

Franklin Soil and Water Supports Your Community



Franklin Soil and Water is governed by a Board of Supervisors

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.

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Conservation Easements

We partner with landowners, developers, local governments and other groups to hold donated or purchased conservation easements. Conservation easements protect streams and wetlands while providing valuable wildlife habitat. They also offer landowners a way to ensure the land stays in a permanent, "natural" state while continuing to have sole property ownership. When possible, we utilize a targeted, watershed-based approach to make the greatest impact on water quality. When combined with our Hellbranch Meadows property, our conservation easement program has provided permanent protection for more than 700 acres of riparian corridor throughout Franklin County.

Hellbranch Meadows

We are currently focusing on the restoration of stream, wetland, prairie and riparian corridor areas located at our Hellbranch Meadows property. The property is located along Hellbranch Run, a major tributary of Big Darby Creek. Hellbranch Meadows was purchased through the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund and is protected in perpetuity from high impact land uses, such as residential and commercial development. We are working to restore native habitats using funds from the Ohio EPA's Water Resources Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP). Once restored, the property will provide conservation education and demonstration opportunities.

Stormwater Program Assistance

We provide expertise and assistance on overall stormwater program management.

Landowner Assistance

We help landowners address natural resource concerns, as well as implement conservation practices through site assessment and practical advice. Practices include drainage management; stream buffers; streambank stabilization; backyard conservation; and an annual tree and native plant sale.

Developing Lands

We provide technical services for stormwater management and sediment and erosion control on developing lands. We provide municipalities, developers and residents with guidance on practices to reduce soil loss and improve water quality; review of stormwater pollution prevention plans; inspections of active construction sites; and training. Achieving compliance with NPDES permit regulations reduces the negative impacts of stormwater runoff and improves water quality.



Demonstration Projects and Water Quality Monitoring

We provide consultations to local municipalities for the opportunity to establish research projects throughout Franklin County to highlight local examples of innovative technologies and solutions regarding stormwater. If parties are interested, we will provide support for design, funding applications, permit approvals, and possible compliance issues. Current and past projects include: stream inserts and sampling at Griggs Reservoir; the installation and monitoring of floating island treatment wetlands at Worthington Hills Golf Course; and the design consultation for Grove City's "Blue Roof."

Watershed Implementation

We provide coordination services for local decision-makers to identify and implement conservation projects in order to meet watershed restoration needs. We can use existing water quality, drainage, and stream condition information through our stream geodatabase to target areas for restoration. The services we provide can include, but are not limited to: overseeing project implementation; grant writing; meeting facilitation; public presentations; evaluation of new technologies; demonstration projects and water quality monitoring to measure the attainment of restoration goals.

Public Outreach and Participation

We provide a variety of public education, outreach, and participation programs for townships and municipalities to help meet requirements of NPDES stormwater permits. These programs include print and electronic newsletters, social media platforms, community displays, workshops, volunteer opportunities, and outreach to local businesses.

Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE)

IDDE is the identification and elimination of any connections to the storm sewer systems that are not rainwater runoff (i.e., septic systems, sump pumps, car washes, and illegal dumping). We ensure communities have up-to-date storm sewer maps and outfalls, as well as conduct dry-weather screening of outfalls for communities (potential pipes or ditches that handle stormwater runoff or home sewage treatment discharges) to identify potential non-stormwater connections and other pollution sources. We also provide assistance with mapping and addressing pollution hot spots, such as dumpsters, educating the public on how to report stormwater pollution and help local governments prioritize needs through IDDE Planning.

Natural Resources Mapping

Our geomatics team uses Global Positioning (GPS) and Geographic Information (GIS) technologies to manage and analyze mapping of both natural and manmade resources. Our countywide stream resource geodatabase includes agricultural tile outfalls, stormwater pipes, ditches and outfalls, and surface drainage for a majority of Franklin County. We have also developed tree canopy layers for the county, wetland-potential layers (for use in plan reviews), and are currently developing urban watershed delineation layers for improved stormwater management.

