



Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

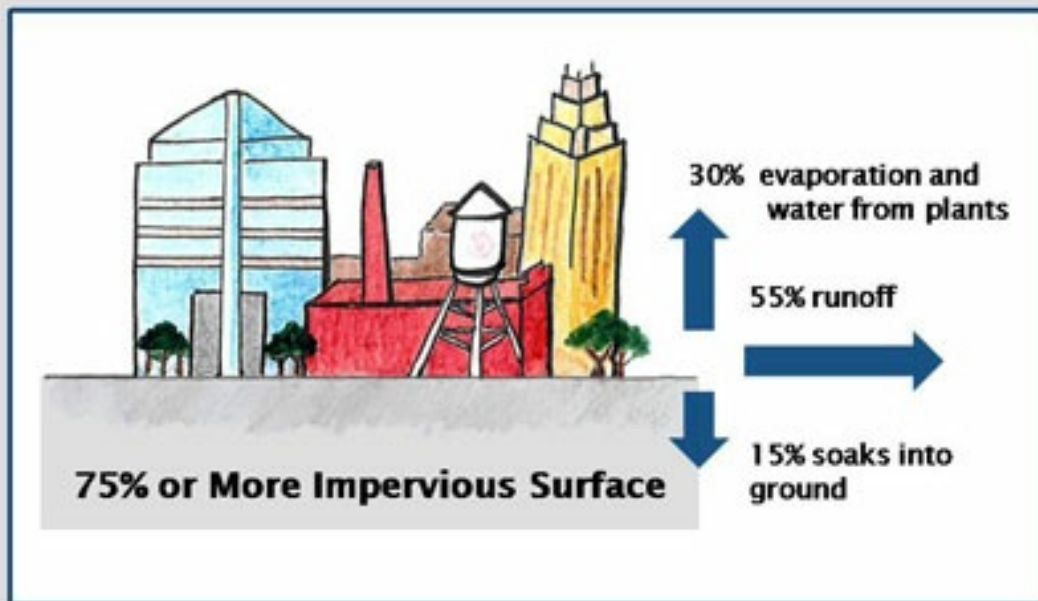
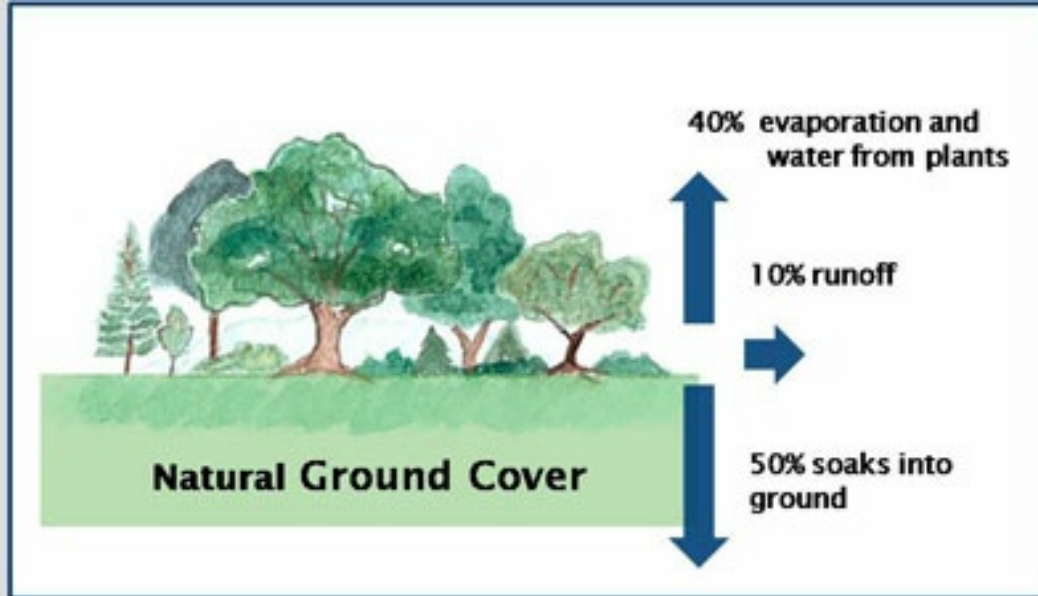
Creating Conservation Solutions for Over 70 Years

Backyard Conversation Connecting Community + Conservation

Welcome to the Backyard Conversation! Each month we'll be sharing a conservation topic from a more personal viewpoint for our readers. To make this successful, I want to hear feedback from you! I'll include a poll at the bottom regarding our topic and share links to some of our partner organizations with similar messages. So, let's get to it!

