

NEWS

& views

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Scioto River Watershed CREP Becomes Reality



The Scioto River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

(Ohio's third CREP) became a reality during a signing ceremony on the banks of the Scioto River in Pickaway County. Ohio is one of only two states (the other being New York) with three CREP programs.

The Scioto River Watershed CREP covers approximately 6,510 square miles (4,166,400 acres) in all or part of 31 counties, and includes many tributary rivers and streams – the Olentangy River, Big and Little Darby Creeks, Deer Creek, Salt Creek, and Paint Creek – to name a few. The watershed is home to nearly 2 million people and boasts

more species of fish and mussels than any other Ohio watershed.

Approximately 95% of the land within the watershed is agricultural, including woodlands. While conservation is widely practiced, there remains a need to further efforts in the Scioto River Watershed to meet water quality, soil erosion, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity goals. Habitat loss within the watershed has especially impacted aquatic species diversity and distribution.

The Scioto River Watershed is also one of Ohio's main contributors to nutrient-related environmental problems in the Ohio River and Gulf of Mexico. And the removal of nutrients and chemicals continues to challenge many municipal drinking water systems within the watershed.

practices will improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, protect biodiversity of terrestrial and aquatic species, and help protect major drinking water sources for the City of Columbus and other municipalities.

Project partners include ODNR's Divisions of Soil and Water Conservation, Wildlife, Natural Areas and Preserves, and Forestry; USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service; the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and 31 SWCDs; City of Columbus; Ohio Environmental Protection Agency; Ohio State University Extension; The Nature Conservancy; Pheasants Forever; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; and Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

Districts in the watershed include Adams, Allen, Auglaize, Champaign, Clark, Clinton, Crawford, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Hardin, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Union, Vinton, and Wyandot.



ODNR Director Sam Speck and USDA Deputy Secretary James Moseley (right) sign the the Scioto River CREP agreement while partner representatives look on.

Scioto River Watershed CREP aims to establish 70,000 acres of long term and permanent conservation practices including riparian buffers, filter strips, hardwood tree plantings, permanent wildlife habitat, wetland restoration, and controlled drainage water management. Together, these

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Conservation Views



Writing about our new election procedures and the upcoming state biennium budget process and making it interesting might seem a daunting task. However, both of these issues remind me of a hayfield I recently saw. That field had just been mowed. There were tufts of uncut grass here, clumps of dumped grass over there, but overall the effect was not bad. While whoever cut it

needed more practice, they seemed to be getting the hang of it.

The first reaction to the news of our new voting process was that it, too, might look somewhat uneven. Comments were made to the effect that it would take too long, and there would be “clumps” of people standing around waiting to vote. But thanks to much practice and preparation by program specialists and district staff, the new procedure has worked out very well. Districts have taken another step to further open their elections to all in the community who are interested in the stew-

ardship of soil and water resources. The hard work of keeping everyone informed and well practiced has proven to be a successful formula. Thank you.

The next biennium budget will be shaped in the upcoming months. The ‘field’ we must now work is in our own backyards – the offices of budget directors and legislators. Even these often-repeated efforts can yield uneven results. The economy may provide some bumps, and legislators may have varying levels of interest or commitment to our issues. Each time we meet our legislator or budget director our skills at delivering a well-honed message will improve. Practice will further help in opening the lines of effective communication. At your monthly board meetings, regional meetings, and even the annual meeting in January, opportunities will be available to shape our list of needs and develop plans to accomplish our goals.

Back to the hayfield I mentioned earlier. That was the first time I had ever driven a mower/conditioner. The hay, however, was tested and rated superior for feed value. That was this past September. I’ll practice more next year! Have a great holiday season! I’ll see you all in January.

Tom Reininger

Dan Kush education fund established to benefit FSR’s Gwynne Conservation Area

A new educational fund has been established in honor of Dan Kush, Division of Soil and Water Conservation employee who passed away in December 2003.

The Dan Kush Gwynne Conservation Area Educational Fund will be used for the development and implementation of educational programs, exhibits, and displays about natural resources and conservation management at the Farm Science Review’s Gwynne Conservation Area. Dan, as a key member and past chairman of the Gwynne committee, was instrumental in helping establish the conservation area.

A tree planting ceremony dedicating the fund was held at the Gwynne during the Farm Science Review. Dan’s wife, Jane, received a plaque in Dan’s memory during the ceremony, which was well attended by SWCD, OSU, NRCS, and ODNR employees.

