

64th ANNUAL MEETING/BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

This year marked the 64th anniversary of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The annual meeting/banquet was held on September 13, 2007, at the Goslin Nature Education Center on the grounds of Alley Park. The evening started off with a Board of Supervisors election. After dinner Stan Gehrt, Assistant Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist at OSU and adjunct Senior Scientist at the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, gave a presentation on coyotes.

The 2006 Cooperator of the Year Awards were presented to the following: Bill & Marilyn Elliott (Elliott Family Farm), Jim & Chris Grilliot (Wild Wing Meadows), Paul & Darleen Harden (Harden Farm) and Gary, Kandy & Emily Jones (TreeQuest Farm).

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 2006 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award was given to Michele Hildebrandt, a science teacher at Fairfield Union High School. The 2006 Hockhockin Conservation Award was presented to Alley Park Outdoor Education Staff (Trina Thornton, Laura Elder, Maria Tharp, Becky Scholl, Trudy Keck, Michelle Storts, Judy Schurtz and Jennifer Scholl). This award is given annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to promoting conservation education and awareness to the people of Fairfield County.

Joe Greene was presented with a certificate for his painting of Fairfield County for OFSWCD/DSWC that will be displayed across Ohio. The winners of the 2007 Photo Contest were announced (1st Place - Debbie Steinhausser, 2nd Place - Joy Davis, 3rd Place - Gabrielle Helber). The two scholarship program recipients, Brady Miller and Brandon Thomas, gave updates on how their scholarship awards were being used.

Steve Hawkins, ODNR Program Specialist, presented Steve Miller with a certificate of appreciation for the three-years he has served on the Board of Supervisors. Steve Hawkins then announced that Bonny Calderwood of Lancaster was elected to serve a three-year term as supervisor beginning January 1, 2008. Bonny will join current board members John Albert, Dick Kilbarger, Tim White and Joe Young.



MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING



John Albert (left), Fairfield SWCD Board Secretary, presented Bill and Marilyn Elliott with a 2006 Cooperator of the Year Award. They received this award for always working to manage their woodland, control soil erosion, and nurture wildlife habitat on their farm.



John Albert (left) presented Jim and Chris Grilliot with a 2006 Cooperator of the Year Award. They have planted over 5,000 conifer trees and participate in the WHIP program.



John Albert (left) presented Paul and Darleen Harden with a 2006 Cooperator of the Year Award. They use prescribed grazing techniques, have worked on a spring development, and have successfully dealt with roof run-off issues.



John Albert (left) presented Kandy, Emily, and Gary Jones with a 2006 Cooperator of the Year Award. They are enrolled in the CRP program. In 2001 they planted over 12 acres of hardwood trees and in 2002 they planted an additional 10 acres.



Vicki Kohli (left), Education Specialist, presented the Alley Park Outdoor Education staff with the 2006 Hockhockin Award. Pictured are Trina Thornton, Laura Elder, Maria Tharp, Becky Scholl, Trudy Keck, and Michelle Storts.



Vicki Kohli (left) presented Michele Hildebrandt with the 2006 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award. Michele is a biology teacher at Fairfield Union High School.



Steve Hawkins, ODNR Program Specialist, presented Steve Miller, Board Treasurer, with a certificate of appreciation for the three years he has served on the Board of Supervisors.

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

- Bank One*
- Division of Wildlife District One*
- Fairfield County Farm Bureau*
- Faler Feed Store*
- JD Equipment Inc.*
- Lancaster High School*
- Miracle Gro*
- MirrorScapes, LLC*
- Ochs Fruit Farm*
- Ohio Valley Outdoors*
- Poplar Creek Perennials*
- South Central Power*
- United Landmark*

PROMOTING SOIL CONSERVATION THROUGH THE USE OF ART

Soil and Water Conservation Districts were created nationwide beginning in the 1930's following the Dust Bowl era. During that time soil became nationally recognized as the vital natural resource it is. Soil not only holds our nutrient base for plant growth but filters water for purification. Ohio has a Soil and Water Conservation District office for each of its 88 counties.

Historically, Soil and Water Conservation Districts have dealt with the agricultural sectors of our communities in the areas of drainage and erosion. With the rapid urbanization occurring in Ohio today there is now a vital need to decrease erosion and address drainage concerns from construction and other development sites. Keeping our soil in place ultimately protects the water quality within a given watershed leading to a healthier and more visually inviting community.

Joe Greene, a local cartoon humorist with Blue Shoe Arts, recently completed an acrylic on canvas painting depicting the things that Fairfield County is famous for – rolling fair fields, clear creeks, and of course covered bridges. His painting, the first in the state of Ohio to be completed, will be part of an ongoing statewide exhibit sponsored by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Ohio Division of Soil and Water Conservation at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. This art exhibit will depict and promote all 88 Districts and what each are known for. The pictures will be on display at ODNR, the Ohio State Fair, and various Soil and Water events in Ohio and throughout the country.

