

WINTER 2025



SUMMIT
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Summit SWCD's Quarterly Newsletter



Summit Metro Parks

Honoring our 2024 Outgoing Supervisor!

The Board and Staff of Summit SWCD wish to express our gratitude to our retiring Supervisor, Catherine Perrow, who gave us her total dedication and commitment during her entire term of service.

Catherine Perrow

We want to take a moment to acknowledge and sincerely thank Catherine Perrow for her dedicated service on the board over the past three years. While Catherine modestly believes she may not have contributed enough due to a lack of technical expertise directly tied to the District's mission, we all agree that her impact has been significant.

Catherine brought an exceptional level of professionalism and knowledge to our organization, providing invaluable guidance in administrative areas where clear-cut processes are often lacking. Her insights filled critical gaps and offered perspectives that others may not have considered. Though not a stream morphologist, community service director, or botanist, Catherine's role was vital in ensuring a smooth operation. We are truly grateful for her dedication and service.

Thank you, Catherine, for everything you've done to support and strengthen our mission.



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2025 Master Rain Gardener Courses

SUMMIT SWCD IS PROMOTING THE NORTHEAST OHIO MASTER RAINGARDENER PROGRAM IN 2025!

Train to be a Master Rain Gardener! Learn to design and install your own raingarden and be the raingarden expert in your neighborhood. Master Rain Gardeners help friends and neighbors to learn about, design, and plant raingardens.

Raingardens work with nature to collect and filter rainwater that runs off impervious surfaces like rooftops and driveways. Impervious surfaces lead to increases in surface runoff and often result in increased flooding and stream bank erosion. As water travels over impervious surfaces, it also has the potential to pick up pollutants. Polluted stormwater runoff enters our rivers and lakes and is one of the leading threats to water quality in the United States.

The Master Rain Gardener Program will teach you how to manage rainwater in your own yard. Raingardens naturally manage stormwater by infiltrating precipitation and allowing it to soak into the ground rather than sending it directly to storm sewers and nearby streams untreated.

Registration for the 2025 Winter Online Master Rain Gardener courses is now open! Please share with anyone you know who may be interested!

Course Information

- January 27 - March 8
- Weekly Q&A Sessions
- Professional certifications available

[Register Here!](#)

<https://neomasterraingardener.org/>

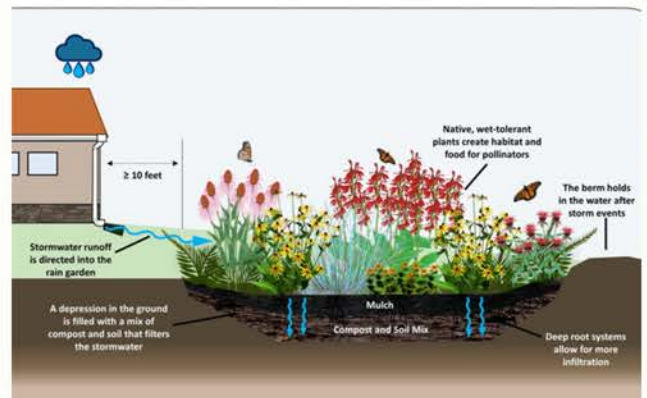


Photo Credit NEOMasterRaingardener.org

2025 Area 2 Envirothon

HOSTED BY RICHLAND SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The 2025 Area 2 Envirothon is coming up!

Where will it be hosted in 2025?

Each year, Area Envirothon rotates around 17 Northeast Ohio Counties. Richland SWCD will host the Envirothon on April 9th, 2024 at the Cooke Family Wildlife Conservation Park in Shiloh, Ohio. The top four teams advance to the State competition along with the other teams from the remaining Ohio Areas, making 20 teams total at the State competition which will be at Wilmington College in Clinton County in 2025. Only one team from State advances to Nationals, which will be held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada in 2025!

What is the National Conservation Foundation – Area 2 Envirothon?

Envirothon is designed to stimulate and enhance interest in the environment and natural resources among high school students. A competitive outdoor team event, Envirothon offers a unique and enjoyable learning experience.

Each team consists of 5 students, all from the same school. An adult advisor (or advisors) must accompany the team but cannot assist the team during the competition. Envirothon tests students' knowledge of soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology, and current environmental issues.

The current environmental issue for 2025 is

“Roots and Resiliency, Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change.” In addition, Envirothon encourages cooperative decision-making and team building. While each student on an Envirothon team is challenged to contribute their personal best, the score that counts at the end of an Envirothon is the team score.

In Ohio, Envirothon is sponsored by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Natural resource and environmental specialists from many agencies, organizations, colleges, universities, park districts, and businesses create the Envirothon questions and staff the various testing ecostations.