Contributions to the Dan Kush Fund can be mailed to Farm Science Review, 232 Ag Engineering Bldg, 590 Woody Hayes Dr., Columbus OH 43210. Contributors are asked to place the development fund number 311780 on donation checks. For more information, call 614-292-4278.



Jane Kush receives a plaque commemorating the establishment of the Dan Kush Gwynne Conservation Area Education Fund from Bobby Moser, Dean and Vice President for Agricultural Administration for OSU’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, during the Farm Science Review.

Division Hosts Timber Harvest, Pond Design, Manure Application Training



The two-day event consisted of a day of classroom instruction focusing on topics related to response and resolution of pollution complaints resulting from timber harvest (logging) operations, and a day of “in the field” tours of several active and completed logging jobs on American Electric Power (AEP) land. Tour

On October 26th and 27th, the Division’s Resource Management Section, with assistance from many partners including ODNR’s Division of Forestry, American Electric Power, MeadWestvaco, OSU Extension and others, sponsored a “Timber Harvest and the Environment” workshop at Burr Oak State Park Lodge near Glouster, Ohio. The training was primarily designed to help increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of SWCD technical staff in implementing the Agricultural Pollution Abatement Law as it relates to silviculture.

participants were able to “walk and evaluate” logging job sites for proper use of BMPs as well as witness a variety of different logging systems and technologies ranging from state-of-the-art automated cut-to-length systems to Amish draft horses.

Approximately 60 participants attended the workshop, including SWCD board members and staff, Division of Forestry service foresters, OSUE personnel, Division of Soil and Water Conservation staff, private consultants, loggers, and others.

As part of the Technician Development Program (TDP) for SWCD technicians, Division engineers hosted a training session on pond design in each of the five OFSWCD areas throughout October. Approximately 110 employees participated in the two-day sessions. The TDP is a training and classification course for less experienced SWCD technical employees. By completing this class, approximately 70 participants have met all classroom requirements for TDP Level 2. There are a total of five levels within the Technician Development Program, and this is the first class to complete Level 2.

The division, in cooperation with the Ohio Livestock Coalition, OSU Extension, Ohio EPA, NRCS and ODA also conducted “Train-The-Trainer” workshops around the state focusing on manure management issues such as winter application of manure, movement of liquid manure to subsurface drainage tile, and water quality. Six sessions were held for 142 SWCD, NRCS and OSUE staffers; two sessions were also held for more than 90 Certified Crop Advisors who work with livestock producers and other interested parties.

Conservation Security Program expanded

In a visit to Lancaster on November 1, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman announced the 2005 watersheds for Ohio that are eligible for the Conservation Security Program (CSP), which is designed to improve the condition of working farms and ranches and protect and enhance natural resources.

Five Ohio watersheds with 7,827 farms totaling 1,313,270 acres have been added to the program – Huron-Vermillion, Grand, Upper Maumee, Hocking and Little Muskingum. In 2004, two watersheds – the Auglaize and St. Joseph – were eligible for CSP (see Area 1 in Area Interests on page 4).

In other news, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was expanded in August, including CRP initiatives to create 250,000 acres (14,200 acres in Ohio) of habitat for the northern bobwhite quail.

Area Interests

After a hiatus of two years, Area Interests have returned to *News & Views!* To have your district highlighted, contact your program specialist!

Area 1

Ed Crawford

Ohio was one of 22 states (18 watersheds) approved to implement the first USDA –NRCS Conservation Security Program (CSP) projects, two of which are in Area 1 – the Auglaize and St. Joseph. Ohio had 243 approved contracts (of 2,188 nationwide). The largest workload was in Williams SWCD (St. Joseph Watershed), which had 64 contracts. Beginning in July, SWCD/NRCS staff assisted with the large workload (informational meetings, targeted mailings, data entry), all of which had to be completed by August 15. Williams County producers were approved for payments based on conservation practices and work being done on their land. Contracts ranged from 4.5 to 3,000 acres. The extra effort by the conservation teams in Allen, Auglaize, Putnam, Paulding, Van Wert, Defiance, and Williams have made CSP a success in NW Ohio!

