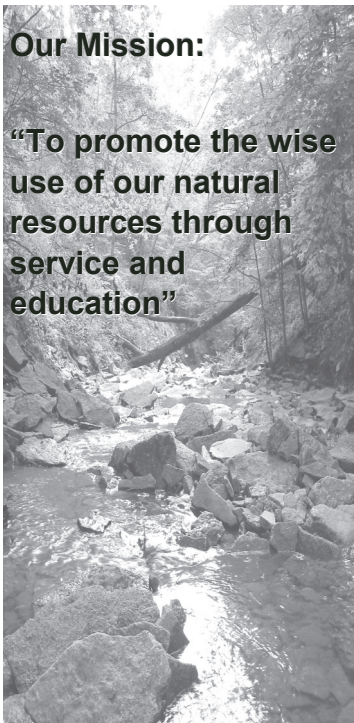


Summer 2011



**Our Mission:**

**“To promote the wise use of our natural resources through service and education”**

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- Judy Krebs
- Susie Steffensen
- Becky McClatchey
- Jacob Hahn

**Sustainable Agriculture: Everyone Benefits**

Written By Susie Steffensen, Administrative Assistant

What is Sustainable Agriculture? Sustainable Agriculture (SA) is the process by which farmers and producers throughout the world explore ways to economically and environmentally improve the way food and fiber is produced and distributed. The primary goals of SA are:

- ⇒ Provide a more profitable farm,
- ⇒ Promote environmental stewardship, such as improving soil health, reducing dependence on non-renewable energy sources, and minimizing the effects of agriculture on water quality and wildlife habitat,
- ⇒ Improve quality of life for farm families and communities

There are as many different SA practices as there are farms and ranches in America. A small sample of SA practices may include:

- ⇒ Utilizing solar & wind power, methane digesters, and other alternative energy sources for farm use
- ⇒ Planting cover crops to prevent erosion and improve soil health
- ⇒ Utilizing water conservation practices to reduce water use and runoff
- ⇒ Developing innovative marketing strategies to improve profitability such as co-ops, locally grown foods, organic farming, farmers markets, alternative crops/livestock, and entertainment farming

*(Sustainable Agriculture Continued on page 5)*

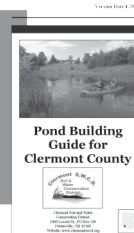
**Rain Barrels & Compost Bins Still Available!**

The Clermont SWCD has a limited supply of plastic rain barrels and compost bins in stock. The rain barrels sell for \$75 and the compost bins are \$45. The 55 gallon barrels come with everything required for simple operation except a down-spout diverter.



You can purchase yours today by visiting our office on the Clermont County Fairgrounds. We accept cash or check; for more information, call 732-7075.

**New Pond Building Guide Available**



If you are contemplating the construction of a pond, check out this new publication produced for both pond builders and landowners. This quick guide highlights important information regarding construction processes, site selection, regulations and contact information for additional assistance.

This easy to read guide explains the steps needed to produce a safe, functional, and healthy pond. Information is specific for Clermont County.

Available from our office or website at: <http://www.clermontswcd.org/ponds.aspx>

# Streams and Watersheds 101

Stream Series: Article #1 (of 4)

Written By: Becky McClatchey, Watershed Coordinator

Record rainfall this spring caused streams in Clermont County, and all across the Ohio and Mississippi River Basins, to swell with excess storm water. Flooding in the Mississippi River has been among the largest and most damaging since the floods of 1927 and 1993. Streams across Clermont County are overflowing their banks, causing headaches for landowners and motorists. Clermont SWCD is inundated (pun intended) with calls from residents asking for help with drainage and flooding issues. These unusual spring rains have drawn much attention to our streams and the connection between the land and water. This heightened awareness prompted our office to begin an article series to provide an overview of streams systems and watershed management information that can help local residents and communities deal with issues of water *quantity* and *quality*.

