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Mahoning SWCD News

Summer | 2013

“From Steel to Stewardship”

We want YOU to be a part of the MSWCD

Our Board members play a crucial role in advocating for our SWCD. We count on them for their knowledge of our county and rely on them for guidance and support of our projects. Five supervisors represent the county residents by serving on the Board for three year terms.

If you feel serving on the board is something that interests you, now is the time to start thinking about running in the November election. Mahoning SWCD is currently seeking two new supervisors to serve on the board and a minimum of three applicants. To apply, applicants must be 18 years of age and property owners in Mahoning County. Citizens can petition to be on the board or be nominated by current board members. All applicants will be asked to fill out a brief application form on their previous experience with environmental practices or activities, outside organizations, and/or conservation farming practices that add to their qualifications for the job.

Election date and location is still TBA.

In addition to Board members, Mahoning SWCD is seeking associates passionate about our county's resources. We are looking for outspoken, conservation-minded, individuals to better our county by sharing their knowledge. Associates duties include attending meetings, sharing input, and attending public functions. If interested in serving as an associate, contact the Mahoning SWCD office or a current board member.

Board meetings are open to the public and held at the Mahoning SWCD office on the fourth Monday of every month. The next board meeting is July 22 at 6 p.m., the public is encouraged to attend!



Board Members

Richard S. Scarsella, Chair
Richard DeLuca, Vice Chair
George Mesaros, Secretary
Lawrence Johnson, Member
Jerry A. Rockhold Jr., Member

Associates

Harold Campbell

Staff

Kathi Vrable-Bryan, District Admin.
Sean McGuire, Urban Conservationist
Todd Miller, District Technician
Shelly Covert, Admin. Assistant
Sarah Perrine, Intern
Eric Turner, Intern

ODNR Area Conservation Soil Scientist

Steve Prebonick

Upcoming Events

Pasture Walk, July 26 @ Truitt Farm

A look at the past 2013 Area II Ohio Envirothon

Mahoning SWCD was the lucky district to host this past Area II Envirothon for Northeast Ohio high school students.

After months of preparation, the event on April 24 at the Mill Creek MetroParks Farm in Canfield, Ohio was a success. 51 teams traveled to the Farm to compete in this year's Envirothon focused on the theme Sustainable Rangeland Management: Achieving a Balance Between Tradi-

tional Agricultural Uses with Non-Agricultural Uses. Mahoning SWCD coordinated with specialists of soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife and the current environmental issue to generate challenging tests in these areas. Students competed in the outdoor event by travelling from station to

station and completing the tests using the resources on the Farm. Mahoning County was represented by Boardman High School and Lowellville High School. Four teams continued on to the Ohio Envirothon.

Ohio Envirothon cont. pg.3

4R Tomorrow

4R Tomorrow is a new campaign launched within the past year to increase soil health and improve water quality in a sustainable manner. The 4 R's stand for the four "rights" in the slogan. 1) right fertilizer source, at the 2) right rate, at the 3) right time, with the 4) right placement. These are four simple reminders for the public to implement

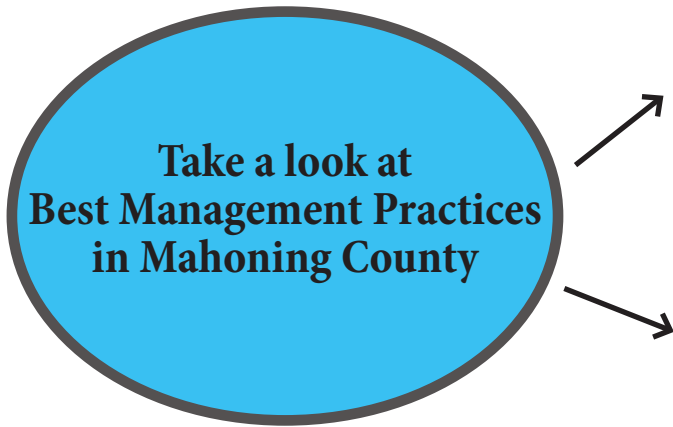
conservation practices and can easily be followed with the proper education.

