

65th ANNUAL MEETING/BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

This year marked the 65th anniversary of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The annual meeting/banquet was held on September 11, 2008, at the Goslin Nature Education Center on the grounds of Alley Park. The evening started off with a Board of Supervisors election. After dinner Mike Woodford of Woodford Brothers, Inc., gave a presentation on barn restoration. His family business specializes in structural renovations.

The 2007 Cooperator of the Year Awards were presented to the following: Scott & Renee Baker of Pairadocs Farm in Bremen, Jeff & Chris Thomas of Thomas Dairy Farms in Bremen, and Raymond Wolfe of Wolfe Farms in Carroll (accepted by Heath & Jenny Wolfe).

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 2007 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award was given to Fairfield Christian Academy 1st grade teachers Kathy Cassidy, Sue Neff, and Loretta Phalen. The Hockhockin Conservation Award is given annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to promoting conservation education and awareness to the people of Fairfield County. This year the 2007 Hockhockin Conservation Award was presented to Paul Mathews, Liberty Union Superintendent. The school district's land lab is fully functional and will incorporate maple syrup making with the community in 2009.

Joe Young, Chair of the Fairfield SWCD Board of Supervisors, presented Tim White with a certificate of appreciation for the six years he has served on the Board of Supervisors. Gretchen Yerian was recognized for being the SWCD's first place winner of the 2008 NACD Conservation Poster Contest. The winners of this year's photo contest were announced. The theme was "Barns" and Joy Davis was announced as the 1st place winner; Carolyn Tilley was the 2nd place winner; and Jeff Slagell was the 3rd place winner. All were given gift certificates to Cord Camera.

James Maynard and Jodi Roush were announced as this year's scholarship program recipients. Emily Hettinger was recognized as an Earth Team Volunteer. Emily has put in over 50 hrs. of volunteer time with the SWCD/NRCS.

Rob Hamilton, ODNr, then announced that Bob Hoffman of Stoutsville and Joe Young of Rushville were elected to serve three-year terms as supervisor beginning January 1, 2009. Bob will join current board members John Albert, Bonny Calderwood, Dick Kilbarger, and Joe Young will start his second term as supervisor in January 2009.



MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING



Bonny Calderwood (right), Fairfield SWCD Board Member, presented Scott and Renee Baker with a 2007 Cooperator of the Year Award. They received this award for the completion of CRP conservation cover and two forestry EQIPs with grapevine control.



Bonny Calderwood (right) presented Jeff and Chris Thomas with a 2007 Cooperator of the Year Award. They have implemented a settling basin for lot runoff, animal waste, and milk house treatment wetland cells.



Bonny Calderwood (right) presented Wolfe Farms (accepted by Heath and Jenny Wolfe) with a 2007 Cooperator of the Year Award. They received this award for the implementation of streambank stabilization, systematic tile, WASCOSBS and filter strips.



Vicki Kohli (right), Education Specialist, presented Sue Neff, Kathy Cassidy, and Loretta Phalen (1st grade teachers at Fairfield Christian Academy) with the 2007 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award.



Vicki Kohli (right) presented Paul Mathews (center) with the 2007 Hockhockin Award. Also pictured is Art Brate, Liberty Union Board of Education member.



Melissa Horton (right), NRCS Soil Conservationist, recognized Emily Hettinger as an Earth Team Volunteer. Emily has volunteered over 50 hrs. of time.

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Fairfield SWCD held a photo contest with a "barn" theme to coincide with our Annual Meeting/Banquet. We would like to thank Vern and Eleanor Allen, and Cheryl Fey for being the judges for this contest. The results were as follows:



1st Place - "Winter Barn"
Joy Davis
\$100 Cord Camera Gift Certificate



2nd Place - "Barn Reflection"
Carolyn Tilley
\$75 Cord Camera Gift Certificate



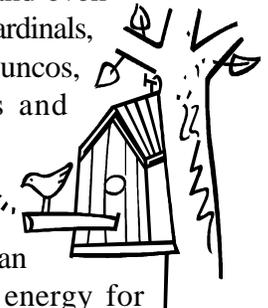
3rd Place - "Through the Fence"
Jeff Slagell
\$50 Cord Camera Gift Certificate

WINTER BIRD FEEDING

Food, shelter, water, and space, those are the four elements that all species need for survival. Bird feeding, and specifically winter feeding, is valuable in attracting and holding birds in the area. Winter feeding of birds keeps birds alive and healthy during severe cold, ice and snow. It also provides for better conditioning for the upcoming breeding season.

