



# ON THE LAND

FALL 2019

## CUYAHOGA SWCD CELEBRATES 70 YEARS OF CONSERVATION



Since 1949, Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District has inspired and empowered residents, businesses and communities to protect and restore the health of our shared soil and water resources. As our county's first environmental agency, we actively implement cutting edge conservation practices through education, stewardship and technical assistance and continue to promote wise use of our land and water. During those 70 years, Cuyahoga Soil & Water has worked with countless landowners to manage and protect natural resources on public and private lands.

These days, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) may not be required reading, and there may not be many that read Timothy Egan's *The Worst Hard Time* (2006), but hopefully you didn't miss Ken Burn's documentary series, *The Dust Bowl* (2012). The stories about the devastating impacts to people, to communities and to fertile soils is a reminder to all of us about the



Staff: Carla Regener, Janine Rybka, Chris Vasco, Jared Bartley, Jacki Zevenbergen, Amy Roskilly, Elizabeth Hiser, Megan Smith, Jaimie Johnson, Patrick Connolly, Kelly Parker, Justin Husber, Brent Eysenbach

importance of protecting our natural resources. The Dust Bowl's huge losses and environmental degradation became the rallying cry for soil and water conservation across the nation.

This year Cuyahoga SWCD celebrates 70 years. The county and the agency have come a long way, from a semi rural county to the most urbanized in the state, and an agency that ran with very little staff, to one with 13 educated, passionate and committed people who work daily to protect our soil and water resources.

[www.cuyahogawcd.org](http://www.cuyahogawcd.org)

### A Voice for Natural Resource Protection

From its inception, the Cuyahoga SWCD alongside its federal partner, the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) provides technical assistance to landowners. Programs include streambank stabilization, erosion and sediment control, forested stream buffer corridors and tree plantings, along with conservation-related educational programs. Conservation education for all stakeholders and diverse target audiences continues to be a mainstay. Each year programs

*continued on pg. 5*

# Cover Cropping Cleveland

With the near completion of my stormwater inspections, I'm shifting gears a bit as Autumn is upon us. Mainly, I will be focusing on two exciting longer-term projects with the help of our Admin, Patrick Connolly, and our new walk-behind tractor, the BCS 853.



*Justin preparing the site by brush hogging the weeds*

The first project is a collaboration with the Ohio Israel Agriculture Initiative with financial assistance from the Cleveland Foundation. We're working with 1.75 acres spread out over two sites with the goal of soil transformation through cover cropping and mycorrhizal inoculations. The two sites can be described as classic "landbank" properties where a house once stood.

As the house was demolished, the topsoil was scraped off with a backhoe, leaving subsoil that's hardly fit to grow monoculture grass. Additionally,

these subsoils are typically extremely compacted, biologically dead, and high in pH. Within the stormwater field, these properties are known as "green concrete" because stormwater just runs right off these properties, rather than infiltrating into the soil.

So, we intend to plant 12 different cover crops with eight separate plantings over the course of two years. We'll be soil testing along the whole way to specifically track changes in organic matter and changes in

microbial soil life. Ultimately, we hope that this can become a management tool in urban planning as alternative to grass and grass cutting for future use as sites for parks, tree plantings, pollinator plantings, or urban agriculture.

The second major project is a conservation nursery on E 71st in Slavic Village, Cleveland. This will be a vacant land re-use project where we grow and maintain our own nursery stock. Shrubs like willow, elderberry, and dogwood will be grown for their live stakes for stream stabilization. We will also be growing native trees for future tree plantings.

**For more information, contact  
Justin Husher  
216.524.6580 x1007  
[jhusher@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:jhusher@cuyahogawcd.org)**

## Green Infrastructure: By Bike and By Bus



*Bikes and pavers*

Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District recently led two different green infrastructure tours. The first tour was by bicycle on 6/21/2019 as part of the Cuyahoga 50 celebration. The second tour was by bus on 7/30/2019 as part of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts 2019 Summer Supervisor School.

The USEPA defines green infrastructure as "a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provides

many community benefits. Green infrastructure reduces and treats stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits."

