

NEWS

& views

July - August, 2001

A newsletter published by the ODNR Division of Soil and Water Conservation

Volume 36, No. 2



Governor Taft Addresses Summer School

By Nelson Strong, Administrator, Environmental Education Section

This year's Summer Supervisors School – held at the spacious new Hilton Columbus at Easton Town Center July 22-24 – was a success at every level. Approximately 350 SWCD board members (and families), staff, and partnering agency personnel benefited from a diverse lineup of workshops and conservation-oriented tours.

Governor Bob Taft delivered the keynote address, praising SWCDs for their local delivery process and extensive partnership development. The governor congratulated districts for their success at increasing county financial support for 42 consecutive years, and thanked

districts for their fast and efficient response to his 1999 emergency hay and livestock water assistance program. He noted that Ohio leads the nation in the number of SWCD employees, and commended districts for their growing education programs and support of the Ohio Envirothon.

A highlight of the summer meeting was the annual awards program. Five SWCDs – Adams, Defiance, Fulton, Lake and Wood – received Buffer Awards, and four – Allen, Marion, Van Wert and Wyandot – were recognized with Lake Erie CREP Awards. (See pages 3 and 6 for more award coverage.)

OSWCC Meets in Darke County

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission held its summer quarterly meeting in Darke County on July 9-10. On July 9, commission members and Division of Soil and Water Conservation staff toured several Darke and Mercer county sites with Darke SWCD board members Ralph Burkholder and Wilma Jean Nisonger and district conservationist Jim Bennett. The group visited Cooper Foods, a turkey processing facility in southern Mercer County, and viewed two anaerobic hog manure



Commission members (left to right) Tom Reininger, David Gilmore, John Bergman and Paul Andre flank Cooper Farms' rep prior to tour.

lagoons, a large restored wetland, and high-rise hog barn, all in Darke County.

On July 10, the commission met at the Darke County Park District office. In addition to setting the FY2002 matching fund formula for districts, the commission adopted "access roads" as a fundable practice under the Ag Pollution Abatement Program, at 75 percent of total eligible cost, not to exceed \$10,000. Division staff will provide information and training as to access road siting, planning and design.

Conservation Views



In a campaign speech four and a half years ago, I stated that I would like to be a part of the leadership of this organization, knowing that any group of this size and complexity is led by a team, not an individual. That was certainly evident at Summer Supervisors School when you voted to increase dues to fund a full time person to work for the Federation.

When the first mailing went out to districts explaining the situation and the need for action, many questions and concerns were raised. But thanks to the efforts of the officers, directors and ODNR staff, those issues were addressed, and you overwhelmingly passed the dues increase as requested. I would like to thank everyone for their support of the Federation's leadership team on this issue.

But now the real work begins for some of us. The officers, along with several volunteers and division staff, are now in the process of following a time-line established at Summer School to draft a job description, identify initial funding sources,

determine additional duties in response to district needs, post the job, interview, and hire a person by this fall. It's a big challenge and I'm thankful for the help of all the members of the team involved in this process.

Any organization must change with the times or it will slowly fade away. I'm pleased to be a part of an organization that recognizes this and I will do all I can to make those changes beneficial and as painless as possible. We are entering the 21st century with our eyes wide open, ready to meet the needs of a constantly changing Ohio landscape, and I'm glad we will have one more person on our team this fall to help us in those efforts.

Dave Linkhart, President
*Ohio Federation of Soil and Water
Conservation Districts*

OFSWCD Auxiliary Awards Scholarships

The Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Auxiliary annually awards \$500 scholarships to college-age children or grandchildren of past or present SWCD supervisors. The Auxiliary has traditionally awarded two scholarships each year, supported by proceeds from the silent auction at the annual meeting and other fundraising initiatives. According to Auxiliary President Diane Winger, the Auxiliary had enough on hand to offer three scholarships this year.