The Ohio Envirothon is financed by grants, donations from businesses and through contributions to the Don Rehl Memorial Envirothon Fund. Many local businesses also provide services and products in support of Area and Ohio Envirothons.

Teachers—check out your local SWCD’s website for more information: Go to: <https://summitswcd.com> for more information.



2025 Regional Native Plant Sales

2025 Native Plant and Tree Offerings

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District is promoting local and regional native plant sales in 2025. Many Soil and Water Conservation Districts are hosting native plant sales this spring, offering herbaceous plants, groundcovers, shrubs, and trees. We also have many new local native plant nurseries in our area now, where you can visit and choose your favorite plants.



Photo Credit: Smith, R.W.

SSWCD's New Blog

Introducing Rooted in Conservation: Stories from the Ground Up, the new blog from Summit Soil and Water Conservation District! Dive into engaging stories and practical tips about local conservation efforts, sustainable practices, and the natural wonders of our region. Whether you're a seasoned environmentalist or just curious about how to make a difference, our blog has something for everyone. Stay connected to the ground—and the roots—of what makes our environment thrive!

Rooted in Conservation: Stories from
the Ground Up



Safe and Sensible Salting Practices at Home

Summit SWCD Promotes Winter Salt Awareness Week!

The use of road salt on our streets and sidewalks to keep them safe during the Northeastern Ohio winter season is a necessary evil that we all have come to expect. We may not realize though, that all this road salt we use is extremely harmful to our surface and groundwater and all the species that depend on freshwater for life. The salt has a cumulative effect, adding up over the years and permanently remaining in the water supply. One teaspoon of salt will pollute five gallons of water.

Summit SWCD, with other Northeastern Ohio partners, is promoting Winter Salt Awareness Week, January 27-January 31, 2025. This campaign is the brainchild of the Wisconsin Salt Wise Partnership, created to spread education and awareness about road salt use and hazards. To learn more about this program, go to <https://wisaltwise.com/> where you will find resources for communities and individuals. We want everyone to know how they can manage their winter salt usage around their homes for safety in the slippery weather, and protect water quality at the same time.

Regular Road Salt, Rock Salt, is composed of Sodium Chloride, NaCl, and it's the same as table salt except the grains are larger, and more grainy in texture. In the United States, we started using road salt to melt snow and ice, in New Hampshire in 1938. It worked, and by the winter of 1941, 5,000 tons of salt were used nationwide. Today, we use around 20 million tons. Because road salt runs off the road during rainfall and snowmelt, it has increased the salinity or saltiness of our water, affecting plants, animals, and our drinking water.

Freshwater fish, plants, and animals can't survive in salty water. Salt is toxic to aquatic life, and when stormwater runoff deposits salt in the soil, plants can't survive either. Too much salt in the soil root zone stops plant roots from absorbing water. Water normally flows from a low salt concentration to a higher one. Plant roots absorb water because they contain more salt than the surrounding soil. When the soil has more salt than the roots, roots can't take up water. Excess road salt also causes damage to vehicles and infrastructure because it corrodes metals.

What can residents do about this "Salty Problem?" People want safe streets. Most people think, the more salt the community dumps on the roads, the safer they will be. That isn't the case. Road salt is ineffective below 15 degrees Fahrenheit. So, it doesn't matter how much salt you put down, the snow and ice won't melt during those temperatures. When it does melt though, all that salt ends up in the stream, river, and lake, and the community has wasted money because salt is expensive. It is problematic for the communities because people call the mayor and complain about the roads, and the mayor calls the Service Department to salt some more. As residents, we need to be more reasonable and stay off the roads unless necessary during a storm.

Yet, there is hope for solving this problem, and we can supply some hopeful solutions on our own sidewalks.

