

# STARK STEWARDSHIP

Stark Soil & Water Conservation District

Spring 2023

2021 District of the Year

## Board of Supervisors

Ann Wolfe  
Rick Horner  
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## District Staff

John S. Weedon  
Sarah E. Matheny  
Adrienne Bock  
Matthew Ferrel  
Jay Jordan  
Rome Marinelli  
Taylor Noble

## USDA-NRCS Staff

John Knapp  
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2650 Richville Dr. SE.,  
Suite 100  
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330-451-7645  
Monday to Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
[starkswcd.org](http://starkswcd.org)  
**Closed:** Memorial Day  
(May 29th)  
Juneteenth (June 19th)  
Independence Day  
(July 4th)  
  
**Board Meetings:** 2nd  
Thursdays at 8:00 a.m.

## Upcoming Events

### Explore the Lore of Vernal Pools

Join Stark Soil & Water at Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center to learn about the unique nature of vernal pools. Participants will learn how vernal pools benefit wildlife and provide other significant ecological services. Dress for a short hike to visit two of the vernal pools located on the property.

- May 7th (2:00 p.m.) at 16146 Daniel St NE, Minerva - Register for the workshop by calling Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center at 330-823-7487.

### Symbiotic Wetlands

Join Stark Soil & Water at Stark Parks Exploration Gateway to learn about the value of wetlands and how to protect them. These habitats play a role in storm water retention, flood control, recreation opportunities, and water quality. During this presentation, you will learn what you can do to protect our wetlands by minimizing pollution and reducing runoff.

- May 30th (6:00 p.m.) at 5712 12th St NW, Canton - Register for the workshop by visiting [starkparks.com/certifiedbackyardhabitat/](http://starkparks.com/certifiedbackyardhabitat/)

### Water Stewardship at The Wilderness Center

Properly managing rain water and surface runoff from hard surfaces is a critical component of environmental stewardship. Learn how The Wilderness Center manages and protects rain and storm water through naturally occurring features such as wetlands and native plants as well as man-made techniques such as rain barrels, composting, and rain gardens.

- July 15th (12:30 p.m.) at 9877 Alabama Ave SW, Wilmot - Register for the workshop by visiting [wildernesscenter.org/inspire\\_events/](http://wildernesscenter.org/inspire_events/)

### Rain Gardens

Join Stark Soil & Water at Stark Parks Exploration Gateway to learn about green infrastructure practices such as rain gardens, and how you can become a Master Rain Gardener!

- July 24th (6:00 p.m.) at 5712 12th St NW, Canton - Register for the workshop by visiting [starkparks.com/certifiedbackyardhabitat/](http://starkparks.com/certifiedbackyardhabitat/)

### Eastern Ohio Grazing Council

Interested in improving your grazing operation? Go on pasture walks with Eastern Ohio Grazing Council on the 4th Thursday of the month. Next pasture walk in Stark County is July 27th.

More information can be found at [facebook.com/EasternOhioGrazingCouncil/](https://facebook.com/EasternOhioGrazingCouncil/)

*Stark Soil & Water greatly appreciates our Stark County Commissioners — Janet Weir Creighton, Richard Regula, and Bill Smith— for their continued financial support of the District.*



Stark Soil & Water Conservation District is excited to announce the 2023 Stark BIG TREE Contest! We are looking for nominations for the largest AMERICAN SYCAMORE (*Platanus occidentalis*) in the County. Mature trees provide a host of ecosystem services and contribute to clean water and healthy soil.

Nominated trees must be American Sycamore trees located in Stark County. Sycamores are easily recognized by their large size and strikingly smooth white bark mottled with brown and gray. You often see them along side streambanks, but can be found in upland habitats as well.

The tree does not have to be on the property of the nominator; however, permission from the landowner must be obtained prior to nomination.

Nomination forms can be found on our website ([starkswcd.org](http://starkswcd.org)) and must be submitted to Stark SWCD no later than Thursday, August 1st.

The winning tree owner will receive a \$75 gift certificate to purchase District merchandises such as trees, fish, rain barrels, and compost bins.

## Cost-Share Rebate Programs

Muskingum Watershed Conservation District offers several cost share rebate programs.

Cover Crop Program is a competitive program that provides rebates to plant cover crops in the MWCD jurisdictional boundary. Approved acres will receive \$12/ac. Deadline: July 15th.

Critical Area Seeding Program provides a financial incentive for producers to seed high-risk erosion areas in permanent vegetation for at least 3 years. The areas being targeted are concentrated flow paths through corn and/or soybean fields where a grassed waterway is impractical due to small drainage areas or small field sizes. 100% reimbursement not to exceed \$500 per acre with a maximum area of 1 acre.

Livestock Exclusion Fencing Program provides a rebate up to \$10,000 per project to keep livestock out of streams and other waterbodies. Producers must follow NRCS standards.

Contact Jay Jordan at 330-451-7643 or [jmjordan@starkcountyohio.gov](mailto:jmjordan@starkcountyohio.gov) for applications and more information.

## Green Cleaning

Has spring sprung on your back forty? Do you have the desire to clean your house? If so, you are like many who are ready to straighten up your home for the warmer and sunnier days ahead. Stark Soil & Water has tips, tactics, and tricks to make your home shine that can be found in the Green Cleaning Video Series on our YouTube channel.