Streams and rivers are integral parts of the landscape that carry water and sediment from high elevations to downstream lakes, estuaries, and oceans. This is essential for processes such as nutrient cycling, filtering and diluting pollutants from runoff, absorbing and gradually releasing floodwaters, maintaining fish and wildlife habitats and recharging ground water. Healthy streams meander over time and strive to maintain a “dynamic equilibrium” where the amount of water and sediment leaving the stream equals the amount entering the stream. It is important to understand how streams work so that management and land use decisions can support the natural characteristics of streams and maintain this dynamic equilibrium.

When rain falls in a watershed, it runs off the land surface into streams or lakes, infiltrates into the soils or evaporates. As surface water moves downslope, it concentrates in low areas and forms small stream channels. These small channels are referred to as *ephemeral streams* that carry water for very short periods or immediately after rainfall. Downstream from

ephemeral channels are *intermittent streams* (or, seasonal streams) which carry water during wet periods of the year. These streams may be partially supplied by groundwater and disappear when groundwater levels drop. Further downstream, where groundwater levels are large enough to sustain stream flow year-round, *perennial streams* develop.

The source or *headwaters* of a stream is the place from which the water in the stream or river originates. Headwater streams that drain an area less than one square mile are termed *primary headwater streams*. Primary headwater streams are like the capillary of a blood supply network – just as the health of the whole organism depends upon a functioning capillary system, the health of larger streams and rivers depend on an intact primary headwater stream network. Over 80% of stream miles in Ohio are composed of these primary headwater streams.

Every stream type has an impact on the overall health of a *watershed*, which is the total area of land from which water drains into a stream. Watershed

## Increased Funding for SWCD Rain Garden Grants

There are several **\$200** grants available for anyone interested in constructing a rain garden. Clermont County Stormwater Department has provided additional funding to allow for double the funding in years past. Rain gardens are beautiful landscape features filled with deep rooting native plants. They often attract various kinds of wildlife.



Rain gardens collect stormwater from rooftops, driveways, and roads. The native plants help filter and slow down stormwater, which in turn keep our streams and lakes clean.

Contact the district office if you are interested in constructing a rain garden and receiving a grant, at 732-7075. An application can also be found on our website



boundaries are defined by ridges and hilltops – high elevation points from which water will flow and converge toward a common low point. A good visualization is to think about the rim of a bathtub. Water that falls anywhere inside the tub runs downwards to the lowest point (the drain). Water that falls outside the tub onto the floor makes its way to another low point in the bathroom. The rim of the bath tub forms the boundary between two watersheds.

Watersheds occur at multiple scales. They range from large river basins such as the Mississippi River, to watersheds of small streams that might measure only a few acres in size. Everyone lives and works in a watershed. People influence what happens in watersheds – good or bad – by how they treat the natural resources. Management decisions for a single resource in the watershed often affect other resources and the ecological functions of that watershed. Examining land uses around streams helps to determine the watershed characteristics and health. Most watersheds have a mix of land uses. The key is determining how these land uses affect streams and the larger watershed. Article #2 will describe how various land uses affect stream morphology, stability, and water quality.

**Sources:**

- Ohio Department of Natural Resources: Ohio Stream Management Guide*
- The Izaak Walton League of America: A Handbook for Stream Enhancement & Stewardship*

