

NEWS

& views

Special Edition

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

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2003 NACD Annual Meeting

Ohioans Score Big Time at “Conservation Bowl”

Being at the NACD 57th Annual Meeting in Orlando February 9-13 was a little like being at the Fiesta Bowl; it seemed Buckeyes were scoring every time you turned around! And they did it without the benefit of a single overtime!

This “Special Edition” of *News & Views* celebrates the prominent role Ohioans play on the national conservation scene. It’s a tribute to all of Ohio’s 88 SWCDs and to the 440 elected supervisors, 400+ SWCD staff, and their NRCS and ODNR partners that Ohio has been a leader in soil and water conservation in America for more than 60 years!



Gary Mast accepts NACD Ohio Bicentennial license plate from Steve Robinson during the NACD Banquet.

Gary Mast Becomes NACD President

At the conclusion of the NACD banquet Gary Mast was sworn in as NACD President for 2003-2004. A dairy farmer from Millersburg and Holmes SWCD supervisor, Gary says of his new charge that, “the change of leadership won’t bring a change in association priorities,” and that his immediate priorities are to work toward full funding of the Farm Bill conservation programs; to prevent the dismantling of base programs to support new programs; and to bring the Conservation Security Program to life.

First elected NACD 2nd vice president in 1999, Gary was elected 1st V.P. at the 2001 NACD Annual Meeting in Fort Worth. The third Ohioan to serve as NACD president, Gary continues a strong Ohio tradition in NACD’s history. Clark SWCD supervisor Allen Craig was one of 18 founders at the July 24-25, 1946 meeting in Chicago when the “National Association of Soil Conservation Districts” was formed, and served on NACD’s first board of directors. Miami SWCD board member Sam Studebaker, Sr. was the first Ohioan to serve as NACD president from 1966-1970, and Union SWCD supervisor Clarence Durban served as president from 1985 to 1988.



Ruth Ann Gerber — NACD Auxiliary President

Elected president in 2002, Shelby County's Ruth Ann Gerber will preside over the NACD Auxiliary until the 2004 annual meeting. She served as OFSWCD Auxiliary President in 1996-97.

The Auxiliary sponsors the NACD poster and photo contests, and will be assuming responsibility for Soil and Water Stewardship Week program promotion to districts nationwide. They also provide support to the Canon Envirothon; Ag in the Classroom; Project Food, Land and People; and the National FFA Land and Soil Judging competition.

Bill Richards NACD 2002 Distinguished Service Award

According to Bill Richards, his objective is to "build bridges between agriculture and environmental interests." Fellow conservation leaders describe him as a "true conservationist" who believes strongly in the value of partnerships as a means of getting conservation on the ground.

His love for conservation germinated on his family farm in Pickaway County, one of the first in the country to practice conservation tillage on the entire acreage. His three sons continue to manage Richards Farms as a showcase for conservation.

He served as chief of the Soil Conservation Service from 1990-1993, during which time he initiated the highly successful National Alliance for Crop Residue Management, forged a close working relationship with NACD, and spearheaded a formal partnership agreement among NACD, SCS, NASCA and the National Association of RC&D Councils.

In recent years he has been active in the conservation partnership as a member of NACD's Farm Bill Implementation Committee, Conservation Delivery Systems Taskforce and Conservation Functions Work Group. His public relations skills are currently being tapped to chair a marketing effort to communicate 2002 Farm Bill programs and benefits. He is vice chair of CTIC and serves on NACD's Business Alliance Council.

Bill Richards accepts NACD "Distinguished Service Award" from NACD President Read Smith.



Ohio Tops NACD Support – AGAIN!

Ohio once again was the top NACD supporter in 2002 – and one of 11 state associations recognized for 100% district participation. OFSWCD President Tom Reininger accepted both the Quota Recognition and 100% District Participation awards during the meeting's opening session.

OFSWCD President Tom Reininger accepts Ohio Quota Award from NACD President Read Smith.

Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District EDUCATION DISTRICT OF THE YEAR

Muskingum SWCD's education programs serve ALL their cooperators, and the district considers all staff to be educators. The district's assistance to local schools and colleges covers a wide array of educational programs. They work not only with public school systems but also parochial schools, home educators, and adult audiences to spread the conservation message throughout the county.

One of the district's most important activities is Camp Adventure, offered free each summer to Muskingum County's fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students to give them the opportunity to explore natural resources. During 2002, the district presented natural resource programs to 4,000 pre-school through college students. A Water Festival is co-sponsored with the Guernsey SWCD each fall, teaching students the importance of watersheds and how the students can make

a contribution to the sustainability of water within their world. Six college scholarships are offered each year for graduating high school students.

Field events for the general public include workshops for contractors and pond and woodland owners. Programs on wildlife and forestry are offered in addition to a Conservation Air Tour. The public information program includes six issues of the district newsletter and five issues of an educator newsletter mailed to over 2,000 area residents. Numerous news articles, television segments, and a district website also help keep the public informed of conservation issues and opportunities.



Neil Strong (representing NACD Education Award sponsor Syngenta Crop Protection), left, with Muskingum SWCD reps (l-r, back row) Ryan Fink (ag/wildlife specialist); Nettie Watson (board member); Dick Sorg (district administrator); Kenny Rupe (ag resource specialist); and (seated l-r) Lisa Crock (administrative assistant); Linda Atkinson (education specialist).

Catherine Knoop ELEMENTARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

This 4th grade Teacher of the Year, nominated by Hocking SWCD, feels students must develop an awareness of the world around them at an early age. She helps them see the interdependence of things in their environment and the role they play. "I have learned the importance of a safe environment; one that is free of intolerance and full of acceptance. My students accept me for who I am and I try to return that acceptance. I want to be there to help them gain a sense of wonder, a desire to explore, and an interest in learning. These skills will help them become lifelong learners."

Cathy works with both the Pickaway and Hocking SWCDs in presenting programs about soil and water resources and the importance of conservation to her students. With the help of a Junior Naturalist Club and the conservation districts, she has planted gardens, prairies, meadows, and built trails and bird feeding areas. Other projects include a fern garden, an herb garden, a wildflower garden, a butterfly garden, and an Ohio native meadow.



Neil Strong (representing NACD Education Award sponsor Syngenta Crop Protection) congratulates Elementary Teacher of the Year Cathy Knoop.

Frank Phelps Core 4 First Place Producer Award

Believing in his role as a steward of the land, Logan SWCD board member Frank Phelps employs a comprehensive system of conservation practices on his 1,500-acre crop and livestock operation. In addition to building better soil through continuous no-till for more than ten years, he helps the Indian Lake watershed work toward cleaner water by using grassed waterways, filter strips, nutrient and pest management, rotational grazing, manure management, native grass plantings and wetland restoration.

Leading by example and actively promoting conservation, the Phelps family has helped bring about significant improvements in Indian Lake and its tributaries. Their conservation efforts were recognized in 2002 with the “Conservation Farm Family Award” for Area 4 during the Farm Science Review.

They are confident the Core 4 Conservation system will lead to a brighter future for their family farm.



Ray Brownfield (Capital Agricultural Property Services Inc.) and Neil Strong (Syngenta Crop Protection), Core 4 Award sponsors congratulate Logan SWCD board member Frank Phelps (right), first place individual winner.



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