The bike tour covered approximately thirteen miles with ten stops. Tour participants had the opportunity to learn about pervious pavers, bio-retention, green roofs, soil remediation, stream restoration, infiltration, and more. The bus tour lasted approximately six hours with five stops. Participants on the bus tour learned about rainwater harvesting, reducing impervious cover, regional scale bio-retention, green infrastructure incentive programs, and the importance of community involvement. It was explained to both groups that while we were only stopping at select sites



*Green Infrastructure Bus Tour huddled under a bus shelter*

during the tour there were many others along the way thus creating an ever expanding patchwork of water quality treatment facilities city-wide.

The bike tour consisted mainly of residents and cycling enthusiasts that did not have a deep understanding of either stormwater management or green infrastructure. Participants had an opportunity to explore Cleveland's Mid-Town at ground

*continued on pg. 5*

# Cuyahoga SWCD Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election

Celebrating 70 years of leading conservation in an urban environment.



Featured Speaker:  
Scott Hardy, Ph.D.,  
"Green Infrastructure  
and Clean Marinas:  
Managing Runoff at the  
Land-Water Interface"

Monday, October 21, 2019  
4:30pm - 6:30pm  
Merwin's Wharf  
1785 Merwin Ave.  
Cleveland, OH 44113

Free and open to the public • Light refreshments will be provided  
Donations suggested for Camp Canopy scholarships

## Schedule of Events

4:30pm - Supervisor Election (until 6:00 p.m.)

5:00pm - General Program Begins

5:15pm - Welcome Remarks

5:30pm - Featured Speaker: Scott Hardy, Ph.D.,  
OSU Extension Educator, Ohio Sea Grant  
College Program - "Green Infrastructure and  
Clean Marinas: Managing Runoff at the Land-  
Water Interface"

6:00pm - Program Highlights and Conservation  
Hero Awards (until 6:30 p.m.)

### RSVP

Phone: 216.524.6580, x1000

Online: [www.cuyahogaswcd.org](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org) (Events - Oct. 21)

Mail: Fill out and send in registration form below



## MEET THE CANDIDATES

Visar Duane

Whitnye Long Jones

Draye Luton

Akbar Tyler

Candidate biographies and  
voter information at  
[www.cuyahogaswcd.org](http://www.cuyahogaswcd.org)

### Cuyahoga SWCD 70th Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election

Mail to: Cuyahoga SWCD • 3311 Perkins Ave. • Cleveland, OH 44114

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a donation to the Camp Canopy Scholarship Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (amount enclosed) Checks payable to Cuyahoga SWCD

# Meet the Candidates



**VISAR DUANE**

Visar Duane immigrated from Cambodia in 1981. She graduated from Notre Dame College of Ohio in 1988 with a biology degree. She then completed a 12-month training program as a medical technologist for University Hospitals where she went on to work for 12 years.

During her last 6 years at UH, she went back to school and earned her degree in Occupational Therapy from Cleveland State University. She now runs a small private practice where she will see patients in their homes or at her home in North Royalton, Ohio.

Visar and her husband David have two children, and since 2011, they have managed Purple Skies Farm, their North Royalton based farm that specializes in delicious fruits and produce. On the farm, Visar practices mindful and sustainable living. This includes creating a pond to use for irrigation needs, applying only organic approved methods, and utilizing companion planting.

Additionally, she participates in multiple NRCS conservation plans such as minimal tillage, cover crops, crop rotation, and pollinator planting. Her goal is to practice good stewardship to our wonderful planet.



**WHITNYE LONG JONES**

Whitnye Long Jones is a community and environmental steward for net positive change with a genuine interest in community empowerment and social entrepreneurship. She is the Community Engagement Organizer for Ohio City Incorporated Community Development Corporation. She is also the Founder / Chief Executive Officer of Aesthetics Squared, LLC, and the Founder / Program Manager of Organic Connects, Inc..

Mrs. Long Jones is a current and first Black American woman CSWCD Board Supervisor. She also participates on multiple local and national committees that have an environmental focus.

Working on the ground directly with youth and residents to bring environmental awareness and resources to urban populations is where her passions are most beneficially expressed. She studied Biology at Case Western Reserve University and, in her spare time, enjoys volunteering for and coordinating nature projects, playing volleyball, and creating art. She, her husband, and two children reside in Shaker Heights.



