Outlook

Greenspace Newsletter

From Jennifer Erena <steward@bobolink-greenspace.com>
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The Neighborhood Chronicle #14

BOB O LINK GREENSPACE

Ecoregion 8.3.3; USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 7a, Ohio Valley, US Forestry Providence 222 (Eastern Broadleaf Forest), F (Interior Low Plateau, Bluegrass)

This past year, I have met wonderfully helpful people in my journey to learn more about conservation. Heather Silvanik, Director at the Fayette County Conservation District, has been a champion for urban conservation, including our Bob O Link Greenspace! Her involvement has led to getting attention from the NRCS and resources like Steve Blanford, Soil Expert. If you don't know much about our FCCD, please visit their website at https://www.kyfccd.org/ .

There are three things I'd like you to check out.

1. **The Fall Backyard Conservation program** provides 50% reimbursement, up to $200, for other conservation practices in your backyard. This year they are adding Significant Tree Care! if you have an old heritage tree that needs assistance to keep it

healthy. Applications through November 1. https://www.kyfccd.org/backyardconservation

2. **The 2026 Fall Photography Contest** (September 22 - October 22, 2026)
3. And the **Soil Sample Voucher Program — KY FCCD**

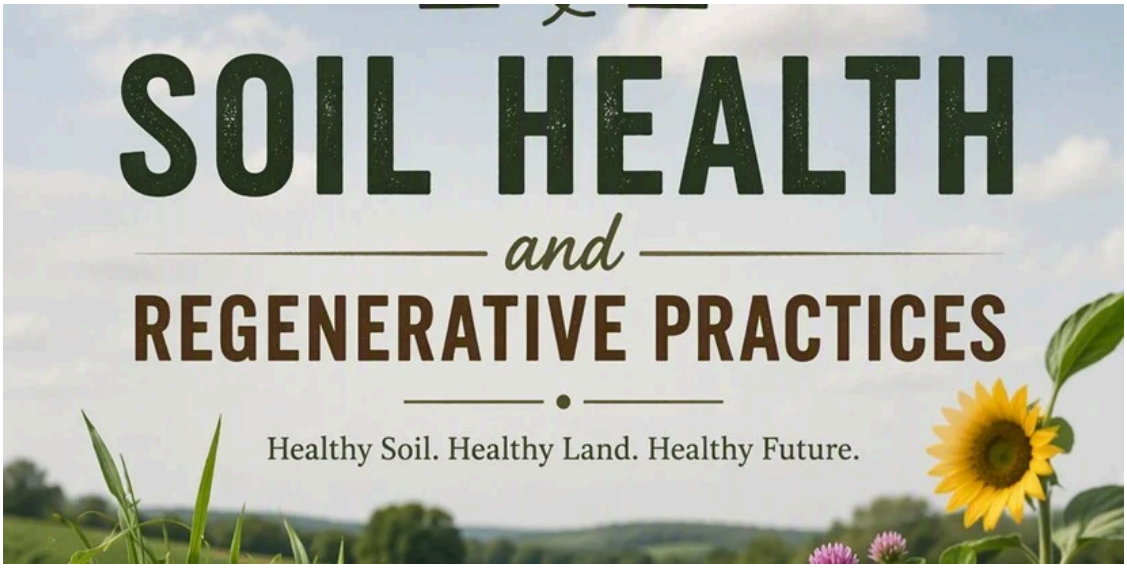
I'll throw in a bonus - their seasonal newsletters - https://www.kyfccd.org/conservelex

STEWARDSHIP SUPPORT

CELEBRATING 2027!

We have been "gifted" the remaining grant funds from Mark Felice's LFUCG Water Quality Grant, which is being used to purchase trees and shrubs. We also have our 2026 grant for plants this fall and next spring. See below on what has been purchased for Oct 17 Tree Week event.

FIELD NOTES



A Firm Foundation

On September 24, Steve Blanford, a retired soil scientist who continues to do field work for Kentucky USDA-NRCS, joined us at the Bob O Link

Greenspace. Within minutes of pushing a probe into the ground, he changed how we see the land beneath our feet.

The turf looks ordinary enough, but Steve explained that almost none of the original soil is where nature left it. When the neighborhood and its sewer lines were built, what was likely a gentle 10–12% slope was cut and graded flat. The natural layers of topsoil, subsoil and parent material were scrambled or buried in the process. Sewer trenches were dug and backfilled with gravel, and the stream that once ran closer to the houses was channelized.

Steve showed us two very different soils side by side. One is called residual soil: reddish, silty soil weathered from the limestone bedrock below, naturally rich in phosphorus (the same fertility that drew the horse industry to central Kentucky). The other was a flour-fine alluvial soil left behind by water runoff That gray isn't clay, he told us; it's a sign the soil is starved of oxygen because water sits in it for much of the year.

The biggest surprise was compaction. Steve's penetrometer topped 300 PSI, so hard the probe simply wouldn't go in. At that density, roots, air, water and the soil organisms that build healthy ground can barely move.

The good news is that soil can heal. Healthy soil is roughly 45% mineral, 25% air, 25% water and 5% organic matter, and while we can't change the minerals, the rest responds to how we care for the land. Steve's prescription starts with breaking up the compacted layers using a soil ripper, then immediately planting a cover crop of cereal rye, rapeseed and clover. The rye builds dense roots and holds the soil, the rapeseed's deep taproots keep channels open, and the clover pulls nitrogen from the air. From there, the goal is simple: keep the soil covered, keep roots growing, and ease up on fertilizers and chemicals, since the site already receives plenty of runoff from surrounding lawns.

We're now working these recommendations into our NRCS conservation plan, which we'll review on October 13. Because tree, pollinator and meadow plantings will roll out over the next few years,

we can prepare each area with cover crops ahead of its planting phase, so every new tree starts life in living soil. Thank you, Steve, for helping us understand that before we can grow a forest, we have to grow the soil.

View photos and more from Steve's visit at https://bobolink-greenspace.com/blog/greenspace-soil-assessment

Stay green, stay kind, stay connected - Jennifer Erena

STEWARDSHIP STEPS



Group Workdays

Our Oct 17 workday will celebrate Tree Week by planting trees!
I made my first trips out to Oakland Farm Trees & Dropseed Nursery and picked up 15 varieties of trees and shrubs to plant on Oct 17th.

Bur Oak (Quercus macrocarpa)
Shumard Oak (Quercus shumardii)
Willow Oak (Quercus phellos)
Overcup Oak (Quercus lyrata)

Buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis)

Ninebark (Physocarpus opufolius)

White Fringetree (Chionanthus virginicus)

Eastern Sweetshrub (Calycanthus floridus) | Carolina Spice

Witch Hazel (Hamamelis virginiana)

Red Buckeye (Aesculus pavia)

Serviceberry (Amelanchier laevis)

American Hornbeam (Carpinus caroliniana)

Hazelnut (Corylus americana)

Winterberry Holly (Ilex verticillata) - require male + female

Wild Hydrangea (Hydrangea arborescens)

SEASONAL SNAPSHOT

📷 Picking up trees & shrubs
📷 October 17 event notice in the wild





Past Newsletters - Chronicle of Activities

🎓 **Learn more** about our beautiful planet and greenspace from our talented neighbors at https://bobolink-greenspace.com/

📩 **Want to write an article?** Or have a topic you want to learn more about? Send your article/ideas to jennifer.erena@me.com.

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