

SUMMIT
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

YEAR IN REVIEW

2025



"To be a trusted leader of an engaged community in support of a sustainable, natural environment for future generations."

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

The district has assisted 29 of the 31 communities in Summit County with the implementation of programs to better manage the quantity and quality of stormwater and to better educate the citizens of Summit County on a variety of water quality and conservation topics. District programs are divided into three program areas: Stormwater, Education, and Watershed.

These programs are overseen by a five-member Board of Supervisors who are publicly elected for three-year terms. They serve as volunteers and do not receive any financial compensation.

Board of Supervisors

Ana Burns, Chair

Andrew Brown, Vice Chair

Rob Curtis, Secretary

Greg Zimmerman, Fiscal Agent

Sarah Blakley, Member

Mission Statement

Summit SWCD provides leadership and advocates for the stewardship of our natural resources and responsible land use through the provision of education, technical assistance, and partnerships in Summit County.

District Staff



Brian Prunty
District Program Administrator



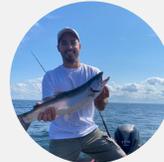
Bethany Fortune
Administrative Assistant



Brandon Andresen
Stormwater Specialist II



Sasha Mikheidze
Stormwater Specialist



Alex Weber
Stormwater Inspector



Zach Laughlin
Stormwater Inspector



Matt Knittel
Outreach Coordinator



Sarah Barrow
Watershed & Outreach
Supervisor



Abbie Hogue
Outreach Coordinator



Kendra Heiser
Watershed Coordinator



Alex Kirchner
Seasonal Conservationist



Erin Burke
Watershed Coordinator

EDUCATION PROGRAM

The goal of the Summit SWCD's Education and Outreach Program is to reach the residents of Summit County with a conservation and natural resource management message. We believe that education is the key to an informed and involved citizenry and therefore we provide both information and activities for the varied audiences in Summit County. These audiences include residents, teachers, students and youth groups, faith-based groups, business owners, landowners, developers, engineers, contractors, and community and civic leaders. A variety of information and education materials are available from the Summit SWCD office and the SWCD Staff is available to provide education presentations on a wide variety of natural resource issues.

Our Outreach and Education team had a major shift this year. Outreach Coordinator Sandy Baric retired after 18 years with the district. Two new Outreach Coordinators were hired to fill our open positions: Abbie Hogue, who was the Outreach Coordinator at Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Matt Knittel, who was a naturalist with Cleveland Metroparks.

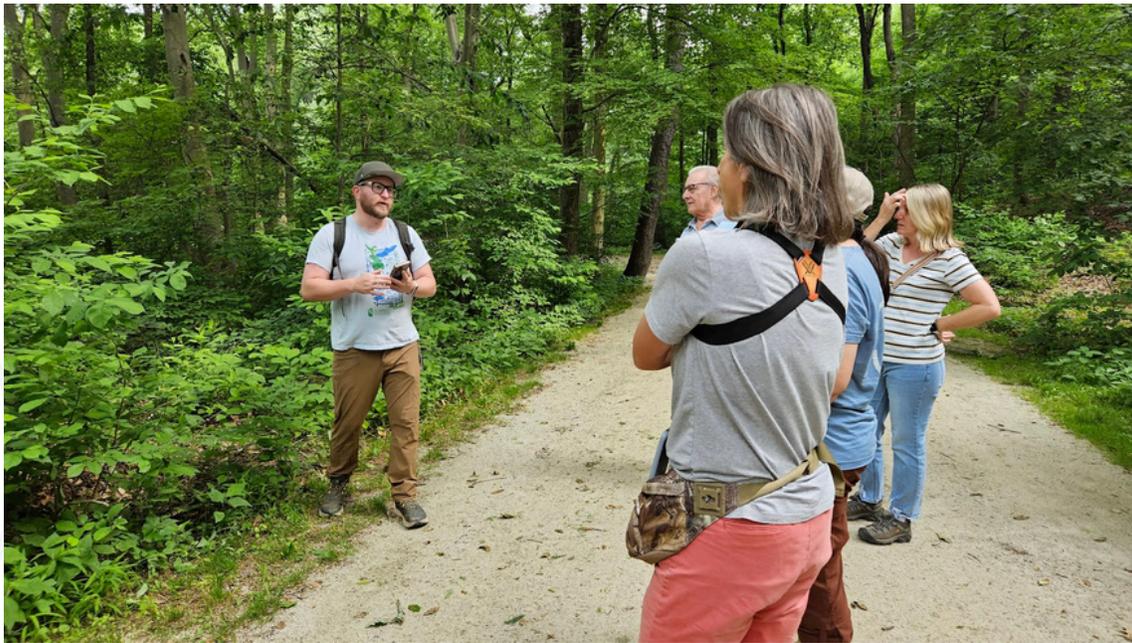
The theme for 2025 is "Watersheds". Through Outreach and Education the District aims to enable residents to have the knowledge of what a watershed is, as well as how our actions as people on our soils and waters have both negative and positive impacts for our watersheds. By understanding the importance of a watershed, and how our actions influence the quality of our watersheds, residents learned how rain gardens, rain barrels and more protect our watersheds.



