

June 2009

## **SAGAMORE HILLS GOES “GREEN”**

There are three new “Green Landscaping” features in Sagamore Hills Township Park, thanks to Trustee Rosemary Snell, her fellow trustees, and the Sagamore Hills Township staff.

Rosemary, along with her staff and several residents, installed a raingarden at the Sagamore Hills Township Park, over the Memorial Day weekend. A raingarden is a healthy landscaping practice, featuring native plants, which catches and holds rainwater during a rainstorm event. The native raingarden plants absorb water, filter out pollutants, and anchor the soil with their long root systems. Since sediments from soil and the attached nutrients are a major component of non-point source pollution, a raingarden provides positive results for clean stormwater efforts. A raingarden can also capture and hold excess water for 24-48 hours, which helps to prevent downstream flooding.

Besides having favorable effects on stormwater, raingardens are aesthetically pleasing, add value to any property, and provide habitat for wildlife, especially beneficial insects. Finally, the raingardens are low maintenance and save money, because the native plants are well adapted to local climate conditions, and require no fertilizer or pesticides.

The second “Green” feature is a brand new rainbarrel. Sagamore Hills Township Service Director Bill Cuprak installed the rainbarrel to capture the stormwater from the roof of the small service building in the park. A soaker hose running from the rainbarrel provides rainwater for the raingarden. In Summit County, our average annual rainfall is about 37 inches, and a rainbarrel installed here can save as much as 1300 gallons of rainwater over the hot summer months. Conserving water is of the utmost environmental importance for all of us here in Northeast Ohio.

The third new “Green” feature in the park consists of three pet waste collection stations. These stations supply bags and a place to put the waste. Trustee James Hunt installed these waste receptacles for the convenience of the residents who enjoy walking with their pets in the park. Pet waste is another major component of non-point source pollution, especially in suburban areas. The excess nitrogen ends up in streams and lakes along with other organic chemicals from fertilizers, fouling the water and causing algal blooms. The fish and other aquatic animals cannot live and reproduce, and the water quality becomes totally degraded. The use of pet waste stations will help to improve water quality in our streams and lakes.

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District congratulates Sagamore Hills Township, and the other “Summit County Communities for Clean Stormwater.” Through the PIPE (Public Education and Public Involvement) group, these communities have increased the environmental awareness of their residents, and installed healthy environmental practices which will improve stormwater quality for future generations.

For more information on raingardens, rainbarrels, pet waste disposal, and other healthy landscaping practices, contact Summit SWCD at 330-929-2871, Ext. 16, or go to [www.summitswcd.org](http://www.summitswcd.org).