



*Watershed Conservation emphasizing  
Preservation, Restoration, Education and Community Involvement*

Happy Fall!

October 2020

As the trees approach their peak color this year, it seems time to connect with both our donors and the Oliver and Martin Lakes communities. First let me say thank you to all who have donated to GOLC this past year. Your support is much appreciated. As donor, you should have received a letter that both thanks and details the amount contributed. If you have not received this letter, please contact me. Contact info is at the end of this message.

Many of you who have been to the lakes recently might have noticed signage along 200 East, 450 South, or 75 East. GOLC once again contacted agricultural producers surrounding the lakes to see if they would participate in cover crop planting along the ditches that flow into Oliver, Olin and Martin Lakes. Most agreed to participate. In addition, McKibben Farms are participating in a three-year study to determine how cover crops affect the soil. Twenty acres of cover crops will be planted over a three-year period, with soil samples taken to assess the effect of the cover crops on soil health. Grossman Farms, who own the field on the east side of 200 East, north of 450 South are participating in a government cover crop program. The whole field was planted. Oats are growing now.

What do cover crops do for the soil? (1) Soil fertility. Organisms will decompose dead cover crops into nutrients that are taken up by the roots of food plants and add to the soil humus content. (2) Soil texture. Mycorrhizal fungi grow in association with plant roots, producing a substance that glues microscopic clay and organic matter particles into aggregates clumps. This makes the soil more porous to oxygen and water. (3) Erosion prevention. A cover crop's tight canopy protects the soil from the drying effects of wind and the impact of heavy rain and its roots hold the soil together. (4) Moisture. Organic matter added by cover crops acts like a sponge in the soil, absorbing rainwater and holding it for gradual release. (5) Weed, disease and insect protection. Cover crops suppress weeds, and their roots release nutrients that feed beneficial microbes in the soil. These microbes then suppress pathogens that cause root diseases. When a cover crop is cut and used as mulch, the population of beneficial insects is boosted.

GOLC wrote a letter of support for the LaGrange County Soil and Water District in support of their effort to obtain a grant for Best Management Practices in the county. Conservation practices, frequently called best management practices, or BMPs, are tools that farmers can use to reduce soil and fertilizer runoff, properly manage animal waste, and protect water and air quality on their farms while achieving multiple positive environmental outcomes.

We continue to evolve as an organization. New Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation have been adopted. GOLC will join OMLCIA, hopefully this June, for our first annual meeting. GOLC hopes to accomplish other projects in the watershed to reduce runoff, sedimentation and continue to protect our wonderful lake environment.

Best regards,

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