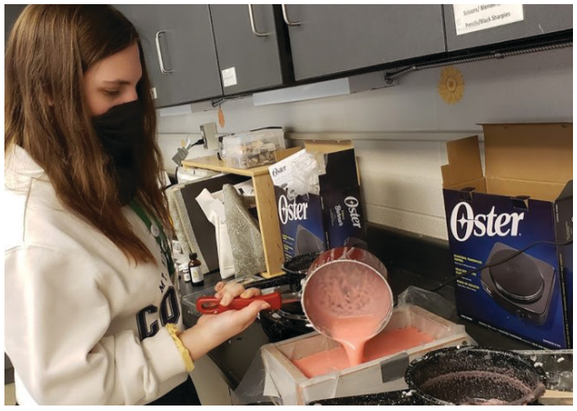
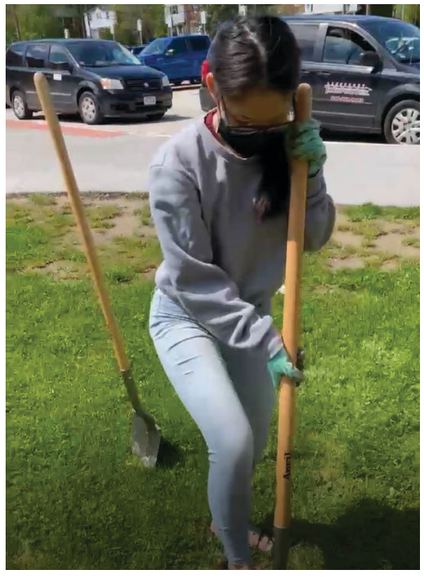
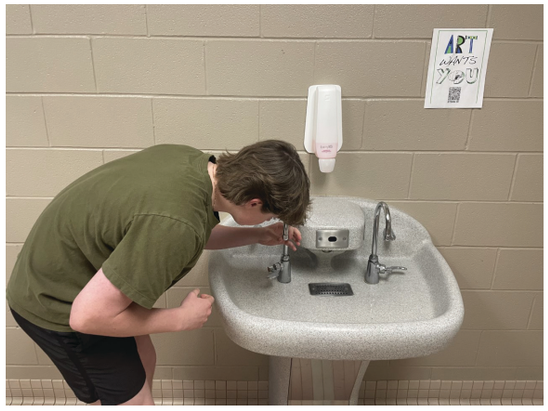
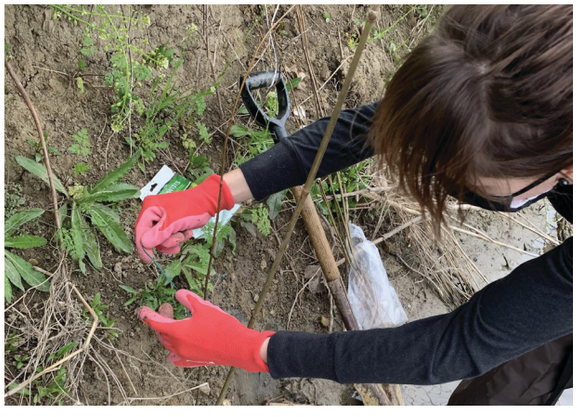
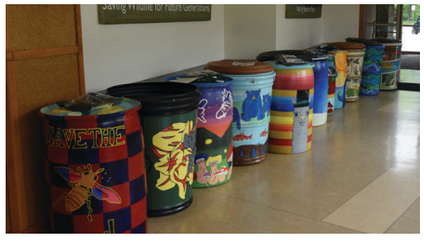
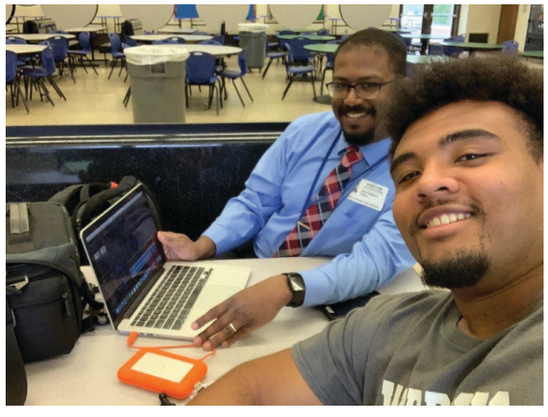












