



# Highlights of RRWC Events in 2024





# 2024 Annual Meeting

## Highlights:

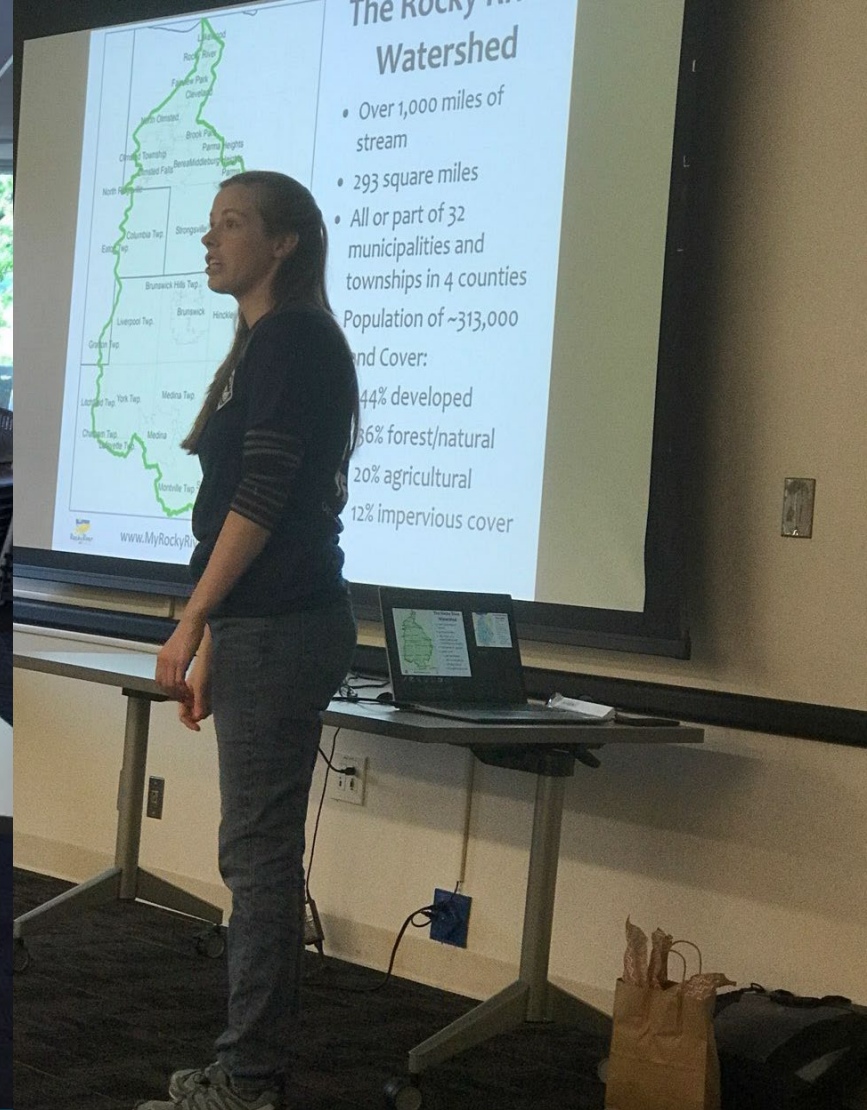
- The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's Tree Canopy Assessment presented on the state of urban forests in Northeast Ohio
- Certified Forester Jennifer Milbrandt on The Value of Trees, covering how trees have social, health, and environmental benefits

# Medina County Earth Day Festival, April 2024

Among RRWC's ongoing activities is outreach at local environmental events. Among the largest event we reach each year is the Medina County Earth Day Event, which includes kids' activities, sustainability groups from around the area, local food, wildlife meet-n-greets, and so much more.

Mark your calendars for next year, the Medina County Earth Day Festival will be **Saturday April 26, 2025** - it's a great time!





Baldwin Creek 101 speaker event  
with Sustainable Berea April 2024



## Strongsville HOA Re-Naturing Program Spring 2024

This program offered trees, shrubs, and native seeds to HOAs looking to stop mowing on common areas, especially near streams. By re-naturing previously mowed areas the HOAs save gas and help filter stormwater.



# Strongsville HOA Re-Naturing Program Spring 2024

In the pilot program of this re-naturing program, 10 HOAs participated in education on stormwater and how native plants can help filter it before it hits the creeks, then made a plan where they could plant native trees and shrubs.

