

**REX PIPELINE**  
**Information Meeting**

The Rockies Express Pipeline (REX) is a 1,679 mile pipeline system that will carry natural gas from Colorado to Ohio. As part of this system, a 42-inch pipeline is proposed to be laid through Fairfield County, Ohio. This pipeline will run approximately parallel to the existing Texas Eastern Pipelines.

REX personnel have been in contact with most, if not all, of those landowners who own property along the route of this proposed pipeline. REX will need to obtain easements for each of the properties that the pipeline will cross. Fairfield SWCD will be holding an informational meeting for these landowners and their tenants. The meeting will be held on **June 7 at 6:30 p.m.** at the Fairfield County Agricultural Center. Guest speakers Paul Wright and Robert Moore of Wright Law Co. LPA will give a presentation on Easement Contracts. Representatives from REX will also be in attendance to provide additional information and answer questions.

Persons wanting to know more about the REX pipeline or about the necessary easements are encouraged to attend.

The Fairfield SWCD is neutral on the issue of the pipeline. We are not for or against it, but are attempting to provide assistance to the citizens of Fairfield County.

For more information visit the following web sites: REX at [www.rexpipeline.com/index\\_east.html](http://www.rexpipeline.com/index_east.html) or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission at [www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov).

**REMINDER**

REX Pipeline Meeting  
Thursday, June 7  
6:30 p.m.  
Fairfield County Ag. Center  
831 College Avenue  
Lancaster, Ohio 43130  
740-653-8154

## **MORE THAN 100 OHIO BLACK BEAR SIGHTINGS REPORTED IN 2006**

*113 sightings in 2006, compared to 105 in 2005*

One hundred thirteen black bear sightings were reported in Ohio last year, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. Of that number, state wildlife personnel confirmed 27 of those sightings, somewhat less than the number confirmed in 2005.

The 27 confirmed sightings were in 10 counties and involved about 22 different black bears, the Division of Wildlife reported.

Sightings occurred in every month of 2006 except for January and February, which are peak months for black bear denning. Most bears were reported in May, June and July, the peak of black bear breeding and dispersal of young male bears.

Twenty-nine of the sightings involved damage or nuisance behavior, such as damage to bird feeders, beehives, and garbage containers, as well as consumption of pet food. An estimated 20 bears were involved in these cases.

Most of the 20 counties with bear sightings were in northeastern and southeastern Ohio. Ashtabula County led the state reporting 44 sightings. Geauga and Trumbull Counties followed with 19 and 13 sightings, respectively. There were four reported sightings of sows with cubs.

In 2005, state wildlife officials confirmed 43 of a total 105 black bear sightings. The confirmed sightings were in 12 counties and involved about 24 different black bears. A record 165 sightings were reported in 2002.

The Division of Wildlife began formally keeping records of black bear observations in 1993. Since that time, bears have been confirmed present in 42 of Ohio's 88 counties.

Efforts to monitor the black bear have been supported by the Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Fund, which receives donations from Ohioans through the state income tax check-off program and by the purchase of cardinal license plates. Individuals wanting to donate to the fund can go to [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife) and click on the red "Donate" button to make a contribution.

The black bear is protected by state law. For more about Ohio's wildlife diversity, visit the Division's web page shown above.

## **WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS VERIFY 37 BOBCAT SIGHTINGS IN OHIO DURING 2006**

Increased evidence of bobcats living in Ohio's eastern and southeastern counties continues with the confirmation of 37 sightings by state wildlife officials during 2006, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. This represents a marked increase from the 20 verified sightings in 2005.

The bobcat was found throughout Ohio during early settlement, but as land was converted for crops and communities the bobcat's population declined. By 1850, the animal could no longer be found living in the state. A handful of unverified sightings in the 1960s marked the bobcat's unofficial return to Ohio. Since 1970, state wildlife biologists have verified 122 bobcat sightings in 33 counties.

Verification of the elusive bobcat includes photographs of the animal and its tracks; encounters through incidental trapping, from which animals are later released; recovery of road kill and sightings by Division of Wildlife personnel. All of the 2006 reports occurred in the following counties: Jefferson, Coshocton, Muskingum, Guernsey, Monroe, Noble, Morgan, Washington, Athens, Vinton, Jackson, Meigs, Gallia, and Adams. The Division of Wildlife also received 134 unverified bobcat reports last year.

In 1997, the Division of Wildlife began monitoring bobcats in Ohio using a combination of field surveys and follow-up investigations of sightings. These efforts have been supported by the Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Fund, which receives donations from Ohioans through the state income tax check-off program and by the purchase of cardinal license plates. Individuals wanting to donate to the fund can also go to [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife) and click on the red "Donate" button to make a contribution.

The bobcat is an endangered species and protected by state law. For more about Ohio's wildlife diversity, visit [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife).

## **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE NOT DETECTED IN OHIO DEER**

*(Testing conducted during last year's deer-gun season)*

COLUMBUS, OH - For the fifth year, testing of Ohio's deer herd has found no evidence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a degenerative brain disease that affects elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

State officials collected 1,097 samples last year from hunter-harvested deer, primarily during the deer-gun season that ran November 27-December 3. Tests were performed at the Animal Disease Diagnostics Laboratory of the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Since 2002, the Division of Wildlife has been conducting surveillance throughout the state for CWD, as well as Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease and Bovine Tuberculosis. While CWD has never been found in Ohio's deer herd, it had been diagnosed in both wild and/or captive deer or elk in 14 other states and two Canadian provinces.

