

W I N T E R 2 0 2 3



SUMMIT
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Summit SWCD's Quarterly Newsletter



Photo Credit: Summit SWCD

When it rains, it pours! Give stormwater a place to be stored.

STEPHANIE DEIBEL, WATERSHED COORDINATOR

We are excited to announce that we've partnered with Copley Township to "Slow it down, Spread it out, Soak it in" by installing a rain garden near the intersection of Copley Road and Collier Road. The installation of this rain garden will provide a low laying, depressional area to collect and temporarily store stormwater runoff. This retention of stormwater allows the runoff to slow down and soak into the ground, reducing the amount of runoff traveling downstream.

Project implementation will begin in spring of 2023, with several opportunities for residents to participate in the planting and maintenance of the raingarden. Project updates and events will be posted on our webpage and social media. Special thanks to Dominion Energy and Western Reserve Land Conservancy for making this project possible by selecting us as one of their 2022 Watershed Mini Grant awardees.

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Furnace Run Watershed

NICHOLE LOPEZ, WATERSHED COORDINATOR

Did you know that you live in a watershed? In fact, everyone does. A watershed is an area of land where water collectively drains, such as a river, stream, or lake. In Summit County, we are a part of over 20 different subwatersheds, delineated by baseline drainage boundaries. It is important to maintain or improve the integrity of our local watersheds as they provide economic, environmental, and social benefits for our community.

Earlier this year, Summit Soil & Water Conservation District began to lead the initiative in the Furnace Run subwatershed to establish water quality protection efforts in the area. After hours of research, meeting with stakeholders, and drafting a nonpoint source pollution implementation strategic plan, the future of Furnace Run is looking very merry and bright.

If you are unfamiliar with the Furnace Run watershed, it originates in Brecksville and Broadview Heights in Cuyahoga County and drains all the way down in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, in the southern border between Boston Township and the city of Cuyahoga Falls. With a main stem length of 10.4 miles, it passes through Village of Richfield, Richfield Township, Bath Township, and Boston Township. The total drainage area of the Furnace Run watershed is 20.34 square miles and it is one of the healthiest, most intact streams that flow into the Cuyahoga River.

In 2023, we will continue to work with communities and local agencies to manage the Furnace Run watershed and protect its water resources. Keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities as we expand our stream monitoring program and schedule clean up events in the area. Feel free to reach out to my email at nlopez@summitoh.net if you have any questions.

Please Welcome Our New Team Members

Brandon Andresen - Stormwater Specialist

Brandon spent over 19 years at Jefferson SWCD overseeing the Jefferson County & Others MS4 Stormwater Group and 3 years at Allegheny County Conservation District in Pittsburgh, PA reviewing erosion and sediment control plans and doing site inspections.

Brandon graduated from The Ohio State University ATI with an Associates Degree in Environmental Resource Management. In his free time, Brandon enjoys spending time with friends, watching sports, listening to podcasts, outdoor recreation, and craft beer.



Claire Hardi - Outreach Specialist/AmeriCorps Service Member

Claire comes to us all the way from Arizona with an extensive environmental background. Claire is an AmeriCorps Member serving as the Outreach Specialist for SSWCD for the 2022-2023 service year.

Throughout her service year, she will be working closely with Sandy Barbic (Education Specialist) and Stephanie Deibel (Watershed Coordinator) to assist with and expand the office's ongoing outreach and education efforts. Claire has a BA in Art History & Museum Studies and a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from Northern Arizona University where she researched sustainable community development policy and best practices.

She enjoys hiking, yoga, listening to podcasts, going to local coffee shops, and is excited to try her first pawpaw while living in Ohio.



Bethany Fortune-Administrative Assistant

Bethany Fortune is Summit SWCD's new Administrative Assistant. She joined Summit SWCD in 2023 after 8 years at Ohio State University as a lab manager for their agricultural soil research lab. Her background is in Environmental Science with a BS from the University of Mount Union in 2014.

Her position at SSWCD is a mix of clerical and financial duties. This includes processing accounts payable, receivable, and payroll, and managing employee files and public records.

Off the clock, Bethany enjoys hiking, birding, renovating houses with her husband, and spending time with family and friends.



2022 Milkweed Pod Collection



Photos Courtesy of Debbie Romesburg

Sandy Barbic, Education Specialist

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District and the Summit County office of the Ohio State University Extension wish to give a hearty round of applause to all of you who so kindly collected milkweed pods in the fall, as part of the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI) program, including the City of Stow, who sponsored their own collection bin. We could hardly keep up with the responses and the pods. It is heart-warming to see how many people are interested in the life and welfare of a tiny insect with fragile wings that manages to fly some 2,500 miles to winter hibernation forests in Mexico.