Summit SWCD used community outreach and public involvement to partner with our communities, Summit Metro Parks, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and other valued conservation partners to deliver an important message to Summit County residents. The message is that residents can help prevent poor water quality by protecting our watersheds. This can be accomplished by preventing pollutants from installing raingardens, using rain barrels, planting native buffers around waterways, planting trees, and using pervious pavers for patios and driveways. These are just some of the stewardship practices that we can all use to protect our watersheds, which ultimately protect our soil and water.

EDUCATION PROGRAM SUMMARY

Public Involvement and Public Education programs (including rain barrel workshops, live-stake plantings, native plant sales, and educational displays and models) reached 58,170 residents. Social media outlets, newsletters, and newspaper articles reached 535,262 viewers. Educator Workshops and school presentations reached 2,509 educators and students. The District programs reached a total audience of 1,506,746.



With the idea of reaching out to a new audience, District staff and partners created 6 podcasts for our “Streamside Chats” program this year, covering a wide range of conservation topics, from agricultural education to impacts of sewer tunnels on our watersheds.

As Summit SWCD continues with its mission to promote water quality and healthy environmental practices in Summit County, we look forward to another successful year working with our valued partners and Summit County residents.



STORMWATER PROGRAM

Local county and city regulations require the review of development plans by the Summit Soil and Water Conservation District. Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) describing the erosion and sediment control needs of a site during construction and the stormwater quality treatment after construction, must be reviewed and approved by the Summit SWCD. District staff members perform inspections during construction to insure proper installation and maintenance of practices.

STORMWATER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Summit SWCD offers Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) reviews for sites disturbing one or more acres of total land. In the last year, staff reviewed 301 SWPPPs and completed 1849 site inspections on active construction sites. Staff also provided 94 on-site technical visits and assistance ranging from riparian assessments to natural resource concerns.



STORMWATER PROGRAM SUMMARY

POST-CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS

Under the NPDES MS4 permit, post-construction stormwater control measures are required to be inspected at least once per 5-year permit cycle. These inspections ensure the post-construction practices are adequately maintained and functioning properly and are part of a larger effort to minimize polluted runoff to our local waterways. The district is currently under contract with several communities to perform long-term post-construction inspections of stormwater control measures. This year, staff has completed 131 inspections on a variety of stormwater practices throughout these communities.



INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE CERTIFICATION

Over the past 9 years, the district has collaborated with The Ohio State University on a statewide inspection and maintenance of stormwater control measures certification program. To date, there are 559 certified professionals that have completed the program.

OUTFALL CONFIRMATION INSPECTIONS and DRY-WEATHER SCREENING

This year the SWCD staff completed 193 outfall inspections to assist the Surface Water Management District (SWMD) by completing confirmation inspections to verify outfall locations and in the City of Cuyahoga Falls dry-weather screening of 100 outfalls to help with NPDES MS4 Permit Minimum Control Measure (MCM) #3 outfall monitoring requirements.