CARING FOR OUR Watersheds®

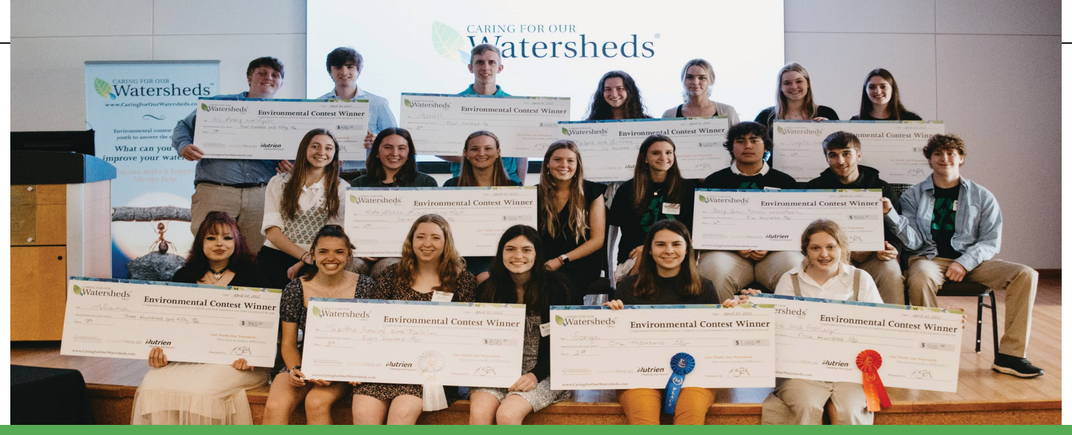
Caring For Our Watersheds is a program that empowers students to imagine, develop and create solutions in their local watersheds. The program promotes watershed awareness and stewardship, values student ideas and offers support when turning theoretical ideas into action. Judges in the environmental field score student entries and ten projects are selected to compete in the final competition which was held on April 30th. $10,000 in implementation funding (up to $1,000 per project) is available to all participants, allowing each and every idea to be turned into reality. At the final event, students presented their projects and finalists received cash awards and matching grants for their schools

Nutrien™ Feeding the Future™

HAMILTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ADVANCING SOIL AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY

NUTRIENTS FOR LIFE FOUNDATION

Caring For Our Watersheds is a joint program of the Hamilton County Conservation District, Nutrien and Nutrients for Life.



CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS FINALISTS

1st First Place:
Sonya
Loveland HS
Contact Lens Recycling

2nd Second Place:
Ollie and Ashley
Loveland HS
Drug Take Back Program

3rd Third Place:
Tabitha, Emily & Natalie
Mount Notre Dame HS
Saving The Earth in Style

OUT OF OVER 130 ENTRIES submitted this year, these ten teams advanced to the Final Competition where students competed for $12,000 in awards for themselves and their schools.

Project: The Butterfly Effect: Wildflowers and Watersheds
Student: Malena & Linnea
School: Wyoming High School
Description: Common milkweed, which is a native perennial plant that serves as important habitat for monarch butterflies, has been in sharp decline over recent years due to habitat destruction. To combat this issue, Malena and Linnea partnered with the City of Forest Park to plant milkweed gardens in local parks, thereby setting an example other communities can easily replicate. The milkweed gardens will also absorb rainwater, which will reduce runoff and help keep our watershed clean.

Project: Drug Take Back Day
Student: Ollie & Ashley
School: Loveland High School
Description: Flushing unwanted medications down the drain can contaminate our watershed and, ultimately, our drinking water. To raise awareness about the harmful effects of pharmaceuticals in the ecosystem and to inform the public on how to properly dispose of them, Ollie and Ashley ran an educational campaign within the community that culminated in a 'Drug Take Back Day.' Loveland residents were encouraged to drop off unwanted medications during a drive at Loveland High School where they would be properly incinerated.

Project: Conservation Stewardship Certification
Student: Garrett
School: West Holmes High School
Description: The challenges of producing enough food, fuel, fiber and fuel to meet the needs of our growing world are becoming increasingly complex, especially while conserving our planet's natural resources. Garrett worked with his local SWCD and the Ohio Farm Bureau to create an on-farm conservation stewardship certification modeled after the Field to Market Alliance's FieldPrint Calculator, which allows farmers to identify the value-added conservation practices that make their farms sustainable and use them as objective marketing tools.

