

## 63RD ANNUAL MEETING/BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

This year marked the 63rd anniversary of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The annual meeting/banquet was held on September 14, 2006, at the Goslin Nature Education Center on the grounds of Alley Park. The evening started out with the Board of Supervisors election. After dinner Joe Steiger, retired SWCD Soil Scientist, gave a presentation on the five landforms that exist in the state of Ohio. This was followed by the presentation of several awards.

The 2005 Cooperator of the Year Awards were presented to the following: Jay Johnson of Dogwood Farms; Brooks and Nancy Sitterley, and Dorothy Roan; Barry and Shelley Russell. Rick and Debbie Moyer were also given a 2005 Cooperator of the Year Award but were unable to attend the meeting.

The 2005 Hockhockin Conservation Award was presented to three Park Naturalists: Diana Morse with Blacklick Woods Metro Park, Scott Felker with Chestnut Ridge Metro Park, and Heike Perko with Clear Creek Metro Park. This award is given to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to promoting conservation education and awareness to the people of Fairfield County.

The Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award is presented to a Fairfield County teacher who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to teaching conservation, environmental awareness, and natural resource education to students in Fairfield County. This year the 2005 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award was given to Bonny Calderwood, a second grade teacher at Liberty Union Elementary, for her comprehensive environmental science program.

Jim Davis, Board Vice-Chair, was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for his nine years of service on the SWCD Board of Supervisors.

John Albert of Pleasant Township and Dick Kilbarger of Rushcreek Township were elected to three-year terms on the Fairfield SWCD Board of Supervisors. Their terms will begin on January 1, 2007. John and Dick will join current board members Steve Miller, Tim White, and Joe Young. Kelly Hurst of Lancaster will be leaving the Board after serving one three-year term, and Jim Davis of Millersport will be leaving the Board after serving nine years.



# MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING



Steve Miller (right), Fairfield SWCD Board Secretary, presented Jay Johnson of Dogwood Farms with a 2005 Cooperator of the Year Award. They received this award for the implementation of several WASCOS and a waterway.



Steve Miller (right), Board Secretary, presented (left to right) Brooks Sitterley, Dorothy Roan and Nancy Sitterley with a 2005 Cooperator of the Year Award. They implemented many conservation practices including conservation grass cover, food plots, shrub plantings, hardwood tree planting, and prairie grass planting.



Steve Miller (right), Board Secretary, presented Barry and Shelley Russell with a 2005 Cooperator of the Year Award. Their list of projects include grass filter strip, hardwood tree filter strip, quail borders, completion of EQIP program fencing, pipeline, tank, and prescribed grazing.



Rick and Debbie Moyer were awarded a 2005 Cooperator of the Year Award. They have implemented the following conservation practices: grass buffer strips, prairie grass planting, conservation grass cover, conservation mulch tillage, and contour strip farming.



Diana Morse, Scott Felker, and Heike Perko with Metro Parks were the recipients of the 2005 Hockhockin Conservation Award.



Vicki Kohli (left) presented Bonny Calderwood with the 2005 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award. Bonny is a second grade teacher at Liberty Union Elementary.

**Thanks to the following businesses  
for donating door prizes for our  
annual meeting/banquet:**

*Bank One  
Dittmar Sales & Service  
Elemental Massage Therapy  
Estate Club  
Fairfield County Farm Bureau  
Fairfield Historical Parks  
Farm Credit Services  
Henry Manor Bed & Breakfast  
JD Equipment Inc.  
Lancaster Feed Store  
Lowe's  
Mid-State Power Equipment  
Night Crawler Gardens  
Ohio Valley Outdoors  
Pacer's Italian Cuisine & Steakery  
Piper's Service Center  
Poplar Creek Perennials  
Ruff's Seed Farm  
South Central Power  
Spectrum Analytic Inc.  
United Landmark LLC  
Wal-Mart  
Young's Crop Insurance Agency*

**BRAD TOLBERT LEAVES SWCD**

Brad Tolbert, Urban Specialist with the SWCD, has decided to "move on to greener pastures" after five years. Brad's work included inspection of the required erosion control measures necessary during the construction and development of subdivisions in Fairfield County. Brad also reviewed subdivision construction plans to check for needed conservation practices.

