

Main Article cont.	2
Franklin SWCD News	3
Get Involved!	4
Stormwater Awareness Week	5
Board of Supervisors' Election & Candidates	6
Annual Meeting Registration Form	7

Frankly Speaking

Annual Meeting

Celebrating Conservation Along The Olentangy River

The Olentangy River is a 97-mile long tributary of the Scioto River. Over 250,000 people live in the lower Olentangy in part of Delaware and Franklin County and that number is increasing. [Join us for our 77th Annual Meeting September 14th](#) at the Park of Roses shelter house to celebrate this Central Ohio waterway. Enjoy networking, pizza and a project area tour with Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed!



Photo of the Olentangy River by George Anderson.

Annual Meeting
Celebrating Conservation Along
The Olentangy River
Thursday, September 14th

Enjoy pizza, networking, and tours
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

at the Whetstone Shelterhouse at
The Park of Roses

3901 N. High St.
Columbus, OH 43085

A Growing County, Strong Partnerships, and Skilled New Staff Drive Urban Conservation Implementation



Urban Conservation Specialist Dave Reutter joins City of Dublin staff to review stormwater controls on a construction site.

If you've stopped by our office in the last year you've probably met at least one new staff person or heard about a new project! The District has recently created several new positions as our workload has grown. New positions on our Urban Conservation and Conservation Implementation teams reflect the District's ability to respond to conservation needs in Central Ohio.

In 2017 the District conducted 649 construction site inspections. Last year we conducted 1,243! The rise in these stormwater inspections stems from several factors, a significant one being Franklin County's rapidly increasing

Continued on next page

Board of Supervisors' Election

Three candidates are running for
two open seats.

**In-person and Absentee Voting at
our office**

August 16 - September 14

Main Article (*cont.*)

population. According to the MORPC 2024-2050 County Population Forecasts Central Ohio is on track to reach nearly 3.15 million residents by 2050 and is one of the fastest-growing large metros in the country, with Franklin County expected to absorb half of that growth. "This population growth goes hand in hand with increased development," notes Stormwater Field Technician, Annabel Spranger. Franklin SWCD's Urban Conservation team is responsible for construction site inspections that help prevent sediment erosion from entering waterways. Sediment erosion is the most significant source of pollution in Ohio's waterways. "Franklin SWCD is uniquely positioned as a SWCD to continue to expand into urban work," says Annabel. "From stormwater program management to



Stormwater Field Technician Annabel Spranger wades through a shrubby section of Hellbranch Meadows during a pre-construction survey.

construction site inspections we have a wide variety of experience within our urban staff which makes us the perfect fit for providing urban stormwater support to municipalities." And indeed, you will often find Urban Conservation team members using their array of skills to work toward our mission not only on construction sites, but also collecting native plants seeds at Hellbranch Meadows; organizing Stormwater Awareness Week; fixing hardware on an educational display; sharing that same display at an outreach event; or assisting other teams, like our Conservation Implementation team.

The Conservation Implementation team recently gained a new member, Emily Fouts to be our Conservation Specialist and AmeriCorps Coordinator. This position was created with the help of several partners to head up a team of AmeriCorps service members that will work across other local partner organizations. This team will help execute conservation practices all around central Ohio. The AmeriCorps project highlights Franklin SWCD's close ties to partners that have been a driving force behind several new projects. "FSWCD is unique because



Watershed Resource Coordinator Henry Stahl grabs litter from a tree at a volunteer event.

of our wide variety of strongly connected partners, both municipal and civic," explains Henry Stahl, Watershed Resource Specialist. Over the past year Henry, who joined Franklin SWCD in 2021, has worked on a variety of projects, including a NPS-IS (Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategies) Plan for the Duncan Run watershed with the City of Columbus Division of Watershed Management and fellow SWCDs in Licking and Delaware county, as well as leading the District's Conservation Mini-grant program. And the upcoming year promises even more new conservation projects. "I am very excited to work with the forthcoming Columbus Tree Coalition, led by our great partner Green Columbus," Said Henry. Like most projects that improve water quality, it's not just the rivers and streams that benefit. "Growing our tree canopy is so critical, as native trees help improve human health, community, equity, and biodiversity—all while reducing stormwater runoff, air pollution, and the urban heat island effect." Like Henry, the rest of the Franklin SWCD staff is preparing for the year ahead and looking forward to using their various skills to keep our water clean as our population grows!

Franklin SWCD News



Youth Education Team Introduces Water Quality Careers Through Lead the Way Learning

High school seniors in Ebony Harris's Science class at Horizon Science Academy High School participated in a 6-week long workforce development program focused on local watersheds, water quality and monitoring biological communities (macroinvertebrates) to determine stream/river health. We worked with local community partners throughout the 6-week long program so that these students had the opportunity to learn from and make connections with local professionals, which in turn will hopefully lead to future internship/job opportunities for some of these students within the environmental/natural resources field.



