



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.

Just What Does Franklin Soil and Water Do?

The function of the Conservation District is to take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water, and related resources.

National Association of Conservation Districts

70 Years of Conservation



The origin of soil and water conservation districts began with the Dust Bowl in the early 1930s. Following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away, creating huge black dust storms that blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside. The dust storms reached south to Texas and east to New York. Dust even sifted into the White House and onto the desk of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

On Capitol Hill, while testifying about the erosion problem, soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett threw back the curtains to reveal a sky blackened by dust. Congress unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Because nearly three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land.

In 1937, President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending legislation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts. The decree organizing Franklin Soil Conservation District was filed on May 11, 1946. For more information on the history of Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District visit www.franklinswcd.org



Franklin Soil and Water Board of Supervisors, 1957

2016 by the numbers

Total receipts: **\$1,795,389**

Total disbursements: **\$1,820,777**

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	30 acres of new conservation easement land acquired
Conservation Site Inspections	
530 inspections completed on 58 construction sites	
Tree Plantings and Stream Clean Up	
2,100 trees planted at Big Walnut Creek Park	Stream clean-up events in Upper Arlington and Hilliard
Mapping, Water Quality Monitoring, Field Data Collection	
Inventoried 5,332 features including pipes, catch basins, and open channels to detect possible pollution sources, assisted in municipal and country storm sewer mapping and conservation implementation	Field data collection and mapping for 2016 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry Weather Screening • MS4 Mapping • HSTS Mapping • Waterway Assessment and Mapping • Dumpster Inventory and Mapping
Conservation Projects	
6,099 trees sold in the 2016 Spring sale	Donated over \$1,000 of plant material to 10 organizations, 3 staff projects, and 7 non-profit groups
3,667 Water Quality Partnership program brochures mailed. 50 businesses pledged to clean water practices in 2016	4 mini grants of up to \$1,500 awarded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW) and Cranbrook Elementary: Restoration of Slyh Run with the removal of invasive species and planting native trees • Chadwick Arboretum: Tree plantings and planting demonstrations during their ArboBlitz 2016. • The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium: Installation of a butterfly garden to improve habitat and educate visitors • Friends of the Ohio Governor's Residence and Heritage Garden: Native tree plantings and improve habitat on their grounds
Assisted 30 residents with rain garden questions, implementation, and installations	
5 pollution complaints investigated from Franklin County Residents	
46 instances of onsite resident or local group natural resource or backyard assistance	
Public Information, Education, and Outreach	
14,826 students reached with educational presentation and hands-on activities	775 rebates distributed to residents for rain barrels, compost bins, native plants, and trees
Participated in 43 community events, reaching approximately 2,533 people with conservation messaging	Provided general assistance to 5,874 landowners, local government staff, contractors and developers, watershed groups, and other nonprofit partners
30 trainings provided to 574 local government stormwater and education professionals through webinars, expos, and scheduled meetings	Delivered the following audience specific newsletters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,900 landowners received the <i>Frankly Speaking Newsletter</i> and <i>Backyard Conservation Updates</i> • 546 developers received <i>Urban Review</i> • 624 partners received <i>Update to Partners</i> • 8,297 educators received the <i>SWIFT</i> teacher resource update
At least 566,000 residents reached through radio program, newspaper articles, advertisements, and social media	

District of the Year

The Ohio Federation of Conservation Districts awarded Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District its District of the Year for Excellence in Soil and Water Conservation Education on February 28, 2017. Franklin Soil and Water is dedicated to protecting soil, water, and natural resources through our school programs, educational presentations, partnerships, and outreach to our local communities. We strive to move beyond traditional approaches to working with the public and look for new ways to inspire individuals towards conservation behaviors and actions. Our Public Outreach strategies include:

- **Meet People Where They Are.** This applies to both a physical location as well as current knowledge base. This means our programs are accessible online, in-person, and where customers shop at local nurseries. Good examples of this include Community Backyards and Gardening for Clean Water programs.

Simple language works well over technical jargon. For example, most residents do not know what a watershed is, nor realize that storm drains “discharge” into local streams. Messaging in our Get Grassy lawn care program is an example of audience-appropriate, easily understood language.

It also means speaking to what people care about. Residents are concerned with flooding, saving money, and staying healthy. This does not mean that water quality is not important, but it is not what people are thinking about during their daily activities.



- **Repetition, Repetition, Repetition.** According to social and marketing research, we need to hear or see information three to seven times before it is really recognized. Think of all the information you receive and how many times you need to see an unsolicited email before you recognize it as important. As a result, we use social media, emails, newsletters and advertising to repeat, reframe, and promote our programs and messages. Good examples of this approach include Community Backyards, Get Grassy, and Water Quality Partner programs.
- **Don't Tell- Ask.** Too often we overwhelm people with information and provide little guidance on what they should do with this new knowledge. Behavior change is encouraged by identifying an action that's easily accomplished, communicating through trusted organizations or people, and asking for commitments. We worked hard with our messaging in our Get Grassy program to identify simple actions for residential lawn care.
- **What's in It for Me?** While people often intend to act, it does not always happen. This does not mean we are lazy, but are more likely just busy or distracted. Pledge forms, cash rebates, and reminders are all simple ways we motivate people to action. We provide cash rebates in our Community Backyards program and provide small tokens for completing pledge forms for the Get Grassy lawn care program.

Our outreach programs have expanded far beyond newsletters, presentations, and displays at community events. We are thankful to motivated partners that ask us to do more and champion our efforts. It is with your encouragement that we continue to be recognized for our efforts. Thank you for your support!



Thank You 2016 Funders & 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
- Village of Lockbourne and Village of Obetz
- The Townships of Jackson, Jefferson, Perry, Plain, Prarie and Washington

2016 Event Sponsors

- AEP, American Electric Power, Annual Meeting
- City Folk Farm Shop, Annual Meeting
- Coldwater Consulting, LLC, Annual Meeting
- McMahon DeGulis LLP, Annual Meeting
- ms consultants, inc., Annual Meeting
- Scotts Miracle-Gro, Annual Meeting
- Stantec (MWH), Annual Meeting
- ADS, Stormwater Expo

2017 Board of Supervisors

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Connect With Us



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