There are some basic principles to be followed for the best results in winter feeding. And, once winter feeding is started, it should be continued until late spring when natural food supplies become available again.

Different species of birds prefer different types of foods. Nuts and nutmeats are preferred by cardinals, catbirds, chickadees, crossbills, goldfinches, grosbeaks, nuthatches, titmice, woodpeckers, jays, and juncos. All of these species have compact bills that are well adapted for cracking seeds. Dry seeds such as corn, grasses and even weeds are eaten by bobwhite quail, cardinals, doves, goldfinches, grackles, jays, juncos, pheasants, sparrows, thrashers and towhees. Fruit and berry eaters include bluebirds, catbirds, flickers, mockingbirds, robins, thrashers and thrushes. Suet, or animal fat, is an excellent source of protein and energy for woodpeckers. Peanuts and peanut butter provide the same benefits.



Store bought bird seed mixes typically contain a variety of different seeds, and thus supply food for a variety of bird species.

Birds have a preferred feeding location as well. Some feed at the feeder itself and will do so with other birds. Others are more aggressive and will drive other birds out first and then feed. Some birds are referred to as ground feeders as they prefer to eat the seeds that are left sattered on the ground.

A side benefit to winter bird feeding is bird watching. A good set of binoculars will give you an excellent chance to see details of the birds' coloring and markings, as well as a chance to watch their behaviors closely.

A good bird field guide is available at any library or bookstore and can offer information on bird habits, behaviors, preferences, songs, flight patterns, field markings, and migration patterns.

Birding and bird feeding is a wonderful family activity suited to all ages. All it takes is a feeder or two and a bag of bird seed to get started.

SHORT STORY ABOUT MY LIFE

by *Eliezer Ortiz Barbosa, Soil Conservationist*



"Work hard and persevere no matter what happens in your life; dreams are the last thing that you could lose". These are words of wisdom my parents gave me. Life before I learned this lesson starts at Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where I grew up with my mother, father and sister; three of the most special people that I need to recognize. Also, my grandfathers and grandmothers taught me that everything comes from two places: land and agriculture. Nothing works right without these two resources. The only way to understand the word perseverance involves grandfather's farm. I decided to work every year with his coffee trees. My mom said, "you need to understand implementation".

I graduated in 2008 with a B.S. in General Agriculture. I took coursework in soils, extension, animals and agricultural education for five years. I found the USDA statement, "helping people help the land"; perfect for someone that is looking to help his country. Keeping in mind the sentences mentioned before, I took the challenge and I applied for the USDA-NRCS Soil Conservationist position, I made my decision, and I took the job. Now three months later I see the results of efforts like those my grandfathers spoke of. The results look good so far, even if it is difficult for me because of language and culture differences.

The Fairfield office staff assisted me a lot since I have come in August. The staff helps me a lot to learn the practices and local agriculture management. I have learned much in my first months, how to help people to help the land.

LANCASTER SENSORY TRAIL BECOMING A REALITY

Forest Rose School is a Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) facility that provides special needs children with educational and life skills opportunities from birth to age 22. The school facility is well equipped to deal with the many challenges faced by the students, but the outdoor education and recreation opportunities are limited to a small playground.

In April, twenty volunteers completed a stream-side cleanup, which involved removing undesirable vegetation and picking up of trash. In June a 5 K "Run for the Rose" event was sponsored by a community volunteer group which raised slightly over eleven thousand dollars for the Sensory Trail. In August, the extension of the asphalt bike/walking trail was completed with donations from the Lancaster Department of Transportation, Shelley Materials, Spires Paving, and Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department. This October the basic design for the sensory area was completed and contains a large concrete pad and three paver patios which were built to showcase specific sensory stations, one of which will contain four large outdoor musical instruments for individuals to play. There will be an overlook to Fetter's Run creek from one of the patio areas.

