



WINTER 2024



SUMMIT
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Summit SWCD's Quarterly Newsletter



Photo Credit:
Ohio Dept. of Natural
Resources

Honoring our 2023 Outgoing Supervisors!

The Board and Staff of Summit SWCD wish to express our gratitude to our retiring Supervisors who have given us their total dedication and commitment during their entire terms of service.

Mike Rorar

Mike Rorar grew up in Akron and graduated from Kent State University with a BS in Conservation and Forestry and a minor in History. Mike has over 20 years of labor, operational, and management experience in the field of Parks, Recreation, and highway operations. A broad range of responsibilities have included overseeing multi-million-dollar operating and capital budgets, development and maintenance of over 1000 lane miles of streets and highways, park renovation, design, and construction. Currently, Mike is working as the Service Director for the City of Tallmadge, where he oversees the departments of Utilities, (Water/Sewer and Stormwater), Street, Cemetery, Zoning, and Park and Recreation.

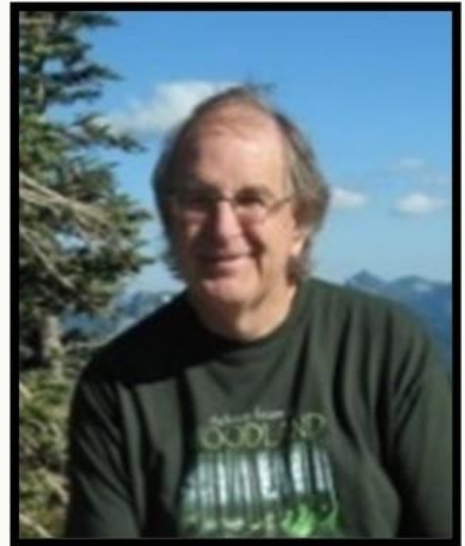


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Danny Ross

Danny Ross graduated from Lincoln Memorial University in 1974 and then completed his Graduate Degree at Duke University in 1975. Danny is a retired USDA NRCS employee with over 33 years of experience in natural resource management with a specialty in Urban Conservation. Over 30 years, he was at the field office level, some of the time at Summit SWCD, and the last 3 years, he was the State Urban Conservationist in Ohio.

He has also taught 20 years part time at Kent State University in the Departments of Geography and Biology. In 2013, Dan went full time as an Associate Lecturer in both departments. His major interests at the University have been in Urban Conservation, Forestry, Wildlife Development, Sediment Transport and Golf Course Design.



Welcome to our New Staff and our New AmeriCorps Service Member!

Sarah Barrow - Watershed Coordinator



Sarah joined SWCD in the Fall of 2023 as a Watershed Coordinator. Prior to this, she spent 8 years as a biology department lab manager and adjunct professor at Stark State College. Sarah has a BA in Biology from the University of Akron and completed her river conservation focused Master's degree from Miami of Ohio in 2022. She works with local communities and organizations in Summit County developing and implementing watershed management solutions. When not working, Sarah enjoys spending time with her wife and dogs, hiking, reading and mindfulness activities. You can often find her out on the water kayaking or participating in local conservation events.

Diane Kavalchek - Stormwater Inspector

Diane Kavalchek has worked for over 25 years in private industry and as a business owner. She holds a BA of Environmental Studies with a focus on stormwater, and land restoration. She worked as a seasonal biologist for Summit Metro Parks. She joined the Summit SWCD team in 2023 as a Stormwater Inspector. With her knowledge from the Erosion, Sediment and Stormwater Inspector certification she will provide MS4 services such as site inspections, providing storm sewer outfall dry weather screening, and pollution prevention programs. In her free time, she restores her property with native plants and has earned an expert level Wild Back Yard through Summit Metro Parks. She enjoys traveling, hiking, and mountain biking.



Zach Laughlin - Stormwater Inspector

Zach Laughlin is a Stormwater Inspector for Summit SWCD. Prior to his employment with Summit SWCD, Zach worked for Fond du Lac Land and Water in Wisconsin as a Watershed Outreach Coordinator. He previously interned for Stark SWCD back in 2014 and ran their cover crop program while doing a few site inspections on the side. Zach is a graduate of Walsh University. He is a native of Stark County. In his free time, Zach likes to play guitar, grow popcorn, and spend time with his family.



Natalie Schroder-Outreach Coordinator

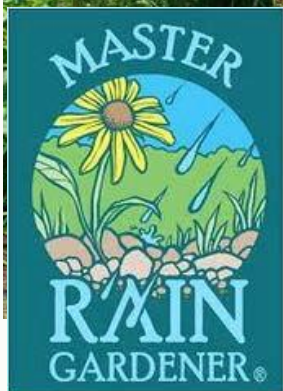
Natalie joined the team in August of 2023 after spending 15 years as a naturalist. She spent the last 8 ½ years with Cleveland Metroparks with a heavy focus of native plants, pollinators and working with residents to help their piece of the planet. Natalie provides education and outreach to the residents of her service area about how they can improve the soil and water by making small changes. She is also in charge of the SWCD mini grant program. In her spare time, she loves hiking, camping, and birding with her kids.



