

### Our Mission:

*To promote responsible land use decisions for the conservation, protection and improvement of soil and water resources by providing information and assistance through effective partnering, technical guidance and education.*

### Conservation, Community and Collaboration



Amy Tressler, Environmental Education Assistant, following CDC mask guidance during a macroinvertebrate sampling. Notice the mayfly on her hat!

Our District used the adversity of 2020 to take a step back, evaluate our community, and see the world with a new perspective. We found innovative ways to continue our programming remotely, address new challenges in our communities, and work with local and state-wide partners. This commitment to creativity, collaboration, and community allowed us to find new ways to promote conservation in Franklin County.

We were fully operational from home when the first stay-at-home order was given due to staff foresight, teamwork, and increased technical resources. Working remotely allowed us to learn new skills and software, including Microsoft Teams and ZOOM, to improve communication. Expanding our videography skills with the use of a Padcaster and boom mike to capture outdoor events allowed us to create more videos and resources for teachers, landowners, and residents. These new skills will continue to benefit us beyond 2020.

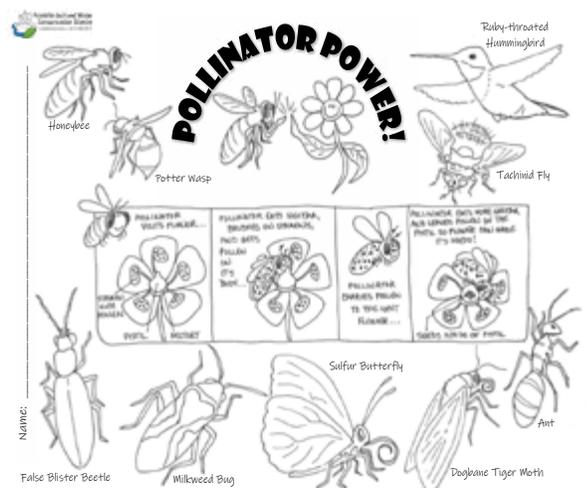
We shifted to virtual resources for parents and teachers by providing activity guides each week during the stay-at-home order. Topics of these [SWIFTlets](#) (named for our quarterly *Soil and Water Information for Teachers* newsletter), included “Surprising Seeds,” “Pollinator Power,” and “Mighty Macros.” These activities encouraged youngsters to explore outside, be curious and, of course, adopt conservation practices. They provided ready to use ideas for parents who now found themselves with kids at home 24/7, and resources for teachers

to engage students remotely. My personal favorite was the creative coloring page that came with every issue - I colored a few pages myself! We are very proud of this new resource and will continue to create these popular activity guides for years to come.

Trainings, events, fieldwork, and meetings continued virtually, proving to be well-attended and engaging to a wide variety of community members. These included:

- 3 Central Ohio Stormwater Roundtables targeted to stormwater and conservation practitioners covering fundraising opportunities, stream setbacks and stormwater pond maintenance.

*Continued*



# Conservation, Community and Collaboration Cont.

- Earth-Day-at-Home Photo Contest encouraging residents to participate in socially distant activities including litter clean up, tree planting, and composting.
- The celebration of Stormwater Awareness Week with the completion of our 150-acre wetland and stream restoration project at [Hellbranch Meadows](#).
- A live broadcast featuring our Watershed Coordinator in the field examining stream health indicators in Whitehall.
- A virtual annual meeting combining Cuyahoga, Franklin and Hamilton County SWCDs that showcased conservation programs and solutions across the state.

With everyone staying at home, we saw a large increase in participation for our most popular outreach program, Community Backyards. As soon as we recognized this trend, we reached out to our partners. Thanks to their generosity, we increased funding, support and participation by 30%. Let's keep this important work going! To learn more, visit: [www.franklinswcd.org/community-backyards-program](http://www.franklinswcd.org/community-backyards-program).

We have initiated plans and continued discussions to ensure we equitably engage with the many diverse communities throughout Franklin County. This includes reviewing where our work has historically touched down most heavily and where we need to engage more, differently, and anew. We have already begun to implement small changes but know this work is a marathon, not a sprint. We look forward to the opportunities to grow our programs in innovative ways and ensure the county's soil and water resources are conserved for all.

Our focus on conserving natural resources through education, technical assistance, and conservation programming allows us to adapt to challenges and find new ways to get conservation on the ground. We are fortunate to have strong support from our state legislators, state agencies, local communities and passionate residents. It is this focus, support and passion that makes finding solutions to new obstacles possible, whether that be funding, changes in policy, or stay at home orders. We are here to make a difference in our community.

Yours in Conservation,  
Jennifer Fish, Director



Celebrating Earth-Day-at-Home with a socially distanced litter clean up!



Mussel sampling in Whitehall.



Filming the Hellbranch Meadows Stream and Wetland Restoration celebration video.

## 2020 by the numbers:

### Conservation Easement Program

33 conservation easements inspected with 757 acres of land protected.

### Conservation Site Inspections

1,039 site inspections completed on 84 construction sites.