**DRAYE LUTON**

My name is Draye Luton. I'm 26 years old and a resident of Cleveland, Ohio. Since my graduation from the College of Wooster, I have been immersed in the fields of nonprofit leadership, financial services, community development, student mentorship and coaching football. Over the last two years, I have worked in commercial banking for Key Bank, as a Corporate Client Specialist. Also, I have served the City of Cleveland as the Executive Director of the Cleveland Neighborhood Initiative which is a community development charity focused on decreasing blight and debris thru beautification projects in conjunction with efforts to rebuild and preserve urban ecosystems, green spaces, and neighborhoods.

I'm excited to run for the board because I believe I can provide a fresh perspective and new impact. Our community's land conservation practices, environmental education programs, and management of natural resources affect our quality of life and my goal is to provide a healthier and improved life experience for everyone in Cuyahoga county.

## SUPERVISOR ELECTION VOTING

There are three ways an eligible voter can cast a ballot.

- At the Cuyahoga SWCD office weekdays from 8:30am - 4:30pm and until 3:00pm on October 21;

- By absentee ballot. Request an absentee ballot form from our office or on our website at [www.cuyahogawcd.org](http://www.cuyahogawcd.org). Ballots will be mailed beginning September 30;

- At the annual meeting on Oct. 21, from 4:30pm - 6:00pm at Merwin's Wharf, 1785 Merwin Ave., Cleveland. For more information, contact Patrick at 216.524.6580 x 1000

## Meet the Candidates



### AKBAR TYLER

Akbar is Director of Training and Healthy Homes for EHW. Akbar started with EHW in 1992 and has over 20 years of experience working with in-home assessments, field research, and education and training of tenants and other providers. During his 18 years, Akbar has gained vast experience conducting home hazard assessments, remediation, family education, healthy house training, and research.

Over the years his emphasis in research has evolved to meet the changing needs of the community -from lead poisoning, to asthma, pesticide exposure, and other health conditions associated with substandard housing and air quality.

Akbar has a passion for cultivating people and soil and sharing his knowledge about the value of nutrition and the importance of maintaining a healthy home. Akbar currently lives on Cleveland's East side. At home he can be found working in his garden and tending to his ducks. He is a Licensed lead Risk Assessor, Lead contractor, Radon tester, Licensed Exterminator and BPI Indoor air quality specialist.



*Celebrating 70 years...continued from pg. 1*  
are developed to engage the public in fun and educational activities such as stream cleanups, rain gardens and rain barrels. The SWCD's areas of expertise enabled us to assist communities with their clean water program implementation. Watershed specialists have been successful in securing funding for stream and habitat restoration projects. The agency also secured two USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grants, both of which helped increase public green space.

### Local Leadership

At first it was the Board of Supervisors that promoted good conservation practices. The board members, volunteers with an interest in conservation, were the face of the SWCD for many years. Students, contract, and part-time clerical assistance were the earliest staff. Beginning in the 1960's, thanks to more awareness of environmental issues, the SWCD began hiring people to assist with erosion and sediment control projects. By the 1990's the SWCD hired staff to provide environmental education programs and to work in partnership with other federal, state and local organizations to tackle environmental issues, with a strong focus on water quality. In the early 2000's until now, the agency has grown to 13 staff and water quality remains a primary issue.

### What's next

We are committed to providing excellent educational programs and experiences. We will strive to assist landowners with practices to reduce sediment runoff. We will plant trees and create habitat along streams and in upland areas.

In the past few years, the SWCD has turned to soil health as an important conservation issue.

*...continued*

*continued...*

Soil is the foundation of our lives and we are going back to our roots, so to speak. We know that healthy soil, just like clean water is important to life. We will continue to promote and implement best practices for protection of our natural resources.

**For more information, contact**  
**Janine Rybka**  
**216.524.6580 x1001**  
**[jrybka@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:jrybka@cuyahogawcd.org)**



[www.cuyahogawcd.org](http://www.cuyahogawcd.org)



*Green Infrastructure ..continued from pg. 2*  
level and discover the hidden world of stormwater infrastructure.

