

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.
Delivered the following audience specific newsletters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9,000 landowners received the <i>Frankly Speaking Newsletter</i> 4,400 residents received our <i>Backyard Conversation monthly e-newsletter</i> 9,000 educators received the <i>SWIFT</i> teacher resource update 1,600 professionals received the <i>Urban Review newsletter</i> 600 partners received <i>Update to Partners</i> 54 Community PR professionals received our monthly outreach articles to share as needed 	Participated in 10 regional programs and shared services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be the Change for Clean Water Children's Water Festival Central Ohio Watershed Council Environmental Education Council of Ohio Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Ohio Federation of Soil and Water 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.



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2020 Annual Report

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

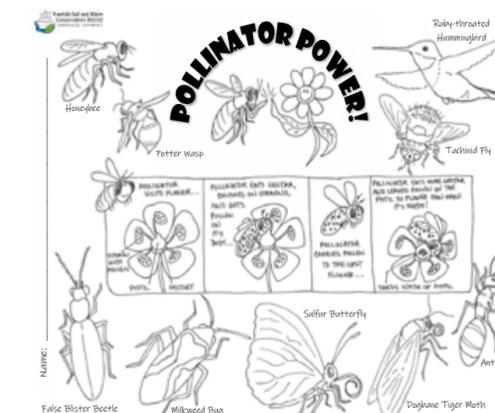
Our Mission: *To promote responsible land use decisions for the conservation, protection and improvement of soil and water resources by providing information and assistance through effective partnering, technical guidance and education.*

Conservation, Community and Collaboration

2020 was a great year to take a step back, evaluate our community, and see the world with a new perspective. Our District embraced the creativity, collaboration, and community that arose from adversity. In 2020 we not only devised new ways to continue our programming remotely, but we also looked closely at our communities to make sure we were addressing new challenges that they were facing. As a result, we adopted innovative opportunities to work with our partners, locally and state-wide. Franklin Soil and Water accepted the challenge from a renewed point of view, evaluated the community around us, and forged new ways to promote conservation in Franklin County.

We were ready to be fully operational from home when the first stay-at home order was given due to staff foresight, teamwork, and increased technical resources and laptops. Working remotely allowed us to learn new skills and software, including Microsoft Teams, ZOOM, and other systems to ensure good communication among team members and partners. Improving our videography 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 weekly activity guides and coloring pages on a different topic 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," "Mighty Macros," and "The Scoop on Scat." 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 parents and teachers for years to come.



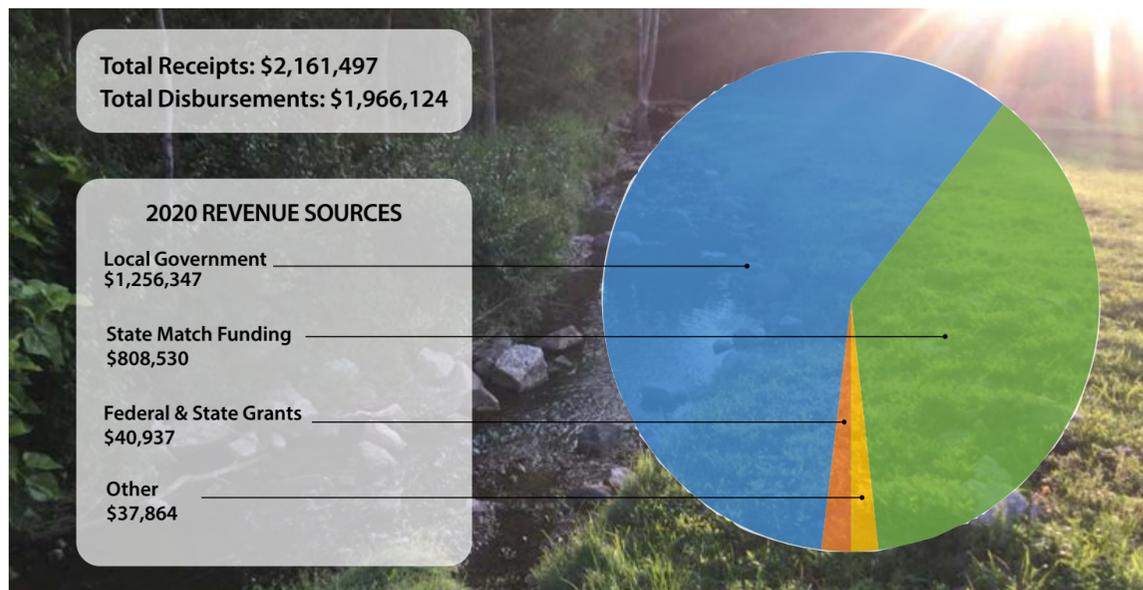
Amy Tressler, Environmental Education Assistant, during an outdoors macroinvertebrate sampling event. Notice the mayfly on her hat!