Green Cleaning has become more popular as homeowners seek cleaning methods that are gentler on their homes, families, budgets, and environment. You likely have many "green" products in your pantry that can be used to tidy and freshen your humble abode. Common items such as baking soda and white vinegar are not only affordable, but also easy on the environment. If you need advice on what products and methods will work best, please contact Stark Soil & Water Outreach Technician, Adrienne Bock, or visit our YouTube channel ([@starksoilwater9702](https://www.youtube.com/@starksoilwater9702)) to learn more.



## Welcome Taylor!

My name is Taylor Noble, and I'm the new Storm Water Specialist at Stark Soil & Water. With this position, I'll be concentrating on inspecting construction sites to ensure compliance with storm water quality regulations and reviewing storm water pollution prevention plans. I'm originally from Morrow County, and I come from a family of grain farmers located in Ashley, Ohio. I attended Hocking College, earning my Associates of Applied Science degree in GeoEnvironmental Science. I then moved to Wayne County to work for Wayne Soil & Water Conservation District, assisting with the implementation of agriculture best management practices along with regulating the county storm water regulations. I'm looking forward to working with contractors and developers in Stark County!



## 2023 Native Plant Sale

Interested in attracting pollinators like butterflies and hummingbirds to your property? Wanting to help save bees? Looking to add to your flower beds or create a backyard oasis? Have a bare spot that won't grow grass? Or maybe you have a wet spot that's hard to mow? Regardless of the reason or condition, we have plants for you!

Stark Soil & Water is hosting a plant sale consisting of native perennial forbs (flowers) in 1 gallon containers for \$12.00 and 3.5" containers for \$8.00.

Orders are credit/debit only and can only be made online by visiting [starkswcd.org/2023nativeplantsale](https://starkswcd.org/2023nativeplantsale). Our website offers recommendations for butterfly gardens, rain gardens, and shade gardens to help you understand what plants will do well on your site. You can also find more details such as plant size, light and soil requirements, bloom time and colors, and other benefits by visiting our website.

Order deadline is Tuesday, May 23rd, and order pickup is Thursday, May 25th, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM at our office (2650 Richville Dr. SE, Massillon).

## Ditch the pipe, don't pipe the ditch

The latest trend in the world of drainage involves piping roadside ditches or small waterways. We're here to tell you that's not a great idea. Here's why.

To start, we need to understand what roadside ditches are and the purpose they serve. Roadside ditches are swales or ditches that line roadways. Their purpose is to drain the roadways to prevent flooding, keeping them safe and traversable. To keep roadways safe, roads are typically crowned (higher) in the center so rain water and snowmelt drains off the road into the roadside ditch or storm drain. Ditches catch and convey runoff from the roads to a low area to discharge, typically into or leading to a nearby waterbody. Without a ditch or drain, roadways would have more ponding water and flooding, creating a hazardous roadway and public safety issue.

Many people are replacing their roadside ditches with plastic piping. We understand the appeal. However, when we sacrifice form by turning a ditch into a piped system, we lose function. A ditch or swale can have a greater capacity for conveying runoff, handling more water than a pipe. Ditches are usually vegetated, which slows the flow and soaks in runoff. Plants slow the speed at which water travels through the ditch, decreasing the velocity, while absorbing water through their roots. In addition to plants soaking up water, plant root systems help to drain water by creating drainage pathways that penetrate deep into the underlying soil layers, increasing the infiltration capabilities of the ditch (think of a block of cheddar cheese turned swiss). Capacity, velocity reduction, and infiltration are sacrificed when a ditch is piped in.

When a ditch is piped in, the area is backfilled and graded, leaving a yard that's nearly level with the road. Whereas the pipe is buried, the yard now becomes the only place for road runoff. Water is now able to freely enter the property to linger on the lawn, potentially causing property damage, an issue that would likely not occur had there been a roadside ditch.

If you're looking to replace your ditch with a pipe you need the permission of the owner of the road: state, county, township, city, village, etc. If a permit is approved, you need to determine the correct pipe size. Installing an undersized pipe can cause serious repercussions. Water can back up upstream or even flood roadways, both of which carry serious financial liabilities. Some townships and municipalities may only grant a permit with the stipulation that they will no longer maintain or be responsible for that drainage system. Therefore, if repairs are needed or the pipe replaced, you would be responsible.

At the end of the day, a roadside ditch may not be the most appealing system but they are practical, easy to maintain, and, as long as they remain open, the responsibility of whomever owns the road.



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## The Lore of Vernal Pools



Vernal pools, or spring pools, are temporary wetlands surrounded by lore and mystery. Typically, less than an acre in size, these tiny wetlands can be found in forested areas. They fill in the fall with surface runoff, often remaining inundated with water throughout the winter, and remain filled in the spring, drying up in summer months. Due to their unique cycles and location, vernal pools are often seen as mysterious when surrounded by tall, old-growth trees and the silence of the forest, sometimes filled with water and the sounds of amphibians, other times dry and barren. In the past, vernal pools have suffered the same fate as many swamps, destroyed due to their unusual nature which most did not understand. However, their uniqueness makes them great habitat for wildlife.

Vernal pools collect surface runoff as it moves through forests and wooded areas. This collected water is a breeding ground for many species of amphibians (frogs and salamanders) and macroinvertebrates (insects and crustaceans). and act as a transitional habitat for migratory birds. Vernal pools occur naturally throughout Ohio. Learning about vernal pools and educating others is a great way to clear up the mystery surrounding vernal pools and ensure they continue providing ecological benefits. Please contact our office or attend the program, "Explore the Lore of Vernal Pools," on May 7th to learn more about these unique wetlands.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.