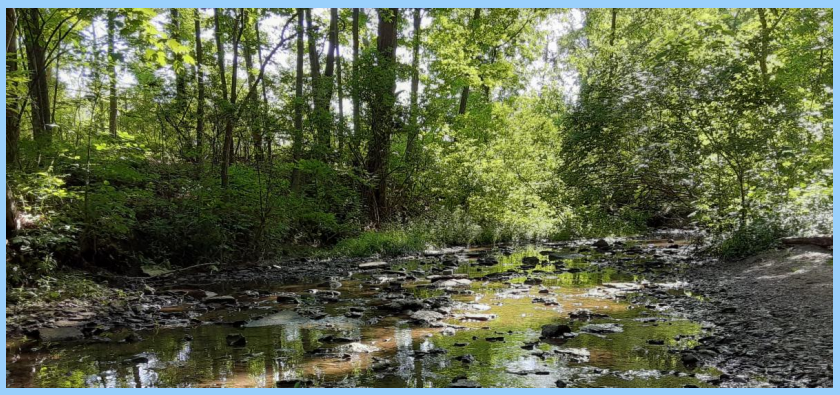
Hamilton County Storm Water District E-Newsletter

Summer 2023 Edition

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



News & Highlights

Summer Featured Co-Permittee: City of Montgomery

Most people understand that trees have many benefits - from absorbing carbon dioxide, providing habitat to wildlife, and of course, soaking up storm water. We spoke with Mike Rogers, Certified Arborist and Public Works Assistant Director for the City of Montgomery (a Tree City USA for the past 27 years) to learn more about how they incorporate trees into their annual planning, community engagement, and why it is an important facet of their city.

A History of Montgomery as a Tree City:

- **Early 1990's:** Now-retired Terry Willenbrink worked in the city's Parks

Department, and was involved with the Beautification and Tree Commission.

- **1994:** Terry became the city's first arborist.
- **1996:** Montgomery achieves it's first Tree City designation.
- **1997:** Terry conducted a tree inventory to begin long term planning.
- **2002:** City Ordinance established outlining a comprehensive tree maintenance program, along with regular community engagement opportunities.
- **2019:** Mike Rogers, who worked and trained under Terry for 13 years, becomes Public Works Supervisor and Certified Arborist.
- **2021:** Mike becomes Public Works Assistant Director and continues Terry's work planting and maintaining Montgomery's Urban Forest.

Montgomery has earned the 'Growth Award' for their work 24 of the 27 years it has been a Tree City. They aim to plant 100 trees a year, frequently exceeding and sometimes even doubling their goal. We spoke with Public Works Assistant Director Mike Rogers about how Montgomery's tree programs work, and the value they bring to their community.

Community Planning & Maintenance

Including trees in planning has helped "...make the community and city park system the great place it is. In 1975, Montgomery Rd became a tree divided boulevard, this transformation shaped our entry into the city limits, and you know you are in Montgomery when you see that" says Mike. The City Arborist actively works with the Community Development department to try to institute a proactive approach. Mike explains that they "...meet with builders prior to construction to discuss our expectations with regards to tree protection, removal and installation. City staff review development project plans and provide feedback/concerns on the landscape design portion of the project."

Montgomery handles most of their own tree care and all city plantings in-house, spending 2000 staff hours on tree related projects in 2022. Their staff attend numerous arboriculture related trainings throughout the year to keep up skills and certifications. They do many of their own removals as well, with the exception of very large trees. A tree company manages fertilizations, oil treatments, and soil applications on trees in rights of way and city parks.

When planning a new planting, they adhere to the philosophy of 'Right Tree, Right Place'. In their right of way tree program, residents tend to prefer smaller, ornamental tree types. In the city park system, they try to include a diverse species selection and will plant the largest size tree the space will allow for. Mike tells us that some trees they have consistently had success with include Redbud, Black Gum,

Serviceberry, Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak, and 'Legacy' Sugar Maple, and they plant a mix of native and non-native species. The City uses local nurseries for purchase, and typically plants 1-1/2" - 2" caliper trees, or 6-7' conifers.