# Strongsville HOA Re-Naturing Program Spring 2024

In total over 800 native trees and shrubs were planted, and native seeds were installed on over 10 acres of land.

Many of the HOAs chose to amend these now-natural areas with walking trails, benches to enjoy nature, bird houses, and more. This program demonstrates how previously un-used land can become a beautiful community feature and protect nature at the same time!

To read more about this program [click here](#) and go to page 4.



**No Mowing**  
We're letting the grass grow!

We are increasing biodiversity, reducing pests and greenhouse gas emissions, and saving money that would be spent on lawn maintenance. Allowing shrubs, trees, and tall grasses to grow also helps to reduce flooding, improve water quality by filtering stormwater runoff and prevent erosion as native species' deeper root systems are better at holding onto soil than the grass in lawns.

**Re-Naturing Program**

In partnership with:

- Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Rocky River Watershed Council
- The City of Strongsville, Ohio
- Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District





Rain Barrel Workshop for NASA Glenn Employees, May 2024



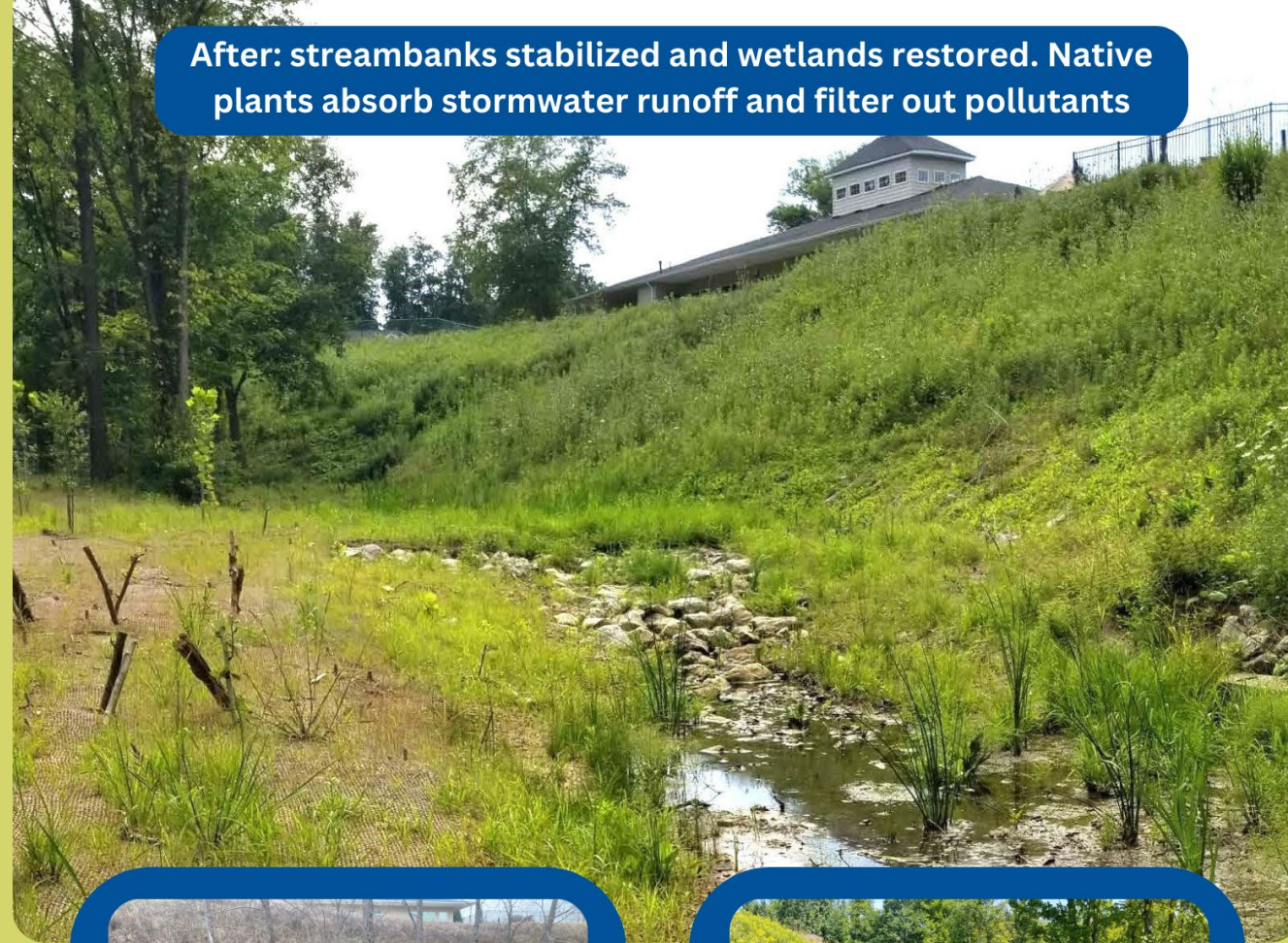
Thank you to our many partners on this project that restored 3 acres of wetlands and floodplain in the East Branch of the RR Watershed!