Milkweed is necessary for the Monarchs to fuel up on nectar in the fall right before they migrate. The humble milkweed is the host plant for the caterpillars to eat when they hatch out of their chrysalis. Every milkweed that is planted will sustain many butterflies and other pollinators.

We just want you all to know that you are helping to save our planet, one Monarch butterfly at a time and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Your efforts show that some humans really care about the other creatures that share their environment with us and the world in which we all live.

For more information on the milkweed collection program, or other environmental topics, visit <https://www.sswcd.oh.net> or call 330-926-2452.



2023 Master Rain Gardener Courses

COURSE UPCOMING IN APRIL!

Train to be a Master Rain Gardener! Learn to design and install your own raingarden and be the raingarden expert in your neighborhood. Master Rain Gardeners help friends and neighbors to learn about, design, and plant raingardens.

Raingardens work with nature to collect and filter rainwater that runs off impervious surfaces like rooftops and driveways. Impervious surfaces lead to increases in surface runoff and often result in increased flooding and stream bank erosion. As water travels over impervious surfaces, it also has the potential to pick up pollutants. Polluted stormwater runoff enters our rivers and lakes and is one of the leading threats to water quality in the United States.

The Master Rain Gardener Program will teach you how to manage rainwater in your own yard. Raingardens naturally manage stormwater by infiltrating precipitation and allowing it to soak into the ground rather than sending it directly to storm sewers and nearby streams untreated.

We will have a virtual orientation meeting for the class on April 12, 2023, when we will also provide links to the online classes. The series of online classes will have weekly zoom meetings where we discuss the lessons. The first lesson will be discussed on April 19, 2023, and the last and final session will be May 17, 2023. For more flexibility, you may watch the classes at your convenience within the course timeline or later if you choose, since you will have access permanently. Summit SWCD will provide you with feedback on your weekly homework assignments and quizzes. Upon completion of the course you will receive your Master Raingardener certificate after you install your own raingarden or help to install or maintain a community raingarden as a volunteer.

Cost for the class is: \$25.00.

You may register for the class in March on our [website](#). Registration and payment should be in our office by April 5, 2023.

Please call 330-926-2452 for more information and any questions. We are grateful to Washtenaw County Michigan Water Resources Commissioner's Office, Cuyahoga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Chagrin River Watershed Partners for resources and assistance with this program.

2023 Area II Envirothon

HOSTED BY

HURON SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The 2023 Area II Envirothon will be held on April 26, 2023, at the Bronson-Norwalk Conservation Club, 295 Townline Road 151, Norwalk, Ohio, 44857. This year's event will be hosted by Huron County Soil and Water Conservation District.

What is the National Conservation Foundation – Area 2 Envirothon?

Envirothon is designed to stimulate and enhance interest in the environment and natural resources among high school students. A competitive outdoor team event, Envirothon offers a unique and enjoyable learning experience. Teams consists of 5 students, all from the same school. An adult advisor (or advisors) must accompany the team but is not permitted to assist the team during the competition. The Envirothon tests students' knowledge of soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology, and current environmental issues. The current environmental issue for 2023 is “Adapting to a Changing Climate”. In addition, Envirothon encourages cooperative decision-making and team building. While each student on an Envirothon team is challenged to contribute their personal best, the score that counts at the end of an Envirothon is the team score.

Five Area Envirothons are conducted around Ohio each spring. The top four teams from each of the Area competitions progress to the Ohio Envirothon in June held in a different part of the state each year. The top-scoring team in the Ohio Envirothon is eligible to compete in the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon, hosted by a different state or Canadian province every year. The 2023 National Conservation Foundation Envirothon will be held at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. For more information, go to: <https://envirothon.org/the-competition/current-competition/>

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 ecostations.

The Ohio Envirothon is financed by grants, donations from businesses and through contributions to the Don Rehl Memorial Envirothon Fund. Many local businesses also provide services and products in support of Area and Ohio Envirothons.

Teachers—check out your local SWCD's website for more information: Go to: <https://sswcd.summitoh.net/> for more information.



Photo Credit: OFSWCD

2023 Native Plant Sale

Summit SWCD regrets that due to unforeseen circumstances, we will not be holding a native plant sale this spring, but we hope to host a sale in the autumn. There will be many plant sales in our region facilitated by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, If you want to reach out to us at 330-926-2452, we will help you find a Soil and Water District near you that is featuring a native plant sale, including Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District, who will be using the same nurseries that we have been using traditionally as vendors for our native plant sales.

