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## Butler County Stream Team December News - 2010



### Volunteer Stream Monitoring in Southwest Ohio Next Sampling Day - December 11th

*SAMPLERS - please note article especially for you below!*

#### **Volunteers Needed in Lab!**

As we have said many times, our organization would not exist if not for the active volunteers we have. This month, we are asking for your assistance in lab, since many of our students will be especially busy getting ready for the upcoming exam week. Last month, with a full lab of volunteers, we were able to process almost 100 samples more quickly than we sometimes process 70! This month, we are hoping to see some of those same faces and, hopefully, new ones. The more volunteers, the more quickly we can process your samples.

\*No lab experience is necessary to volunteer!

\*\*Thanks again for all you do for Butler County Stream Team!

#### **Holiday cooking and healthy streams ... what's the connection??**

During the holiday season, fats, oil and grease (FOG) from food preparation can cause big problems for homeowners and our streams. The obvious source that comes to mind is turkey fryer grease, but that is just one type of FOG. FOG is any solid or thick substance that could cause an obstruction to wastewater flow and interfere with the normal operation of the sanitary sewer system, including: meats, sauces, gravies, salad dressings, deep-fried dishes, cookies, pastries, cheese, and butter.

FOG should never be disposed of down the kitchen drain, the sanitary sewer, or a storm drain. It will cause a mess and cost you money. FOG accumulates over time and leads to clogged pipes in your house and under the street that take the wastewater from your house to the treatment plant. If that happens, wastewater can back up onto the surface and allow

#### **Volunteer Spotlight** Ushering in a new year and new lab managers!

by: Sarah Van Frank

The Butler County Stream Team lab manager position is an important role that Miami University - IES graduate students play. They are in charge of all operations needed to maintain a Level 2 laboratory.

As I complete my coursework for my M.En. I am looking for internships to begin the *professional practice* part of my degree and, hopefully, my next career (so....if you know anyone who's hiring ...!) That means my time as Stream Team lab manager is ending, so I want to use this newsletter to introduce the two assistant lab managers who have been training with me since August. Both Chad and Beth have been great additions and I have truly enjoyed working with both of them.

Chad Toussant is a graduate of Ohio University (2008) with a B.A. in environmental geography. He is currently pursuing his M.En. with a focus in water resources and environmental geology. After graduation Chad plans on pursuing a career with the EPA working with acid mine drainage reclamation.

Elizabeth Downs, originally from Doylestown, PA, graduated with honors from Otterbein College in

untreated sewage to run into the streets and into our storm drains. Not only is this a human health hazard, but since storm drains flow untreated directly to creeks and rivers, this can cause significant environmental damage and impact aquatic life.

Unclogging drain lines and cleaning up sewer overflows is very expensive both for homeowners and for local municipalities. You can avoid unnecessary expense and damage to the sewer system by following a few simple rules.

- **Wipe it up.** Small amounts of cooking oil, such as meat drippings, can be soaked up with a paper towel and thrown into the trash.
- **Reuse it.** Decide whether the oil needs to be discarded. Oil used for deep-frying can be reused several times. After it has cooled, filter and freeze used cooking oil and reuse it for another meal.
- **Trash it.** After it has cooled, pour the used cooking oil into a sturdy closed-lid container, like a coffee can, and dispose of it in the trash or take large amounts to a local landfill.
- **Recycle it.** Dispose of large quantities of cooking oil and grease by contacting your nearest solid waste district to find out if used cooking oil and grease is accepted for recycling. Alternatively, recycle large amounts of used cooking oil with the help of a cooperative local restaurant. Most restaurants have used grease bins. Ask if you can add your used oil to their grease bin.

Holiday food preparation creates a lot of fats, oil, and grease (FOG), but cooking regular meals throughout the year does too. Just in smaller amounts. Apply the same tips and practices year round to protect your house, your health, and your environment.

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2009. Awarded a B.S. in Environmental Science, she also studied earth science and economics. At IES she is concentrating on resource analysis and biological conservation.

December will be my last sampling day with Stream Team, so Chad and Beth will "practice" the role of Co-Lab Managers. It now will be their smiling faces you will see in the lab, at area events, and at Oxford's Farmers Market!

Thank you for your participation with Butler County Stream Team! I have enjoyed my time with the organization and happy holidays to all of you!

## SAMPLERS - PLEASE NOTE:

### Safety first

With the ice and cold temperatures this weekend, please remember that your safety is always the first concern. Don't walk on ice or put yourself in danger just to collect a sample!

### Dry sites

We have received several questions from those of you who sample the same sites each month about what to do when the site is dry. We have decided that it will enhance our records to note in the database that the site is dry. So, put your labels on the bottles and just turn them in along with any bottles of water. We will reuse the bottles for the next sampling date by putting a new label on, so be sure not to open them!

### Wash your hands ....

We recently found out that area wastewater treatment plants are not required to use chlorine in treatment during the winter - November thru April. So we thought we need to remind you that, particularly if you sample in the Great Miami or other large streams, to wash your hands after sampling!

Mark Your  
Calendars!

December Sampling Day -  
Saturday, December 11th

For comments, concerns, or  
suggestions, please contact  
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Butler County Stream Team Monthly Newsletter

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