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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Townships Recognized for Rain Garden Outreach**

Clinton, Hamilton, Mifflin and Prairie Townships were recognized at the Franklin County Commissioners' General Session on October 18 for their participation in the *Franklin County Commissioners' Rain Garden Challenge 2011*.

The *Rain Garden Challenge* is a collaboration among the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the Economic Development and Planning Department, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District and the four townships. Its purpose is to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners in the unincorporated areas of Franklin County understand the impacts of storm water runoff on flooding and water pollution as well as how to mitigate these effects.

Clinton, Hamilton, Mifflin and Prairie Township staff worked with Franklin Soil and Water to site, design and install demonstration rain gardens on township property. They also advertised the accompanying workshops and published articles in township newsletters describing how rain gardens can reduce runoff.

"Protecting our streams and rivers should be a priority for communities," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "I am grateful for the leadership shown by our townships and Soil and Water to help families install rain gardens which not only improve local water quality but also increase a homeowner's property appeal, save families money and help reduce flooding in neighborhoods."

The Rain Garden Challenge, funded by a Community Development Block Grant, also includes a cost-share for qualified homeowners in any of the 17 townships in Franklin County. After submitting an income eligibility calculation worksheet, homeowners work with Franklin Soil and Water to properly site and size their rain garden. Upon completion, the homeowner can receive reimbursement for compost, mulch and plants.

The Rain Garden Challenge cost-share continues through June 2012.

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Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District is the natural resource agency in Franklin County with the sole purpose of promoting conservation and responsible land use for better water quality and natural resource management. This is accomplished through establishing partnerships, providing technical guidance and targeted environmental education.