

ON THE LAND

CUYAHOGA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

LEADING CONSERVATION IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE



Summer 2012

Reclaiming Soils for Urban Agriculture

Reclamation in its broad sense means modifying land, especially soils, to make it suitable for cropping. Given that urban soils are mostly carbon starved, soil organic matter (SOM) is an essential factor to improving and sustaining desired soil functions related to urban agriculture.

Soil organic matter influences formation of soil structure and stability; a key variable of soil health. Good soil structure promotes deeper rooting, better aeration and infiltration, and healthier soil organisms, like earthworms. In other words, SOM allows plant roots to move more freely within the soil to find essential nutrients and water; thereby minimizing the need for supplemental fertilization and irrigation. Think organic!!!

Bio-drilling cover crops, such as tillage radish (<http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ecs/agron/Cover%20Crop/Radishes>), buckwheat, etc. can be used to rebuild urban soil biopores and SOM. Biopores are created by roots, earthworms and other soil organisms. They are usually tube-like in shape and may be continuous for 3 feet or more.

In finer soils, biopores serve as an essential conduit for new roots, air and water. Even in sandy soils, biopores are important to the macroporosity that dominates air and water flow.

Ray Archuleta, a member of the National Soil Health and Sustainability Team (NRCS) professes that "We don't have runoff problems...we have an infiltration problem." In keeping with this, it is definitely worth considering bio-drilling

cover crops to reclaim urban soils for improved crop productivity, infiltration, irrigation-water management, and a myriad of other benefits.

A presentation on *Concepts for Urban Agriculture* can be viewed at www.cuyahogawcd.org under the storm water button or contact Todd Houser at 216-524-6580 x17.

You Are Invited

Learn more about soil health, pollinator habitat and conservation at the [Conservation from the Ground Up workshops on August 29th](#). Helpful information for improving productivity for plants and clean water. Great speakers, informative handouts, and a site visit. www.cuyahogawcd.org



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Conducting Construction Site Inspections

Traveling Workshop

Wednesday, August 22, 8 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Free! Registration required at

216-524-6580, ext. 10.

Rain Barrel Workshop

Thursday, August 23, 6:00 p.m. in Parma

\$60, please register at

216-524-6580, ext. 22.

Conservation from the Ground Up

Wednesday, August 29, CMHA HQ in Cleveland. Hear expert speakers discuss soil health and pollinator habitat strategies for conservation. *Registration \$10.*

Call 216-524-6580, ext. 10.

Conservation Day-Annual Meeting

Saturday, September 29, 9:00 a.m. - Noon at Berea Coe Lake Pavilion. Family friendly activities, Baldwin Creek tour, rain barrels.

Euclid Creek Fall Clean Up and Bioswale Winter Preparation

Saturday, September 8 from 9:00 a.m. - Noon at Wildwood State Park-Marina Lot.

Bring gloves and water. *Free!*

Cleveland Urban Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative

On May 4th, State Conservationist Terry Cosby announced funding for the [Cleveland High Tunnel Program](#) being offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. This program, part of the USDA Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative, will give beginning farmers the ability to extend the growing season on

products harvested late in the growing season.

So far, technical assistance has been given to 54 applicants who applied to be considered for this year's funding. High tunnels, or hoop houses, help to control nutrient runoff, conserve energy, reduce air pollution, and promote soil and plant health and help to extend the Ohio growing season.

Workshops were held to educate local producers on USDA guidelines for implementation of this conservation practice. An estimated \$200,000 dollars was provided to Cleveland and its surrounding urban area. With support from Congresswoman Marcia Fudge and her staff the project has been a hit for urban conservation. Applications can still be completed but will be

considered for the next period of funding. Considering the number of requests, there is a possibility that the program will be continued. Contact Alfonso Norwood at 740-396-2519; 216-524-6580 for more details or alfonso.norwood@mi.usda.gov. Mr. Norwood will also be on hand for the [Conservation from the Ground Up workshops](#).

ELECTION 2012

Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of the state that provide natural resource management assistance to county landowners and other units of local government. The Cuyahoga SWCD is currently funded by municipalities, Cuyahoga County and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Soil and Water Resources. Each SWCD is administered by a board of five locally elected supervisors who serve three year terms. Each year any Cuyahoga County resident 18 years of age or older may vote in the election of SWCD supervisors (board members).

This year, the Nominating Committee presents the following candidates to fill two open positions.

Fred Cash of Richmond Heights, Tom Marsalis of Mayfield Village and Ruth Skuly of Cleveland Heights were nominated. Residents of Cuyahoga County may vote for their favorite candidates at the Conservation Day event on September 29, 2012 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. at the Berea Coe Lake Pavilion or you can vote by absentee ballot. Contact the office at 216-524-6580, ext.10 to request an absentee ballot or visit cuyahogawcd.org for the required request form and instructions and the latest Conservation Day information after September 7th.

Conservation Day is a family-friendly event and will be held on September 29 from 9:00 - Noon.

Please join us!

Dave Kopchak Retires

After 32 years with the USDA-NRCS and 6 with the National Park Service, District Conservationist Dave Kopchak is retiring. Dave served as DC in Wyandot & Medina counties, with very brief tenure in Lorain and Cuyahoga counties. His conservation work was amazingly varied over most of those years, primarily agricultural, but he also had the opportunity to work on urban issues and Ag-land preservation in the 1990s. Dave's last 10 years have been consumed by USDA program and contract administration. His plans include to still work in a conservation related position on a part time basis.

Congratulations Dave!

Fred Cash

Fred recently retired as a partner with the engineering firm of CT Consultants, Inc. where he served as Project Manager under the Municipal Engineering Division. He was employed in the engineering field for nearly 40 years with many years experience in environmental engineering & construction services.