Hellbranch Meadows Is Under Construction

Construction has begun on part of the western side of our Hellbranch Meadows property! Through the H2Ohio Statewide Wetland Grant Program we will be restoring a wetland uphill of our previous stream and tributary restoration. The area was once part of a wetland, but it was drained using field tile so it could be planted as an agricultural field. This project will remove the tile and regrade the surrounding area to restore the water-holding capacity of the area, and it will be planted with native wetland plants to recreate habitat.



Donate to our Conservation Fund!

The purpose of our Conservation Stewardship Fund is to raise money for the implementation of conservation projects that improve water quality for the benefit of wildlife, recreation and drinking water.

To learn more or to start supporting on-the-ground conservation projects in Central Ohio,

contact (614) 486-9613 or visit franklinswcd.org/conservation-fund.

Get Involved!

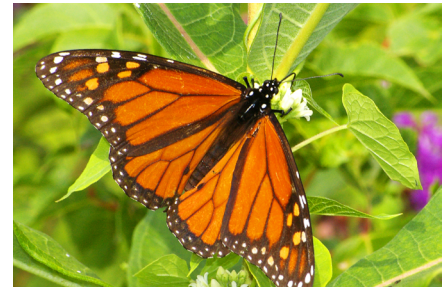
Volunteer to Promote Soil and Water Health in Central Ohio!

Franklin SWCD has identified areas of our programming that could use the support of volunteers with an interest in environmental stewardship. Opportunities include tree plantings, public outreach events, rain garden maintenance, invasive species removal and more! If you're interested in becoming a volunteer visit franklinswcd.org/volunteer-opportunities.



Annual Milkweed Collection

Monarch butterflies were recently classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. The [Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative](#) and Franklin SWCD are calling on Ohioans to help monarch migration by collecting Milkweed pods. Milkweed is the only host plant for Monarch butterfly egg laying and caterpillar rearing. It also serves as a food source for Monarchs as well as many other pollinator species. We'll be collecting seeds from September 1 (Most seeds in Central Ohio aren't ready until Mid-September at the earliest!) until the end of October.



- Before you collect seed, become familiar with common milkweed to avoid harvesting pods from similar plants such as dogbane and swamp milkweed.
- It's best to collect the pods when they are **dry, grey, or brown**. It is important to check this. If the center seam pops with gentle pressure, they can be harvested.
- Store the pods in paper bags; plastic bags collect unwanted moisture.
- Put the date and county collected on the bag when you turn them in.
- Keep the pods in a cool, dry area until you can deliver them to the nearest collection site. We will have a collection bin outside our office!
- Leave some pods (10-25%) on the plants so that seeds have a chance to naturally disperse and do their job as an important food source for milkweed bugs and other critters.





Participate in the 6th Annual Ohio Stormwater Awareness Week October 1-7!

Stormwater Awareness Week has grown into a statewide effort that encourages communities, and the groups that care about them, to utilize newsletters, social media posts, and educational events to raise awareness of how rain water moves through infrastructure and our environment. Ohio Stormwater Awareness Week will be taking place October 1-7, and to celebrate we will be working with partners to promote fun and educational events throughout the week. Learn more at franklinswcd.org/stormwater-week.

Example actions/events might include (but are definitely not limited to):



- Participating in community or neighborhood clean-ups.
 - Planting native trees & plants.
 - Keeping storm drains clear of debris like leaves and litter.
 - Constructing or maintaining a rain garden.
 - Mulching leaves on your grass to help soil conditions.
 - Encouraging a local business to become a Water Quality Partner.
 - Properly disposing of chemicals and hazardous waste.
 - Fixing car leaks.
 - Committing to always pick up and throw away pet waste.
 - Learning how to reduce winter salt usage.
 - Attending an educational workshop or tour.
- (See our Event Calendar for more details!)

Anyone can participate in Stormwater Awareness Week (municipalities, townships, schools, watershed groups, and more!). If you are interested in participating, contact your local municipality or visit franklinswcd.org/stormwater-week.

2023 Board of Supervisors' Election

Get to know the candidates. Additional election information can be found online:

www.franklinswcd.org/board-of-supervisors-election

In Ohio, Soil and Water Conservation Districts are administered by a board of five supervisors. Supervisors are elected to three-year terms in public elections conducted by the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Supervisors volunteer their time, energy and expertise. Our Board of Supervisors' public election will be open for absentee ballot submission, and in-office voting weekdays 8:30am-4:30pm starting August 16 until September 14, 2023.

The Board of Supervisors' Election is held in conjunction with our Annual Meeting. Below are the three candidates running for two open seats.