Joe has been cartooning since the age of 4. He is the middle child from a family of 6, born and raised in Lancaster. Joe is deaf and does not speak verbally, but communicates marvelously and humorously through his self created characters. His self taught cartooning was the direct result of his mother giving him stacks of paper and a pencil to draw with when he was quite little. From that beginning Joe started winning various art contests and began painting his cartoons in high school.

Joe currently completes his art work as one of the twelve artists with the Blue Shoe Arts studio and gallery, located at 4465 Coonpath Road NW in Carroll (just off the bypass). He ultimately designed their logo by putting his characters in royal blue tennis shoes, hence the name.

Blue Shoe Arts is owned by Fairfield Industries with support from Fairfield County MRDD. The original idea for the studio was created and is coordinated by Cheryl Fey. The gallery is open for viewing and purchasing of the artists work Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Gallery products for sale include note cards, three lines of jewelry, T-shirts, and prints of all kinds. Each artist receives 100 percent of the profit minus supply cost.



For additional information on the studio, gallery, and artists visit www.blueshoearts.org.

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

New this year, the Fairfield SWCD held a photo contest with a "wildlife" theme to coincide with our Annual Meeting/Banquet. This contest was a great success with the SWCD receiving 37 photos. We would like to thank Vern Allen, Cheryl Fey and Dave Saunders for being our judges for this contest. The results were as follows:

1st Place - "Bluebirds"

Debbie Steinhausser

\$100 Cord Camera Gift Certificate

2nd Place - "Chipmunk"

Joy Davis

\$75 Cord Camera Gift Certificate

3rd Place - "Mother's Wings"

Gabrielle Helber (pictured below)

\$50 Cord Camera Gift Certificate



PLATEAU AVAILABLE

The Fairfield SWCD has 6 gallons of Plateau available for purchase. The cost is \$277 per gallon. Call the SWCD office at (740) 653-8154 for more information.

ACORN PRODUCTION UP ACROSS OHIO

Acorns are a critical winter food source for more than 90 forest wildlife species

Ohio's fall crop of acorns is very good this year and will again provide a vital food source for more than 90 forest wildlife species. Statewide, white oak acorn production is up 10 percent, while red oak acorn production is up 2 percent over 2006 figures, 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.

The Division of Wildlife is currently participating in a multi-state, on-going 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 43 percent of white oak trees and 68 percent of red oak trees bore fruit this year. 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.



ARCHERY HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES INCREASED WITH NEW ANTLERLESS DEER PERMIT

The reduced price antlerless deer permit, new for the 2007 season, allows hunters the opportunity to harvest up to seven deer in Ohio, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. The antlerless deer permit is valid statewide during archery season from September 29 through November 25. The permit can also be used in urban units and Division of Wildlife controlled hunts as they occur from September 29 through February 3. The antlerless permit is valid during the youth deer-gun season, November 17-18, for youth using archery equipment only.

Hunters are reminded that an either-sex deer permit (\$24) must be purchased before purchasing (up to four) antlerless permits (\$15). Hunters may purchase a total of three deer permits and four antlerless permits, to be used in accordance with zone and season regulations. Hunters with questions about the new permitting system are encouraged to consult page 7 of the *2007-2008 Ohio Hunting Regulations* or contact the Division of Wildlife office in their area with questions. Copies of this new regulation are also available in the Fairfield SWCD office.

"The intent of the reduced price antlerless deer permit is to focus additional pressure on the antlerless segment of the population. Expanding antlerless hunting opportunities not only aids in herd management, but has the added benefit of improving the buck age structure by reducing pressure on the antlered segment of the population," said Mike Tonkovich, deer biologist for the Division of Wildlife.

"By limiting the use of the antlerless deer permit to the first two months of the season, the division can safely evaluate it as a management tool, while encouraging hunters to commit to harvesting an antlerless deer early," said Tonkovich.

After November 25, archery hunters must use a deer permit for antlerless deer. Under the new regulation, hunters can take one additional antlerless deer in Zone A, up to two additional in Zone B, and up to three additional in Zone C. Details on this new opportunity for archery hunters can be reviewed on the division's web site at <http://wildohio.com> and click on the "Frequently Asked Questions" link.

Landowners can also take advantage of the new antlerless deer permit. Landowners are not required to purchase a permit, but must check their harvested deer. Location of the landowner's property will determine how many antlerless deer permits he or she can use.

Hunters are reminded that only one antlered deer may be harvested in Ohio, regardless of season, method or zone. Antlerless permits are available to both resident and non-resident hunters, youths and adults, for a cost of \$15 each.