Mr. Cash is a graduate of the Fenn College of Engineering, Cleveland State University. As a

member of many professional organizations, he has presented papers at professional conferences, most recently focusing on the NPDES Phase II regulations and storm water management.

Mr. Cash currently serves as the Cuyahoga SWCD's Vice Chairman; and was re-appointed to serve another four year term by Governor Kasich to the Ohio Soil & Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC). Along with his experience in civil and environmental engineering, he will be able to continue to provide the necessary insight to meet the district's current and future responsibilities during these difficult economic times. Mr. Cash would welcome the opportunity to continue to serve on the Cuyahoga SWCD Board of Supervisors during what he believes is a critical time in conserving and protecting our natural resources. He resides in Richmond Heights and serves on several community committees.



Tom Marsalis

Tom Marsalis received a Bachelor of Science degree from Cleveland State University. Before retiring in 2009, he was Deputy Commissioner of

Cleveland's Water Pollution Control Division with duties that included personnel, budget, fleet maintenance, engineering, construction, inspection, customer service, outreach, sewer repair, sewer cleaning, and the Capacity Management & Maintenance program. He served as the City of Cleveland's representative on the Cuyahoga RAP Technical Committee since 1990 and was an active member of the Northeast Ohio Storm Water Task Force that proposed storm water activities for communities to comply with the USEPA Storm Water mandated requirements. He also wrote the City of Cleveland Storm Water Compliance Permit application and the annual reports. He has lectured on storm water controls at conferences locally, nationally, and abroad and has provided assistance to the SWCD's storm water program. In addition, Tom has been involved in coordinating public events, including the Big Creek clean up and City of Cleveland Public Works Day, both of which the SWCD has been involved.

Tom resides in Mayfield Village. He has served on the SWCD Board and as an Associate Board member for two years.

Ruth Skuly

Dr. Skuly is completing her 4th term on the Board. Currently the board chair, she has served as treasurer and vice chair, led the development of our Strategic Plan, helped with community outreach and completing her ninth year as a director of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Ruth earned a BA in biology from St. Xavier College (Chicago), an MS in environmental biology from Cleveland State University and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from Kent State University. She retired from the Cleveland Municipal School District where she taught biology and environmental science before becoming an administrator. Ruth and her husband reside in Cleveland Heights and they own and manage a tree farm in Coshocton County where they have implemented programs under the federal Farm Bill. She has been instrumental in bringing federal cost share dollars to Cuyahoga County. She has also taken training in storm water management, brownfield redevelopment and is currently enrolled in the Urban Forestry Tree Commission Academy, all of which are relevant to helping to lead the District.

Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District presents
63rd Annual Meeting & Conservation Day

Saturday, September 29, 2012

Berea Coe Lake Pavilion

7 Berea Commons (behind the library)

9:00 a.m. – Noon



Join us for one or all of these fun, family-friendly educational events featuring:

- ◆ Save the rain for a sunny day!! Rain barrel “workshop” (Registration required at 216-524-6580, ext. 10)
- ◆ Take a guided hike along Baldwin Creek to visit the site of three dams scheduled for removal on Baldwin Creek. Learn why they are coming down.
- ◆ Stroll through the soil tent, watch soil demonstrations, play with “dirt” and make a tasty treat!
- ◆ Get near the water to get the scoop on aquatic bugs
- ◆ Learn about the LEAP Native Plants of the Year
- ◆ Fishing anyone? All ages come and learn how to cast (9 a.m. - Noon)
- ◆ Congratulate our Conservation Heroes at 11:00 a.m. (refreshments)

 Conservationist of the Year ~ Al Penko

 Educator of the Year ~ Steven Warner

 Volunteers of the Year ~ Heather & Andrew Blonsky

- ◆ Sip a refreshment and find out how the Cuyahoga SWCD programs get conservation off the ground!!!

**Cuyahoga SWCD
 Supervisor Election**

Five volunteer board members oversee the operations of the Cuyahoga SWCD. Each year candidates are solicited to run for the Board of Supervisors and the public is encouraged to participate in their election. Voting takes just a few seconds and will take place between 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. at the event. See page 2 for candidate information and check our website for the latest Cuyahoga SWCD program information and updates.

Conservation Day 2012 is possible due to the support of our sponsors and conservation partner agencies:

- City of Berea** ▪ **Container Compliance Corporation**
Cleveland Metroparks ▪ **Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau**
LEAP for Biodiversity ▪ **USDA-NRCS**

Come for all or part of the activities. To register call 216-524-6580, ext. 10

Visit www.cuyahogawcd.org for the latest information

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CUYAHOGA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Leading Conservation since 1949!

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*Conserving land and aquatic resources in a developed environment through stewardship, education, and technical assistance.
An equal opportunity employer and provider*

School Scoops

Friday, October 12 Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and Rain Barrel Teachers Workshop

Garfield Park Nature Center
Garfield Hts., OH

Call Amy at 216/524-6580, ext. 22 to
register or for more information

Project WET Workshop is FREE!!!
(\$35 to make a rain barrel)



CONSERVATION FROM THE GROUND UP

For conservation enthusiasts, planners, gardeners,
farmers and landscape professionals.



Wednesday, August 29, 2012

1:00pm - 4:00pm or

5:00pm - 8:00pm

Cuyahoga Metropolitan
Housing Authority Headquarters
8120 Kinsman Road
(1.5 miles from I-490 & E. 55th St.)

A little conservation planning goes a long way! Attendees will gain a better understanding of how healthy soils and hard-working pollinators provide important ecosystem services. Please join us for this hands-on workshop and observe how plants and soils can work together to benefit our lives and our communities.

To register or for more information,
contact Gloria at 216-524-6580, ext. 10