The goal of the campaign is to improve water quality of Ohio and battle a major issue Ohioans are currently facing: algae blooms in lakes and rivers caused by excess nutrients, mainly phosphorus. This is not a problem that can be solved alone by the agriculture com-

munity, but in conjunction with everyone including homeowners and business owners. Citizens need to be mindful of the fertilizer, chemicals, and other nutrients they use and understand the proper distribution methods.

4R Tomorrow was created by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and is supported by

the Ohio Soybean Council. Contact the Mahoning SWCD office to help determine the best methods for your situation and to help connect you with additional resources. Take the pledge on the 4R Tomorrow website, 4rtomorrow.org, or find it on our website, and commit yourself to using only best management practices today!



Gary Ruggles Jr. Farm: A grass waterway, a seeded area of farmland where water flows too, was constructed on the farm last summer. The water collected in grasswater ways limits the amount of runoff from a farm and acts as an absorption pad for some of the chemicals and fertilizers that may be carried in the water.

Campbell Farm: Heavy use pads and an Access drive are just two of the BMP's used on the Campbell Farm. Heavy use pads protect areas of heavy use, such as feeding areas for livestock. Access drives provide a fixed route of travel for moving livestock, and supplies as well as provide access for proper operation, maintenance, and management of livestock or conservation enterprises while. Both practices help to control runoff thereby preventing erosion and improve water quality.

Cover Crop Resources for Farmers

Contributed by Ed Miller, Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District

The list of benefits from growing cover crops has become very long. There are economic benefits, production benefits, and numerous environmental quality benefits, such as, soil quality, water quality, air quality, and some various wildlife benefits. Numerous fact sheets, websites, field guides, handbooks, and other types of information are available for producers and home gardeners to assist them as either beginners or experienced cover crop growers.

For sure, growing cover crops is on the increase.

A few sources of cover crop information, however, point out that a degree of caution is necessary. Ohio State University Fact Sheet, Sustainable Crop Rotations with Cover Crops SAG-9-09, makes a statement that reminds everyone growing cover crops that there are still a few situations where one must exercise some thought and discretion. The fact sheet points out that "A wrong combination of cover crops may exert negative



attributes, so a thorough understanding of cover crops selection and management is needed to minimize negative outcomes." For example, some research on cover crops indicates certain species may actually contribute to nutrient runoff, a negative impact. I certainly hope that the words "thorough understanding" does not deter anyone from using cover crops due to the level of knowledge and understanding required. Going through the learning process may take some effort, but can be both interesting and fun and the benefits of learning can be very rewarding.

When it comes to website resources, the Midwest Cover Crops Council site is one of the most comprehensive. This site (www.mccc.msu.edu) provides links to Ohio State University cover crops fact sheets and research as well as other Midwestern universities and Ontario. The site also provides special publications for free download or hard copy purchase and an

online cover crop decision tool. Expert assistance is also available through local Extension, soil and water conservation districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service and other similar agencies. In addition, technical and financial assistance is available from time to time from some of these agencies. Don't overlook the opportunities to network with local farmer experts and seed dealers, and be sure to take advantage of the many field days and workshops that go on throughout the year.



Left Photo: Volney Rogers Middle School students learn from Test America how to use water quality testing equipment.

Below Photo: Our friends and partners, Test America and General Motors, who help us to educate our area youth.



Revival of Mahoning County Junior Envirothon

With the excitement of the past Area II Envirothon still in the air, Mahoning SWCD is busy planning a Junior Envirothon for the county. As an agency that prides ourselves in providing strong conservation education, especially our Phase II communities, a Junior Envirothon is the perfect educational event for us to host.

Through the work we've done in the county, we have established close ties with community members and within the schools; as well as a vast knowledge of water and soil resources within the county.

By combining these accomplishments to host a Junior Envirothon at Mahoning County Career and Technical Center, we are further strengthening our education outreach. This county wide program will not only enable Mahoning SWCD to teach students about soil and water resources within their county, but also to familiarize them with the Mahoning SWCD and what MCCTC has to offer in education.

Students will gain an environmental conscious they may not have had before, by competing in the Junior Envirothon.

By completing tests on the subjects of forestry, soil, aquatics, wildlife and an environmental issue, students are learning about their counties resources, developing strong problem solving skills, and receiving early preparation for the Ohio Envirothon!