The recipients for 2001 are Jennifer Bornhorst, Marie Fleming, and Michelle Vinka.



Jennifer Bornhorst

Jennifer is entering her junior year at Wilmington College. She's majoring in language arts and social studies, and plans to teach middle school back home in Shelby County, where her father, Tony, was an SWCD board member from 1983-1989.

Marie will be a senior at the Ohio State University this fall. Her major is animal science, and she hopes one day to manage a dairy farm using conservation tech-



Marie Fleming

niques. Marie's mother, Mary, is serving her second term as a Delaware SWCD supervisor.

Michelle will be a sophomore at OSU's Agricultural Technical Institute this year, where she is studying animal science. She hopes to one day manage a beef cattle operation on the family's home farm in Harrison County, where her father served a two-term stint on the district board.



Michelle Vinka

Focus on Education

By Jeanne Russell, Nonpoint Source Education Coordinator

Agencies Join Forces to Strengthen Environmental Education

Is your SWCD the only agency or organization in your community providing environmental education services? Probably not. So why not take advantage of the opportunity to work with others to build awareness of environmental issues and foster changes in attitude and behavior that will help protect our precious natural resources?

Both Hamilton and Franklin SWCDs have been working toward this goal. Hamilton SWCD was instrumental in helping organize the Greater Cincinnati Environmental Educators (GCEE) group. GCEE consists of over 25 agencies and organizations (park districts, the sanitation commission, the zoo, solid waste districts, water agencies), and individual non-profit organizations such as watershed groups. GCEE meets quarterly to update each other on new and ongoing initiatives, and they schedule one or two professional development days annually. This year they helped sponsor their third annual two-day teachers' symposium, "Connecting Students with the Earth," which drew in over 90 participants.

Thirty organizations in central Ohio participate in TREE (Terrific Resources for Environmental Education), a consortium of agencies and organizations working together to promote environmental education among youth, adults, and families in the area. Spearheaded by Franklin SWCD's Linda Pettit, TREE members meet quarterly to update each other on current programs and devise ways to help promote common goals. They share calendars to help avoid conflicting schedules, and often collaborate in providing workshops and special events. They developed a promotional booklet listing TREE members, along with contact information, mission statements, and specific details on programs provided by each group.

Multiple benefits can be derived from partnerships such as these. Communication between agencies and organizations is greatly enhanced by drawing together



An archaeological "dig" was one of the attractions at this year's GCEE teacher workshop.

groups with common missions. Networking meetings can serve as springboards for new initiatives and ideas. Partnering with other agencies provides opportunities to combine resources and expertise. And cosponsoring events and activities increases audience potential. "One for all and all for one" worked for the Three Musketeers – it can work for you, too!

Conservation Calendar

2001	November 6-7	Conference on Natural Channel Design – Worthington Holiday Inn
	November 7	OFSWCD Board of Directors Meeting – Columbus
	November 8	Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission Meeting - Columbus
2002	January 22-23-24	OFSWCD Annual Meeting – Marriott North, Columbus
	February 3-7	NACD Annual Meeting – Nugget Hotel, Reno, Nevada
	March 5-6	All-Employee Meeting – Marriott North, Columbus
	April 29-May 5	Soil & Water Stewardship Week – "The Gift of Trees"



OFSWCD President Dave Linkhart presents Conservation Teacher-of-the-Year (elementary) to Wayne County teacher Laura Grimm.



Henry County teacher Duane Knisely accepts the Teacher-of-the-Year Award in the secondary grade category.

Educators Honored at Summer School

The OFSWCD recognized two outstanding educators and the Medina SWCD's education program during the 56th annual Summer Supervisors School on July 23. Ohio's winners will go on to compete in the NACD-Zeneca Conservation Education Awards program. The national winners will be recognized during the NACD annual meeting in Reno, Nevada next February.

Area Interests

Editor's note – We'll return to the traditional format in the next issue.

