

# BRWP Times

Summer 2012

Blanchard River Watershed Partnership

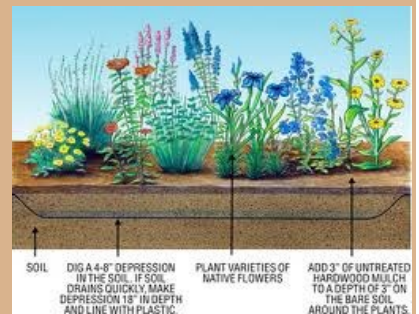
Volume 5

**GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE FUNDING (GLRI)....** The Upper Blanchard was named a focal watershed for funding from the GLRI 2012 program. The money will be coming into the watershed from three main sources: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Geological Survey (USGS), and National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The competitive portion of the funding had proposals due on May 24, 2012. Five agencies submitted proposals for approval. Those submitted were: Coastal Management ODNR – funding for technician help and cost share for farmers; The Nature Conservancy – funding for two-stage ditches; University of Findlay – to build a wetland in the Rieck Center; University of Toledo – project is to plant harvestable grasses in filter strips and to use the grass to produce ethanol and Electric Power Research Institute – use FGD gypsum to control phosphorus run off from agriculture fields. The Ohio EPA is also exploring funding and programs to assist in project implementation. All GLRI grants for this fiscal year are still being evaluated with decisions being announced in August. Check us out on Facebook or on our web site, [www.blanchardriver.org](http://www.blanchardriver.org) for updates.



**Hancock County Commissioners, Hancock Board of Health and the BRWP** working together secured a \$160,000 **Water Pollution Control Loan grant** to repair/replace Home Septic Treatment System for income-eligible homeowners in Hancock County. There have been 5 projects approved at this point. There is still enough money in the grant for several additional projects. Any money not spent by September 1, 2012, will be sent back to the Ohio EPA. This grant was awarded on a county basis. **Your eligibility will be determined before the Health Department checks your system to see if it is failing.** Contact Phil Martin, Watershed Coordinator at 419-422-6487 for information.

**Ottawa Rain Garden...** A new rain garden is being built in Memorial Park, east of Ottawa's swimming pool. A Rain Garden provides a natural solution to handle stormwater. The Blanchard River Watershed Partnership provided \$750.00 to help fund the new garden. The Partnership would like to have a model Rain Garden in each of the communities in the watershed. Rain Gardens are a perfect landscape addition to the urban environment. Rain Gardens catch rainwater and hold the water so the water slowly infiltrates into the ground **Please let us know of any potential sites by calling Phil Martin at 419-422-6487.**



**Blanchard River Clean-up Day will be held on Saturday, August 18, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.**

**Check out our web site for further details or call Phil Martin at 419-422-6487**  
**Volunteers are needed!!!!**

### **Riley Creek/Little Riley Creek Clean-up.....**

The BRWP is planning to hold a clean-up in Bluffton in late August or early September. Volunteers are needed to help clean Riley Creek and Little Riley Creek. Watch for further information on the web and in the media

### ***Riley Creek Watershed Action...***

The Riley Creek Watershed Action Plan (WAP) was submitted for full endorsement to the ODNR and Ohio EPA in late May. The WAP passed the first review and was sent to final review in June. The results of the final review should be released in August. The WAP has already allowed the Blanchard River Watershed Partnership to apply for a \$270,000 Great Lakes Basin Sediment Reduction grant to address sediment loading in the Upper Riley Creek and the Putnam County portion of the Lower Riley Creek. These two areas were chosen due to the interest of the Hancock and Putnam SWCD and the limitations of the grant.



Waterfalls on Riley Creek



Algal Bloom in Lake Erie, November 2011

### ***Lake Erie Algal Bloom...***

The picture above shows the enormous and widespread Algal Bloom in Lake Erie late in 2011. The last time the Lake Erie Algal Bloom was this bad was in the 1960's and 70's. Removal of phosphorus from detergents, changes in agricultural practices and improvements made to sewage treatment plants and sewer systems lead to the significant decrease in the algal bloom in the 1990's and earlier 2000's. The algal bloom started to return in the mid 2000's and have continued to grow more each successive year. BUT WHY???? Phosphorus from lawn fertilizer have been voluntarily eliminated by the major lawn producing fertilizer companies. If you plant a garden, do not use the fertilizer on your yard. The nutrients in fertilizer is identified by three numbers, such as 12-12-12. The middle number is the percent of phosphorus in the fertilizer. Improvements to and the elimination of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) in the sewer systems of municipalities have reduced phosphorus loading.

After a mild weather this past winter, fears were high that the algal bloom would be one of the worst ever this summer. According to a Toledo Blade article on July 7, 2012, the lack of heavy rain events this year will probably lead to a smaller than expected algal bloom by the end of the summer in Lake Erie. This is great news for Lake Erie. Jeff Reutter, the director of The Ohio State University's Sea Grant program is quoted in the article that, "This is great news for this year, but we haven't solved this problem yet. The break from the severe algae blooms has nothing to do with the solution for their underlying causes." Mr. Reuter goes on in the article to state that, "Last year, we saw the largest amount of phosphorus - and water for that matter - going down the rivers and into the lake that we've seen in 35 years of following the Maumee River." The good news is that the algal bloom has been reduced for this year. *WILL IT RETURN IN 2013???* Probably, if rain events return to a more normal pattern and the source of the phosphorus is not eliminated. How can this be accomplished?? The Blanchard River Watershed Partnership and other partners have received grant money to install Agricultural BMP's to address sediment and nutrient loading. Check with your local SWCDs for details or contact Phil Martin at 419-422-6487. The Partnership will continue to look at ways eliminate loadings from failing Home Septic Treatment Systems.

### ***BRWP activities in the watershed .....***

- Visit our Fair Display at the Allen County, Hancock County, and Hardin County Fairs.
  - Allen County - August 17-25 in Lima
  - Hancock County - August 29-Sept. 3
  - Hardin County - Sept. 4-9
- August 2 - Hancock SWCD Annual Meeting. Call 419-422-6569 for tickets.
- River clean-up in Findlay on August 20, 2011.
- Riley and Little Riley Creek clean-up in Bluffton Late August or early September. Check the web site after August 1st for more details.
- Fall Water Quality Monitoring will occur late September to early October. Volunteers are welcome.
- November 15, 2011 - Tentative date for the Annual Meeting

***Corporate Sponsor of the Quarter!!!!!!***

