to non-native perennial grasses.



# Rocky River Watershed News

## Baldwin Creek Dam Removal Project Update

The first phase of the Baldwin Creek Dam Removal and Fish Passage Restoration Project is now complete! Located in Berea and funded through the Ohio EPA's Surface Water Improvement Fund and Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program, (WRRSP), the initial project removed three low-head dams, restoring fish passage to the lower mile of Baldwin Creek. The City of Berea, Cleveland Metroparks and the Rocky River Watershed Council also partnered on the project.

The obsolete dams impeded fish passage in Baldwin Creek, preventing it from meeting Clean Water Act goals for its fish community. In addition to removing the dams, rock riffle structures were installed along the project reach to improve in-stream habitat and maintain the stability of the creek channel.

A fourth Dam located upstream on Baldwin Creek is the final major barrier to fish passage. Its planned removal in 2013 will restore fish passage to the entire Baldwin Creek sub-watershed!



## 2013 Rocky River Cleanups Get Your Feet Wet!

Removing trash from the rivers, streams and floodplains of the Rocky River Watershed is one of the most direct acts of stewardship that any one can do. Please join us in your corner of the watershed for a clean-up this spring!

June 8 – Rocky River (Main Stem) Cleanup  
July 27 – Champion Creek Cleanup

Check out [www.MyRockyRiver.org](http://www.MyRockyRiver.org) for complete details.

Groups should pre-register by contacting Jared Bartley at 216-524-6580, ext. 14 or by email at [jbartley@cuyahogaswcd.org](mailto:jbartley@cuyahogaswcd.org).



## SUPERVISOR ELECTION 2013

Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors represent county residents in the 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, assist with programs and attend area and state meetings. This year, candidates will be nominated to fill one open position. 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  
<http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org/2013ConservationDay.htm>

## Cuyahoga SWCD Conservation Day

**Saturday, September 21, 2013**

**9:00 a.m. - Noon**

**Wildwood State Park Pavilion**

**Visit the restoration of a wetland island, participate in activities, build a rain barrel, pull invasive plants, and vote in the Supervisor Election.**

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

## ON THE LAND

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**Conservation**  
District

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*Conserving land and aquatic resources in a developed environment through stewardship, education, and technical assistance.  
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## Earth Partnership for Schools Schoolyard Enhancement Workshop

**Join us for a week long workshop using the outdoors as an educational tool to learn about native ecosystems and how you can transform your schoolyard into a learning lab.**

**July 29 - August 2, 2013: 9 a.m. – 3p.m.**

**Fee: \$150** Includes all instruction, materials and lunch on Monday and Friday  
(materials include the Earth Partnership for Schools: K-12 Curriculum Guide )

Two graduate credits will be available from Ashland University

Interested in teaching your students about sustainability, biodiversity, pollution prevention and what they can do to improve water quality?

Do you want interdisciplinary, hands-on lessons, project-based learning and research practices?  
This workshop uses the outdoors as an educational resource. You will visit project sites to learn about native ecosystems and how you can transform your schoolyard into a learning lab.

Offered through the Great Lakes Earth Partnership RESTORE Institute with area partners:  
**Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, National Park Service and  
Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District.**

For more information or to register, please contact [Cdages@forcvnp.org](mailto:Cdages@forcvnp.org) or call 330-657-2796 x 100