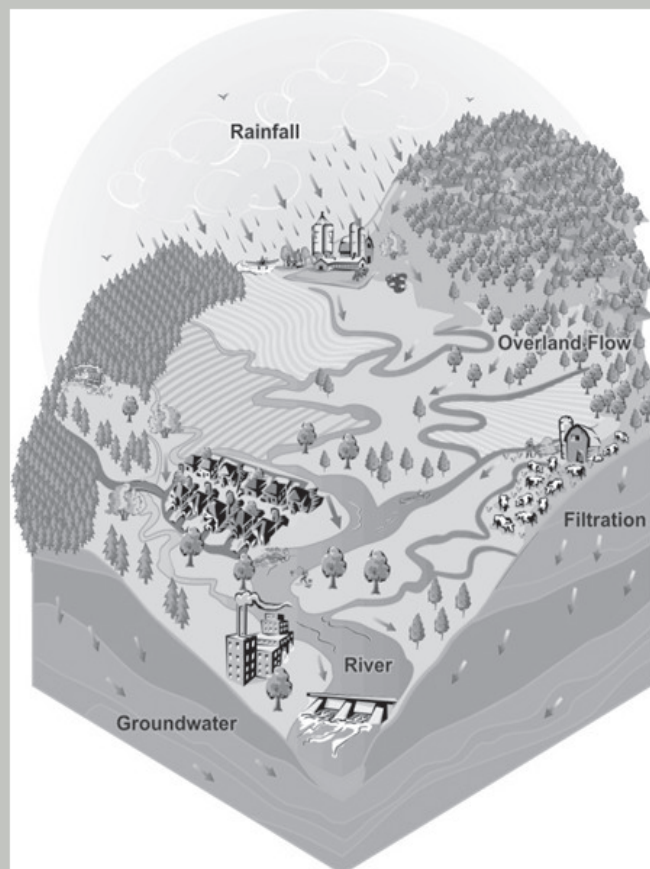


Figure 1. Watershed Diagram: Arkansas Watershed Advisory Group

## Attention Young Farmers!!

The Southern Ohio Agricultural & Community Development Foundation is pleased to announce an unprecedented opportunity for progressive young farmers. The Young Farmer Agricultural Program is designed to facilitate growing an agricultural enterprise to the next level. The intent of the program is to help promote and ensure a strong future in southern Ohio agriculture. Eligible applicants must be age 20 – 38 as of August 1, 2011 and must reside within the 22 counties the Foundation currently serves. A valid driver’s license will be required to verify age and residency.

SOACDF will award up to 8 grants at a maximum of \$25,000 each. The grants will be 50% cost shares with the awardees. Applications, including a business plan, will be accepted for the Young Farmer Agricultural Program from August 1 – August 31, 2011 and will be available at the SOACDF office, your local Farm Service Agency or online at [www.soacdf.net](http://www.soacdf.net) after July 1, 2011. If you have questions about the program eligibility or criteria please call Eastern Region Field Representative Ed Vollborn at 740-441-1479 or Western Region Field Representative Chris Grooms at 937-213-2700.

The Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation serves 22 counties in southern Ohio by providing educational assistance, agricultural and economic development grants. The Foundation has awarded more than \$50 million in agricultural grants alone since the programs began in 2001.



# The great flood of 2011...

## or was it?

By: Jacob Hahn, District Technician

The Cincinnati area has experienced the wettest 30 day stretch in history since record keeping began, and the rains keep rolling through. Localized flooding has caused damage to our streambanks, road infrastructure, and sanity. Harsha Lake has witnessed the highest level of water ever and the Mississippi River basin witnessed extreme flooding from this rainfall event. Although this has been one of the wettest periods in history, how does it compare with historic Ohio River floods of the past?

### Feb. 1884

Considered the biggest flood of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Mt. Washington and Newtown were cutoff from Cincinnati. Ohio River Flood Stage\*: 71.1 feet.

### March 1913

Ohio region received 10 inches of rainfall in five days and 467 Ohioans lost their lives as the Ohio River crested at 62.2 feet. The Ohio River rose 21 feet in 24 hours.

### Feb. 1918

Heavy snowfall throughout the region followed by unseasonably warm weather caused ice jams along the Ohio River. This destroyed many steamboats and thus ended the era of steamboat commerce on the Ohio River. Ohio River Flood Stage: 61.8 feet.

A damaged steamboat lies along the bank of the Ohio River in Cincinnati.



### Jan. 1937

The Ohio Great Miami River Flood peaked twice in Cincinnati at 69 feet and 79.99 feet, nine feet higher than ever recorded. This flood lasted for 19 days and became known as Black Sunday as oil tanks exploded leading to fires in the Ohio and Mill Creek Valleys. One third of Kenton and Campbell counties in Kentucky were submerged in flood waters. One million people were left homeless and flooding took the lives of 385 people (10 in Ohio). This is still the wettest month ever recorded in Cincinnati with 13.68 inches for the month.