Training, events, fieldwork, and meetings continued virtually, proving to be well-attended and engaging to a wide variety of community members. Some that impressed us included:

- 3 Central Ohio Stormwater Roundtables targeted to stormwater and conservation practitioners covering fundraising opportunities, stream setbacks and stormwater pond maintenance.
- A live broadcast featuring our Watershed Coordinator in the field examining stream health indicators in Whitehall.

Continued

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



2020 Board of Supervisors

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Connect With Us



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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	Field data collection and mapping for 2020 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry Weather Screening • MS4 Mapping • HSTS Mapping • Waterway Assessment and Mapping • Dumpster Inventory and Mapping
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	
Conservation Projects	
25 instances of on-site natural resource or backyard assistance	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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.	
Completed stream and wetland restoration on 200-acre property, Hellbranch Meadows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 livestock • Mechanically removed or treated invasive species on approximately 130 acres • Planted more than 50 acres of native prairie grasses pocket parks 	 <p>Photo credit: Coldwater Consultants</p> <p>Flock of egrets enjoying one of the newly restored wetlands within the Hellbranch Meadows Restoration Project.</p>

Business Partnerships

221 businesses in Franklin County are Water Quality Partners - www.franklinswcd.org/water-quality-partner-businesses
9 lawn care partners through our Get Grassy program - www.getgrassy.org/program-partners
10 garden center and nursery partners through our Gardening for Clean Water Program - www.centralohioraingardens.org

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 want to share their generosity as we all benefit from conserving and protecting our natural resources.

2020 Funding Partners:

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



Conservation Stewardship Fund

Thanks to support from over 35 donors, with donations ranging from \$25 to \$5,000, we now have an active Conservation Stewardship fund with the Columbus Foundation. The purpose of our Conservation Stewardship 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. While focused on water quality and rainwater runoff, these projects will 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.

These funds along with proceeds from our annual meeting, silent auction and spring tree sale supports our mini grant program and allows us to supplement grant funding for partner conservation projects. Currently this fund is at \$25,000. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 in funds annually to continue to build this fund. For more information or to donate visit: www.franklinswcd.org/conservation-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



Conservation, Community and Collaboration Cont.

- The celebration of Stormwater Awareness Week with the completion of our 150-acre wetland and stream restoration project at [Hellbranch Meadows](#), our 200-acre property in the Darby Watershed.
- A combined virtual annual meeting held among Cuyahoga, Franklin and Hamilton Counties that showcased a variety of programs and conservation solutions SWCDs bring to communities statewide.

With everyone staying at home we saw a large increase in participation for our [Community Backyards program](#). This program is our largest outreach effort which has developed in size and reach over the past decade. Eligible residents who participate in an online course or attend a workshop (virtually of course in 2020 and into 2021) receive a reimbursement for compost bins, rain barrels and native plants and trees. As soon as we recognized this trend we reached out to our partners and increased funding and support to accommodate a 30% increase in participation. We did not want to miss out on this unique opportunity to engage homeowners with conservation practices.

We also initiated planning and discussions to better engage underserved communities. With diversity training we learned that we need to do more to provide conservation education and opportunities to those who we do not traditionally reach. We are evaluating opportunities in our youth and adult education programs to meet this need. As a committed member of the community, we have a responsibility to address this important community priority.

Franklin Soil and Water has always been good at adapting to new challenges because we are strategically focused on getting conservation on the ground and conserving our natural resources through education, technical assistance, and conservation programming. We are also fortunate to have strong support from our state legislators, state agencies, local communities, and passionate residents. It is this focus, support and passion for what we do 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



Mussel sampling in Whitehall.



Identifying macroinvertebrates at the Wading Through Watershed Educator Workshop.



Celebrating Earth-Day-at-Home by encouraging residents to participate in socially distant activities including litter clean up, tree planting, composting and more!