

Crawford County Conservation Planting Program



Maplewood students worked diligently to put in three thousand trees along I79.

Crawford County Conservation District (CCCD) has completed more than 70 riparian buffer projects by planting more than 50,000 trees and shrubs since 2000. High School students and teachers from seven Crawford County schools, one Erie County School, and one New York school help to plant trees and shrubs along stream banks, which are known as riparian buffers, to prevent a decrease in water quality and promote streambank stabilization. The selected plants are all native to the area and are known to thrive in wet environments.

The Conservation District and DCNR Bureau of Forestry work with landowners each fall to create and plan for each individual planting project. For more than a decade, CCCD and their partners have coordinated the projects to help area farmers and land owners plant trees along streams on their properties. Over the past 13 years the CCCD has leveraged over \$220,000 in state and federal funds to support the project. With the grant funding the CCCD was able to leverage nearly \$400,000 in matching funds in the form of volunteer student labor to install the projects.

"The riparian planting program in Crawford County has been a wonderful way to protect and clean our local streams while providing an unmatched opportunity to educate future generations about conservation. Over the past 13 years, the program has opened doors to project sites that we might never have been invited to restore," states watershed specialist Brain Pilarcik. "It has also provided a generation of local stakeholders a chance to participate in the plantings. We are now seeing these former student volunteers, as



adults, working side by side with us in the conservation field. As so many teachers have told us over the years, there is no substitute for hands-on experience to solidify their classroom lessons."

This program not only allows for stream protection, it also allows the high school students to get hands on experience with real world results in environmental protection. Future stewards of Crawford County's resources are receiving hands-on experience and reaping the rewards of doing something positive for their community.

"This program is a winning arrangement for landowners, students, the conservation district and all county residents." said Lynn Sandieson, CCCD Manager.

For more information on CCCD visit <http://www.crawfordconservation.com>.

