



Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

Creating Conservation Solutions for Over 60 Years

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2014 Conservation Mini-Grant Recipients Announced

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District is highlighting three projects that exemplify the spirit that fills April, the month that celebrates both Earth Day and Arbor Day. These projects are the recipients of the District's Conservation Fund Mini-Grants, which promote on-the-ground conservation, especially small or on-going projects that may not meet the criteria of larger grant programs. The 2014 mini-grant winners are:

- Franklinton Gardens to purchase root-stock for an edible perennial nursery
- Green Columbus to purchase native trees for volunteer planting in conjunction with Earth Days activities
- Worthington Libraries, Northwest Library Branch, to purchase native perennial plants for an educational garden

Franklinton Gardens will use the grant funds to purchase disease-resistant rootstock of apple, pear, cherry and plum trees, onto which will be grafted scions, or cuttings, from heritage fruit trees. The fruit trees are part of a four-year plan to develop an edible, perennial nursery of fruit trees, shrubs and brambles. After four years, cuttings will be made available from the nursery, so that others can begin their own urban orchards. Franklinton Gardens encourages ecologically sensitive, bio-diverse and edible landscapes, and works to inspire neighbors to adopt similar gardening practices in their own yards. The gardens consist of one and one-half acres spread across seven parcels in Franklinton. [Contact for Franklinton Gardens is Nick Stanich, (614) 233-1887.]

Green Columbus will use the grant to buy trees for planting during Earth Day 2014 service activities, from April 19 through 26. The purchase of three-gallon-sized trees will enable volunteers to help restore neighborhood tree canopies by planting them in residential neighborhoods during the Earth Day service week. By restoring these canopies, stormwater runoff will be reduced, which will ultimately result in cleaner waterways in central Ohio. The grant will also be used to purchase tree seedlings given to attendees at the Earth Day 2014 celebration at Columbus Commons on April 26. Green Columbus organizes the largest Earth Day volunteer service project in the nation

and sponsors events, including monthly Green Drinks, which brings speakers on sustainability issues to an audience in casual settings. [Contact for Green Columbus is Nicole Rasul, (646) 246-9989.]

Worthington Libraries Northwest Branch will use the grant funds for the purchase of native perennials to be planted as part of an outdoor learning space where adults and children can experience a variety of imaginative sensory experiences in an accessible and natural setting. In addition to native plantings, the space will feature sculpture, safe 'pondless' water features, a rain garden, gravel pathways, a dry creekbed with native pebbles and boulders, a bird habitat area, natural log seats and benches and storage for 'loose parts' for creative play. "Just as we strive to do inside our buildings, we look forward to providing our community with an outdoor space to learn, explore and interact with nature in an atmosphere that is welcoming, engaging and fun," said Lisa Fuller, director of community engagement at Worthington Libraries. [Contact for Worthington Libraries Northwest Branch is Lisa Fuller, (614) 807-2626.]

This is the second year the Conservation Mini-Grants have been awarded. Franklin Soil and Water provides up to three grants of up to \$1,500, to assist in the protection and improvement of soil and water resources in Franklin County. The funds are generated from the Franklin Soil and Water annual meeting and silent auction, the annual tree and fish sale and donations received throughout the year for the Conservation Fund.

The mini-grants are available to schools, local governments and nonprofits, such as watershed organizations and civic associations. The project must align with Franklin Soil and Water's mission to promote responsible land use decisions for the conservation, protection and improvement of soil and water resources.

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The mission of Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote responsible land use decisions for the conservation, protection and improvement of soil and water resources by providing information assistance through effective partnering, technical guidance and education.

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