When the state of Ohio's Agricultural Easement Protection Program began, Brad worked with Joe Steiger to build a strong local program. Brad and Joe worked with several local producers and in four out of five program years, a local farm was protected. Over 1,200 acres of farmland are now enrolled. Brad was also instrumental in helping to form a local land trust in Fairfield County, which can accept conservation easements on farmland. Brad was a versatile, effective employee who had a hand in many other projects as well. His leadership and ideas will be missed. Good luck Brad!

**JIM DAVIS AND KELLY HURST TO LEAVE  
DISTRICT BOARD POSITIONS**

Jim Davis has served on the Fairfield SWCD Board of Supervisors for three consecutive terms. He served in all board capacities, including Chair. Jim was extremely active with Soil and Water Conservation Districts statewide serving as an Area 5 Director. Jim was very good at soliciting outside funds for the District, enabling work to be done on outdated dam structures in the Hocking and Rushcreek Conservancy Districts. He was selected as the Ohio SWCD Board Member of the Year in 2003.

Kelly Hurst has served one term for the SWCD and has served as Treasurer-Fiscal Agent for the past three years. Kelly's insight into education and outreach has helped launch the District into its current active education and outreach programs. She also was part of the District's education subcommittee.

We will miss the skills and time commitments that both of these board members brought to the District. Thank you Jim and Kelly from all of us!

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**FAIRFIELD COUNTY STATEWIDE POSTER  
CONTEST WINNER**

Georgi Silvia won first place statewide in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade category of the annual NACD poster contest for 2006. Georgi is a student in the Bloom Carroll school district. Each year all students in grades K-12 countywide are eligible to compete.

The conservation education poster theme for 2006 was "Water Wise", with each student designing their own poster around the concept of water, how we use or conserve it, water quality, or its wise use.

Each year this contest is sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), and is a nationwide conservation education poster contest. Georgi's poster will be judged one more time at the national level in January for the NACD meeting in February. Congratulations and good luck Georgi!





## DEVELOPMENT WITH CONSERVATION IN MIND

During the past decade, Fairfield County has become the third fastest growing county in Ohio. In 2005, over 2,500 acres of land were developed in the unincorporated portions of the county. Urbanization is happening at a rapid rate, with homes being built on prime farmland soils. Home buyers need to research soils information before purchasing, as not all land is equally suited for development. Soil maps available in the SWCD office contain information regarding suitability for drainage, basements, driveways, ponds, farms, building sites, septic, and wildlife habitat.

Smart Growth is a land use and development concept that incorporates the ideas of diversity, transportation, safety, and space into a community's land use and projected growth plan. Smart Growth creates livable, well-planned communities, helps reverse the negative effects of sprawl, and can be linked to quality community development. Protection of soil and water resources is accomplished by using specific sites for their best designated use. Where, how, and how quickly growth occurs is the real issue to consider. Both the pace and pattern of development are considered and managed.

In 2002, the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission mapped out a development strategy and land use plan for our future projected growth. The benefits of planned growth can include more jobs, a broader tax base, and a healthier economy. Services generally cost less using planned community development. Examples of development strategies that keep conservation in mind include cluster housing, farmland preservation, and green space.

Cluster housing is planned growth in one area rather than conventional 1 to 5 acre lots. Fifty percent or more of a cluster "conservation" development can remain as open space. Construction and maintenance expenses for roads and utilities can then be reduced by building houses close together.