Since CWD was discovered in the Western United States in the late 1960s, there has been no evidence that the disease can be transmitted to humans.

The Division of Wildlife continues to carefully monitor the health of Ohio's deer herd throughout the year. For the latest information on CWD, visit [ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://ohiodnr.com/wildlife), [ohioagriculture.gov/cwd](http://ohioagriculture.gov/cwd), or the Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance at [www.cwd-info.org](http://www.cwd-info.org).

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## **Searching for "Aquatic Weed" Information using the Internet**

When searching for information about aquatic plants consider using the internet as a first step. Internet access is typically available for free in most public libraries or can be hooked up in your home for a service fee.

Federal, state, and local agency web sites are a good place to start your internet searches as they spend a tremendous amount of resources verifying the accuracy of their web postings for public access. If preliminary data is posted it will be labeled as such with a disclaimer.

If you specifically want to search for aquatic plants, try the two easiest sites: IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants web site is <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu>. Use the following links if you are looking for your state's aquatic plant management procedures and activities: [www.apms.org](http://www.apms.org); [www.fapms.org](http://www.fapms.org).

## **Warm and Cool Season Grasses**

If you think you keep hearing all this talk about warm and cool season grasses you are not alone. But just exactly what does that mean and what is their purpose?

Cool season grasses are just that, grasses that grow in the cool seasons of spring and early summer and fall. They provide some of the first food and cover of the year for birds and wildlife. Their production drops off through the hot summer months and then picks up again as fall approaches. Orchard Grass, Blue Grass, and Fescue are cool season grasses.

Long, hot, sunny days promote the growth of warm season grasses. In fact, the warm season grasses are most productive from mid-June to mid-August. Examples of warm season grasses include Switchgrass, Indiangrass, Big and Little Bluestem. Warm season grasses are native to Ohio and the Ohio tall grass prairie ecosystem.

By growing warm season grasses in addition to the more familiar cool season grasses, producers can maintain forage production spring through fall, and even stockpile forage for extended-season grazing. For instance, a producer with a rotational grazing system might start grazing livestock on cool season grasses in the spring then move the livestock to the warm season grasses for the summer. Meanwhile, the cool season grasses would re-grow so they could be grazed again in the fall.

Besides helping provide more uniform forage production through the growing season, warm season grasses can help landowners provide wildlife habitat in non harvested areas such as sod waterways and filter strips. For example, Switchgrass provides good nesting cover, because it stands well through the winter.

Like most crops, warm season grasses grow best on fertile soil that is well drained, yet has good water holding capacity. However, compared to cool season grasses, warm season grasses are generally more tolerant of low pH and low fertility. Certain warm season grass species also are more tolerant of poorly drained soils or soils with poor water holding capacity. However, warm season grasses do not establish quickly enough for erosion control.

Establishing a stand of warm season grass takes at least two years and often longer, especially if weeds aren't well managed. Once established, and in order to keep the grass fields from undergoing natural succession, most grasses and native prairie ecosystems need to be burned in order to effectively maintain that habitat.

## District Hires New Resource Specialist

The Fairfield SWCD recently hired Jonathan Ferbrache as the Resource Specialist. Jonathan is a graduate of Fairfield Union High School and received a Bachelors of Science in Landscape Architecture from The Ohio State University. He has spent the last seven years designing educational facilities across Ohio. Jonathan will be involved in our subdivision reviews, drainage maintenance districts, and our farmland preservation efforts in Fairfield County. Please help us welcome Jonathan to our staff.



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## Photo Contest

The Fairfield SWCD is offering something new this year to its annual meeting agenda. We are going to sponsor an Ohio wildlife photo contest, so get out your camera this spring and summer! Here are the rules:

- You must be a Fairfield County resident to compete (children are eligible too)
- Photos can be color or black and white
- Photos can either be 8x10 or 11x14
- Finished photos need to be framed with matting optional
- Photo must be a picture of *native* Ohio wildlife (no pets please)
- Photos can be from prints, slides, or digital format
- Must be your own original work
- Judges will award 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes
- *All* entries will be displayed at the annual meeting and in our fair booth in October
- **DEADLINE** to submit photos to the SWCD office is **Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at 4:30 p.m.**
- Please list your name, phone number, and location the photo was taken on the back of your entry.

We hope to see many entries! Call us at 653-8154, if you have questions.

## Fairfield SWCD's 64th Annual Meeting Set for September 13

The Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District will be holding its 64th Annual Meeting/Banquet on September 13, 2007, at the Goslin Nature Education Center at Alley Park. Look for more information in the next newsletter!

## **Teacher Workshop Spot Open**

The Division of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is holding its annual Educator's Workshop this year August 7-9 at Atwood Lake Resort and Conference Center. The Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District has one teacher scholarship left to use at 100%. If you know of an educator that teaches environmental topics to their students, this is the workshop for them. There are indoor sessions as well as outdoor sessions and field trips. The workshop is both fun and educational. The theme for 2007 is "Run for the Hills...For Great Environmental Education (EE) Experiences". Please call 653-8154, if you are interested.