Project: Guide to Being a Watershed Superhero
Student: Crysta & Bailey
School: Mount Notre Dame High School
Description: Crysta and Bailey recognized the importance of educating younger generations about how to care for our watersheds, so they created a children's book called Guide to Being a Watershed Superhero. They also visited a grade school to share their story with kids K through 3rd grade. By exposing children to environmental stewardship at a young age, they hope to create a trickle-up effect in families and communities.

Project: Saving the Earth in Style
Student: Tabitha, Emily & Natalie
School: Mount Notre Dame High School
Description: Emily and her team found that many Mount Notre Dame students throw away their school uniforms after they graduate even though they are often still in good condition. To improve their school's sustainability, the students started a uniform resale program where all students can donate used uniforms for a small incentive. Not only does their program reduce the cost of uniforms for new students but also the water, land and air pollution that comes from their production and shipment.

Project: The Unspoken Problem
Student: Alana
School: John Marshall School of Engineering
Description: Every year, millions of pounds of plastic found in tampons ends up in landfills. To help limit the plastic waste that ends up in the trash, and, potentially, our watershed, Alana created care packages containing reusable, eco-friendly menstrual products and provided them to a women's shelter. She also created a series of educational videos on how to use and create the products, hoping to empower more women to think consciously about hygiene products.

Project: Aer-It-Out
Student: Eli, Andy & Wyatt
School: Wyoming High School
Description: Outdated faucet heads can be a major culprit when it comes to wasting water in residential and commercial buildings. To reduce both water bills and water waste, Andy and his team installed aerators in the sinks throughout their high school. To help inform the public about the water efficiency savings of aerators, they put up fliers around town and created educational TikTok videos.

Project: Clean Up for Candy
Student: Busy, Semi, Roman & Gavin
School: Loveland High School
Description: Gavin and his team noticed tons of trash getting left behind after numerous sporting events at Loveland High School. This trash contributes to pollution in our watershed, so they created an incentive-based program where students get rewarded with candy for staying late to clean up trash after sporting events.

Project: It's a Barrel o' Fun!
Student: Kate, Grace, Lexi & Kat
School: Ursuline Academy
Description: Because most of Cincinnati's storm sewers are combined with sanitary sewers, the excess runoff ends up polluting our watershed during periods of heavy rain. To help mitigate this issue, Kate and her team held a rain barrel decorating contest at their school, afterwards they donated the barrels to public buildings in their community. They hope these functional works of art will catch the eyes of pedestrians and inspire them to decorate and install rain barrels of their own.

Project: Implementing a Contact Lens Recycling System
Student: Sonya
School: Loveland High School
Description: After years of flushing used contact lenses down the drain, Sonya decided to pilot a multi-brand recycling program in her community to reduce the amount of microplastics entering our watershed. She worked with several local eye care facilities to install contact lens recycling bins in their offices, and she also started a petition to require manufacturers to add recycling instructions on their packaging. Although each lens is tiny, Sonya hopes the cumulative efforts of her recycling program will benefit all aquatic life in our watershed.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Milkweed For Monarchs
Reese & Sophia (Loveland High School)

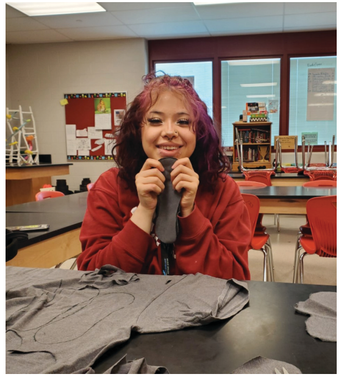
Reducing Stream Bank Erosion and Harnessing the Power of Mushrooms
Anthony & Dharmin (Loveland High School)

