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Franklin County Board of Commissioners Receives Great Blue Heron Award

For Continued Support of Natural Resources Mapping Program at Conservation District

12/02/14 FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO—At today's weekly General Session, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners was presented with a Great Blue Heron award in appreciation of the Commissioners' ongoing support of the natural resources mapping program at Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (FSWCD). The award was presented by FSWCD's director Jennifer Fish.

The natural resources mapping program consists of geographic information system (GIS) maps that capture information about the data points collected. In addition to mapping all of Franklin County's surface water, ditches and storm sewer systems, the geodatabase includes flow directionality of stormwater through the system, enabling more efficient responses to pollution reports. It also contains data on storm sewer outfalls where illicit discharges can be detected from failing household sewage treatment system (HSTS) and other sources, assisting Franklin County Public Health with their HSTS inspection program. Data on tree canopy cover and possible wetland areas have also been added, again making for more efficient and effective land use decisions by local governments. This will be increasingly valuable data to the county for future stormwater management and climate preparedness.

In her remarks, Fish lauded the Commissioners' foresight and vision in supporting the mapping program. Their ongoing support continues to reduce funding costs for requisite stormwater and watershed planning. The amount and quality of data puts Franklin County at the forefront of geographic data analysis capabilities compared to counties nationwide.

"Due to early and consistent funding from the Board of Commissioners and the long-term retention of employees, we've been able to build a geodatabase with a huge amount of data at a reasonable cost," said Fish. "That's why we are also recognizing our GIS natural resources coordinator, Jeff Pierce. A 19-year employee of FSWCD, Pierce was recently awarded an honorable mention in the National Association of Conservation Districts' 2014 Distinguished

Service Award, given for significant life-time contributions to the conservation of our nation's natural resources." Pierce was the initial creator of the FSWCD natural resources geodatabase and mapping program and has continued to coordinate its growth and quality assurance.

Commission President Marilyn Brown said, "I'd like to thank Jeff, Jennifer and all of the employees at Franklin Soil and Water for their important work in protecting our local environment, and for providing comprehensive data to local governments, helping us make more efficient and effective land use decisions."

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The mission of Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote 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.