Community Engagement

During his tenure, Mike tells us he has "...met several new homeowners and residents to the city who were drawn here in large part because of the trees and parks," and that this is a consistent sentiment he hears. The city actively provides opportunities for residents to get involved with their tree work. Mike leads the Beautification and Tree Commission, involving 7 dedicated residents. The Commission handles all things beautification and trees - annually planting thousands of flowers by over a hundred of volunteers, organizing tree walks, and more.

One longstanding educational program enjoyed by the community is their annual tree walk. These walks often include a tree planting demonstration, general tree information, and have recently been updated to include QR codes throughout the parks, providing short educational videos on select trees with a goal to educate a wide age range and encourage residents to enjoy the parks. Mike reports that these new digital tree walk videos were well received with positive feedback from residents.

There are two popular programs Montgomery residents can utilize to participate the city’s planting efforts. The Right of Way Tree Program was originally developed to increase urban canopy, and "...residents feel a sense of ownership because the trees are in their front yard...", says Mike. The program is a partnership between homeowners and the city. The city provides expertise on species selection for that yard and location and plants the tree for them. The resident helps by watering and caring for the tree as it gets established, reducing staff workload. They may also choose to participate in the Commemorative Tree Program. Once again, residents receive a personal consult with the city's arborist (Mike) to select their desired location and tree type that is suitable. They get an engraved plaque marked with their chosen wording and the tree species name placed at the base of the tree.

Check out the Summer BMP section below for more information on how urban trees can be utilized to make a difference for storm water management!

Household Hazardous Products Disposal - Community Partners Wanted!

"Only Rain Down the Drain!"

Hamilton County R3Source is looking for community partners to make Household Hazardous Products (HHP) disposal more accessible and convenient for residents. They are piloting community drop-off events for up to five communities in 2023 and hope to expand the program to ten communities next year! These can be single or multi-day events.

Hamilton County R3Source will provide the following for communities: training on how to safely collect HHP, collection materials, safety equipment, an onsite chemist during the first day of the event to assist staff and volunteers, pick-up service of materials collected, assistance promoting the program if needed, and registration services if needed.

The community would be responsible for providing a space for HHP collection, volunteers to collect HHP from residents, and promotion for their program.

Lastly, communities can choose what they do and do not want to collect from the following list: batteries, fluorescent bulbs, pesticides and fertilizers, motor vehicle fluids, kerosene, solvents, thinners, oil-based paints, driveway sealers and tar, cleaners, and propane tanks.

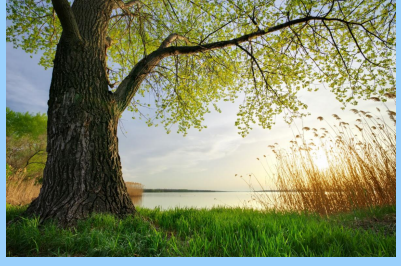
If you are interested in your community hosting an event in 2023 or 2024, contact Gage Bradford at 513-946-7746.

HHP Event Webpage

Stormwater Best Practices

Tree Preservation & Protection

Growing and preserving tree canopies is an issue that has come to the forefront of most municipalities' planning discussions as development increases and we lose mature wood



lots. Tree canopies are especially important in urban areas - they provide shade, offset the urban heat island effect by increasing shaded areas and decreasing temperatures, filter and absorb water to help prevent flooding; and improve air quality.

Many municipalities are creating urban forestry master plans and putting together concerted efforts to maintain and grow their tree canopies. The US Forest Service has recently put out of a notice of funding specifically to be used for urban tree canopy growth. Tackling this issue requires getting a lot of different stake holders involved, and planning at a regional scale. But like any big issue, individual efforts also matter!

