



# Success With Conservation Districts

Conservation News from the Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

## President Burdell Testifies Before Senate Finance Committee

Lawrence Burdell, OFSWCD President & Gallia SWCD Supervisor testified before the Senate Finance & Financial Institutions Committee on May 20th. Burdell noted that:

*“Our future lies in our soils. The production ability and economic sustainability associated with our soil is critical for today and for the quality of life in the future—not only for the food resources we need for nourishment, but also for clean water, fuel, fiber, medicines, the foundation of our homes & buildings and so much more.”*

Lawrence is passionate about the need to keep our water clean and our soils productive, just like the SWCD supervisors throughout Ohio. He quickly notes that it is better to take steps today to keep our waters clean than to pay down the road for corrective measures. And, he quickly notes that agriculture and natural resources are the truly bright spots in our state’s economy today. In concluding his testimony, he urged the Senate members to support 1:1 match funding for the SWCDs, which are efficient and effectively serving Ohio’s constituents... after all without soil and water, there is no quality of life.



## NACD Highlights Coshocton SWCD on The Resource

The spring edition of *The Resource*, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) newsletter, highlighted Coshocton SWCD on its’ cover! Coshocton SWCD holds an annual spring tree planting with fourth grade elementary students from local city schools. The district teaches the students: how to properly plant a tree; the importance of conservation and natural resources to their everyday life; and, the fun and excitement nature provides as they take the kids on a nature hike!

This month’s edition also focuses on “New Opportunities for Conservation Districts: Markets, Trading and Credits.” To learn more, go to: [http://nacdnet.org/news/publications/resource/TheResource\\_Spring09.pdf](http://nacdnet.org/news/publications/resource/TheResource_Spring09.pdf)

## Cuyahoga SWCD: Storm Water Program Technical Quarterly

In an effort to help communities throughout Cuyahoga County, SWCD staff worked diligently to create the “Storm Water Program Technical Quarterly” aimed to help local leaders, developers, educators and constituents better understand storm water permit requirements and beneficial conservation practices.

This issue includes information on the following topics: Phase II Non-Point Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Regulations and Riparian Setback Requirements; Local MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Program; Advantages of Riparian and Wetland Setback Ordinances; USEPA Recommends “Green Infrastructure”; What is OCAPP (Office of Compliance Assistance & Pollution Prevention)?; Draft Storm Water Requirements for Small MS4s Open for Comments; NRCS Program for Flood Prone Lands; and, Care and Maintenance of Vegetative Cover.

The newsletter provides website information and links that allow individuals to gain more news on a number of different programs, as well as upcoming training opportunities available within the area. To learn more, go to : <http://www.cuyahogawcd.org/services-stormwater-publications.html>



## Hancock, Van Wert & Mercer SWCD have “Tunnel” vision

As a result of a joint effort by Hancock, Van Wert and Mercer SWCDs —and a grant from The Community Foundation of Findlay— a soil tunnel was created and is now ready for display! The Soil Tunnel was designed for the following purposes: to share the importance of soil in supporting crops for human consumption; to show the numerous organisms which live within the soil; how man-made structures can upset the balance of an ecosystem; that soil is found in layers and that the layers are not always the same size; that each type of environment can have soil that is different in texture and color; and for so many other important reasons!



To learn more about the soil tunnel and its' availability, contact:

Hancock SWCD at (419) 422-6569  
[www.hancockswcd.com](http://www.hancockswcd.com)

## Ashtabula SWCDs “Rain-ing” Success

In an effort to help reduce nonpoint source (NPS) pollution entering into nearby streams and Ashtabula county's scenic rivers, Ashtabula SWCD partnered with a number of local entities on a rain garden project that was implemented by high school students and local organizations.

Students, Brian Kimmel of the Ashtabula Co. JVS and Charles Primbas of the

Hawken School received a \$1,000 State Farm Good Neighbor Service Learning Grant to create the garden.

These two students educated high schoolers on NPS, planned, led, worked and coordinated the garden with educators, Jefferson Township administration and the Ashtabula SWCD.

