Partnerships, Pollinators, and Cover Crops in Urban Conservation

By Justin Husher, Natural Resources Conservationist at Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District in Cleveland, Ohio

Cuyahoga County – 1.25M people

Staff of 13:
Roughly one staff per 100,000

TENTACLES

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PROFESSIONAL

- Board members
- Cleveland Landbank
- Watershed Groups
- Land Conservancies
- Professional Organizations
- County Fairgrounds
- Rust Belt Riders
- Farmers/Farm Bureau
- NRCS
- Ohio Israel Ag. Initiative
- NEO PIPE
- Community Development Corporations

PERSONAL

- Rock N Roll
- Chicken Wings
- Plogging
- Crazy Cat Lady
- Birding
- Watershed Groups outside our service area
- Boy Scouts
- Church

In short, always look for funding and get yourself "out there."

REAL EXAMPLES

1) Ohio Israel Agriculture Initiative Cover Crop Pilot
2) Pollinator Plantings
3) Ohio Farm Bureau Grant
4) Conservation Nursery

OIAI COVER CROP PILOT

- What? 2 Year, 2 acre, 2 Site Cover Crop Pilot with mycorrhizal inoculations to increase tilth in urban soils.

- Non-profit: OIAI

- Funder: Cleveland Foundation

- Product partner: Groundwork BioAg

- Land partners: Kinsman Farm via West Creek Conservancy and Union Miles Development Corp.

- Other partners: Rust Belt Riders

"Funny" story about Dunham Tavern

POLLINATOR PLANTINGS

- Started $500 seed money from landlord

- Boosted OARDC/OSU Extension
    - Extras to Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Ben Franklin Community Garden, and Beachwood stabilization project.

- Board member Bayer Grant
    - Three sites
    - Brambles, Elders, Buckeyes, Serviceberries, Witch hazel…
    - Current: Sunchokes, Goldenrod, New England Asters
    - Maintenance agreements

"Funny" Landbank story

Ohio Farm Bureau Grant

- What? To increase our education Ag offerings.
  - Silage Tarp
  - Seeder
  - Seed Saving
  - Soil Blockers
- Good rapport with County Farm Bureau President
- Occasional Farm Bureau member

Conservation Nursery
- 0.25 Acre site on E 71st
- Streambank stabilization and some street trees
- Slavic Village Development Corp. and Landbank

The One That Got Away...

Or at least has alluded us so far.

In Conclusion:
- Get your self out there
- Have alternatives
- Be flexible
- Stay humble
- Maintenance agreements