One of the tools that can be used to preserve prime farmland is "FLP". Farmland Preservation is gaining momentum in Ohio as farmers statewide work to preserve farm life. Fairfield County has four farms totaling 1,313 acres in the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program. Farmland is preserved while generating a tax savings to the landowner. Agricultural Security Areas are blocks of land where farms coexist. Farms provide diversity, sustainability, food, and economic income to a community.

A public forum on Smart Growth is being scheduled for February. More information will be available as plans for the forum come together. Call the SWCD office at (740) 653-8154 for more information.

## OHIO HUNTING, TRAPPING SEASONS FOR FURBEARERS OPEN NOVEMBER 10

Ohio hunters and trappers set to begin their pursuit of furbearers will find good populations of these animals during the 2006-2007 season, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

For the second year, forty-three counties will be open for river otter trapping beginning December 26. The season closes February 28, 2007. In central Ohio, river otter trapping is open in Delaware, **Fairfield**, Franklin, Knox, Licking, Morrow, and Pickaway counties. The bag limit in these counties is one river otter. Full details of open counties, checking and permit requirements can be found in Publication 88 *River Otter Trapping Regulations*.

River otters were reintroduced into four Ohio watersheds between 1986 and 1993 and since then their numbers have increased substantially. They were removed from the state endangered species list in 2002, and they are now found in over two-thirds of the state. The current statewide population estimate is over 6,000 otters.

In most regions of Ohio, hunting and trapping seasons for fox, raccoon, opossum, skunk, and weasel opened Thursday, November 10, and close January 31, 2007. The trapping season for mink and muskrat is open November 10 through February 28, 2007.

Ohio's beaver-trapping season opens December 26 across the state. Beaver season closes statewide February 28, 2007. There are no daily bag limits or restrictions on hours when furbearers may be hunted or trapped, with the exception of river otters with a bag limit dependent on the county where the trapping occurs. Special hunting regulations for coyotes apply during the one-week statewide deer-gun season November 27 through December 3 and the deer gun weekend of December 16 and 17. Only firearms legal for deer hunting may be used during these dates.

A fur-taker permit is required in addition to a valid Ohio hunting license to hunt or trap fur-bearing animals, except for coyotes, which may be hunted or trapped year round without a fur-taker permit. A special permit is required from the Division of Wildlife to trap beaver and otters on all state public hunting areas. However, not all public hunting areas are open to beaver and otter trapping. Contact your nearest District Wildlife Office to find out which areas these permits will be available for.

As before, otters that are accidentally captured, either in excess of bag limits or in closed counties, must be released unharmed. Otters that cannot be released must be turned over to the Division of Wildlife. Beaver trappers in particular, are advised to watch for otter sign and modify their set placements where necessary. The Ohio State Trappers Association and the Division of Wildlife have published a guide on how to recognize otter sign and use various otter avoidance techniques while trapping for beaver in areas closed to otter trapping. A copy of this publication and reports about observing otters in Ohio can be ordered by calling 1-800-WILDLIFE.

## ACORN PRODUCTION HIGHEST IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE STATE

Ohio's fall crop of acorns will not match the exceptional production of 2005, but is very good this year and will again provide a vital food source for more than 90 forest wildlife species, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

"A significant acorn crop leads to healthy wildlife populations, as acorns are high in fat and are critical food resources for many animals during the winter," said Suzie Prange, forest wildlife biologist with the Division of Wildlife.

Statewide, **white oak acorn production is down 15 percent, while red oak acorn production is up 4 percent** over 2005 figures. Biologists believe last year's large white oak acorn crop may have significantly depleted tree resources, causing this year's production drop off.

The Division of Wildlife is currently participating in a multi-state, ongoing research project to estimate regional acorn production throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. Wildlife biologists hope to use the acorn production information gathered in the study to forecast wildlife harvest and reproductive success rates on both a local and regional basis.

