



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.

Our 2023 Top 5

Five District Activities That Defined Our Year

1

Hellbranch Meadows Wetland Restoration

The District implemented a **\$496,578** H2Ohio grant for wetland restoration at Hellbranch Meadows on the western side of the property. This project restored 11 acres of wetlands and 18 acres of wetland buffer, with approximately 500 trees and shrubs planted (both bare roots and containerized), and approximately 3,000 live stakes planted. We'll be completing this project in May 2024.



In late 2023 the restored wetlands at Hellbranch Meadows became functional and began to fill with water.



Mr. Dennis Ingle's class at Prairie Lincoln Elementary pose with their composter that was partly funded by Community Backyards.

2

Record Community Backyards Rebates

We set a new record for our Community Backyards rebate program, with **\$97,765** reimbursed to county residents for the purchase of rain barrels, rain gardens, compost bins and native plants that not only improve soil and water quality, but also save residents money on utilities, increase climate resilience, and offset food waste.

3

AmeriCorps in Central Ohio

This year marked the beginning of the Central Ohio Collaborative AmeriCorps program with our partners at Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks, Green Columbus, FLOW, Grange Insurance Audubon Center, and Stratford Ecological Center to build capacity for these host sites in conservation projects, GIS mapping, and environmental education. AmeriCorps members are managed by Franklin SWCD, but serve at their host site, as well as participate in monthly days of team service including invasive removal and tree plantings.



Several members of the Central Ohio Collaborative AmeriCorps Team at the Franklin SWCD.



Some types of data in the Stream Resource Database.

4

9,000 Miles of Mapped Infrastructure

Jeff Pierce, our GIS Natural Resources Coordinator, reached 9,000 miles of mapped stormwater infrastructure within our Franklin County Stream Resource Geodatabase, including creeks, streams, pipes and ditches. This GIS map helps local governments make efficient and effective land use decisions in the interest of stormwater management and climate preparedness.

5

16,740 Native Plants Sold in Our Annual Tree & Plant Sale

Our Annual Tree & Plant Sale has been providing affordable plants that prevent soil erosion and create habitat to Central Ohioans for decades, and 2023 was one of our largest sales ever! Ohio native plants were the top sellers of the sale, which also included fruit trees, mushrooms, and seed kits. Native plants enhance home landscapes and conservation sites alike by providing incredible benefits for wildlife and absorbing stormwater with their roots.



Students from Lead the Way Learning participated in a Franklin Soil & Water-led program that taught them about the importance of water quality and job opportunities in natural resources.

2023 Numbers From The Field:

Conservation Easement Program

33 conservation easements inspected with 757 acres of land protected.

Conservation Site Inspections

1,839 site inspections completed on 84 construction sites.

Mapping, Water Quality Monitoring, Field Data Collection

Inventoried over 24,000 features (including pipes, catch basins, and open channels) to detect possible pollution sources. Assisted in municipal and county storm sewer mapping, and pollution identification and elimination.

49 instances of pollution in waterways were reported to public health or local governments.

Field data collection and mapping for 2023 included:

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

Conservation Projects

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

Provided 10 rain garden cost shares.

Donated nearly \$2,000 of native plant material to staff projects and non-profit groups.

Sold 16,740 native trees and shrubs, 1020 fruit trees and brambles, 118 native plant kits, 108 seed packets, and 34 mushroom kits in the 2023 Spring sale.

Awarded 2 Conservation Mini-grants to local non-profit organizations who demonstrate their ability to carry out on-the-ground conservation projects in Franklin County:

- Netcare - Tree Planting at Miles House.
- Friends of Lower Olentangy Watershed- Worthington Native Tree Nursery Improvements.

Program Highlight: Master Rain Gardener

- The Master Rain Gardener program is a certification course that trains residents to build their own rain garden throughout a series of classes, field trips, and design feedback. The program enables gardeners to improve their own yard while becoming a stormwater ambassador in their neighborhood.
- In 2023 our Master Rain Gardener program entered its second year with 32 participants, 13 more than in 2022. In 2024 the program will have two graduating classes, one online and one in-person to keep up with growing demand.
- The program is funded by the Cities of Columbus, Grove City and Westerville. Instruction is provided by the District, Metro Parks, The Garden Sage, and Urban Wild Ltd.