Kim Landsbergen

Kim Landsbergen is an ecosystem scientist, an educator, and an avid volunteer for the environment. An applied environmental scientist for over 25 years, Kim has over 10 years of experience serving the Franklin County Soil Water Conservation District: She volunteered as an Associate Board Member for FSWCD for over a decade, and joined the Board of Supervisors in Nov 2021. Kim is a Certified Senior Ecologist with the Ecological Society of America, which is the largest ecological professional organization in the world. She earned her M.S. from the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University, a Ph.D. in Forest Ecosystem Analysis from the University of Washington's School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, and a post-doctoral climate change fellowship at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. In the last twenty years, Kim has worked on applied research on Ohio's invasive species, forest ecology, soils, and urban ecology. Her interests in stormwater management, green infrastructure, ecosystem

restoration and increasing urban forest canopies intersect with the mission of the FSWCD. A Tennessean at heart, Kim moved to Ohio in 2001, and has been a resident of Franklin County for 15 years. In 2017, Kim was appointed to the Tree Commission for the Parks and Forestry Department of Upper Arlington, where she resides with her family. For the last nine years Kim has worked as an Associate Professor of Environmental Science at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio.



Erin Miller

Erin Miller is the Assistant Vice President of Energy Policy and Sustainability for American Municipal Power (AMP). Erin has been with AMP since 2017. In this role, she spearheads the organization's sustainability programs, manages the member-led Focus Forward initiative and associated electric vehicle sub-group, manages the organization's grant services program, and tracks renewable energy policies at the state and federal level. Previously, Miller served as the Environmental Steward with the City of Columbus for nearly eight years. In that role, she managed programs such as the Branch Out Columbus tree initiative, the GreenSpot program, and RecyColumbus. She has also occupied various positions with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), including Director of the Center for Energy and Environment as well as Greenways Program Manager, where she coordinated with various organizations and

agencies to develop and implement the Greenways Program and Greenways: A Plan for Franklin County. Prior to MORPC, Erin served as the Executive Director of the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW). She holds a bachelor's degree in ecology and environmental sciences from Otterbein University, has completed the Ohio Environmental Leaders Institute at the Ohio State University and also has attained the designation of LEED® Green Associate™ from Green Business Certification Inc. Miller currently serves on the American Public Power Association Smart Energy Provider Panel; the Smart Electric Power Alliance Program Advisory Committee; and the Large Public Power Council Emerging Trends Task Force.



Leigh Anne Ward

Leigh Anne received dual degrees from Capital University in 2000, a BA in art therapy and a BSW in social work with a focus on children and families. She is an advocate of using animal assisted therapy and horticultural therapy with children and families, especially those impacted by trauma and domestic violence. She developed a psychological research project for the Buckeye Ranch which was presented at the 2000 North American Riders for the Handicapped Association Conference. As a Linden resident, Leigh Anne became a community advocate in 2013, and co-founded the North Linden Community Watch and The Miracle Garden in 2014 to help address the need for food security and sustainability in at-risk communities. As Director of The Miracle Garden, she taught gardening in the Smart 2.0 Summer Program at the Millennium School through the Afrocentric Personal Development Shop. Also in 2014, she became a Clark County Master Gardener, helping with their seed trial plots and with the Farm Science Review. For the past 7 years she has been the Coordinator for the Community Cleanup Crew, a sentencing alternative for the Franklin

County Municipal Court, and managed the Ohio EPA Litter Management Grant which provided supplemental funding for the program. With the support of the grant, she focused on removing and recycling illegally dumped tires from public property throughout Franklin County. Leigh Anne was able to bring the Community Cleanup Crew to support cleanup and beautification projects with area commissions, block watches, civic associations, and environmental organizations such as the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, the Friends of the Alum Creek and its Tributaries, the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, Columbus Recreation and Parks, Metro Parks, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Prior to that she conducted product research for Kurtz Brothers and worked as a Landscape Enhancement Specialist.



2023 Annual Meeting Registration

You may also register online: franklinswcd.org/products/annual-meeting-registration

Join us for our 77th Annual Meeting and Board of Supervisors' Election, September 14th, 2023 at the Park of Roses. The event is open to all partners, communities, residents, and landowners so we can be "Celebrating Conservation Along The Olentangy River"! The evening will include networking, pizza, yard games, our conservation awards, and a tour of a Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed project area nearby.

You may also cast your vote for two members of the five-person, publicly elected Franklin Soil and Water Board of Supervisors. Election rules and both in-person and absentee voting information can be found on our website: franklinswcd.org/board-of-supervisors-election.

All proceeds from the annual meeting go to Franklin Soil and Water's Conservation Fund, which supports student, landowner and community conservation projects throughout the county.

Celebrating Conservation Along The Olentangy River September 14th, 2023 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Whetstone Shelterhouse at the Park of Roses • 3901 High Street Columbus, Ohio 43085

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Email: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Please indicate the number of Annual Meeting tickets requested:

Individual RSVP \$10 _____

(Please make check payable to Franklin Soil and Water) Total ticket cost: \$ _____

Additional Guests Attending:

Please mail by September 8th or call our office. Send form with payment or invoice request to:

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
1404 Goodale Blvd., Suite 100
Columbus, Oh 43212

☐ Please send invoice

If you are interested in sponsoring our Annual Meeting, contact our office at (614) 486-9613 or visit franklinswcd.org/products/category/sponsorships.



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August 2023

Frankly Speaking

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

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