Acorn production is cyclical, with some trees producing acorns nearly every year, while others rarely ever produce. This year, Division of Wildlife employees scanned the canopies of selected oak trees on 38 wildlife areas in the state to determine the percentage of trees that produced acorns and the relative size of the acorn crop. Results varied regionally, but an average of **32 percent of white oak trees and 67 percent of red oak trees bore fruit this year throughout Ohio**. Acorn production was highest in the southern portion of the state, especially among red oak trees. Wildlife prefer white oak acorns, because red oak acorns contain a high amount of tannin and are bitter in taste.

Mast crop abundance can affect hunting plans as well. Hunters can expect to find deer, wild turkeys, and squirrels feeding on the abundant acorns of red oaks this fall. An abundant food source can also make hunting more difficult because deer and turkeys will be spread out and less concentrated around farm fields.



## JIM LEHMAN NAMED LAW ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATOR FOR ODNR DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Jim Lehman, 45, of Lancaster, has been named administrator for the Law Enforcement Section of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. Lehman replaces Dan Schneider, who retired on October 31 following a 30-year career with the division - the last five as law enforcement administrator.

Most recently, Lehman served as manager of the Division of Wildlife's District One office in Columbus, which oversees operations in 13 central Ohio counties. He joined ODNR in 1981 as a law enforcement officer in the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves, later moving to the Division of Wildlife in 1986 as the Portage County state wildlife officer. Lehman subsequently served in several law enforcement supervisory positions in the division's District One office before being named the district manager in 2000.

In his new position, Lehman will direct statewide law enforcement initiatives in order to meet the mission of the Division of Wildlife. He will develop division rules and regulations, recommend changes in the Ohio Revised Code to the chief and department when necessary, and make sure that Ohio's wildlife laws are enforced.

"I believe we have one of the best wildlife law enforcement sections in the country," said Lehman. "I am excited to serve the Ohio Division of Wildlife in this new capacity."

Lehman is a graduate of Lancaster High School and Hocking College. He and his wife, Vicki, have two children, Ryan and Jennifer.

### 2006-07 Ohio Hunting & Trapping Seasons

<u>Game Species</u>	<u>Opening Date</u>	<u>Closing Date</u>	<u>Bag Limit</u>
Squirrel	Sept. 1	Jan. 31	6
Whitetail Deer	Zone C, refer to hunting digest for details - 3 deer total		
Ruffed Grouse	Oct. 14	Feb. 28	3
Ducks, Geese	See waterfowl regulations		
Wild Turkey (Spring)	April 23, 2007	5/20/07	2
Cottontail Rabbit	Nov. 3	Feb. 28	4
Pheasant	Nov. 3	Jan. 7	2
Fox, Raccoon, Opossum, Skunk, Weasel	Nov. 10	Jan. 31	None
Beaver (trapping only)	Dec. 26, 2006	2/28/07	None
Coyote	No closed season for hunting or trapping		
Groundhog	Closed during deer gun season only		

## PLANNING FOR EQIP 2007

Funding for manure storage structures will require a **Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)**. A **Forest Stewardship Plan** will be required for forest stand improvement practices (i.e. grapevine control, thinning, crop tree release, and tree planting). A **Prescribed Grazing Plan** is required for livestock production practices, such as fencing, spring development, trough, pipeline, and pasture and hayland planting practices.

EQIP does provide a cost incentive to develop a required **Prescribed Grazing Plan** at the rate of \$250 for less than 50 animal units (1 animal unit is equivalent to 1,000 lbs.), \$500 for 50 to 100 animal units, and \$750 for more than 100 animal units. A Prescribed Grazing Plan addresses objectives of sound grazing management which includes: 1) Meeting the nutritional needs of your livestock, 2) Optimizing forage yield, quality, and persistence, 3) Maximizing pasture yields with minimal investment, 4) Improving livestock performance, productivity, and 5) Protecting and enhancing long-term pasture health, soil quality, and fertility.