Tree preservation and protection during construction plays an especially important role, because the goal is to protect existing trees and the environmental services they provide vs. trying to mitigate loss with smaller replacements after the fact. This detail is mirrored throughout various regulatory permits & manuals:

- Per Section G.2.a of the OEPA Construction general permit, "The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan shall make use of practices which preserve the existing natural condition as much as feasible. Such practices may include… designation of tree preservation areas or other protective clearing and grubbing practices."
- This section of the CGP also points to Ohio's Rainwater and Land Development manual, which specifically covers Tree and Natural Area Preservation in Chapter 7.3. This chapter outlines specs and states *"A tree's root zone is critical to its ability to survive.* ***Damaging the root zone during construction will lead to the tree's decline and ultimately its death within 1 to 10 years****. Ninety-five percent of a tree's roots are in the upper 12-18 inches of soil, and the majority of the roots supplying nutrients are found just below the soil surface.* ***The critical root zone extends at least to the drip zone of a tree and must be protected from soil compaction, grubbing, filling activities, and other disturbances****."*
- In Table 8.2.2, A Construction Sequence for Small Construction Sites, it lists the **first step in a construction sequence** as marking off the dripline of trees that will be protected during construction.

The typical detail for tree protection is orange snow fence supported by stakes, installed beyond the drip line of the tree. Often, the biggest mistake we see is tree protection installed directly around the trunk (or not installed at all, on trees that are intended to be preserved!). Although it is

important to protect the trunk, we really want to be protecting the roots of the trees. Failing to protect the root zone or perform timely treatment will lead to tree decline/death, saddling the property owner with the unfair cost of treatment/removal/replacement.

Symptoms of decline include smaller and fewer leaves, dieback in the crown of the tree, and premature fall color. Stressed trees are more prone to attack by certain diseases and pests, which further a tree's downward spiral.

If you intend to preserve a tree, it is important to protect it! Install your snow fence outside of the dripline of the tree, and make sure to keep heavy equipment, stock piling, and lay down areas away from the tree. This is a way to help grow and maintain tree canopies in the areas we live and work in, one tree at a time.

You can find additional resources at https://www.treesaregood.org/
(brought to you by the International Society of Arboriculture)

The Ohio Division of Natural Resources also has several good urban tree resources. You can contact our designated regional ODNR Urban Forester with questions and for more resources. ODNR Urban Forestry.

TCA TREE COMMISSION ACADEMY

TREE CITY USA®


Urban Forestry Toolbox

Sump Pumps- Know The Facts!

Where can a sump pump discharge?

- Sump pumps *may* discharge to a natural ravine, gully, roadway ditch, or storm sewer at least 15 feet from any property line on the same property as the pump.
- They ***may not*** discharge into a paved or unpaved street, road, alley, parking lot, building sewer or sanitary main line.

When do you need a permit when working with sump pumps?

Installation **or** *replacement* of sump pumps both require a permit and inspection.

How do you get a permit?
Call the Plumbing Division at Hamilton County Public Health at 513-946-7854. There is a printable permit application on the website listed below.

How do you schedule an inspection after a permit has been obtained?
Hamilton County Public Health will send you a postcard with the permit information and our phone number. Just call the listed number to schedule an inspection.

Who obtains the permit?
Your contractor will obtain the permit. Search our database of registered and bonded plumbing contractors to help you with your project.

Click the link below for more information about plumbing permits & fees.

Website - Information & Permit Application

2023 Upcoming Events

Warren Co SWCD Urban Chat: Soil Considerations for Stormwater Design

August 2nd

Join Warren County SWCD in person or via Zoom for their second Urban Chat of the year, Soil Considerations for Stormwater Design, featuring guest speaker Jay Dorsey of The Ohio State University Stormwater Management Program. Jay Dorsey is a water resources engineer with 30 years experience addressing watershed management issues through watershed planning, watershed modeling, site evaluation, stream assessment, and all facets of stormwater management. This program will include an overview of soil groups and characteristics, an explanation of parameters used in soil loss equations, and information on soil study methods. Professional Development Hour can be claimed through the Ohio Board of Engineers and Surveyors. Credit hour has also been pre-approved by Envirocert (applicable for CPESC, CPSWQ, and CPISM). Lunch will be provided for in-person attendees. This program starts at 12 pm on August 2nd, the program is free but registration is required. Registration closes July 26th.