Look for tours and presentations detailing this successful project in 2025!



## Greenbriar Valley Floodplain and Wetland Restoration

After: streambanks stabilized and wetlands restored. Native plants absorb stormwater runoff and filter out pollutants



Before: eroding banks adding sediment pollution.



After: banks stabilized and supporting native plants.



# Rainfall Simulator

This year RRWC purchased a rainfall simulator education tool for use in watershed outreach. This tool shows how erosion occurs at different rates depending on surface cover, vegetation levels, and impervious materials. Our partners, Medina SWCD, used this tool at their County Fair, where it reached over 640 people. It has continued to serve the watershed through several school events and Medina County's Agriculture Day.

# Landowner Assistance (year-round)



One of RRWC's core services remains providing landowner assistance site visits, free of charge, to anyone in the watershed. These services have been used by private residents, public institutions, HOAs, and many others.

Site visits and consultations can provide a guide on many issues such as how to address erosion, whether a potential problem can be managed or left alone, and how residents can help protect our streams.

# 25<sup>th</sup> ROCKY RIVER CLEAN UP

SATURDAY,  
JUNE 1ST  

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9 AM-12 PM

In June RRWC celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> Rocky River Clean-Up! This event drew over 150 volunteers and cleaned along a mile of the main stem. Thank you to our sponsors, Ernst Machine and Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District! This year we were also joined by Cuyahoga Solid Waste District for a workshop in composting. Afterwards, the traditional BBQ and picnic was a hit with all!

# Medina County Invasive Species Buy- Back program:

In 2024 RRWC sponsored and helped fund replacing invasive species with natives in the Medina County Invasive Species Buy-Back program.

71 people were reached. 44 invasives were cut including:

- 13 Callery Pears
- 6 Burning Bush
- 6 Bayberry
- 5 Bush Honeysuckles
- 6 Autumn Olive
- 3 Buckthorn
- 3 Privet
- 2 Multiflora Rose.

Trees were given out to replace the invasives cut.





## Rain Barrel Workshop in Brook Park August 2024

Participants learned how to divert stormwater into green spaces, such as lawns or gardens, and how this practice can reduce flooding and improve water quality in nearby streams.



# Stream Stewards Program

RRWC was a guest agency at Medina County SWCD's Stream Steward Certification Program. 14 people attended 7 weeks of classes around stream health, native & invasive plants, green infrastructure and became certified stewards. RRWC assisted in teaching stream chemistry and presented on the continuing efforts day, to encourage future efforts in the watershed.