Resource Management Specialists Hired to Assist SWCDs

Earlier this year the Division of Soil and Water Conservation hired five Resource Management Specialists (RMS) to provide technical assistance to SWCDs on an Area-basis. Primary responsibilities will include implementation and administration of the division's agricultural pollution abatement cost-share program, follow-up and evaluation

of division-funded best management practices, and assisting districts to solve pollution complaint situations. RMS staff will also assist watershed groups and local agencies to implement nonpoint source pollution control programs.

The five Resource Management Specialists are:

Area 1 – Jocelyn Henderson was previously a district technician/education specialist for the Union SWCD, and prior to that was a technician for Trumbull SWCD. (Jocelyn is one of a growing number of professionals who participated in the Envirothon as a high school student.)

Area 2 – Tom Holmes previously served the Lorain SWCD as a technician and urban stream specialist (since November, 1997); prior to that he worked for Ohio EPA, conducting stream surveys as an electrofishing biologist.

Area 3 – Bob Mulligan was a technician (beginning in 1992) for the Athens SWCD prior to joining the division staff and served three southeast Ohio school districts as a substitute teacher from 1990 to 1992.

Area 4 – Jeff Thomas formerly worked for the Montgomery SWCD as a technician (1997) before moving to Warren SWCD as an urban stream specialist (1998 – 2001).

Area 5 – Rob Hamilton started his career as a part-time technician for Clinton SWCD, and went on to serve Preble and Greene SWCDs prior to working for the Highland SWCD as a technician and manure nutrient management specialist.

Martin Joyce, previously Area 3-South program specialist, will oversee the Resource Management program for the division.



Resource Management Specialists (left to right) Jeff Thomas, Rob Hamilton, Jocelyn Henderson, Tom Holmes, and Bob Mulligan.

Using Tile Stops to Control Manure Runoff

By Ed Crawford, Mark Seger, and Jocelyn Henderson. Photo by Kate Hanko, Crawford SWCD

Sub-surface drainage systems are a fact of life here in NW Ohio. For more than 50 years subsurface drainage has allowed agriculture to prosper and has provided Ohio with some of the best cropland for producing products for an ever-growing population. Much of this drainage has been installed with technical assistance provided by SWCDs.

Over the years most drainage systems have been designed to get the water off the land as fast as possible to benefit crops and livestock. Most drainage systems efficiently take rainfall away from the surface through a tile system to a maintained outlet. Today these systems



present a problem to livestock producers who must make use of cropland for land application of manure.

Recently we have observed that liquid manure, which is applied by tank, irrigation, or injection, has the potential to get into field tile and, eventually, streams. Faced with this scenario,

SWCDs are installing field tile stops with inspection ports/pump-out ports to eliminate this environmental hazard. Area 1, through an innovative grant from the OSWCC, is demonstrating the tile stops as an alternative in abating liquid manure from sub-surface drainage systems. A group of SWCD Technicians and NRCS Engineers recently toured the first tile stops installed by the Crawford SWCD. Crawford SWCD has worked with three swine producers to install 12 of these practices. Early reports and observations from the tile stops are encouraging. If you would like more information on this new conservation practice contact the Crawford SWCD staff at (419) 562-2203.

New Program Specialist for Area 3



Chad Amos is the newest addition to the SWCD Section staff in the Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Chad is a Program Specialist in Area 3-South and covers

Muskingum, Guernsey, Belmont, Perry, Morgan, Noble, Monroe and Washington SWCDs. As a Program Specialist, Chad assists those SWCDs in program development, office administration, personnel issues, budgeting, and training of both SWCD board members and staff. Chad previously served as Wildlife Specialist and, most recently, District Administrator for the Washington SWCD. (Side note – Chad is the only division employee to ever play professional baseball!)