The patios have been installed through the efforts of the Lancaster "Lowe's Heroes" volunteers and Nessley's Lawn & Landscaping. Lowe's Heroes are part of the Lowe's volunteer community improvement program. To date, more than twenty-five Lowe's Heroes have donated over 200

hours doing the manual work of placing gravel, framing the pathway for the concrete patio and walks, and setting the pavers for their patio. Nessley's Lawn & Landscaping volunteered time to build two patios as well. Nessley's also used their bobcat to move the extra sand, gravel, and dirt to complete the final landscaping of the site.

Businesses and individuals that have provided materials for the sensory trail project include Lowe's, Oberfield's, West Side Coal, The Apple-Smith Corp., Ohio University-Lancaster groundskeepers, Shelly Materials, Dave's Concrete, and Mark Scarpitti.

NRCS, Fairfield SWCD, MRDD, and many local agencies have given guidance for the sensory trail project that proposes pull-off stations designed to stimulate an individual's senses through the use of a variety of colors, textures, scents, and sounds.



Forest Rose students enjoying the bike trail extension.

OHIO HUNTING, TRAPPING SEASONS FOR FURBEARERS OPEN NOVEMBER 10

Ohio hunters and trappers preparing to pursue furbearers will find good populations of these animals during the 2008-2009 season, which begins on November 10. "Food sources and habitat conditions for furbearers have been fair to good this year across Ohio," said Mark Shieldcastle, wetland wildlife supervisor for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. "Fur takers can expect a good season."

For the fourth year, 43 counties will be open for river otter trapping from December 26 to February 28. River otters were reintroduced into four Ohio watersheds between 1986 and 1993 and have increased their range in the state. They were removed from the state endangered species list in 2002. Full details of open counties, checking and permit requirements can be found in the Ohio River Otter Trapping Regulations.

In most regions of Ohio, hunting and trapping seasons for fox, raccoon, opossum, skunk, and weasel open November 10, and close January 31, 2009. The trapping season for mink and muskrat is open November 10 through February 28, 2009. Exceptions are Erie, Ottawa and Sandusky counties, and in Lucas County east of the Maumee River where raccoon, mink and muskrat trapping seasons will remain open through March 15, 2009. Ohio's beaver-trapping season runs December 26 to February 28, 2009, statewide.

There are no daily bag limits or restrictions on hours when furbearers may be hunted or trapped, with the exception of river otters where bag limits are dependent on the county where the trapping occurs. Special hunting regulations for coyotes apply during the one-week statewide deer-gun season December 1-7, and the deer-gun weekend of December 20-21.

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 Division of Wildlife permit is required to trap beaver and otters on state public hunting areas.

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 set placements where necessary. The Ohio State Trappers Association and the Division of Wildlife have published a guide on how to recognize otter signs and use various otter avoidance techniques while trapping for beaver in areas closed to otter trapping. A copy of the publication and reports about observing otters in Ohio can be ordered by calling 1-800-WILDLIFE.



Ohio is among the nation's leading producers of raw furs. Last year, there were 89 licensed fur dealers and 16,000 licensed fur takers in the state. Additional hunting information is contained in the 2008-2009 Ohio Hunting Regulations brochure, available where Ohio hunting licenses are sold, on the Internet at www.ohiodnr.gov or by calling toll-free 1-800-WILDLIFE.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources ensures a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Visit the ODNR web site at www.ohiodnr.gov. If you have problems with muskrats, raccoons or beavers, the SWCD office has a list of local trappers available.

MARIETTA STATE NURSERY CLOSES

In an effort to provide more focused support to private woodland owners and the state forest system, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources proposed closing the Marietta State Nursery effective November 8, 2008.

"Over the past decade, annual tree seedling sales have steadily dropped from 6 million trees in 1997, to nearly 4 million in 2003, to this year's low of less than 1.5 million seedlings," said David Lytle, chief of the ODNR Division of Forestry. "As sales have declined through the years, the Green Springs State Nursery was closed in 1984, and the Zanesville State Nursery was closed in 2003."

The Marietta State Nursery began operations in 1925 as a provider of seedlings for reforesting land purchased as part of the state forest system. Over time, the nurseries at Marietta, Green Springs and Zanesville supported tree planting on both state forests and private lands. The Marietta State Nursery has been operating at a deficit over the past several years. The closing of the nursery will help the division operate more efficiently.