### Mapping, Water Quality Monitoring, Field Data Collection

Inventoried 8,398 features including pipes, catch basins, and open channels to detect possible pollution sources, assisted in municipal and country storm sewer mapping, and pollution identification and elimination.

3 streams monitored or assessed for stream conditions and water quality.

86 instances of pollutions in waterways were reported to public health or local government.

Field data collection and mapping for 2020 included:

- Dry Weather Screening
- MS4 Mapping
- HSTS Mapping
- Waterway Assessment and Mapping
- Dumpster Inventory and Mapping

### Conservation Projects

25 instances of on-site natural resource or backyard assistance.

Assisted 15 residents with rain garden questions, implementation, and installations.

10 pollution complaints investigated in Franklin County.

3,888 Water Quality Partnership program brochures mailed.  
20 businesses pledged to adopt clean water practices in 2020.

Awarded 3 Conservation Mini-grants to local non-profit organizations who demonstrate their ability to carry out on-the-ground conservation projects in Franklin County:

- City of Grove City for Hoover Crossing Park Enhancements including habitat improvement and landscaping with native plants.
- Jones Middle School (Upper Arlington) for habitat restoration on OSU golf course in collaboration with Franklin Soil and Water.
- Willow Brook Condominium Association (Columbus) for Turkey Run streambank stabilization and revegetation.

## Hellbranch Meadows Stream and Wetland Restoration Project

- Restored over 2500' linear feet of main stem Hellbranch Run (Franklin County tributary to Big Darby Creek State and National Scenic River).
- Daylighted and Restored more than a 1000' of unnamed tributary to Hellbranch Run.
- Created or Enhanced more than 10 acres of upland and floodplain wetlands.
- Planted more than 10,000 native trees, shrubs and livestakes.
- Mechanically removed or treated invasive species on approximately 130 acres.
- Planted more than 50 acres of native prairie grasses pocket parks.



Photo credit: Coldwater Consultants

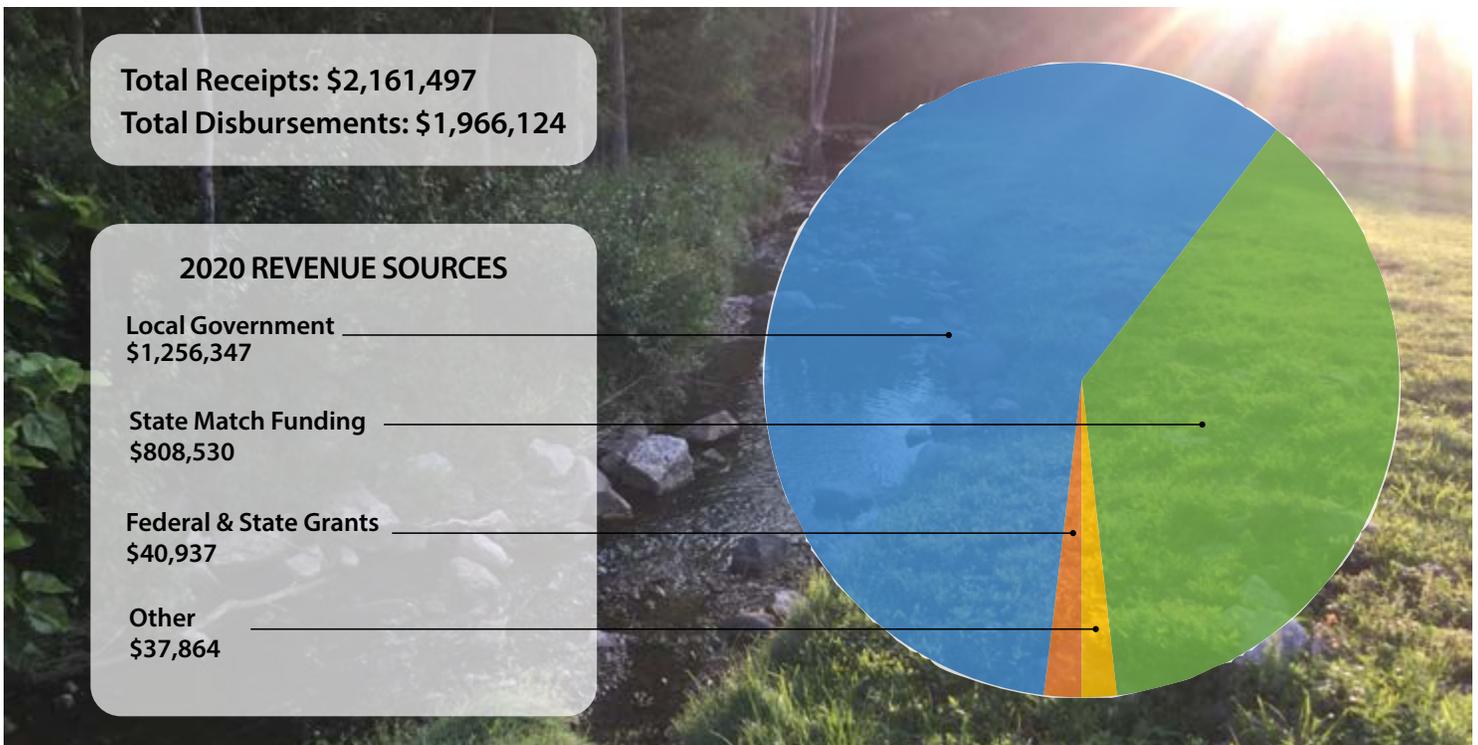
Flock of egrets enjoying one of the newly restored wetlands within the Hellbranch Meadows Restoration Project.

