



Our Mission

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

Urban Conservation: 30 Years Strong in Franklin County

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District's efforts to conserve and protect natural resources are going into the seventh decade. Long before the Clean Water Act, the district was helping to preserve important environmental services. As urban centers developed, agricultural conservation practices needed to be adapted to a new environment.

Like agricultural conservation, urban conservation is the practice of conserving existing environmental services by promoting responsible land use decisions. This involves multiple landowners and other partners, demanding long-term, big picture planning with public input and education, and partnership development.

In the 80's and 90's construction site runoff and sediment loads were listed as the main causes of pollution in our waterways. The impacts of construction site erosion on the land and our streams were extreme. It took a great deal of effort from government agencies, including soil and water conservation districts, to raise awareness and get effective sediment and erosion control measures in place. Integrating conservation practices into construction site plans is now a part of stormwater program management which anticipates erosion threats before they become problems.

Implementing these practices on construction sites is now common practice, and sediment from construction sites is no longer the major water quality problem it once was. Even so, continued vigilance is required. It only takes one control measure failure to impact a stream. As a result, Franklin Soil and Water's urban conservation work includes a robust site inspection program and education series conducted with the support of our partners. Our site inspectors are regularly in the field, checking on sediment and erosion controls, and our education events draw stormwater professionals from across the county.



USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Gene Alexander, Lake Darby Estates June 3, 1980

New urban conservation challenges have come to the fore as construction site erosion has become less of a problem. Ongoing stormwater impacts and other modifications to streams and their corridors stand out among the problems we face today. High stormwater runoff volumes create instream erosion, which produces sediment pollution, impairs habitat for aquatic life and threatens properties along streams. Changes to stream channels, wetland filling and the loss of trees and other streamside vegetation further impair our valuable natural resources.

New problems require creative solutions. The installation of green infrastructure that emulates nature's stormwater management and the increased adoption of stream buffer, wetland and tree protection ordinances are leading the way as we work to better protect our natural resources, critical components of a vital and vibrant urban community. Ecology and economy are linked by the Greek root *eikos* or house. Working with our partners, Franklin Soil and Water is helping keep our urban house in order.

Thank you for your continued support!

2015

Making a Difference through Urban Conservation Project Implementation

Dysart Run is a relatively small, headwater stream in the Blacklick Creek watershed on the eastside of Franklin County. Its longest branch is approximately 3.6 miles long, and it is fed by 4.6 square miles of land. Longtime residents say that it was once a lazy stream, drying up for periods of the summer. Lazy no more, Dysart regularly becomes a torrent, fed by stormwater runoff coming off of the ever-increasing hard surfaces in the watershed. This stormwater runoff brings pollution with it and erodes the stream bed and banks, adding mud to the water and threatening properties along the stream banks.

To help reverse these trends, Franklin Soil and Water wrote a grant proposal with the support of the City of Columbus to implement a project that would treat water quality in stormwater runoff and reduce runoff volumes. The Ohio EPA funded the project with a 319 Grant. As a result, the Crawford Farms Park Stormwater Treatment Wetland was constructed in 2015 to treat the stormwater running off from a subdivision on the eastside of Columbus.

Located in a Columbus park, the project retrofitted an old stormwater basin that was not designed to treat stormwater for water quality and only affected stormwater volumes during very, very large rain events. In the new wetland, the water flows through a small pond where water quality treatment begins, dirt, grit and trash are collected. It then flows through wetland vegetation where more water quality treatment takes place and the runoff volume is



Crawford Farms Park Stormwater Treatment Wetland: a stormwater basin retrofitted a year after construction

decreased as some water is absorbed into the ground, evaporates and is taken up by plants. It finally goes through another small pond where there is continued water quality treatment and any solids and trash that might have been picked up in the wetland collect. The water is then discharged to a stormwater system that empties to Dysart Run. Franklin Soil and Water will be monitoring the development of the wetland plants through the remainder of this summer. The District has also been measuring the outflow from this basin and will continue to do so. It is an exciting project that we believe will improve water quality in Dysart Run, reduce erosion along that creek, and serve as an aesthetic improvement to Crawford Farms Park. You can go to our website for more information on the project.