Community Backyards

We provide workshops and online education to residents, focusing on what they can do at home to reduce stormwater runoff and pollution entering local waterways. By participating, residents are eligible for rebates on rain barrels, compost bins, and native plants or trees.

Watershed Mapping and Planning

We partner with local municipalities to provide accurate GIS-based watershed and storm sewershed delineations and water quality indicators that can assist in interpreting watershed functions and impairments. We conduct physical and desktop inventory and analysis on an appropriate watershed scale, laying the framework and base data for developing innovative strategies to address impairments. Our goal is to locate and prioritize areas for protection and mitigation, provide the technical background needed by local decision-makers to justify implementing best management practice options, including possible application of green infrastructure, to restore these systems.



Gardening for Clean Water

We are partnering with local nurseries and garden centers to promote rain garden education for clean water, and the use of native plants. The program involves educational signage, employee training, and rain garden plant tags to designate rain garden appropriate perennials, shrubs, and grasses.

Get Grassy: Clean Water by the Yard

Partnering with local lawn care businesses, we educate residents on the beneficial impacts proper lawn care can have on Ohio waterways. We offer rain gauges to residents who choose to take a pledge and commit to maintaining a healthy lawn while considering water quality in order to engage residents in the process of reducing nutrient water pollution.

Pick Up Poop (PUP)

The Pick Up Poop (PUP) program encourages residents to clean up after their pets to protect our waterways. We reach out to community members at local events and spread the word about the possible impacts of pet waste on clean water.

Water Quality Partnership

We provide education and outreach to local businesses on reducing stormwater runoff pollution entering our streams. Businesses have the opportunity to take a voluntary pledge, committing their business to good water quality practices. In return, we acknowledge the businesses on our website, send them a window cling and Certificate of Partnership to display, and keep the business up-to-date on current stormwater practices.

Environmental Education

We provide a variety of educational programming to students and educators. Resources for the classroom include loan kits, in-class presentations, field investigations (stream quality monitoring), and competitions (Envirothon and Conservation Poster Contest). All youth programs are correlated with Ohio's Learning Standards for Science. Environmental education workshops for teachers are also offered.



Be The Change for Clean Water

When it comes to protecting our water resources we all need to be part of the solution. Be The Change for Clean Water is bringing together nine counties and a multitude of partners to provide education, resources, and opportunities to make it easier for all Central Ohio residents to Be the Change for Clean Water.

Conservation Grants

Our District recognizes the importance of supporting locally led, on the ground conservation projects. Administering rebates and grants allows us to support and empower these projects while providing technical expertise to ensure they are carried out effectively and cost-efficiently.

Conservation Mini-grant

For the past 10 years this program has provided up to \$2,000 grants for non-profit community groups to implement conservation projects such as rain gardens, native tree plantings, rain barrels and cisterns, invasive species removal and more.

Columbus Business Rebates

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, Sustainable Columbus, and City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities work together on this grant that promotes more conservation practices on lands owned by businesses. Businesses and organizations make a significant amount of land use and management decisions in Central Ohio. We want to demonstrate that urban conservation projects can be done by businesses cost effectively and make a positive environmental impact.

Urban Agriculture Critical Infrastructure Grant

This grant made \$150,000 of federal ARPA funding available to small local non-profit and for-profit growers in 2024. This grant seeks to strengthen the local food supply chain and support local farmers by funding infrastructure that helps local farms and community gardens scale up their production and distribution, with examples including high tunnels, water service, cold/dry storage, and market stands.

FSWCD would like to thank Franklin County Board of Commissioners, City of Columbus, Franklin Park Conservatory, OSU Extension, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, and the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board for their partnership throughout the planning process. This grant builds on and contributes to the ongoing efforts to implement the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Action Plan.



Funding Supporters

**Franklin County
Commissioners**
City of Columbus
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City of Canal Winchester

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City of Gahanna
City of Grandview
City of Grove City
City of Hilliard
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