# 2020 Education & Outreach Numbers

## Public Information, Education, Outreach and Involvement

9,870 students reached with educational presentations.	Provided general assistance to approximately 2,400 landowners, local government staff, contractor and developers, watershed groups and other nonprofit partners.
Participated in 8 community events, reaching approximately 296 people with conservation messaging.	1,522 rebates distributed to residents for rain barrels, compost bins, native plants, and trees.
25 trainings provided to 402 local government stormwater and education professionals through trainings, webinars, conferences and meetings.	Reimbursed 818 planted Native Trees & Plants through the Community Backyard Program.
At least 93,216 residents reached through radio program, newspaper articles, advertisements, and social media.	13 people reached through 2 water quality volunteer monitoring and training events.
<p>Delivered the following audience specific newsletters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9,000 landowners received the <i>Frankly Speaking</i> newsletter</li> <li>• 4,400 residents received our <i>Backyard Conversation</i> monthly e-newsletter</li> <li>• 9,000 educators received the <i>SWIFT</i> teacher resource update</li> <li>• 1,600 professionals received the <i>Urban Review</i> newsletter</li> <li>• 600 partners received <i>Update to Partners</i></li> <li>• 54 Community PR professionals received our monthly outreach articles to share as needed</li> </ul>	<p>Participated in 10 regional programs and shared services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be the Change for Clean Water</li> <li>• Children's Water Festival</li> <li>• Central Ohio Watershed Council</li> <li>• Environmental Education Council of Ohio</li> <li>• Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission</li> <li>• Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Districts</li> <li>• Ohio Stormwater Association</li> <li>• School Gardens of Ohio</li> <li>• Terrific Resources for Environmental Education</li> <li>• Water Management Association of Ohio</li> </ul>

This table is a partial list of representative projects and activities of the District.  
The entire financial report is available by calling the office at (614) 486-9613.



## Thank you to all the Partners, Funders, Sponsors and Supporters of Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District.

There are many ways that residents, businesses and local governments in central Ohio support the mission of our District. We acknowledge their generosity as we all benefit from conserving and protecting our natural resources.

### Business Partnerships

221 businesses in Franklin County are Water Quality Partners  
9 lawn care partners through our Get Grassy Program  
10 garden center and nursery partners through our Gardening for Clean Water Program

### 2020 Funding Partners:

27 Local Governments • Working Agreements • Grant funding • State Match



### Conservation Stewardship Fund

Thanks to support from over 35 donors, we now have an active Conservation Stewardship fund with the Columbus Foundation. The purpose of this fund is to raise money for the implementation of conservation projects targeted to improving water quality for the benefit of wildlife, recreation and drinking water. These projects also benefit wetlands, forestry, carbon offsets, pollinators, native plants, and bird populations throughout Central Ohio. Each year, Franklin SWCD Board of supervisors will approve funding for conservation projects that ensure long-term sustainability.

Along with proceeds from our annual meeting, silent auction and spring tree sale, these funds support our mini grant program, which allows us to supplement grant funding for partner conservation projects. Currently this fund is at \$25,000. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 annually to continue to build this fund.



### Thank You to our Sponsors!

**Conservation Platinum Donors:** Kurtz Brothers, Steward Flaherty

**Conservation Gold Donors:** Friends of the Ravines

**Conservation Advocate Donors:** Coldwater Consulting, Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Wilson (Chloe Foundation), Sue Farley

**Conservation Steward Donors:** Boss Excavating, Meijer, TruGreen

**Roundtable Event Sponsor:** Wild Ones

**Conservation Friend Donors:** David Lebold (in memory of Don G. Lebold), Sandstone Financial Group, Rebecca Kravitz, Anonymous, Diamond Hill Investments Charitable Foundation, Kelsey Song, Laurinda Woodward, Mark Skinner, Medard Lutmerding

For more information or to donate visit:  
[www.franklinswcd.org/conservation-fund](http://www.franklinswcd.org/conservation-fund).



# Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

Creating Conservation Solutions for Over 70 Years  
1404 Goodale Blvd., Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43212  
614.486.9613

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*District programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis.*

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- Jessica D'Ambrosio, Vice Chair
- Abigail Rhodebeck, Treasurer
- Anuja Sriparameswaran
- Marty Wicks
- Maureen Lorenz

## Management

- Jennifer Fish, Director
- Josh Garver, GIS & Special Projects Director
- Kyle Wilson, Assistant Director
- Aaron Hebert, GIS Manager

### Connect With Us



1404 Goodale Blvd. Suite 100  
Columbus, OH 43212

(614) 486-9613  
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