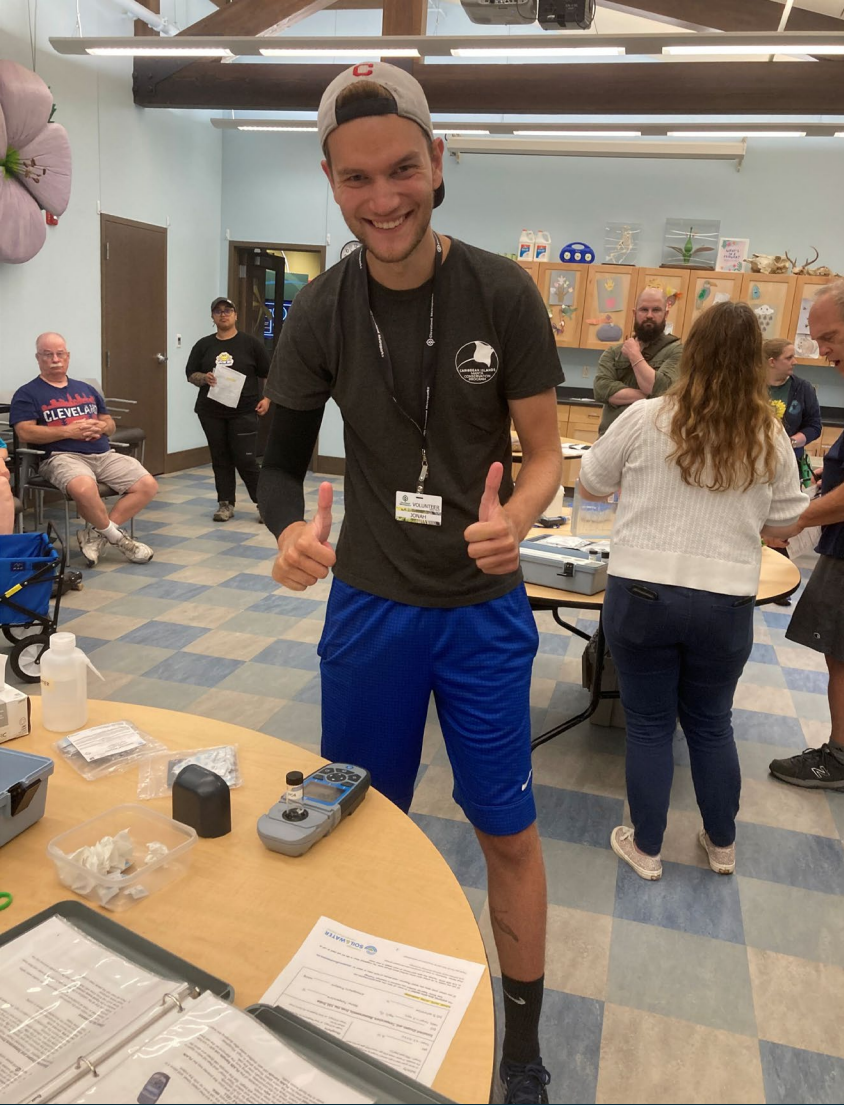


## Pollinator Garden Planting, Olmsted Township

In September volunteers with RRWC and Cuyahoga SWCD implemented watershed-friendly landscaping methods to plant a pollinator garden in Olmsted Township. Participants learned about how native plants not only feed pollinators and native wildlife, but also soak up more rainwater, help build healthy soils, and filter stormwater before it hits the creek.







# Water Quality Monitoring Program

Throughout the year volunteers monitor streams for pollutants through this program, run jointly with Cleveland Metroparks. Thank you stream monitors!



# Shrink Your Lawn with Native Plants

Middleburg Heights

In September participants in a “Shrink Your Lawn” workshop received native plants to jump-start their efforts. By replacing turf grass with native plants whose roots are much deeper, you too can help filter rainwater before it drains to the Rocky River. To learn more, come to our next Shrink Your Lawn workshop in 2025!

# Green Yards Healthy Homes

(several workshops throughout the year)

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At this workshop members of the public learn what pollutants can be found in common household cleaners and fertilizers, as well as the effect on the watershed when those products wash away. Earth-friendly alternative recipes are shared and this year free soil test kits were available thanks to NEORSD, with which residents can test how much (if any) fertilizer they might truly need. Thank you NEORSD!





## Live Staking

North Royalton,  
November 2024

Volunteers came out to help install live stakes (cuttings from riparian plants that can re-root to help stabilize banks and prevent erosion) along a tributary to the East Branch of the Rocky River. Despite the cold and rainy weather, it was a great success and installed over 450 live stakes!



**Want to see events in your area? Let us know!**

Come to a meeting, email us on our website, or reach out to a board member. We aim to plan events where the community wants to see them held – that's YOU!

Thank YOU to  
everyone who made  
2024 a success!



Mark your calendars for  
our 2025 Annual Meeting!  
[RSVP here!](#)

SAVE THE DATE:  
**ROCKY RIVER WATERSHED  
COUNCIL  
2025 ANNUAL MEETING**

THURS. JANUARY 30TH 2025 | 6:00 PM  
ROCKY RIVER NATURE CENTER AUDITORIUM  
24000 VALLEY PKWY, NORTH  
OLMSTED, OH 44070



MIKE DURKALEC;  
CLEVELAND METROPARKS



KATE CATANESE; FRIENDS  
OF IMPETT PARK

**FEATURING SPEAKERS ON BACKYARD CONSERVATION &  
HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD:**

**MIKE DURKALEC** ON HIS 20 YEARS WITH THE RRWC

**KATE CATANESE** ON ORGANIZING AN ADVOCACY GROUP  
FOR THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

RSVP AT  
[WWW.MYROCKYRIVER.ORG](http://WWW.MYROCKYRIVER.ORG)