Former Grant Memorial bridge crossing Big Indian Creek in Point Pleasant during 1937 flood.

### March 1997

Brush Creek, Scioto, and Great Miami River Valleys received upwards of 12" of rain in 3 days causing the worst flooding in 30 years to this area. Ohio River Flood Stage: 64.7 feet.

### April 2011

Cincinnati witnessed the second highest rainfall month in history with 13.52 inches of rain falling over the region. The timing and the severity of the rainfall allowed the Ohio River to crest at just 55 feet. Harsha Lake in East Fork State Park recorded record high pool levels, topping out at 44+ feet above normal summer pool level, thus preventing major downstream damage.

Matt Maupin Pavilion located at the beach of East Fork State Park on 4-28-2011.



\*The Ohio River Flood Stage is 52 Feet for the Cincinnati gauging station. Normal pool elevation is 25.4 feet.

## East Fork River Sweep Goes On

Despite the unrelenting spring rains and high water at East Fork Lake and the East Fork River, dedicated volunteers came out on April 30<sup>th</sup> to show their support for the East Fork Little Miami River Watershed. Over 189 volunteers contributed a combined 485 hours of community service to clean areas at Stonelick Lake, East Fork Park and the Rivers Edge complex in Milford. Volunteers filled nearly 400 bags of trash and removed other large items including metal signs, tires, scrap metal and plastic chairs.

Many local businesses and organizations provided support for the event. We would like to thank Buckeye United Fly Fishers, Little Miami Inc., United Dairy Farmers, Medary's Market, Bethel IGA, Boar's Head Bait & Carry Out, Sam's Club, McDonald's (Bethel) and Wendy's (Batavia). We would also like to thank Rachelle Rapp (and Milford School colleagues) and the City of Milford for assisting with cleanup efforts at Rivers Edge. Special thanks to Mark Birkle for lending his photography and canoeing skills.

Partnering agencies included the Ohio Department

*(Riversweep Continued on page 5)*



Riversweep cleanup at Stonelick Lake State Park

of Natural Resources: Parks, Watercraft and Scenic Rivers Divisions, Clermont SWCD, Clermont County Office of Environmental Quality, Clermont County Park District, Clermont Stormwater Management Dept., and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

This event was partially supported through a grant provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Recycling and Litter Prevention Program.

(Sustainable Agriculture Continued from page 1)

- ⇒ Integrated pest management
- ⇒ Employing innovative products, technologies, programs and research to increase yields and profits, reduce environmental impacts, and make farm operations more sustainable.

Since 1988, the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program has been the go-to for USDA grants and outreach programs for farmers, ranchers, researchers and educators who want to develop innovations that improve farm profitability, protect water and land, and revitalize communities. NRCS has financial incentive programs available to assist with some of these projects, such as cover crops, high tunnels and solar powered technology for watering systems, to name a few.

Clermont SWCD and NRCS are working towards developing a collaborative in the county for those producers & landowners interested in sustainable agriculture to help them meet their goals and discover what additional resources are needed. We are looking at what barriers may be preventing agricultural producers from moving forward with SA, what their impressions are, and if this is important to them. Whether you have hundreds of acres or just a few, utilizing SA practices can improve your profitability and environmental health. Information and specific success stories can be found at the SARE website: [sare.org](http://sare.org). If you have an interest in contributing to a Sustainable Agriculture Group in Clermont County, please contact the District at 513-732-7075 or [clermontswcd.org](http://clermontswcd.org).

**Clermont County Farm Bureau**



A membership organization which fights for fair property taxes, property rights, and the interest of agriculture.

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### ***Calendar of Events***

SWCD Office Closed (Holiday)	July 4
SWCD Board Meeting	July 13 –6pm
Clermont County Fair	July 24-30
SWCD Board Meeting	August 10 –6pm
SWCD Office Closed (Holiday)	Sept. 5

*If your address is incorrect or you would like to be added / removed from our mailing list, please contact us at (513) 732-7075*

All NRCS / SWCD programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status.