Urban Sprawl Meets Urban Conservation

Did you know that Columbus is THE [fastest growing metropolitan area](#) in the Midwest? Yes, that's right! The Columbus greater metro area has grown by more than 230,000 people in just ten short years from 2010 to 2020, which is a 12.2% increase. Sometimes it feels like there is constantly construction around us such as new housing developments and shopping plazas and more traffic. New business and housing developments can contribute a significant amount of sediment and erosion in our local watershed during the construction process. Furthermore, impervious surfaces like pavement and roofs cannot infiltrate stormwater like natural ground cover. As impervious surfaces continue replacing natural ground cover, we see more stormwater flooding and poor drainage in the rapidly developing and urbanizing areas.



How Stormwater Regulations Work in a Growing Metropolis

With more construction and development comes more stormwater runoff. Luckily, there are protocols and requirements in place to mitigate some of the effects. Under U.S. EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Ohio EPA's stormwater program, construction activities in the State of Ohio disturbing one or more acres of land are required to obtain a permit. Additionally, any construction activities located partially or totally in the Big Darby Creek Watershed and parts of the Olentangy River Watershed have additional permit requirements that must be met in order to protect these critical waterways.

The general construction permit authorizes construction activity to discharge stormwater into the watershed but applies certain requirements that must be met to prevent erosion and stormwater pollution. Each site must also have a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, often abbreviated as SWPPP or SW3P. The purpose of a SW3P is to identify where stormwater pollution discharge can happen and how the site is going to reduce or prevent the discharge. These stormwater requirements are necessary to protect our watershed and local sewer infrastructure.

Franklin Soil and Water provides many local municipalities in Franklin County [stormwater management services](#), from performing site inspections at construction sites to conducting NPDES required community outreach and SW3P reviews to installing stream inserts and other conservation projects. We are also available to provide technical assistance and guidance to local residents and landowners on stormwater issues such as poor drainage, erosion, and more. You can contact our office [here](#).

Urban Conservation for the Average Joe or Jane

Given that many Backyard Conversation readers are homeowners and not stormwater or construction professionals, let's talk about what residents can do for urban conservation! The best thing you can do for Franklin County's urban stormwater problem is to reduce your stormwater runoff from your property. Easier said than done, right?

Well, it's not as complicated as it sounds. Here's a few ideas to get you started.

- Install a rain barrel to capture and reuse rain water.
- Replace traditional turf grass with buffalo grass or ditch the lawn all together!
- Replace non-native plants with native plants.
- Install permeable pavement for driveways or parking areas.

The [City of Columbus has been installing pervious pavement](#) on residential streets, walkways, and even boat ramps! [Pervious or permeable pavement](#) can reduce stormwater flooding and erosion, and it can even reduce heat island effect as well. It sometimes [can be more expensive and labor intensive](#) to install than traditional asphalt or concrete, but it can certainly provide valuable stormwater runoff and drainage control as we continue to develop and urbanize in the fastest growing Midwestern city.

Already do these things anyway or don't have a yard? Spread the word to other residents! Let them know about our programs and about how they can be urban conservationists at home too. You can also advocate and get involved on the local level in conservation projects from community gardens to local parks to scouts projects. You can also encourage local government and businesses to invest in conservation projects.

COMMUNITY BACKYARDS GET \$50 FOR YOUR YARD!

Interested in implementing backyard conservation practices at your home?

Participate in our Community Backyards program! You can receive up to a \$50 rebate for a backyard conservation practice like a rain barrel, native trees/shrubs, or a compost bin, OR up to \$25 on native perennials. Take the online course or attend a live virtual workshop on Zoom to receive a voucher for a rebate. Please note, funding is limited and varies by community. Franklin County residents or those that live in a participating community are eligible. Please visit the [Community Backyards website](#) for a list of communities that participate and for more details. If you have any questions, please contact Franklin Soil and Water.

POLL TIME

Which of the following do you find most concerning regarding our rapidly growing metro area?

Stormwater runoff and pollution

Select

Loss of greenspace and habitat

Select

Air pollution and quality

Select

Urban heat island effect

Select

Increased energy demands

Select

Traffic!

Select

Here were the full results from last month's poll about what readers would do to protect local stream habitat:

28.7%	22.7%	21.3%
Replace turf grass with native plants	PUP (Pick Up Poop)	Keep turf grass and mow high!
12%	11.3%	4%
Install a rain garden	Report illegal dumping	None of the above

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