Zachary Randolph AmeriCorps Service Member



Zachary is an AmeriCorps Member serving as the Watershed Outreach Specialist for Summit SWCD. Throughout his service year, Zachary will be developing a variety of outreach content, such as the Streamside Chats Podcast, the Portage Lakes Branch Library Corner, and much more! He will also be assisting with the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program. Zachary currently holds a B.A. in Public History from Baldwin Wallace University with minors in Communication Studies and English and is presently working on a B.S. in Environmental Science at Southern New Hampshire University. In his free time, Zachary is passionate about hiking, camping, reading, and writing!



2024 Master Rain Gardener Courses

SUMMIT SWCD IS PROMOTING THE NORTHEAST OHIO MASTER RAINGARDENER PROGRAM IN 2024!

Train to be a Master Rain Gardener! Learn to design and install your own raingarden and be the raingarden expert in your neighborhood. Master Rain Gardeners help friends and neighbors to learn about, design, and plant raingardens.

Raingardens work with nature to collect and filter rainwater that runs off impervious surfaces like rooftops and driveways. Impervious surfaces lead to increases in surface runoff and often result in increased flooding and stream bank erosion. As water travels over impervious surfaces, it also has the potential to pick up pollutants. Polluted stormwater runoff enters our rivers and lakes and is one of the leading threats to water quality in the United States.

The Master Rain Gardener Program will teach you how to manage rainwater in your own yard. Raingardens naturally manage stormwater by infiltrating precipitation and allowing it to soak into the ground rather than sending it directly to storm sewers and nearby streams untreated.

Registration for the 2024 Winter Online Master Rain Gardener course is now open! Please share with anyone you know who may be interested!

Course Information

- January 29 - March 8
- Weekly Q&A Sessions
- Professional certifications available

Register Here!

<https://neomasterraingardener.org/>

Registration for the 2024 Spring In-Person Master Rain Gardener course is now open! Course Information

- March 15 - April 5
- Location: Beachwood Community Center - 25325 Fairmount Blvd, Beachwood, OH 44122
- Four in-person classes
- Optional field trips

Register Here:

<https://neomasterraingardener.org/>

Please call 330-926-2452 or write to nhildebrand@crwp.org. for any questions that you may have. We are grateful to Washtenaw County Michigan Water Resources Commissioner's Office, Cuyahoga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Chagrin River Watershed Partners for resources and assistance for this beneficial program.

Links courtesy of NEO MRG Newsletter.

2024 Area II Envirothon

HOSTED BY WAYNE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**The 2024 Area II Envirothon is coming up!
Where will it be hosted in 2024?**

Each year, Area 2 Envirothon rotates around 17 Northeast Ohio Counties. Wayne SWCD will host the Envirothon on April 24th, 2024 at the Kidron Community Center and Park. The top four teams advance to the State competition along with the other teams from the remaining Ohio Areas, making 20 teams total at the State competition. Only one team from State advances to Nationals, in Geneva, NY in 2024!

What is the National Conservation Foundation – Area 2 Envirothon?

Envirothon is designed to stimulate and enhance interest in the environment and natural resources among high school students. A competitive outdoor team event, Envirothon offers a unique and enjoyable learning experience.

Teams consists of 5 students, all from the same school. An adult advisor (or advisors) must accompany the team but is not permitted to assist the team during the competition. Envirothon tests students' knowledge of soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology, and current environmental issues.

The current environmental issue for 2024 is “Renewable Energy For A Sustainable Future.” In addition, Envirothon encourages cooperative decision-making and team building. While each student on an Envirothon team is challenged to contribute their personal best, the score that counts at the end of an Envirothon is the team score.

In Ohio, Envirothon is sponsored by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Natural resource and environmental specialists from many agencies, organizations, colleges, universities, park districts, and businesses devise the Envirothon questions and staff the various testing ecostations.

The Ohio Envirothon is financed by grants, donations from businesses and through contributions to the Don Rehl Memorial Envirothon Fund. Many local businesses also provide services and products in support of Area and Ohio Envirothons.

Teachers—check out your local SWCD’s website for more information: Go to: <https://sswcd.summitoh.net/> for more information.



Photo Credit: OFSWCD

2024 Native Plant Sale

ORDERS AND PAYMENT DUE BY MARCH 5TH!

2024 Native Plant and Tree Offerings

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District is once more offering separate bundles of native plants for sale. These bundles each contain 3 plants of the chosen species and the minimum order is one bundle containing 3 plants of the same species.