SAVING THE EARTH IN STYLE

In the age of social media, teenagers often shape their ideas of what is fashionable around the examples set by their favorite influencers on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Unfortunately, a rising trend among social media influencers is the idea of fast fashion, which Tabitha describes as "the creating of clothes that we don't necessarily need, wearing it for one day, and throwing it away. That's what a lot of these brands have built themselves on."
With young people learning from an early age that clothing is disposable, our landfills are filling up. A recent survey from Savers, a global thrift retailer, found that Americans on average throw away 81 pounds of clothing each year. And as the textiles industry booms, water used in the production process increasingly goes to waste. According to the Water Footprint Network, it takes 650 gallons to produce the cotton required for one T-shirt.
Tabitha, Emily and Natalie saw the effects of fast fashion at their school and decided to act. Mount Notre Dame requires all students to wear uniforms, but once uniforms don't fit or are no longer needed after graduation, many students just throw them away. To increase awareness about this issue and make their school more sustainable, Tabitha and her team created a used uniform drive. Now students can donate unwanted uniforms, which are then washed and resold at a fraction of their original cost in the school spirit store. All proceeds from the sale go to the MND Environmental Action Team, funding cleanups in the local community. Once the three girls graduate, MND parents will take over the sale to ensure that it continues for years to come. Tabitha argues that "it's such an easy solution; many grade schools have done this before. So, it will create a lasting impact that many people will notice."

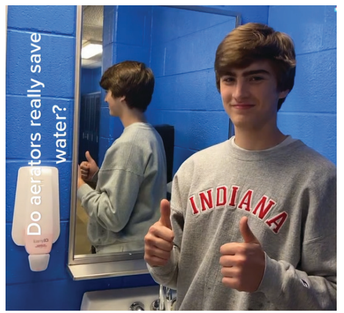
THE UNSPOKEN PROBLEM

Alana Betancourt, a senior at John Marshall School of Engineering, sees menstrual products as necessities - not luxury items, which is how they are taxed in Ohio. This "tampon tax," as it is frequently called, disproportionately affects women, especially women of color. And for women living in homeless shelters for whom every penny matters, many must go without every time their period starts.
Alana knows firsthand the struggles many homeless women face. At age 14 she found herself bouncing from couch to couch without a stable living situation. Today, her experiences motivate her to give back to women in need, one menstrual product at a time. "When I think of people in immediate need, I truly think of mothers of children that are left to fend on their own. Most of the time, the baby comes first. A mother will put her all into a child and not have the time to care for herself. This goes for just about anyone, especially considering how expensive single use pads and tampons are."
A budding environmentalist, Alana wanted to combine her interest in women's health with sustainability. Reusable pads and menstrual cups seemed to be the perfect solution. "I want to offer an outlet to people that don't have the money or resources to get pads or tampons immediately. Not only is it a sustainable way of eradicating the use of plastic in that aspect of life, it's also cheap and reusable." Considering that the Absorbent Hygiene Products Manufacturers Association estimates the average menstruating person will use 11,000 feminine products in their lifetime, going green can have a huge impact on natural resource use.
Alana discovered June, a menstrual cup company, and a sewing machine and got to work. She hopes to sew enough reusable cloth pads to make 30-40 kits to pass out at her local women's shelter. Not only will these kits be good for the environment but also, Betancourt hopes, for a woman's wellbeing. "Cloth pads and cups are safer, healthier and help get rid of the stigma around periods. You get more comfortable with your body and this normal function. I want to help people that have been in an unfortunate circumstance with no resources just like me."



AER-IT-OUT

Most of us don't think twice about the water that comes from our faucets. Where it comes from. How much we use. It's just one of the many miracles of modern life. But, as it turns out, making one small change can have an outsized impact on your wallet and the environment.
Aerators are simple round attachments that can be screwed onto the end of most faucets and, as the name implies, they add air bubbles to or "aerate" the flow of water as it leaves the faucet. Just like low-flow showerheads, aerators act to reduce water usage without sacrificing functionality.
Eli, Andy and Wyatt found that many faucets at their school were outdated and inefficient, wasting water which adds to Cincinnati's already overflowing sewer problem. Because the majority of the city's sewers are combined, meaning they transport wastewater and storm runoff, they often overflow during times of heavy rain and pollute local creeks and streams. After a few quick google searches, the three Wyoming students decided aerators could be a cost-effective way to tackle this problem.
Aerators are so easy to use, they can be installed without a plumber. They are also inexpensive, typically costing only $5-$20. Eli estimates the aerators they installed will reduce Wyoming High School's water consumptions and costs by 10%. Better yet, less water used means more for our local watershed and ecosystem.



PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Organizations dedicated to creating the next generation of land stewards in Hamilton County

Nutrien and The Hamilton County Conservation District understand the importance of protecting our watersheds and conserving natural resources. But it's equally important to cultivate future land stewards and tomorrow's advocates for the environment. That's why the Hamilton County Conservation District has partnered with Nutrien to establish Caring For Our Watersheds in Ohio, a unique program that enhances classroom learning through the practice of environmental research, writing skills, public speaking and hands-on stewardship. The program, which is funded by Nutrien and run by Hamilton County Conservation District, asks high school students to propose ideas on how to improve local watersheds. Students with strong proposals have the opportunity to put those ideas into action. As projects are planned and implemented, students develop strong leadership skills, learn sustainable practices, and contribute to creating a healthier ecosystem. Students also have opportunities to connect with environmental professionals who volunteer and mentor the students as they learn new skills and develop deeper connections with the community in which they live. Caring For Our Watersheds is open to all high school students who live in or go to school in the state of Ohio.

Nutrien™ Feeding the Future™

Caring for Our Watersheds is sponsored by **Nutrien**, a worldwide producer and retailer of fertilizers and other agricultural products and services. As the world's largest provider of crop inputs and services, Nutrien plays a critical role in Feeding the Future by helping growers increase food production in a sustainable manner. With nearly 20,000 employees, operations, and investments in 14 countries, Nutrien's crop inputs and services reach every major growing region of the world.

HAMILTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ADVANCING SOIL AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY

The Hamilton County Conservation District (HCCD) is responsible for the conservation of natural resources within Hamilton County, Ohio. They have a special emphasis on soil and water with a focus on assisting landowners in planning and applying conservation practices on the land. HCCD is dedicated to the sustainable use of our natural resources and to encouraging positive behavioral changes that produce a higher quality of life for our citizens. The District assists all Hamilton County residents, schools, and jurisdictions through their services and dynamic partnerships that continually provide innovative solutions for the challenges of our region.

NUTRIENTS FOR LIFE FOUNDATION

The Nutrients for Life Foundation is a global organization consisting of members and collaborative partners that develop and distribute science-based materials to improve plant nutrient literacy, soil health knowledge and promotes fertilizer's role in sustaining a growing population. Plant nutrients, especially nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, are also required to keep our parks, gardens, playgrounds, sports fields and golf courses green and healthy in communities from coast to coast.

CARING FOR OUR WATERSHEDS PARTNERS

PARTICIPATING TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

Mary Brown - *John Marshall School of Engineering*
Joe W. Carstensen - *Clay High School*
Mary Dudley - *James N. Gamble Montessori High School*
Kelly Dye - *West Holmes High School*
Melissa Kowalski - *Put-In-Bay High School*
Tracy Majors - *Wyoming High School*
Bret Miller - *The Summit Country Day School*
Tonya Nkhata - *Loveland High School*
Monika Nuñez - *Ursuline Academy*
Mary Beth Rieth - *Mount Notre Dame High School*
Stephanie Rammacher - *Spencer Center for Gifted & Exceptional Students*
Kira Rucker - *Spencer Center for Gifted & Exceptional Students*
William Schnure - *Walnut Hills High School*
Kat Sickinger - *The Summit Country Day School*

JUDGES AND VOLUNTEERS

Jeffrey Baker - Nutrien, Inc
Renee Boronka - Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Steph Bradford - Cincinnati Recycling & Reuse Hub
Pat Bruns - OH Board of Education, retired
Jessica D'Ambrosio - The Nature Conservancy
Lori Dorn - Greenacres Foundation
Elise Erhart - Hamilton County R3Source
Sara Fehring - Hamilton County Conservation District
Gia Giammarinaro - Cincinnati Parks
Cory Gonya - Nutrien, Inc
Lauren Gottschalk - Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden
Kirk Hines - ODA, Div of Soil & Water Conservation
Emily Horne - Greenacres Foundation
Scott Huber - Hamilton County Conservation District
Sarah Kitsinis - volunteer
Erin LeFever - Civic Garden Center
Sheryl Long - City of Cincinnati
Christen Lubbers - Architectural Foundation of Cincinnati
Anne Lyon - volunteer, retired
Adam Mahler - CFW Intern
Heather Mayfield - Kenton County Conservation District
Judy Mouch - Cincinnati Nature Center
Joe Phelps - Greenacres Foundation
Tony Staubach - Hamilton County R3Source
Mike Sustin - Summit Metroparks
Kat Zelak - Clermont Soil & Water Conservation District