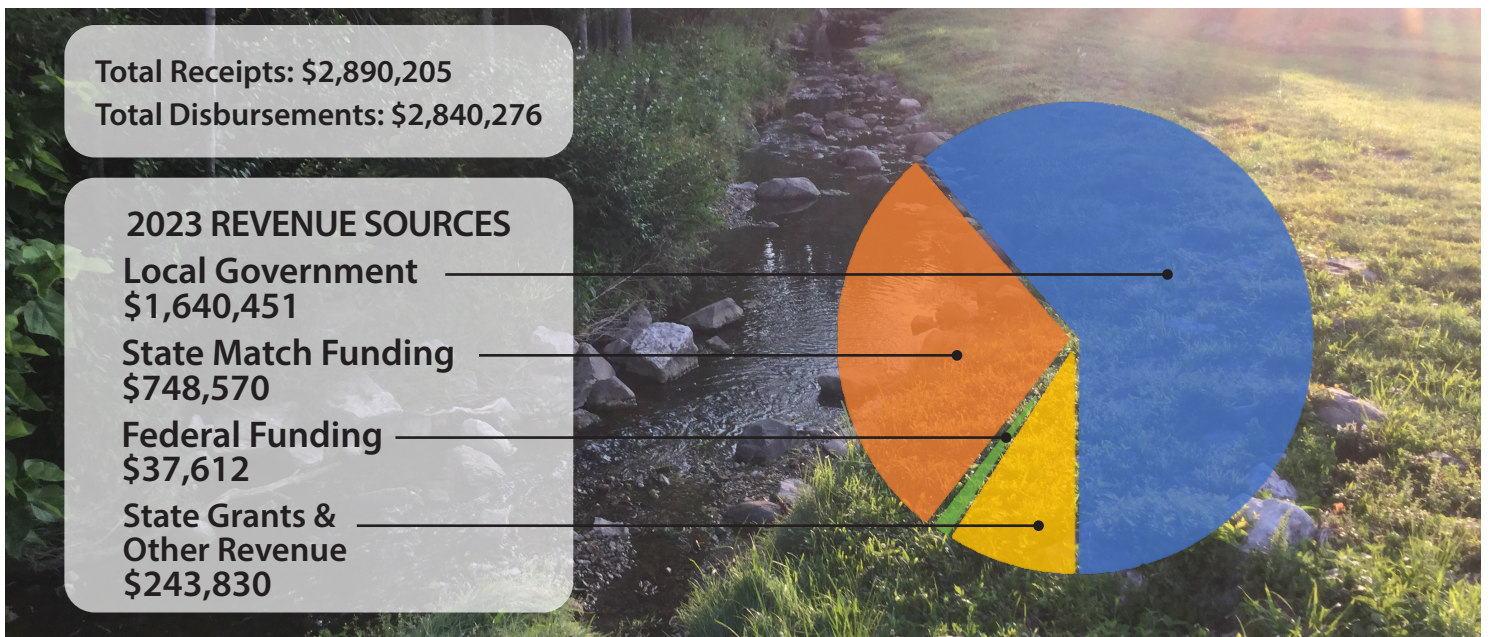
Our 2023 Master Rain Gardener Class included 32 participants from all around the county!

2023 Education & Outreach Numbers

Public Information, Education, Outreach and Involvement

17,198 students reached with educational presentations.	Provided general assistance to 2,376 landowners, local government staff, contractors and developers, watershed groups, and other nonprofit partners.
Participated in 69 community events, reaching approximately 5,154 people with conservation messaging.	1,717 rebates distributed to residents for rain barrels, compost bins, and native plants.
35 trainings provided to 928 local government stormwater and education professionals through webinars, conferences, and meetings.	Reimbursed 1,132 planted Native Trees & Plants through the Community Backyards Program.
At least 170,553 residents reached through radio programs, newspaper articles, advertisements, and social media.	3,387 Water Quality Partnership program brochures mailed. 33 businesses pledged to adopt clean water practices in 2022.
<p>Delivered the following audience specific newsletters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14,945 landowners received the <i>Frankly Speaking</i> newsletter • 4,986 residents received our <i>Backyard Conversation</i> monthly e-newsletter • 9,209 educators received the <i>SWIFT</i> teacher resource update • 1,613 developers received the <i>Urban Review</i> newsletter • 688 partners received <i>Update to Partners</i> • 54 Community PR professionals received our monthly outreach articles to share as needed 	<p>Participated in 16 regional programs and shared services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps • Be the Change for Clean Water • Children's Water Festival • Central Ohio Watershed Council • Central Ohio Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (COPRISM) • Central Ohio Food Waste Initiative Convening • Environmental Education Council of Ohio • Lead The Way Learning • Leave No Child Inside Central Ohio Collaborative • Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission • Native Plant Backyard Challenge • Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts • Ohio Stormwater Association • School Gardens of Ohio • Terrific Resources for Environmental Education • Water Management Association of Ohio

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

298 businesses in Franklin County are Water Quality Partners - franklinswcd.org/water-quality-partner-businesses

7 lawn care partners through our Get Grassy program - getgrassy.org/program-partners

9 garden center and nursery partners through our Gardening for Clean Water Program - franklinswcd.org/gardening-for-clean-water

5 local vendors participate in the Community Backyards immediate discount rebate vendor program - communitybackyards.org/immediate-discount-vendors

Thank You To Our Sponsors!

Conservation Advocate: Coldwater Consulting

Conservation Steward: MAD Scientist Associates, Oakland Nursery, Scioto Gardens

Conservation Friend: Able Printing Co., GPD Group

Conservation Partner: RASL LLC

2023 Funding Partners:

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



Giving to Conservation

Franklin Soil and Water fundraises for sponsors for our annual meeting and professional education events and seeks donations for our Columbus Foundation conservation stewardship fund throughout the year.

The purpose of the Conservation Fund at The Columbus Foundation is to raise money for the implementation of conservation projects targeted at improving water quality for the benefit of wildlife, recreation and drinking water. 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 and spring tree sale, these funds support our mini grant program, which allows us to supplement conservation funding for grassroots projects undertaken by our partners around the county.

Sponsorship of Urban Program events including our Central Ohio Stormwater Roundtable Series,

Sponsorship of Urban Program events including our Central Ohio Stormwater Roundtable Series,

Center for Watershed Protection Webcast Series, and Stormwater Awareness Week, and helps support staff efforts to get more professional development and education to land use decision makers.

For more information or to donate visit:
www.franklinswcd.org/conservation-fund.



Students from Lead the Way Learning participated in a Franklin Soil & Water-led program that taught them about the importance of water quality and job opportunities in natural resources.

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

Board of Supervisors

Jessica D'Ambrosio
Marty Wicks
Erin Miller
Kim Landsbergen
Leigh Anne Ward

Leadership Team

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

Connect With Us



1404 Goodale Blvd, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43212

(614) 486-9613
www.franklinswcd.org



facebook.com/franklinsoilandwater



linkedin.com/company/franklin-soil-and-water-conservation-district/



instagram.com/franklinsoilandwater