The herbaceous plants include some of our iconic woodland spring ephemerals and come in the form of bare roots and corms just out of dormancy and are less fragile, so the plants are easy to handle and plant right away when the ground is still soft in early April.

The trees and shrubs are bare-root seedlings and should also be planted promptly to assure successful growth. If adding mulch when planting your trees and shrubs be sure not to place mulch around them any closer than 6 inches from the stem or trunk. This will help to prevent disease, insect infestation, and smothering of the roots.

Remember that when you plant these natives you are helping thousands of species of pollinators and other wildlife, while restoring and sustaining your own ecosystem.

You may call 330-926-2452 for more information on the plants or any questions that you may have.

You can view descriptions and characteristics of the native plants and some pollinator information which may help you decide how to plan your planting arrangements to attract certain pollinators and wildlife, by going to our website at:

<https://sswcd.summitoh.net/featured/2024-tree-shrub-perennial-sale>

Pussywillow



Photo Credit: Albert Vick

Trillium



Photo Credit: Hilltop Hollow.

Photo Credit: Smith, R.W.

2024 Native Plant Kits

Orders and Payment Due by

March 5, 2024

You can help restore Ohio's native vegetation and improve the water quality and health of our lakes and streams by including a Native Plant Garden included in your landscaping plan. The Summit Soil and Water Conservation District is offering native plant kits for sale again this spring, in 2024.

Each kit contains 50 native plant plugs and costs \$160.00. There are 4 types of kits available, with 10-11 varieties of native plants in each kit. One kit will cover around 100 square feet when the plants are planted 18 inches on center. Substitutions of alternate species may be made without notice if necessary. To find out more about the Native Plant Kits and how to order, go to our website at:

<https://sswcd.summitoh.net/featured/2024-native-plant-kit-sale>



“Coneflower”
Visitor filling pollen sac.



Photo by: Mike Vielhaber

Safe and Sensible Salting Practices at Home

Summit SWCD Promoted Winter Salt Awareness Week!

The use of road salt on our streets and sidewalks to keep them safe during the Northeastern Ohio winter season is a necessary evil that we all have come to expect. We may not realize though, that all this road salt we use is extremely harmful to our surface and groundwater and all the species that depend on freshwater for life. The salt has a cumulative effect, adding up over the years and permanently remaining in the water supply. One teaspoon of salt will pollute five gallons of water.

We at Summit SWCD, along with other Northeastern Ohio partners, have promoted Winter Salt Awareness Week, January 22-January 26, 2024. Winter Salt Awareness Week is the brainchild of the Wisconsin Salt Wise Partnership, created to spread education and awareness about road salt use and hazards. To learn more about this program, go to wisaltwise.com/, where you will find many resources for communities and individuals.

To promote wise winter salt usage in our area, we want everyone to know how they can manage their winter salt usage around their homes for safety in the slippery weather, and protect water quality at the same time.

Regular Road Salt, aka Rock Salt, is composed of Sodium Chloride, aka NaCl, and it's the same as table salt except the grains are larger, and granular in texture. We first started using road salt in the United States, to melt snow and ice, in New Hampshire, back in 1938. It worked, and by the winter of 1941, 5,000 tons of salt were used nationwide. Today, we use around 20 million tons. Because the road salt runs off the road during rainfall and snowmelt, all this salt has increased the salinity or saltiness of our water to a point where it has negative effects on our environment, plants, and animals, and has a huge impact on our drinking water.

Freshwater fish and other freshwater plants and animals have not adapted to salt like the animals in the ocean have and they can't survive in salty water. Salt is not only toxic to aquatic life, but the runoff deposits salt in the soil, and plants can't survive when they take it in their vascular system. Excess levels of salts in the soil root zone limit the ability of plant roots to absorb soil water. Water normally flows osmotically from low salt concentration to higher salt concentration. Roots uptake water normally by having a higher salt concentration than the surrounding soil water pool. When there is more salt in the soil than the roots, then the osmosis doesn't work to the plants' advantage but works the opposite way and inhibits growth. The same is true for the fish and bugs because they lose water from their bodies and become dehydrated.

Besides the disastrous effects road salt has on plant and animal life, there is also a great deal of damage to vehicles and infrastructure of all kinds due to corrosion of the metals.

The US EPA has set limits on the allowable levels of chloride in water but hasn't put limits on sodium. In high concentrations, both sodium and chloride are harmful not only to aquatic organisms and other wildlife, but sodium is especially bad for humans with high blood pressure.