The Mahoning SWCD Junior Envirothon will take place in October 2013. If you are a middle school, grades 6th-8th, and are interested in participating in the Mahoning SWCD Junior Envirothon, please contact our office at (330) 740-7995 for details and registration.

Conservation Crusader

Looking for ideas about how to live a more sustainable lifestyle? Like the new Ohio Soil and Water Mascot, Conservation Crusader, on Facebook and check out the videos! Click the link for more information on the new superhero and links to the conservation videos: <https://www.facebook.com/ConservationCrusader?fref=ts>



Ohio Envirothon Cont.

Chardon Red of Geauga County, Chardon Black of Geauga County, Perry Red of Lake County, and United Future Farmers of America team 1 of Columbiana County; represented Area II at the Ohio Envirothon on June 9 held at Deer Creek State Park, Fayette County.

Chardon Red won the Ohio Envirothon and will be representing Ohio in the 2013 Cannon North American Envirothon to be held at Montana State University during the week of August 4th, where students from the U.S. and Canada will compete in this very prestigious event.

Good luck to our Area II finalist team

as their Envirothon journey continues!

Thanks to Bob & Chuck Eddy Chevrolet, Dominion, CertainTeed-Saint Gobain, Ducks Unlimited, Mill Creek MetroParks Farm, Mahoning Valley Landscape & Nursery Association, Walgreens, Western Reserve RC&D, WM Waste Management, Republic Services, Farmers National Bank, Green Team, White House Fruit Farm, Advanced Waste Services, Frito Lay and our Mahoning SWCD Board members. We wouldn't have been able to host such a huge event without the help of our sponsors! For Envirothon pictures, visit our website.

Protect Your Water Resources

RAIN BARRELS

Why you should have one

These little changes make a large impact on the quality of our water

- Take unwanted household chemicals to hazardous waste collection sites instead of dumping down your drain. Contact the Green Team at 330-740-2060 for more information on collection within Mahoning County or contact Youngstown Litter Control at (330) 744-7526 for the city of Youngstown.
- Cars can easily pollute waterways by leaking oil and other fluids, so always look for leaks and don't put off getting them fixed!
- When landscaping your yard, select plants that need minimum amounts of water, fertilizers and pesticides or none at all! Spread mulch on bare ground to protect run off water.
- If you have a septic system, make sure you inspect and pump it regularly. Leaks can penetrate ground water and cause serious health issues if ingested.



Help fight against water pollutants by investing in a rain barrel. Non-point source pollution is the number one water pollutant in the US, and a major example of this is runoff. Runoff is all water that is unabsorbed during rainfall that rushes into storm drains and directly enters our waters. Runoff can contain multiple pollutants including pesticides, fertilizers, pet wastes, and automotive fluids. Rain Barrels catch the run off from your roof before it has a chance to pick up these pollutants and can be used for all your lawn care needs.

Combat run off pollution while saving on your water bill and pick up a vegetated top rain barrel from our office today!

One stop shop for your backyard conservation needs

St o p
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our of-
fice to pick
up locally
grown bird-
seed, hand
crafted cedar
birdfeeders



and birdhouses, as well as our new rain barrels with vegetated tops! We carry 25 Lbs. bags of Mixed Bird Seed, 25 Lbs. bags of Black Oil Sunflower Seed, and 10 Lbs. bags of Thistle Seed from Martig Farms, Beloit Village. Our birdfeeders are hand crafted specially for soil and water offices. We have hanging corner feeders, single cake suet feeders, squirrel pin-wheels, 3 chamber bat houses

and a Screech Owl/Krestrel Nest box. If interested in our new rain barrels equipped with vegetated tops call the office for ordering and pick up information. Our birdseed is always

at the office; just give us a call before you stop up, in case we're out on the road helping neighbors with conservation practices!

Send us a picture of your backyard birdfeeders or rain barrels today to have them posted on our website and Facebook page!

For those who are really creative, send us a picture of a painted rain barrel to win a

Contact Us

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Twitter: twitter.com/MahoningSWCD

Don't forget to stop by our booth in the Government building while at the Canfield fair!