Website & Registration

Master Rain Gardener Course

August 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th & September 8th

The Master Rain Gardener course is a 5 day course that takes place over 6 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. Once the course is completed, students are required to build their own rain garden. If building a rain garden is not an option, students may volunteer to maintain/rehab an existing rain garden for 1 year as a substitute (instructors will help pair students with an appropriate rain garden). Once a student has completed these things, they will be awarded their Master Rain Gardener Certification, a MRG t-shirt, and Rain Garden yard sign! Registration for the Fall 2023 course closes on July 31!

Website & Registration

Volunteer Appreciation & Conservation Celebration

August 18th

Join the Hamilton County Conservation District at Gorman Heritage Farm on August 18th for the Volunteer Appreciation & Conservation Celebration. This evening will celebrate our dedicated volunteers, hardworking partners, and the public we serve. Spend the evening exploring the farm, enjoying good food, visiting with staff, and listening to Celtic music. Registration is recommended but not required.

Website & Registration

HCCD 2023 Native Tree & Shrub Sale

September 9th

The Hamilton County Conservation District and the

Great Parks of Hamilton County are partnering once again to host a Native Tree and Shrub Sale. The sale offers a variety of native trees and shrubs at a low cost. Planting trees and native plants can reduce the negative effects of stormwater runoff. Trees and native plants can intercept and hold large amounts of water while reducing soil erosion by slowing down the speed of stormwater runoff. Native plants are adapted to our local climate and provide rich habitat for local wildlife. Plants will be in 3-gallon containers and will be 1-5ft. tall. Ordering opens July 17th and closes August 25th. Plant pickup is September 9th, from 9 am to 1 pm.

Website & Order Form

Southwest Ohio & Northern Kentucky Stormwater Field Day

September 21st

Plan on joining us on September 21st to learn how developers and contractors are meeting sediment erosion control and stormwater BMP requirements that protect local waterways. This day-long workshop will begin with demonstrations of BMPs led by experts eager to answer questions and share their knowledge. Attendees will then board the Belle of Cincinnati River Boat for lunch and speaker sessions about industry regulations and trends. Early bird registration closes on August 14th, click this link to register.

Website & Registration

6th Annual Ohio Stormwater Awareness Week

October 1st-7th

Stormwater Awareness Week is a statewide program that encourages communities to utilize newsletters, social media posts, and educational events to raise awareness of how rain water moves through infrastructure and our environment. Some examples of community efforts can include rain garden construction, native plant installation, neighborhood cleanups, and much more! Anyone can participate in Stormwater Awareness Week, follow the link to learn about resources and how you can get involved!

STORMWATER WEEK
Clean Streams Start HERE

Website

Kentucky Stream Crossing Survey Training Registration

October 3rd-4th

The Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) and partners have developed a standardized protocol to assess fish passability and condition at road stream crossings in the Southeast. This protocol was originally developed by the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) protocol, and tailored to the Southeast by SARP. It outlines various measurements and assessments to be collected at each site that is then used to determine if the crossing is passable to aquatic species and risk of habitat degradation. This protocol was designed to be a rapid assessment in an effort to reduce the amount of time spent at each crossing and requires very little field equipment and people power. In order to accurately use the protocol and enter data into the Barrier database, participants must attend a 2-day training. This training is free to all registrants. Registration will be limited to 25 (limit two representatives per organization). Contact adam.lehmann@hamiton-co.org with questions.

Information & Registration

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

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