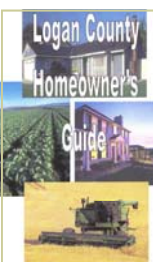
25 high school students from ACJVS science and horticulture classes volunteered to plant the 200 square foot garden.

The garden is beautiful, functional and a demonstration as to how to involve youth in community service activities.

*Great Work to all involved in making this a fantastic project!*



## Logan SWCDs “Home” Run!



Logan SWCD has partnered with a number of local associations to develop a “County Homeowners Guide.” The guide provides an overview of how to be a “good neighbor” and items that should be considered when purchasing and building on property, or other issues associated with home ownership.

The guide breaks down topics in a “before & after” stage. The “before you buy” topics include: soils, watershed, sewage systems, water supply, natural features and drainage characteristics, regulations, legal requirements, local assessments, and community features. While the “after you build” topics include: erosion problems, is your lawn flooded, do you have a wet basement, physical changes to the property, managing your onsite septic system, attracting backyard wildlife, household waste management, know the law, why burning laws exist, drainage, slow moving vehicles, and trespassing.

To view the guide, go to the Logan SWCD website at: <http://www.co.logan.oh.us/soilandwater>



## Medina SWCD: Reaching Far and Wide

The Medina SWCD had a very busy, yet successful year in providing valuable conservation programs and assistance to local constituents within the county. Besides sharing conservation news through publications, newsletters and newspaper articles, the district sought out a diverse crowd and shared a multitude of successful conservation programs that benefit the local economy, the environment and the quality of life. Here are a number of highlights for the year as provided in the district's recent annual report!

*Conservation Practices Planned, Designed and Installed:* 2 Conservation Nutrient Management Plans, 4,042 acres of conservation planning; 29 active EQIP contracts; 4 grassed waterways totaling 6,012 feet; 1 concrete block chute; 4 grazing management fences totaling 8,840 ft.; 3 water lines totaling 3,000 feet; 2 heavy use pads totaling 7,000 feet; 5 access road totaling 1,636 feet; 1 Manure Management liquid tank; 1 dry stack barn; 3 scrape alleys; 2 settling basins; 1 filter area; 1 milk house waste irrigation system; 1 tank and pump system; 400 feet of gutters and downspouts; and, 1,000 feet of outlet pipes.

*Landowner Assistance Provided:* 20 ponds; 40 drainage inventory and evaluations; 18 erosion inventory and evaluations; 2 agriculture pollution abatement visits; 5 acres of critical area seedling; tile maintenance of 320 feet; 600 feet of ditch improvements; 2 floodplain site assessments; 1.1 acres of all-weather paddocks; 1 pond sealing; and 10 acres of CREP forest buffer.

*Local Assistance /Outreach Programs:* Assisted townships with Stormwater/ Water Quality Volume design, floodplain setback requirements; conducted an elected officials luncheon; held various public meetings focused on Forestry Tax Law and OH CAUV, horse owners, and riparian setback. And, conducted a forestry field day. The district participated in the local Home & Flower Show, Medina County Fair, Leadership Medina County, Fall Foliage Tour, and, Earth Day activities. The district also offered various contests including the Recycle Project at the county fair, the Big Tree-Ash Tree, and the Earth Day Coloring Contest.

*Education:* Provided education displays during 28 different county functions; provided classroom presentations to eight different schools; provided teacher workshops focused on Ag-Ecology, See and Do Conservation III, and, an August educator's workshop offered along with Franklin SWCD. Medina SWCD sponsored with Wayne SWCD the Area 2 Envirothon Competition that included classes from 17 counties in northeast Ohio.

Medina is clearly living up to its' mission statement , "To provide the Medina County community with education, guidance and technical assistance that promotes the wise use of its soil and water resources." —*Keep up the great work!*

## Crawford SWCD Highlights "Honey" of a grant!

As highlighted in the recent Crawford County Newsletter, the Honey Creek Targeted Watershed Grant is offering practice incentive payments to farmers in the Honey Creek watershed who reduce nitrogen rates or apply zero phosphorus during corn production. Producers who reduce their total nitrogen program to 0.8 pounds per bushel of production can receive a \$5.00 per acre incentive payment. If the total nitrogen is reduced to 0.6 pounds per bushel of production the producer is eligible for \$10.00 per acre incentive. For example; if a farm has a 160 bushel corn average and the farmers total nitrogen plan is between 128 pounds and 159 pounds (0.8 lbs/ bushel incentive rate), the farmer can receive \$5.00 per acre for that farm. There is a \$750.00 cap per producer, eligibility based on FSA Form AD-1026.