Clark Hutson

Are you tooting your own horn or relying on others to tell your story? Auglaize SWCD is using Electronic Media to “get the word out.” Utilizing Adobe Acrobat they create two professional looking media items. First they publish their traditional district newsletter – Resource Reviews – in paper and ink format, then convert it to an electronic format using Adobe Acrobat. Second, they publish “Securing the Future,” a quarterly promotional piece designed to “build or enhance local, state, and national partnerships while reporting to those providing or investing funds in Auglaize County.” They can then send electronic copies of these items to their local distribution lists or newsgroups and also post them to the web. The advantage of using a product like Adobe is that those who receive the files only need to have a free version of Adobe Reader to access the newsletter and view or print it in its intended form.

Area 2

Dorothy Farris

Sekhar Gorla began working for Geauga SWCD in July 2003 under an Urban Storm Water Specialist grant supported by the County Commissioners and Engineer and three urban townships. His responsibilities include assisting townships in complying with Ohio EPA’s NPDES Phase II requirements. His many accomplishments include establishing a naming convention for streams, tributaries, and storm water outfall numbering; modifying the Comprehensive Outfall Database (COD) created by Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to meet county requirements; identifying and numbering outfalls to streams in three sub watersheds and obtaining coordinates for these outfalls; obtaining hydrographic shape files for each township from the Auditor’s office and adding outfall layers to show the outfalls on GIS maps; and developing a map (using Arc View GIS) of existing storm water basins based on historical records and field visits.

Long-time Summit SWCD board member and two-term OSWCC member Dr. Vern Harnapp resigned this past summer to relocate to Florida. He helped the

Summit SWCD establish itself as a leader in urban conservation programs, developing one of Ohio’s first model riparian setback ordinances.

Jeff Van Loon

Area 2 has launched a new effort to reduce workload bottlenecks and de-mystify policies which exist (or are perceived to exist). The effort was necessitated by concerns over increased workload, increased program dollars, and decreased timeliness in accomplishing conservation on the ground. The Area 2 OFSWCD Directors, in cooperation with NRCS and the division staff at the area level, agreed to support the creation of four task forces to pull together interested district and NRCS employees in Area 2. Formation of the task forces was achieved at a “Conservation Summit” held October 5th. The four groups will address conservation practice application, planning, urban, and administrative issues. Those participating in this locally-led process are eager for results that can be implemented. They will be reporting progress at the Area 2 Winter meeting in Wooster on December 6.

Area 3

Chad Amos

About a year and a half ago, the Monroe SWCD and Monroe County Auditor entered into an agreement to provide a new service to Monroe County woodland landowners wherein landowners who were enrolling in the CAUV woodland tax abatement program would be referred to Chad Hammond, wildlife/forestry specialist for the SWCD. Chad worked with these landowners to develop a woodland stewardship plan for their land that would allow them to meet the guidelines for the CAUV program set up by the County Auditor. Chad and the SWCD have had a chance to work with an entirely new group of landowners and resources. To date, 34 landowners have developed plans covering 2,374 acres.

Area 4

Liz Cline

Congratulations to districts in southwest Ohio for continuing to build amazing partnerships while promoting public outreach and developing new programs to meet customer needs in a time of tight budgets.

Greene and Warren SWCDs partnered with several agencies and organizations to host the Little Miami River Watershed Festival at Caesar Creek Lake Visitors Center, which attracts up to 600 visitors on a fall weekend day. Tourists and locals participated in many hands-on activities to increase their watershed and water quality awareness, including the stream table, EnviroScape, Incredible Journey, trail hikes, and locating their “watershed address.” Presentations included a raptor show and zoo animals, and the National Weather Service provided a session on flood hazards.

Hamilton, Clermont, and Butler districts hosted the first Horse Pasture and Manure Management Seminar to address the growing horse population. Speakers covered horse health, horse ownership, manure manage-

ment and composting, pasture management, cost-share opportunities, and legal liabilities. Exhibitors offered participants an array of products and provided door prizes. Event partners included OSU Extension and NRCS.

Ed Everman

What started as an off-hand remark during an office staff meeting turned into a great financial boost for the Darke SWCD. In discussing the 40+ contracts for CRP, WRP, and WHIP, it was noted that they all called for warm season grass seeding. Could the district buy the relatively expensive seed in bulk, saving money for landowners and making a profit (they hoped) for the district? Landowners would have the choice to buy from the district or locate their own seed source. Several warm season grass suppliers were contacted and the district got the price break they were looking for. All seed would come prepackaged with producers’ names on it from the supplier. In all, 47 landowners placed orders with the district, and the district made about \$8,000.