The bus tour on the other hand included supervisors and staff from other soil and water conservation districts; both urban and rural districts were represented. Since many of these tour participants were familiar with the fundamentals of green infrastructure we were able to take a deeper dive into some ancillary considerations. These included; funding sources, design challenges, community involvement, construction challenges, maintenance costs and challenges, effectiveness, and return on investment.

**For more information, contact**  
**Brent Eysenbach**  
**216.524.6580 x1011**  
**[beysenbach@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:beysenbach@cuyahogawcd.org)**

# Euclid Creek East Branch Restoration Complete



*Teachers testing iNaturalist and Nature Scavenger Hunt as potential lesson plans for outdoor learning*

Construction is now complete at our Willoughby Hills Stream Restoration Project on the East Branch of Euclid Creek!

The restoration effort provided a unique opportunity to engage with the School of Innovation students and teachers. They were involved from design to planning for long-term management of the site.

The main goal of the project was habitat restoration and flood storage. An undersized culvert was removed, and fish and macroinvertebrate habitat was created. It was so exciting to see the increased number of fish visiting the site already this summer!

Some project highlights include:

- Reviewing 8th grade student design ideas.
- Planting 120 trees and 159 shrubs with 6th-8th graders.
- Planting 600 live stakes with 3rd - 5th graders.
- Planting 800 wetland plugs with 3rd-5th graders and volunteers from Friends of Euclid Creek, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and Cleveland Metroparks.
- Showing off the project to national floodplain managers during the State Floodplain Managers Conference. The site was part of a Rockin' Projects in Euclid Creek tour.
- Working with Lake SWCD to offer teaching plans to utilize the restored space as an outdoor learning lab.

We had a wonderful time managing this project and working with all our important partners.

**Huge thanks to Betsy Kling, Ann Geyser and Jeff Reidel from WKYC for covering this project twice on the Girls in Stem segment!**

[www.wkyc.com/girlsinstem](http://www.wkyc.com/girlsinstem) (April 23 and September 18)

## Terminology

Live stakes are dormant, live woody cuttings of a species with the branches trimmed off.

Wetland Plug plants are wetland seedling species which have been germinated and grown in trays of small cells.

Floodplain is an area of low-lying ground adjacent to a river, formed mainly of river sediments and subject to flooding.

Macroinvertebrates are animals without a backbone that can be seen with the naked eye. These bottom-dwelling animals include crustaceans and worms, but most are aquatic insects.

**For more information, contact Elizabeth Hiser**

**216.524.6580 x1002**

[ehiser@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:ehiser@cuyahogawcd.org)

[www.euclidcreekwatershed.org](http://www.euclidcreekwatershed.org)

## Rocky River Watershed - Royalton Farm restoration

Construction to restore 800 feet of in-stream habitat and floodplain access along the East Branch of the Rocky River at Royalton Farms in North Royalton began in late August and is currently underway. The project, funded by \$199,000 from Ohio EPA's Section 319 grant program and \$132,000 from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, is being implemented by Cuyahoga SWCD through a contract with the design-build team of Enviroscience, Inc. and River Reach Construction.

The finished project will substantially improve in-stream habitat, channel stability and floodplain access.

Beyond that, though, this project reduces sediment loading to downstream, existing high quality in-stream habitats and begins to address the serious problem with channel instability and habitat degradation that plagues the uppermost headwater portion of the Upper East Branch.

The project is expected to be completed this fall. Watch our web site and Facebook page for upcoming volunteer opportunities related to the project!

**For more information, contact**

**Jared Bartley**

**216.524.6580 x1003**

[jbartley@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:jbartley@cuyahogawcd.org)



*Tour participants (below) learn about the project during a construction tour of the site (above)*



[www.myrockyriver.org](http://www.myrockyriver.org)

## What's new in the Cahoon Creek - Frontal Lake Erie Watershed

One year has passed since the Cahoon Creek – Frontal Lake Erie (CCFLE) Watershed program has been established and significant accomplishments have already been made. The Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategy plan (NPS-IS) has been developed and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), qualifying this watershed for grant funded restoration projects. The complete NPS-IS plan can be found on our website, as well as the Ohio EPA



*Floating wetland mat in August*

website for public viewing.