EQIP also provides a cost incentive to develop a required **CNMP** at the rate of \$500 for less than 100 animal units, \$1,000 for 100 to 249 animal units, and \$1,500 for 250 or more animal units. A CNMP is a plan developed for a livestock operation to protect water quality. It is part of a conservation plan that prescribes conservation practices such as crop rotations, residue management, pest management, and other conservation practices to apply animal manure safely to the land without causing runoff into nearby streams and water sources. Soil testing, to determine present nutrient level, is necessary for all fields that receive manure. Record keeping of where the manure is applied and how much is applied, is also part of the CNMP and a responsibility of the producer.

There is currently not a cost incentive to develop a required **Forest Stewardship Plan**. In order to develop a plan, a landowner needs to contact ODNR, Division of Forestry - Service Forester, or a private consulting forester.

If you're interested in applying for EQIP in 2007, plan ahead by getting a plan developed now. Call the NRCS office at (740) 653-5320 for more information.

**EQIP Deadline Set: In order to be considered for 2007 funding, you must stop by the office to sign-up by December 29, 2006.**

## ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR LANDOWNERS WITH FORESTRY PROJECTS

The following are programs for forestry:

### **Forestry Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)**

- In Ohio, this program facilitates planting hardwood trees.
- Pays 50% of the cost of the trees and shipping.
- Minimum of 5 acres.
- Can't be used with any other USDA cost-share program.
- Contact Dave Murray, ODNR Service Forester at (740) 774-1596, Ext. 9.

### **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**

- Must have cropping history or be marginal grazing land.
- Continuous CRP - land adjacent to streams or other water bodies can apply at any time. Whole field CRP - whole cropped fields, apply at nationwide sign-up periods.
- 50% to 90% cost incentive for trees, land prep and planting costs.
- Annual rental payment based on soil types.
- Contact Farm Service Agency at (740) 653-4012.

### **Forestry Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** (2006 information - criteria and emphasis may change for 2007)

- Must have 10-30 acres and a Forestry Stewardship Plan to be eligible.
- Competitive process - points given for property lines marked, being a Certified Tree Farm and the forestry practice (i.e. TSI practice gathers more points than tree planting).
- Practices available are grapevine control, crop tree release, woody invasive specie control tree pruning, and tree planting.
- 50% cost incentive for trees, land prep and planting costs. Ohio Natural Resources Conservation Service set average costs for a practice.
- Contact NRCS at (740) 653-5320.

### **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

- Competitive process - points are given for size of acreage, proximity to existing wildlife habitat and water, type of practice (trees, prairie grass, wetland, etc.).
- 5 acre minimum.
- Eligible land - agricultural, pasture, woodlots, streambanks.
- 75% cost incentive on practice implementation.
- Eligible practices - grass (prairie and cool-season) seeding, fence, wetland structures, tree planting.
- Contact NRCS at (740) 653-5320.

### **State of Ohio Program - White Pine Match**

- Minimum of 5 acres or 3,000 white pines (8x8 spacing).
- 20 cents per tree, State of Ohio, Division of Forestry matches after 1,500 trees.
- Contact Dave Murray, ODNR Service Forester at (740) 774-1596, Ext. 9.

All of these forms of economic assistance for forestry projects require a Forestry Stewardship Plan. This plan can be obtained by working with an Ohio Division of Forestry Service Forester. Dave Murray is the Service Forester for Fairfield County and he can be contacted at (740) 774-1596, Ext. 9.

Tree seedling sales are just around the corner. Look for our 2007 Wildlife Packet order form and information in the next newsletter.



The information will also be available on our website at [www.fairfieldswcd.org](http://www.fairfieldswcd.org).

## **2006 FAIR BOOTH DRAWING WINNERS**

Paul Harden of Amanda was the recipient of the SWCD drawing for a bluebird box at the Fairfield County fair this year.

Tammy Brunney of Pleasantville was the recipient of the SWCD drawing for a \$25 Lowes gift card. Congratulations to both of our winners!