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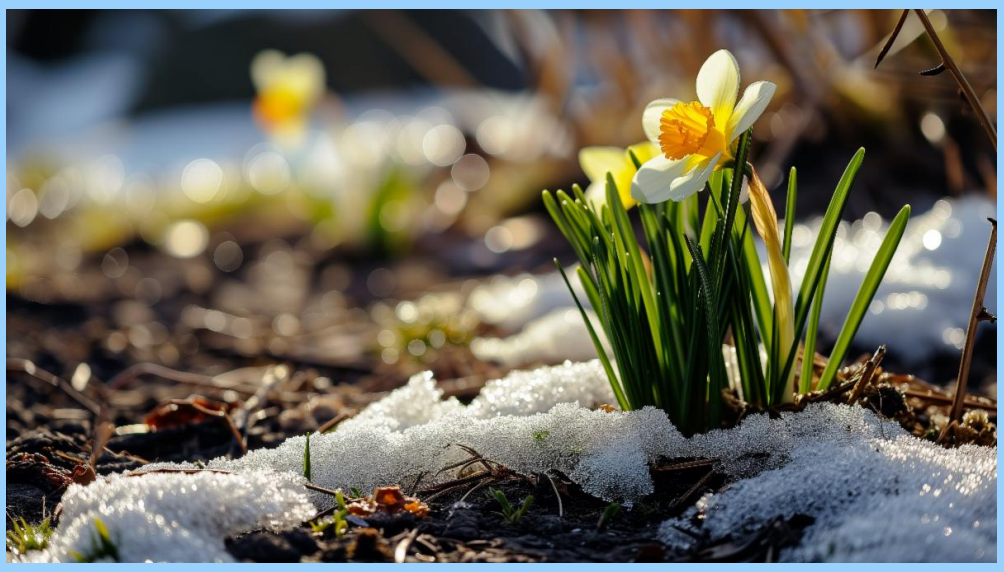
Hamilton County Storm Water District E-Newsletter

Spring 2025 Edition

Quarterly News & Updates from your Partners at the Hamilton County Storm Water District



Storm Water District Dive:
MCM2 - Public Education and Participation

Get to know your Storm Water District! This section will highlight services provided by the Hamilton County Storm Water District. Each quarter, we'll feature Minimum Control Measures (MCMs), review FAQs, or highlight TMDLs.

This quarter we're reviewing MCM2 - Public Education and Participation.

The purpose of MCM2 is to respond to citizen requests for stormwater information and provide stormwater control recommendations. It also involves the public in stormwater-related activites and the implementation of a stormwater management plan.

Volunteers help install live stakes along the Mill Creek.

HCSWD MCM2 Fact Sheet

Visit the HCSWD Website

MCM 2 District and Co-Permittee Permit Compliance Activities include:

- Public Reporting
- Public Involvement Activities
- SWMP (Stormwater Management Program) Plan Development and Implementation
- Public Access to District Information

Check out the MCM2 Fact Sheet linked above, and browse the website for even more information.

News & Highlights

Storm Drain Labeling

Storm drain labels are small but significant tools

used to raise public awareness about the connection between storm drains and local water bodies. Typically, these labels are placed on or near storm drains with messages like “No Dumping – Drains to River” or “Only Rain in the Drain.” They serve as visual reminders that what enters the storm drains goes directly into nearby rivers, lakes, or streams without treatment.

By labeling storm drains, communities can help prevent pollution by reminding residents to dispose of hazardous materials properly. They also play a key role in environmental education, encouraging responsible behavior, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for clean water. Whether it’s preventing litter or ensuring that fertilizers and pesticides are used sparingly, storm drain labels are a simple yet effective way to protect our waterways.

Storm Drain Labeling events are great for community groups, scouts, and other groups looking for fun community service projects! The Hamilton County Conservation District is looking to host storm drain labeling events with communities in the following watersheds in 2025:

- Muddy Creek: Green Township, Colerain Township
- Taylor Creek: Whitewater Township
- Rapid Run: Delhi
- Mill Creek: Sharonville

For more information about scheduling a Storm Drain Labeling event in your community, contact Sarah Meadows at: sarah.meadows@hamilton-co.org, (513) 946-8032

Native Plants and their Potential Role in Mitigating Road Salt Pollution

A researcher, Megan Rippy, a researcher and assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at Virginia Tech, is exploring how native plants could help reduce the impact of road salt pollution in cities. During winter, salt is spread on roads to melt ice, but this salt can leach into stormwater systems, damaging

plants, soil, and water quality.
This problem is particularly serious in stormwater detention basins, where high salt concentrations harm both native and non-native plants.