Area 5

Steve Hawkins

Congratulations to the technical staff in the Area for a record number of practices installed this year.

Delaware SWCD is working on a comprehensive drainage plan for the county. They have been meeting regularly with the County Engineer’s staff to outline drainage issues in the county and determine who is responsible for each item. This will speed up the process of directing individuals to the responsible agency. Next they looked at drainage needs and maintenance issues for the future, which will streamline the process to make a great program even better. Delaware District is also working on a Conservation Park at the fairgrounds that will include various structural and natural practices to increase the public’s understanding of conservation. Practices demonstrated will be of interest to urban and rural, young and not-so-young.

Constance White

On October 13, following major flooding, Washington SWCD learned that information was needed by the County EMA office – in two days! The district took on the challenge. Cathy Davis, storm water specialist, and Kevin Wagner, district technician, worked to locate sites that could be eligible for FEMA relief. Calls were made to all township trustees in the county. Between Wednesday, and Friday, information on 25 sites was compiled and delivered to the EMA office – on time. County Commissioners have also received this information and will work with Morgan/Washington Community Action on possible funding for areas that may not qualify for FEMA assistance. District manager Pam Brooker received very positive feedback on the service provided at this critical time. The Army Corp of Engineers is now working with Kevin to review and validate the identified sites for FEMA.

Focus on Education

52nd Annual FFA State Land and Soil Judging Contest Results



About 370 students gathered at Dawes Arboretum on an over-cast Saturday morning for the 52th Annual FFA State Land and Soil Judging Contest.

This year's FFA State Land and Soil Judging Contest was held on October 9 at Dawes Arboretum in southern Licking County. The teams

judged a variety of soils from pits at eight sites selected by Steve Miller. Judges for this year's contest were the division's Tim Gerber, NRCS' Rich Gehring, and OSU's Brian Slater.

Ninety-seven teams from 70 Ohio high schools earned the right to compete at the state level. Some schools brought two teams – one to judge soils for agricultural uses and another for the urban use contest. The following teams and individuals excelled in the contests:

Agricultural Uses – Teams:

First Place: Crestview H.S. (Richland)
Second Place: Adena H.S. (Ross)
Third Place: Fort Frye H.S. (Washington)

Agricultural Uses – Individuals:

First Place: Matt Pauley (Ross)
Second Place: Kara Sloan (Richland)
Third Place: Justin McDaniel (Clark)

Urban Uses – Teams:

First Place: Mt. Gilead H.S. (Morrow)
Second Place: National Trail H.S. (Preble)
Third Place: Big Walnut H.S. (Delaware)

Urban Uses – Individuals:

First Place: Jack Scoles (Knox)
Second Place: Cody Beacom (Delaware)
Third Place: Bradie Angell (Gallia)

Division Awards Two More Watershed Grants

Watershed projects in northeastern and southwestern Ohio will benefit from a total of \$384,000 in grants recently awarded by the Division of Soil and Water Conservation.

The grant money will support watershed coordinator positions for the Chagrin River Watershed Partners, based in Lake County, and the Three Valley Conservation Trust in Preble County.

Chagrin River Watershed Partners

formed in 1996 to provide technical advice and assistance to member communities on ways to minimize flooding, erosion and water quality problems in land areas drained by the Chagrin River. Portions of the Chagrin are designated as a state "scenic" river.

Three Valley Conservation Trust oversees protection and restoration efforts for western tributaries of the Great Miami River, including Twin Creek, Four Mile Creek, Seven Mile Creek

and Indian Creek.

Each organization will receive a total of \$192,000 over the next six years to cover salary for a watershed coordinator. Funding for Ohio's watershed coordinator grants comes from Clean Water Act money, administered by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and state general revenue funds. This partnership offers operational support to 30 local programs around the state.

Conservation Farm Family Awards

Since the Ohio Conservation Farm Family Awards program was initiated in 1984, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, in partnership with Ohio Farmer magazine, the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, and Hancor, Inc., has honored 111 exemplary private lands conservationists from all over the state. The five families honored during this year's Farm Science Review were: Vincent and Mary Schroeder, Putnam County; Fred Deering and family, Erie County; Richard and Carolyn Potts, Holmes County; Fred and Marie Cowman, Clinton County; and Lawrence, Judy, and David Burdell, Gallia County.



Conservation Farm Family Award winners for 2004 were honored during the FSR.



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