So, what can residents do about this "Salty Problem?" People want safe streets and roads in the winter. Most people think that the more salt the community dumps on the roads, the safer they will be. That isn't the case. Road salt is ineffective below 15 degrees Fahrenheit. So, it doesn't matter how much salt you put on, the snow won't melt during those temperatures. When it does melt though, all that salt ends up in the stream, river, and lake, and the community has wasted a lot of money because salt is expensive. It is very difficult for the communities because people call the mayor and complain about the roads, and the mayor calls the Service Department to salt some more. As residents, we need to be more reasonable and stay off the roads unless absolutely necessary in a storm.

Yet, there is hope for solving this problem, and we can supply some hopeful solutions on our own sidewalks.

- Shovel your snow early and often if you are able because that reduces the amount of salt you need to de-ice the surface. Also, pile your snow in various locations, so the salt is not concentrated in one spot when the snow melts.
- Keep salt away from storm drains because that is a direct route for runoff into the stream.
- Follow the application instructions on your de-icer. Less is More!!!!
- Only apply salt to the walkways you use all the time.
- Remember the temperature limitation and don't apply when it is less than 15 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Sweep up the extra road salt. That will also keep it off your grass and out of your soil.
- Use a Potassium Acetate de-icer if you have pets and make sure you wash their feet after walking them.
- Finally, the most important thing to remember is that one 8-ounce coffee cup of salt will de-ice 250 square feet, which is the same as 10 sidewalk squares. Go easy when you salt, please!

Another great resource is the Izaak Walton League's road-salt watch program that people can participate in at: <https://www.iwla.org/water/stream-monitoring/salt-watch>. You can also obtain great information about salt intake from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/be-salt-smart>. As always, if you have any questions about salt usage or other environmental topics, contact Summit SWCD at 330-929-2871, <https://sswcd.summitoh.net>, or sbarbic@summitoh.net.

Get into Action!

Be a Volunteer Stream Scientist!



We're seeking passionate volunteers who want to join our local stream monitoring team for the 2024 field season!

This year, our program includes both the Cuyahoga River Basin and the Tuscarawas River Basin, meaning more opportunities for you to make a meaningful impact in your community.

Our watershed coordinators will teach you all you need to know to measure the health of our local streams, so no prior experience needed! All monitoring equipment is provided, and our coordinators are available to support your efforts throughout the season.

If you're interested in learning more about joining our volunteer program, [click here to visit our webpage!](#)



Common Snapping Turtle
Ohio Division of Wildlife



Green Frog
Summit SWCD

Where Do the Frogs and Turtles Go In Winter?

Have you ever wondered what animals do when the pond freezes over? During the summer, green frogs and bullfrogs can be heard croaking all day and night. Snapping and painted turtles can be seen lounging on logs. But when the warm temperatures leave, these animals seemingly go with it. Reptiles and amphibians do not migrate, they do not stay active, and they don't even hibernate! These amazing creatures do something called brumation.

Brumation is a type of dormancy similar to hibernation, however these hibernators are reptiles and amphibians! Brumation is a state of 'deep sleep' where reptiles and amphibians undergo the same process of inactivity and low body temperature, heart rate, metabolic rate, and respiratory rate drops. All reptiles that brumate do this, even at the bottom of a pond where the water is not frozen.

The main species of frogs that live in ponds in Northeast Ohio are green frogs and bullfrogs. These large amphibians do not leave their home during the winter. Instead, they swim to the bottom of the pond and burrow just enough to keep some skin exposed to the water. They must have skin exposed because during winter, these animals breathe through their skin by absorbing oxygen through the water. Frogs will emerge from brumation when the temperatures have warmed up for multiple days.

Aquatic turtles, like snapping turtles, spend the winter under the bottom of the pond where temperatures are stable. During the summer, when turtles are active, they breathe air with their lungs. When ice forms on the pond, the turtles cannot come up to breathe. To survive this period, aquatic turtles brumate. To get the oxygen they need, turtles breathe through their backsides. By the end of the winter, the pond's oxygen may be dangerously low. If this happens, some turtles are able to brumate without any oxygen for a short time. To do this, turtles go through a process that produces lactic acid, which can be harmful to their bodies. To survive this, the turtles neutralize the acidic waste using calcium from their shell and bones.

The next time you are enjoying a winter walk by a pond, stop and take a minute to think about the animals living under the ice.



SUMMIT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Contact Us!

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Mission Statement:

Summit SWCD provides leadership and advocates for the stewardship of our natural resources and responsible land use through the provision of education, technical assistance, and partnerships in Summit County.

The Summit SWCD is an independent division of the Ohio Department of Agriculture and is funded by the State of Ohio, the Summit County Council, and the Summit County Communities for Clean Stormwater.

In order to provide equal employment opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions in the District will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The Summit Soil and Water Conservation District does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic to the extent protected by law.

Summit SWCD does not discriminate in services with regards to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic to the extent protected by law.