Rippy is leading the research on how certain plants might help tackle this issue, with a focus on salt-tolerant species and their potential for cleaning up excess salt. While plants like cattails show some promise in absorbing salt, the study reveals that even the most salt-tolerant plants can only do so much. The findings suggest that combating road salt pollution will require a mix of approaches, such as choosing the right plants and rethinking how much salt is used in the winter.

Rippy's work highlights the importance of designing cities in ways that promote plant health and environmental sustainability. It also takes into account how climate change might affect salt levels and plant stress, pushing for more research into how changing conditions could influence the effectiveness of these plants. Ultimately, the goal is to create more resilient cities that balance healthy ecosystems with effective stormwater management.

Source:
The impact of deicer and anti-icer use on plant communities in stormwater detention basins: characterizing salt stress and phytoremediation potential - https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969724084687?via%3Dihub#coi0005

Spring Wildflowers in Ohio

With spring arriving in Hamilton County in full force, HCCD is celebrating by highlighting some of Ohio's wildflowers! Spring ephemeral wildflowers take advantage of the full sunlight available on the forest floor before trees and other plants leaf out for the season. This allows wildflowers to grow and develop with less risk of competition, and they

provide an important food source for many early spring pollinators.

Image 1.

Blue Eyed Mary is a showy bi-colored woodland wildflower that blooms April - May. It presents in extenstive colonies and finds its home on wooded floodplains and lower slopes of rich woods.

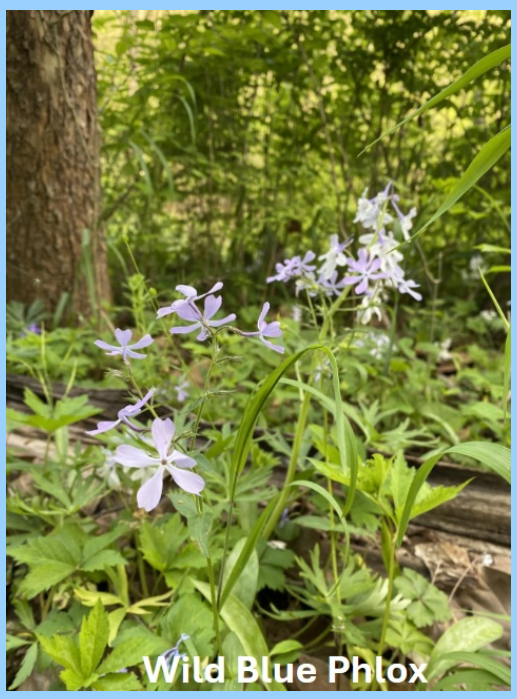


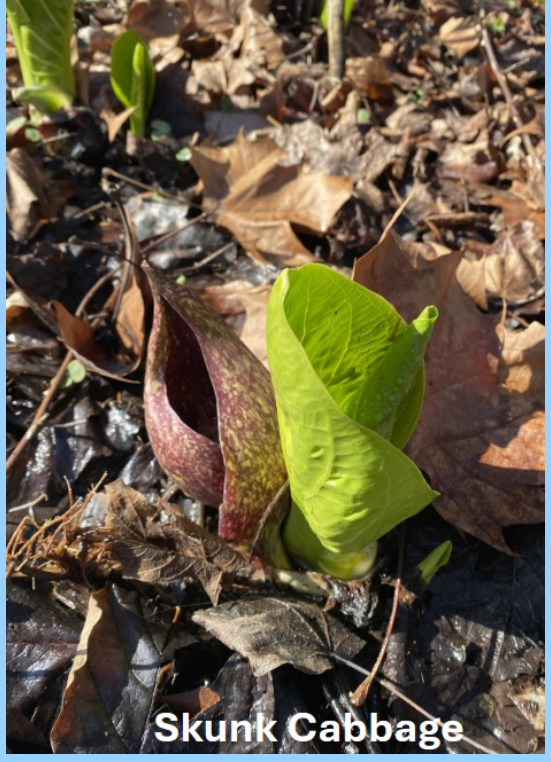
Image 2.