POLLUTION PREVENTION/GOOD HOUSEKEEPING INSPECTIONS

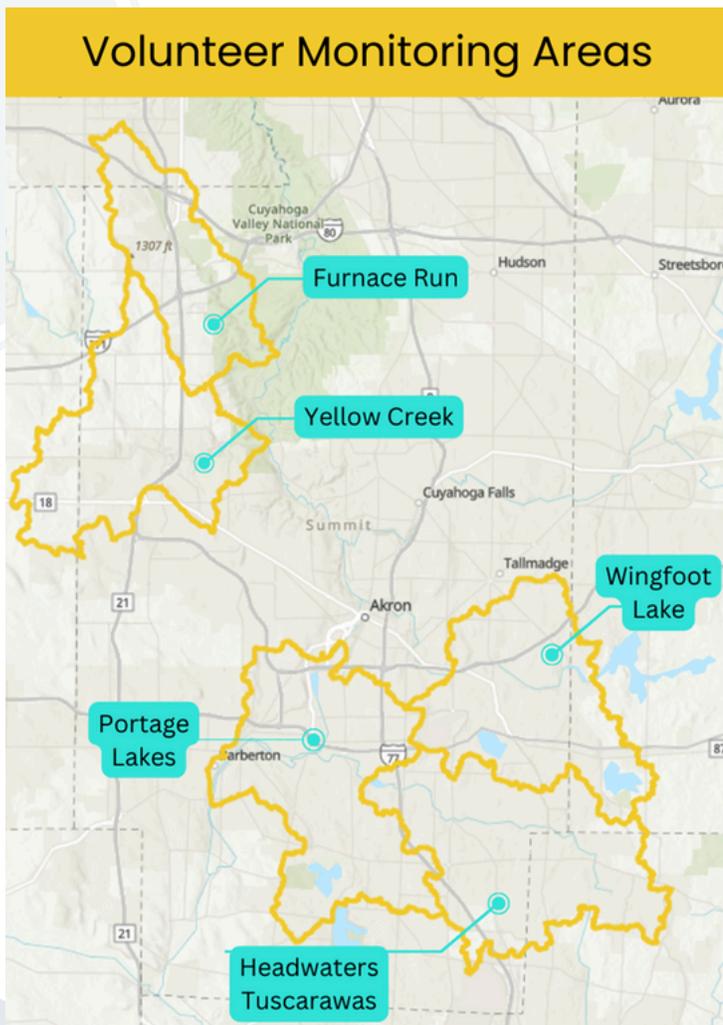
The district staff continues to conduct inspections in 15 different communities for county, city, village, or township owned facilities to assist with compliance for NPDES MS4 Permit Minimum Control Measure (MCM) #6 requirements. The staff completed 79 facility inspections across the 15 communities this year.

WATERSHED PROGRAM

Our Watershed Program leads efforts to restore and protect Summit County's water resources through collaborative planning and action. We work with stakeholders to identify priorities and implement projects such as habitat restoration and preservation, watershed tours and field days, homeowner workshops, and the development of Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategic Plans.

VOLUNTEER WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Our fifth season of the volunteer stream sampling program continued the program in five watersheds. This year, we're sampling 45 locations monthly with the help of our 53 volunteers and our Seasonal Conservationist. We test for a variety of chemistry parameters including phosphorus, nitrate, sediment, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and chloride. We also sample for macroinvertebrates and perform habitat assessments. Our data helps to support a regional data collection effort approved by the Ohio EPA and led by the Cleveland Water Alliance. Their project, the Lake Erie Volunteer Science Network (LEVSN), aims to ensure the long-term health of Lake Erie by broadening access to reliable mechanisms to measure key water quality parameters.



WATERSHED PROGRAM SUMMARY

WATERSHED PLANNING

NPSIS PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategic (NPSIS) Plans are living strategic planning documents that encourage collaboration between stakeholders by addressing water quality concerns identified by government officials, state & federal agencies, non-government organizations, and citizen stakeholders. This year, the Ohio EPA has approved four plans written by the District's watershed coordinators: Wingfoot Lake, Furnace run, Headwaters Tusc, and an update to Yellow Creek.

WATERSHED OUTREACH

HUC Highlight

From May through September, staff highlighted a different watershed in Summit County - featuring engaging events and activities! From rain barrel workshops and sampling demos, to a River Health workshop and stream cleanup, we reached nearly 500 people this summer with this exciting new initiative.

Library Corner

Our Library Corner Initiative added two additional libraries - Twinsburg and the Fairlawn-Bath Branches to our programming in 2025, bringing the total to five. This initiative provides library visitors with general information about their watersheds, while also providing space to highlight important water quality issues and solutions. The library corner includes displays, hands on activities, list of book recommendations, a series of workshops, and other outreach events for visitors to explore.



OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FUND GRANT

District staff secured almost \$5000 in OEEF moneys to provide low-to-no cost Rain Barrel workshops in multiple municipalities in 2025. These workshops increased public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues, namely stormwater runoff, and provided participants with the skills to make informed decisions and take responsible actions through rain barrel installation at a reduced cost. Over xx community members attended our five workshops and took home a rain barrel.





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Contact Us!

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The Summit SWCD is an independent division of the Ohio Department of Agriculture and is funded by the State of Ohio, the Summit County Council, and the Summit County Communities for Clean Stormwater.

In order to provide equal employment opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions in the District will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The Summit Soil and Water Conservation District does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic to the extent protected by law.

Summit SWCD does not discriminate in services with regards to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other characteristic to the extent protected by law.