Educators of the Year

Jenny Carter, Librarian, *West Mound Elementary*

Kathleen Bertner, Librarian, *Cranbrook Elementary*

Mini Grant Recipients

Iuka Ravine Assc. - *Native vegetation planting along ravine*

Friends of Upper Arlington Parks - *Restoration of native tree cover*

Franklin Co. Public Facilities Management - *Children Services easement restoration*

Conservation Stewardship & Great Blue Heron Award Recipients

Anheuser-Busch, Columbus Brewery

Frank Dengg, *Columbus City Schools*

Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW)

James Cola, *Worthington Hills Golf Course*

Laura Fay, *FLOW*

MAD Scientist Associates, LLC.

Patti Von Niessen and Kristi Crissinger, *Westgate Park*

Rachel Pace, *Steeling Copper Metal Studio*

2015 by the numbers

Total receipts: **\$1,885,552**

Total disbursements: **\$1,846,756**

The entire financial report is available by calling the office at (614) 486-9613

The table below is a partial list of representative projects and activities of the District

Conservation Easement Program	
30 conservation easements inspected with 705 acres of land protected.	Acquired 5 acres of conservation easements.
Conservation Site Inspections	
480 inspections completed on 54 construction sites.	Tree Plantings and Stream Clean-up
	Planted 2,200 trees on 8 acres.
Mapping, Water Quality Monitoring and Field Data Collection	
Inventoried 8,565 features including pipes, catch basins, and open channels to detect possible pollution sources, assisted in municipal and county storm sewer mapping and conservation implementation. Field Data Collection & Mapping for 2015 Included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry Weather Screening • MS4 Mapping • HSTS Mapping • Waterway Assessment and Mapping • Dumpster Inventory and Mapping 	Continued to monitored stream inserts in Reynoldsburg tributary and Columbus stormwater channel to test the effectiveness of these bioreactors for filtering out nutrients and bacteria from urban streams impacted by failing septic systems. Continued to work with City of Columbus and USGS to monitor effectiveness of Rain Gardens at Griggs Reservoir.
Conservation Projects	
Provided 5,460 trees to 339 different customers.	Investigated 5 pollution complaints from residents.
Assisted 23 residents with rain garden questions, implementation and installation.	Provided 39 landowners with backyard conservation, stream management technical guidance, or other natural resource assistance.
Provided 3 mini grants, up to \$1,500 to Iuka Ravine Assc. for a planting along a ravine, Friends of Upper Arlington Parks for a tree restoration project, Franklin Co. Public Facilities Management for a Children Services easement restoration.	Installed a stormwater treatment wetland retrofit project with the support of a grant from the Ohio EPA and matching funds from the City of Columbus.
Public Information, Education and Outreach	
Distributed 596 rebates for rain barrels, native plants and compost bins.	Participated in 18 community events reaching over 2,530 residents with a conservation message.
Provided 12,760 students with stormwater and environmental education presentations and hands-on activities.	Provided training on 28 occasions to 596 local government, stormwater and education professionals through webinars, expos, meetings, and trainings.
Provided general assistance to 5,543 landowners, local government staff, consulting firm employees, contractors and developers, and 8 watershed group members.	Delivered 4 audience-specific newsletters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,297 education professionals receiving <i>SWIFT</i> teacher resource update • 8,750 landowners receiving the Franklin Soil and Water newsletter, <i>Frankly Speaking</i> • 773 developers receiving <i>Urban Review</i> • 812 partners receiving <i>Update to Partners</i>

Thank You 2015 Funders and Partners

Franklin County Board of Commissioners

The Ohio State Legislature

The City of Columbus

The Cities of Bexley, Canal Winchester, Dublin, Gahanna, Grove City, Hilliard, New Albany, Reynoldsburg, Upper Arlington, Westerville and Worthington, the Villages of Lockbourne and Obetz

The Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department

The Franklin County Sanitary Engineer

The Ohio Environmental Education Fund

Natural resources assistance from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Soil and Water Resources.

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2015 Event Sponsors

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