

## Clermont SWCD Rain Garden Project

In the fall of 2008, Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) received a \$50,000 grant from Ohio EPA's Environmental Education Fund to install 10 rain gardens on the campuses of local schools. The Clermont Storm Water Management Department and Greenacres Foundation are partnering with the District on the project.

Teachers and students will participate in the design and installation of the rain garden on school grounds; the planting will occur in the spring/summer of 2009. Students are also helping with the development of an educational booklet that will include rain garden activities/experiments. Participating schools are: Batavia, Bethel-Tate, Clermont Northeastern, Felicity-Franklin, Goshen, Milford, West Clermont, Williamsburg, and the Grant Career Center in Bethel.

Rain Gardens are natural infiltration systems that absorb and filter stormwater runoff. The native perennial plants also provide habitat and food for wildlife. Rain gardens are growing in popularity as they are beautiful landscape features that help to protect our local streams and lakes.

For more information, or to learn more about how you can create your own rain garden, contact the Clermont SWCD at (513) 732-7075.



*A rain garden planted outside the Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District offices in Owensville*

## 17th Annual East Fork River Sweep

On Saturday, April 25, 2009 over 200 volunteers were on hand to give the East Fork a proper spring cleaning. The weather was delightful—clear skies and lots of sun. Walkers and canoers cleaned over 16 miles of river bank and shoreline at Valley View in Milford, East Fork State Park and Stonelick State Park.

Volunteers collected 170 bags of trash (60 gallon trash bags), 38 tires, 6 propane tanks, along with other unusual items including a go-cart frame, mailbox, mattress, and an industrial fan.



Many local organizations and businesses participated and provided support for the event. We would like to thank the Clermont County Office of Environmental Quality, Clermont County Water and Sewer District, Valley View Foundation, ODNR State Parks, Clermont Park District, East Fork and Stonelick State Parks, the Harsha Lake Army Corps of Engineers, ODNR-Scenic Rivers Program, the Cincinnati Nature Center, Buckeye United Fly Fishers, the Grassy Run Historical Society, Stantec Engineers Inc., Meijer, Milford Tech Park, Riverside Coffee Mill, Kroger, and the Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District.

The event was partially funded by a grant received from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention. Special thanks also go to Mark Birkle for donating his time and skills to photograph the event.

To view more pictures check out the *new* East Fork website at: <http://www.clermontswcd.org>



## EAST FORK NEWS AND NOTES SPRING 2009

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## A Personal Note from Watershed Coordinator Becky McClatchey

The East Fork Watershed Collaborative is one of the most dedicated and innovative watershed groups in the state and I am very excited to join the partnership and continue the good work going on in the watershed. Over the past 9 months, I've been working to complete the Middle East Fork and Stonelick Watershed Action Plans and lay the foundation for future community projects throughout the watershed. There is much work to be done and I look forward to working with our partners to restore and protect the East Fork!

## Watershed Planning

In the spring of 2009, the Middle East Fork Watershed Action Plan (WAP) was re-submitted for full endorsement by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). The East Fork Watershed now has 4 out of the 5 sub-watershed action plans completed and endorsed. The plan for the Stonelick Creek sub-watershed is expected to be submitted for endorsement by November 1, 2009.

Watershed Action Plans can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.clermontswcd.org>



A photo of Brushy Creek in the Stonelick sub-watershed: photograph taken by Mark Birkle

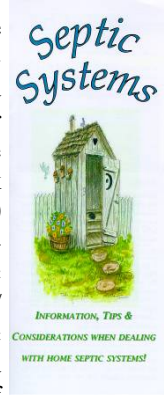
## East Fork Project Round-up

### Avey's Run Project Receives National Award:

The East Fork Watershed Collaborative and Clermont Soil & Water Conservation District's Section 319 (h) Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), received an honorary award from the American Council of Engineering Companies for its stream restoration project along Avey's Run at the Cincinnati Nature Center. Thank you to the Cincinnati Nature Center, Bluegrass Streams, FMSM Engineers-Stantec and JF New for all your hard work and cooperation!

### Highland County 319 grant complete:

The Highland Soil & Water Conservation District, working with the Highland County Health Department and the East Fork Watershed Collaborative, has completed their project to improve the performance of septic systems in the East Fork Headwaters region. The \$233,000 Ohio EPA grant provided cost-share to repair/replace failing septic systems and to support education/outreach. A total of 18 home septic systems were replaced in Highland and Brown County and hundreds of homeowners and contractors were reached through workshops and mailings. Thank you to Highland SWCD, Highland Health Department and Ohio EPA for your efforts to protect the headwaters!



### Boat US Foundation Clean Water Grant:

The East Fork Watershed Collaborative and Little Miami River Partnership (LMRP) received a \$2,000 grant from the BoatUS Foundation to implement an East Fork Marine Debris Prevention Education Campaign. With these funds we developed a brochure, installed 2 educational kiosks and 10 marine debris signs along boat ramps at East Fork Lake. Thank you to the BoatUS Foundation and partners for helping us to expand our educational outreach efforts in the East Fork!

## East Fork Watershed Collaborative

On March 17, 2009 the East Fork Watershed Collaborative (EFWC) convened at Perry Township Hall in Brown County to review East Fork projects and also to discuss future initiatives for the watershed.

Representatives from the Ohio House of Representatives, Clermont, Brown, Clinton, and Highland Counties, along with staff from U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and the City of Milford attended the meeting.

Jason Brown, Land Steward for the Cincinnati Nature Center and former East Fork Watershed Coordinator presented information on the Avey's Run stream restoration project in the Lower East Fork; Chuck Williams, Technician for the Highland SWCD shared insights from efforts in the Headwaters region to replace/repair failing home septic systems; and Paul Braasch, Director of Clermont County's Office of Environmental Quality discussed efforts to protect riparian corridor in the Lower East Fork.

In addition to reviewing projects in the watershed, information on the various federal, state, and local funding programs was presented. The Collaborative is working to lay the groundwork for community projects throughout the watershed to utilize these funding opportunities as they become available.

During a working session, participants had the opportunity to share information and discuss ideas about potential projects. In-



formation collected from the working session is being reviewed and the Collaborative aims to have a list of potential projects to share at the next EFWC meeting.



EFWC Presenters: Jason Brown (top left), Chuck Williams (top right), and Paul Braasch

## How Can I Get More Involved?

If you're interested in:

- Joining the East Fork Watershed Collaborative
- Sharing Ideas for Projects & Partnerships
- Protecting Your Land and Water Quality
- Participating in Storm Drain Labeling
- Adopting a Waterway or Watershed Sign
- Making a donation to Protect the East Fork...and more!

Please contact Becky McClatchey at (513) 732-7075