Wild Blue Phlox is a spindly perennial with widely spaced opposite leaves and showy blue-purple flowers. They are found in a variety of woodlands, including cut-over and regenerating sites. The flower's very long corolla tube, with nectaries deep in the base, selects for pollinators with very long tongues. Swallowtail butterflies are especially attracted to the flowers. A vibrant patch of phlox will often entice a constant procession of butterflies to visit.

Image 3.

Skunk Cabbage is a flowering perennial plant and is one of the first plants to emerge in the spring, with its habitat being soggy soil of spring-fed wooded wetlands. The flowers appear before the leaves and are characterized by a mottled maroon hood-like leaf called a spathe, which surrounds a knob-like structure called a spadix. The spadix is actually a fleshy spike of many petal-less flowers. As the flowers mature, the spathe opens more to allow pollinators

such as flies and carrion beetles to enter and pollinate the flowers.



Stormwater Best Practices

Check Dams

Check dams are relatively small, temporary structures constructed within concentrated-flow areas such as swales, channels, and ditches. Check dams are a erosion and sediment control practice and are most effective when combined with other erosion and sediment control practices.

Check dams are useful for reducing erosion in areas where channels are not vegetated or channel lining is not feasible. They can slow down flow velocities and help reduce erosion, but should not be used solely for sediment trapping. Check dams are typically made from materials like rock, sand-filled bags, or fiber logs, and should not be constructed using straw bales or silt fences. They are effective in concentrated-flow areas draining 10 acres or less, where velocity exceeds 4 feet per second.

When designing check dams:

- Construction staff should ensure that the downstream dam's crest is at the same elevation as the upstream dam's base.
- The dam should extend from bank to bank and have a center that is no more than 24 inches high, with a height at least 6 inches lower than the edges.
- Materials should be implanted at least 6 inches into the sides and bottom of the channel.

Check dams are not a complete solution for erosion or sediment control and should be used alongside other methods. They can reduce a channel's hydraulic capacity and create downstream turbulence, potentially increasing erosion unless additional protection is provided. Also, ponded water behind the dams can harm existing or new vegetation. Prior to installation, upstream flow should be diverted, and regulatory approval is necessary for installation in streams or waterways.

Source:
https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/bmp-check-dams.pdf

2025 Upcoming Events

2025 Rain Barrel Art Project

March 29 - April 24

The Rain Barrel Art Project was created to promote the use of rain barrels throughout the Ohio River Valley through a creative and educational medium and is designed to educate people on environmental issues like stormwater

runoff, watersheds and water conservation. These rain barrels will be available for public viewing at the Cincinnati Zoo from March 29 - April 24. Barrels will be auctioned from April 1 - 25 at 10:00am, with 4 barrels being raffled. All proceeds support environmental education.

Rain Barrel Art Project Auction and Raffle

Youth Conservation Board

April 1 - May 1

The Hamilton County Conservation District is forming its *NEW* Youth Conservation Board, giving a voice to Hamilton County high school students who are passionate about conservation leadership in their community. Accepted students will be expected to adhere by the Youth Board bylaws and may be elected to Youth Board roles such as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Youth Board will work together to design and implement a conservation project with mentorship and funding from HCCD. Students will meet once a month to discuss project details and any additional District events they play a role in.

Apply Here

Ohio Stormwater Conference

May 8-9, 2025

OHIO stormwater conference 2025

The 2025 Ohio Stormwater Conference offers a unique opportunity to directly interact with over 1000 representatives from many organizations, all of whom have a direct interest in stormwater quality issues and technologies.

Register Here

Post-Construction Water Quality Workshop

May 21, 2025

Join us for an informative session on post-construction water quality requirements for development sites in Southwest Ohio. A panel of engineers and regulatory professionals from Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren counties will share insights on the review, approval, inspection, and enforcement of water quality standards, focusing on the OEPA Construction Site General Permit and the MS4 Permit.

Register Here

Master Rain Gardener

October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, and Nov. 13

The MRG course is a 6 day course that takes place over 7 weeks. During the course, students are guided through the rain garden design and installation process by experienced regional professionals. Homework is assigned after each class. By the final day, students will have created their own custom ready to go rain garden plan, complete with location size and planting design.

Register Here

Storm Water District Partner's Contact Information

Hamilton County Planning+ Development

Phone: (513) 946-4550

HAMILTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Phone: (513) 946-7800

HAMILTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Phone: (513) 946-8020

www.hcswd.org