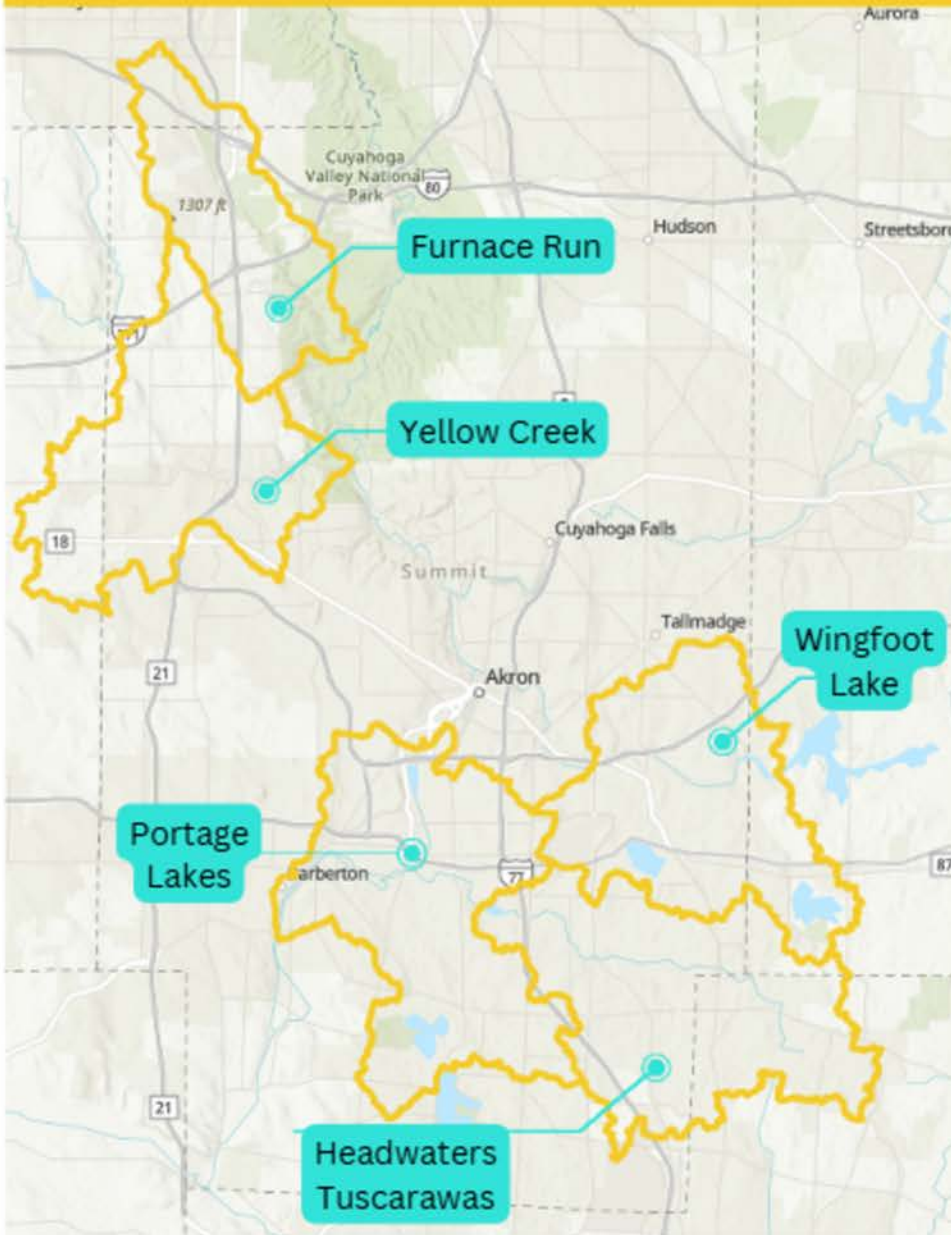
- Shovel your snow early and often if you are able because that reduces the amount of salt you need to de-ice the surface. Also, pile your snow in various locations, so the salt is not concentrated in one spot when the snow melts.
- Keep salt away from stormdrains because that is a direct route for runoff into the stream.
- Follow the application instructions on your de-icer. Less is More!!!!
- Only apply salt to the walkways you use all the time.
- Remember the temperature limitation and don't apply when it is less than 15 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Sweep up the extra road salt. That will also keep it off your grass and out of your soil.
- Use a Potassium Acetate de-icer if you have pets and make sure you wash their feet after walking them.
- Finally, the most important thing to remember is that one 8-ounce coffee cup of salt de-ice 250 square feet, which is the same as 10 sidewalk squares. Go easy when you salt, please!

Another great resource is the Izaak Walton League's road-salt watch program that people can participate in at: <https://www.iwla.org/water/stream-monitoring/salt-watch>. You can also obtain great information about salt intake from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/be-salt-smart>. As always, if you have any questions about salt usage or other environmental topics, contact Summit SWCD at 330-929-2871, <https://sswcd.summitoh.net>, or sbarbic@summitoh.net.

Get into Action!

Be a Volunteer Stream Stomper!

Volunteer Monitoring Areas

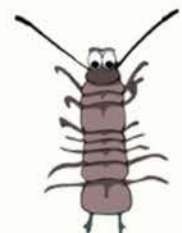


We're seeking passionate volunteers who want to join our local stream monitoring team for the 2025 field season!

This year, our program includes both the Cuyahoga River Basin and the Tuscarawas River Basin, meaning more opportunities for you to make a meaningful impact in your community.

Our watershed coordinators will teach you all you need to know to measure the health of our local streams, so no prior experience needed! All monitoring equipment is provided, and our coordinators are available to support your efforts throughout the season.

If you're interested in learning more about joining our volunteer program, [click here to visit our webpage!](#)





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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.

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.