"We honor the hard work of nursery staff over the past 80-some years, which has led to the planting of tens of millions of trees in Ohio," said Lytle. "However, as our state forests have successfully been reforested, and other public and private sources are available to provide tree seedlings, we must focus our available resources on those priorities that return the greatest possible services to the people of Ohio."

Lytle said he understands the difficult impact that closing the Marietta State Nursery will have on both state workers and seedling customers. "Please know that we will make every effort to support impacted employees through this tough transition period. We will also be working to assist customers of the Marietta State Nursery in finding available sources of tree seedlings."

OHIO LINE FENCE LAW CHANGE

Ohio lawmakers made a major revision to Ohio's line fence law this summer. Governor Strickland signed the line fence law-H.B. 323-on June 27, 2008, and the new law was effective beginning September 30, 2008.

Here's a quick summary of the bill's major provisions. For further details of the new law, visit the following website: <http://aede.osu.edu/programs/aglaw/>.

- New rules of apportionment will apply to most "new" line fences--those fences built after the law's effective date of September 30, 2008. For new line fences, the landowner seeking to build the fence will have the sole burden of constructing and maintaining the fence.
- There is a reimbursement process a landowner can follow for recouping construction and maintenance costs on a new line fence if an adjacent landowner uses the line fence to contain livestock within thirty years of the fence's construction date.
- "Old" line fences will still be subject to the old law's rule of equal shares. Old line fences include fences in existence on the law's effective date, fences that previously existed, and fences that have been removed. A landowner must follow certain actions to establish a previously existing or removed line fence. If either of these types of fence is reconstructed, the old law of equal shares applies to the replacement fence.
- Landowners will have two options for resolving line fence disputes--filing an action directly in the court of common pleas or filing a complaint with the board of township trustees. A landowner dissatisfied with the decision of the township trustees may use binding arbitration rather than appealing the decision.
- The court or the board of township trustees must consider certain factors in resolving line fence disputes. These include topography, streams and other waters, trees, vines and vegetation, trespasser risk, importance of marking the property line and number and type of livestock contained.
- New fences built after September 30 that will be used to contain livestock must be one of three types, unless the landowners agree otherwise in writing. The accepted types are: woven wire of standard or high tensile with one or two strands of barbed wire at least 48 inches from the ground, nonelectric high tensile with at least seven strands constructed in accordance with NRCS standards, or barbed wire, electric or live fence agreeable to both landowners.
- Governmental neighbors must contribute 50% of the cost of a line fence that is used for grazing livestock.

- A landowner or contractor will have rights of access to neighboring properties for the purpose of constructing or maintaining a fence.
- A landowner must follow a notification procedure before removing a line fence; failure to provide notice waives the equal shares rule, and the landowner would be entirely responsible for replacing an improperly removed fence.
- There are criminal penalties for obstruction or interference with a person who is lawfully engaged in building or maintaining a line fence.

2009 NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) supports the popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

EQIP is the voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers that want to implement conservation practices to conserve and/or protect soil, water and other natural resources.

Any livestock and/or crop producer or landowner that would like to participate in EQIP must first **make an appointment with District Conservationist Dave Libben to get a mandatory Conservation Plan**. In this planning process, environmental and production concerns will be discussed. In the former Farm Bill practices such as heavy use pads, compost and manure storage facilities, fence, watering facilities, cover crops and nutrient management were available. This 2008 Farm Bill has added practices related to organic production and fuel management.

Any landowners who would like to be eligible for the EQIP incentives available for forest land improvement must **first obtain a Forestry Stewardship Plan from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, forester Dave Murray**.

The former Farm Bill included practices such as timber stand improvement, tree seedling plantings, and invasive species management.

At this time the regulations guiding EQIP have not been released to Ohio NRCS. We anticipate having 2009 Ohio EQIP guidance by January.

Operators and landowners who are interested should however **sign-up now at the Fairfield NRCS office** so the conservation or forestry planning processes can get started. Call (740) 653-5320 for more information.

Tree seedling sales are just around the corner. Look for our 2009 Wildlife Packet order form and information in the next newsletter. The information will also be available on our website at www.fairfieldswcd.org.