Also, producers in the Honey Creek watershed who have sufficient soil phosphorus levels can choose to apply zero phosphorus and be eligible for incentive payments up to \$30 per acre.

If you are interested in either of these programs or have questions regarding eligibility requirements contact Bret Margraf at the Crawford Soil and Water Conservation District (419) 562-8280 or by email at [bret.margraf@oh.nacdnet.net](mailto:bret.margraf@oh.nacdnet.net).

# First, April "Showers"— Next.... May "Wetlands"

May is Wetland Awareness Month. If you didn't know, wetlands are the vital link between land and water, where the flow of water, the cycling of nutrients, and the energy of the sun meet to produce highly productive ecosystems with unique plant and animal life. While these may not be wet year-round, some of the most important wetlands are seasonally dry transition zones. They are among the most valuable, but often least understood, wetland resources.

Wetlands provide water quality protection and improvement. They are often referred to as the "kidneys" of the landscape for their ability to remove excess nutrients, toxic substances, and sediment from water that flows through them, helping to improve downstream water quality. Wetlands can retain significant percentages of nitrates, ammonium, phosphorus, and sediment loads. Natural wetlands have also been effective in removing contaminants such as pesticides, landfill leachate, dissolved chlorinated compounds, metals, and stormwater runoff.

Wetlands play an important role in reducing the frequency and intensity of floods by acting as natural buffers - slowing, absorbing, and storing significant amounts of floodwater. Since flooding is the most common natural hazard in the nation, wetlands play an integral role in managing this risk, particularly through planning approaches that consider the entire watershed. Wetlands can also significantly mitigate the impacts of storm surges and waves.

The ability of wetlands to store and filter water helps to protect and replenish surface and underground drinking water sources. As nurseries of nature, wetlands are among the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs in their productivity and in the diversity of species they support. Mixtures of vegetation and shallow water zones provide diverse habitats for a variety of species - plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, shellfish, and mammals. Many species rely on these critical habitats for survival as sources of food, shelter, and breeding grounds. Frogs, toads, and salamanders depend on small, isolated wetlands during their development. It is estimated that one-half of all North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands, and despite the fact that wetlands comprise only 5% of the land surface in the conterminous United States; they are also home to an estimated 31% of plant species. Commercially, wetlands provide an essential link in the lifecycle of 75% of the fish and shellfish harvested in the United States and up to 90% of the recreational catch. Many industries, besides fishing, derive benefits or produce products that are dependent on wetlands. Commercial products harvested in wetlands include rice, cranberries, peat, hay, medicines, timber, and fur.

Wetlands provide infinite opportunities for recreation and cultural pursuits. They are inviting places for popular activities such as hiking, fishing, bird watching, photography, and hunting. In 2001, more than 82 million Americans took part in these types of recreational activities, spending approximately \$108 billion.

As you see, wetlands play a vital role in our communities today. To learn more about grant opportunities for wetland restoration or other information, touch base with your county SWCDs, local NRCS offices, or both the Ohio and U.S. EPA.

*\*Wetlands information provided by the U.S. EPA website*

## Upcoming Events

- June 7-9: State Envirothon, Kenyon College
- June 14: Logan Home & Garden Tour, ([www.co.logan.oh.us/soilandwater](http://www.co.logan.oh.us/soilandwater))
- July 8-9: OSWCC Meeting
- July 8-9: Water Quality Trading Workshop, Atwood Lodge
- July 10-12: Lilyfest:, Rockbridge, Ohio— ([www.lilyfest.com](http://www.lilyfest.com))
- July 20-24: IDEA Institute, Hiram College
- July 18-21<sup>st</sup>: NACD Legislative Conference, Washington, DC
- July 26-29: Summer Supervisor School,



"The Leader in Promoting Natural Resources Stewardship to Enhance Ohio's Quality of Life"

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