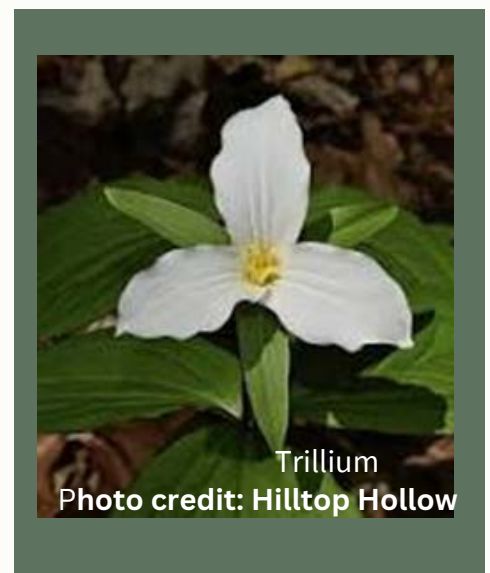
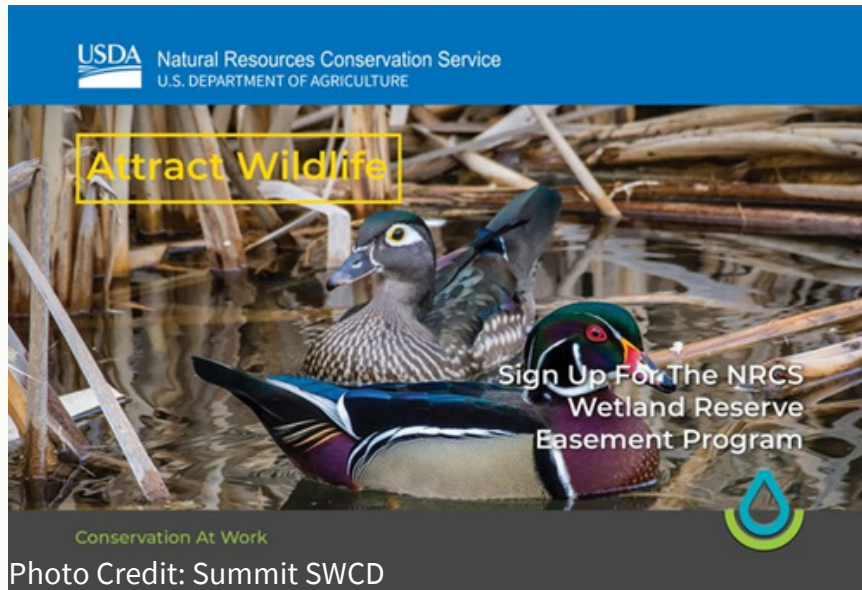


Photo Credit: Hilltop Hollow

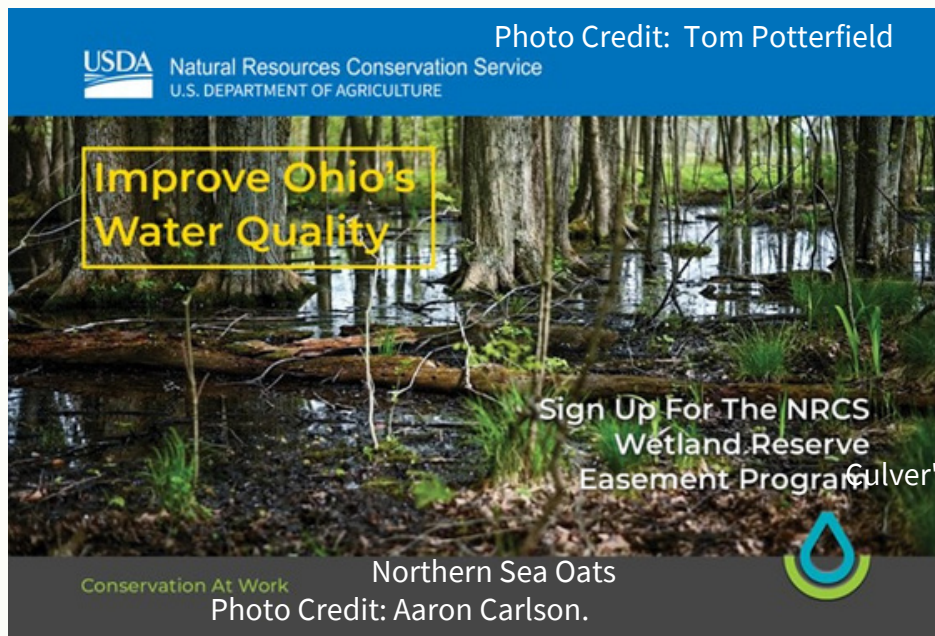
Photo Credit: Smith, R.W.

Wetland Reserve Easement Program



The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Ohio Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications from landowners interested in restoring, enhancing, and protecting wetlands with financial and technical assistance through the Wetlands Reserve Easement Program (WRE). The deadline to receive fiscal year 2023 funding is February 17, 2023.