The pilot season of our Floating Wetlands project has turned out to be a successful learning experience. A floating wetland is an artificial platform that allows aquatic emergent plants to grow in water that is typically too deep for them. Their roots grow down into the water creating dense columns of vegetative surface area that allow microbes to grow, forming a slimy biofilm that degrades excess

nutrients and toxins that enter our waterways via stormwater runoff. Our floating wetland has been residing in the City of Westlake's Recreation Center stormwater pond where it not only removes harmful nutrients from our fresh water drinking source, but also provides crucial habitat and shade for the pond's stocked fish population. Before the plants start their senescence stage this fall they will be moved and planted in their final home at a stream restoration site located in North Royalton.



*Sperry Creek in Bay Village*

## BECOME A WATERSHED CHAMPION

The Cahoon Creek – Frontal Lake Erie Watershed has also developed its' own Watershed Champions Program. If you reside within the CCFLE watershed check out our website and take the Watershed Champions pledge to earn your very own champions yard sign! [www.cuyahogawcd.org](http://www.cuyahogawcd.org) - click on programs and Pledges!

For more information, contact  
**Jaimie Johnson**  
216.524.6580 x1004  
[jljohnson@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:jljohnson@cuyahogawcd.org)



*Lakewood family proudly displaying their Watershed Champion sign*

## Tree Care and Root Flare Repair



*This is a ridiculous amount of mulch for this tree. (this is not at Mitchell's)*

**Saturday, October 19, 2019 • 9:00am - 10:30am**

Mitchell's Homemade Ice Cream  
18832 Westwood Drive • Strongsville

**Speaker: Colby Sattler, ISA Certified Arborist**  
**Forest City Ecological Services**

Thousands of trees are planted each year but many are planted incorrectly, too low and mulch piled around the base. These practices cover the root flare of the tree - the area where the trunk meets the roots. The root flare is critical for oxygen exchange and proper root growth. When it is covered up, roots circle around the base restricting the tree's ability to transport water. The bark begins to rot. The tree can suffocate and die. We want the trees planted to be successful and live long, happy lives. Join us to learn how to properly plant and take care of a tree. We'll analyze the trees at Mitchell's to see if they need some help and if so, we will fix them.

Workshop is free.

Registration is required.

Contact Amy Roskilly

216.524.6580 x1005

[aroskilly@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:aroskilly@cuyahogawcd.org)

[www.cuyahogawcd.org](http://www.cuyahogawcd.org)

(click on Events, October 19)

**CUYAHOGA SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

3311 Perkins Avenue, Suite 100  
Cleveland, OH 44114

**Phone** 216.524.6580  
www.cuyahogawcd.org



Printed on



Recycled Paper

Nonprofit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Cleveland, OH  
Permit No. 3666

# Operation Soil Education

Cuyahoga SWCD is partnering with Erie Basin RC&D and the Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau to bring free educational resources to Cuyahoga County students!

Operation Soil Education will help teachers meet the Earth Science standards for soils. School districts should order their free copies today! Kindergarten students can get free copies of the **S. K. Worm coloring books**. Third grade students can get free copies of the **S. K. Worm activity books**.

This project will help students meet state proficiency requirements in a fun way that the children will be sure to remember. The books cover soil composition, soil conservation, soil diversity, and soil biology. S. K. Worm books will also help students understand water, animals and plants.



Students will be better able to observe and describe the composition and properties of soil.

These books can be used as a classroom incentive, rainy day activity, reinforcement for classroom teaching, or as an activity for students who have finished class assignments early.

Operation Soil Education will advance the awareness of environmental concerns associated

with soil and water resources. S. K. Worm is the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) mascot. Learn more about Erie Basin RC&D and S. K. Worm at Erie Basin RC & D. We are very excited that they have extended this opportunity to schools in Cuyahoga County.

We will distribute books to school districts in the fall of 2019.

**For more information, contact**

**Jacki Zevenbergen**

**216.524.6580 x1006**

**[jzevenbergen@cuyahogawcd.org](mailto:jzevenbergen@cuyahogawcd.org)**