Ohio Team Finishes 11th at Canon Envirothon



The winners of the Ohio Envirothon – the Logan High School “Gold” team from Hocking County – traveled to the Canon Envirothon (July 24-29) in Raymond, Mississippi and provided the best finish for an Ohio team in several years. The five-member team came in 11th in a field of 49 teams from the US (42) and Canada (7), finishing only one-half point behind 10th place California. The Ohio team had the high score in the Aquatic Ecology test, earning them individual medals and a team plaque.

Who Ya’ Gonna Call? Maintaining Competency in Soils in the Division and SWCDs

By Tim Gerber, Administrator, Soil Inventory and Evaluation Section

Soil Scientists Hired by the Division

About three years ago, the division started looking for ways to ensure a smooth transition between the current generation of pedologists, or soil scientists, and the next. Since then, the Soil Inventory and Evaluation section has hired two college interns, Danielle Balduff and Matt Deaton, and two full-time soil scientists, Steve Miller and Aaron Lantz.

All four are now graduates of The Ohio State University. Danielle and Matt already had taken at least four soil science courses by

mid-way through their senior years, but the division recruited them because they had been so successful on OSU’s collegiate soil judging team. Steve and Aaron received their M.S. degrees at OSU in 2000, after taking at least eight college courses in soil science. Both Steve and Aaron had been members of collegiate soil judging teams as undergraduates.



Steve Miller and Aaron Lantz

Competency in Soils at the District Level

ODNR and NRCS now have a total of 29 full-time soil scientists in the Ohio Soil Survey, not enough to answer all of the soil-related questions that arise in SWCD offices; most of those questions are currently addressed by district conservationists and SWCD technicians. But, when they retire or resign to take other positions, will their successors

have the competency in soils to serve the SWCDs’ customers? Who will be the “para-pedologists” in Ohio’s Conservation Partnership five years from now?

The division will be conducting a survey of SWCD technicians this fall to help determine the current level of competency in soils statewide. The survey may indicate that there are several distinct competency levels among SWCD technicians. Those who by their training or experience can speak with a high level

of authority about the soils in their counties could someday become mentors in a program similar to the Education Specialist’s Mentoring Program.

After the survey results are sum-

marized, other strategies can be developed to maintain or improve the current level of soils competency. Specific levels of competency could be established, similar to the job approval authority levels technicians can earn through training from engineers. Or, SWCDs could offer incentives for technicians to take soils courses. The one- or two-day soils courses currently offered periodically by division, NRCS, and OSU soil scientists could be offered more frequently if enrollment were to increase dramatically. Soil science courses are already offered by at least six different colleges in the state.

We take pride in knowing that Ohio’s Soil Survey and SWCD programs are recognized nationally as exemplary. Intentional, strategic steps will be needed to remain worthy of our reputation through the current decade.

More Summer School News

OASWCDE Awards First Scholarship



OFSWCD president Dave Linkhart congratulates OASWCDE scholarship recipient Jonathan Sorg.

The Ohio Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Employees awarded its first \$500 scholarship at the OFSWCD Summer School Awards Breakfast. The

recipient, Jonathan Sorg, is the son of Muskingum SWCD administrator Dick Sorg. Jonathan is working toward a dual Biology and Math Major at Wilmington College, and for the past two summers has interned at Battelle Memorial Institute, working on environmental restoration research.

OFSWCD Distinguished Service Awards

Defiance and Union SWCDs were recognized for their outstanding program accomplishments in the first “OFSWCD Distinguished Service Award” program during the Summer School Awards breakfast. Formerly

sponsored by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, the award recognizes outstanding planning and execution of a wide range of SWCD programs and services.



Dave Linkhart congratulates Union SWCD board members and staff.



Defiance SWCD board with OFSWCD president Linkhart.



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Soil and Water Conservation

4383 Fountain Square Drive
Columbus OH 43224
(614) 265-6610
(614) 265-6994 (TDD)

Bob Taft, *Governor*
Sam Speck, *Director*
Lawrence G. Vance, *Chief*

An equal opportunity employer-M/F/H

News and Views is edited by Nelson Strong