Wetland Reserve Easements can help landowners protect land from development, restore critical wildlife habitat for outdoor recreation, and improve water quality by filtering sediments and reduce flooding. To find out more about this program, go to: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/wre-wetland-reserve-easements>.





Winter Salt Watch

One of the biggest environmental challenges that we face is the question of how to reduce the rainwater runoff that enters our surface and groundwaters due to increased development and impervious surfaces. Not only does this runoff cause flooding but it also carries pollutants that wreak havoc with our streams and the aquatic life in them.

Road salt, applied mostly in the winter, becomes a formidable pollutant because salt does not “disappear” after a storm event. Fish and bugs that live in freshwater streams can’t survive in extra salty water. According to study results from the Izaak Walton League, 118 million Americans also depend on local streams for drinking water. Water treatment plants are not equipped to filter out the extra salt, so it can end up in your tap water and even corrode pipes. The salt is also absorbed into the ground at the roadside where it can soak into the water supply or be washed into streams with every rain storm. Salt impacts roadside vegetation, by damaging and killing trees and other plants. Salt also causes corrosion of vehicles and metal infrastructure when it reacts with the metal.

Road salt is applied to road surfaces in the winter to disrupt the freezing cycle. Road salt works by lowering the freezing point of water through a process called freezing point depression. The salt (NaCl) breaks into its separate ions, Sodium and Chloride, in a small amount of water. The added particles make it more difficult for the water to freeze into ice, so it lowers the freezing point of the water. For road salt to work, there needs to be a small amount of liquid water. This is part of the reason why road salt is not effective in extremely cold weather when water would freeze too easily. When cold weather is forecast, it is common to pre-treat roads with brine, which is a solution of salt and water. This allows plows to remove ice and snow before it solidifies on the roadway. The application of the substances in the winter allows road crews to make the roads safer for winter driving.

Road salt replaced sand, which was used in earlier times to add grit to snow and ice to improve traction. Some communities used ashes as well. But in the spring, all that sand and ash needed to be swept off the roads and picked up, so it didn’t get washed into streams and lakes with the snow melt and spring rain. The search for alternative types of road salt has been going on for years. There are some substitutes available that use calcium, magnesium, or potassium, instead of sodium, but they all cost more up-front. The relatively inexpensive price of traditional road salt makes it the most popular choice.

Water Quality impacts from road salt in the winter have long been problematic but there are some ways we can work toward the solution. Besides reducing the amount of runoff with green infrastructure, raingardens, rainbarrels, and streamside plantings, we can help to reduce the amount of salt in the runoff. Here are some homeowner and business Best Management Practices:

Shovel early and often: When you remove snow manually you will need less salt and the de-icing material will be more effective. Begin as early as you can and keep up with the snowfall, (unless freezing rain is forecast to follow the snow) so the sun can get at the pavement or sidewalk and melt it away. You may not even need salt.

Reposition snow piles: Shovel away from paved surfaces if possible. Dump your shoveled snow onto nearby grassy or vegetated areas so that the snow melt will absorb into the ground, preventing runoff containing dissolved salt and other pollutants from entering the storm drains.

Apply only what's needed: Remember-One cup of road salt will de-ice 250 square feet or ten sidewalk squares. Sprinkle de-icing material on icy areas only and follow the manufacturer's instructions for working temperatures and application rates. Winter salt is most effective between 32 degrees F and 10 degrees F.

Apply protectively: Keep salt application away from any stormdrain, or where melted runoff can mix with salt and then flow into a stormdrain. Stormdrains lead directly to streams, rivers, and lakes.

Safe roads are very important to all of us, and we can achieve safety and still be more efficient and careful with our road salt. If we practice the best management practices, we can make a difference and improve conditions for ourselves and future generations.

For more information and to get the free Water Reporter app. for your phone, go to <https://www.iwla.org/conservation/water/winter-salt-watch> from the Izaak Walton League.

References:

Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies
IZAACK Walton League of America
Lake George Association
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Ullmann's Encyclopedia of Industrial Chemistry
U.S. Geological Survey





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Mission Statement:

Summit SWCD provides leadership and advocates for the stewardship of our natural resources and responsible land use through the provision of education, technical assistance, and partnerships in Summit County.

The Summit SWCD is an independent division of the Ohio Department of Agriculture and is funded by the State of Ohio, the Summit County Council, and the Summit County Communities for Clean Stormwater.

In order to provide equal employment opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions in the District will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The Summit Soil and Water Conservation District does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic to the extent protected by law.

Summit SWCD does not discriminate in services with regards to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic to the extent protected by law.