County residents that have had crop damage caused by deer have been issued hunting season control permits in past years. However, this permit type has been discontinued by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. Deer damage permits issued from February through September are still available next year.

Remember that managing local deer numbers through legal deer hunting seasons is still one of the best annual management tools available. The Fairfield SWCD office maintains a list of interested local hunters. Please call the office if you would like to reduce deer numbers via hunting but are not inclined to hunt your land.



2007-08 Ohio Hunting & Trapping Seasons			
Game Species	Opening Date	Closing Date	Bag Limit
<i>Squirrel</i>	<i>Sept. 1</i>	<i>Jan. 31</i>	<i>6</i>
Whitetail Deer	Zone C, refer to hunting digest for details		
<i>Ruffed Grouse</i>	<i>Oct. 13</i>	<i>Feb. 29</i>	<i>3</i>
Ducks, Geese	See waterfowl regulations		
<i>Wild Turkey (Spring)</i>	<i>April 21, 2008</i>	<i>5/18/08</i>	
Cottontail Rabbit	Nov. 2	Feb. 29	4
<i>Ringneck Pheasant</i>	Nov. 2	Jan. 6	2
Fox, Raccoon, Opossum, Skunk, Weasel	Nov. 10	Jan. 31	None
<i>Coyote</i>	<i>No closed season for hunting or trapping</i>		<i>None</i>
Groundhog	Closed during deer gun season only		None

NEED A GRASSED WATERWAY?

Now that harvest season is in full swing, are you finding gully erosion in your water patterns developing? These areas could become worse if left unattended, resulting in more soil loss. A grassed waterway could help solve this problem.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) can assist with funding for grassed waterways installed in eroded water patterns that qualify. You can receive approximately 50% of the construction cost (based on a state average cost) along with a 40% incentive payment, ultimately resulting in approximately 90% cost-share. You would also receive an annual rental payment based on the soil type and area of land taken out of production.

If you would like to check eligibility and apply for a grassed waterway, see Melissa Horton in the NRCS office, or Nancy Myers at the Farm Service Agency. You can contact Melissa with questions at (740) 653-5320. New procedures have lengthened the sign-up process, so if you need a waterway built in 2008, sign-up at your earliest convenience.

If your ground is eligible and you apply, the SWCD engineering staff will survey the site and design a plan for the waterway(s). Design is based upon the watershed, slope, soils, etc. The average waterway is typically 30' wide by 1' deep, but can vary dependant upon site conditions. You will be sent copies of the plan once it is completed. Once you've chosen a contractor (or you've decided to do the labor yourself) and are ready to begin construction, the SWCD staff will layout and follow the project until it is finished. Once the job is approved, you would need to submit your bills to receive payment.



FORAGE REPORT

The summer of 2007 has been a challenge for Fairfield County forage producers. The spring weather was dryer than normal and the lack of rainfall resulted in a reduction of the first cutting hay crop by 50 percent or more. Along with the reduction in hay, the pastures did not produce the amount of forage needed to get livestock through the summer months. This meant that some people had to feed their limited supply of winter feed in July and August.

With the lack of rainfall, many producers turned to alternative measures to increase forage production. In the past five years a few producers have planted oats into their wheat fields after the wheat was harvested. This year we had over twenty farmers plant oats after wheat. Also, some planted sorghum sudan grass. With the increased amount of plantings there was an opportunity to collect more data this year than in the past. Since we had different planting dates, varying rates of fertilizer applied, and different harvest dates, Fairfield SWCD along with OSU-Extension were able to gather some interesting information. The harvest time so far has ranged from thirty-three days to seventy-five days. Yields have ranged from 2,000 pounds of dry matter in thirty-three days to over 6,000 pounds in seventy-five days. Some of the oats were baled as dry hay, some were wet wrapped as balage, some chopped as silage and some of the oats were strip grazed.

We are still gathering data, but some of the results from the July planted oats showed that dry matter doubled between week four and week six. Forage samples analyzed so far indicate that protein levels in July planted oats to be between nine and ten percent at seventy-five days. We will have more information to report later as we don't have the results back on the August planted oats.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY STATEWIDE POSTER CONTEST WINNER

Rosemary Reese won first place statewide in the 4th to 6th grade category of the annual NACD poster contest for 2007. Rosemary is currently a 7th grade student at Fairfield Union Junior High School.

The contest theme for 2007 was “Today is the day to be a part of Conservation's Power”. Rosemary's original poster depicted a hybrid car.



2007 FAIR BOOTH DRAWING WINNERS

Thanks to everyone who stopped by the Fairfield SWCD booth at the Fairfield County Fair. Bonnie Hatch of Johnstown was the recipient of the drawing for a spruce tree donated by Albert Family Tree Farm & Nursery.

Mariah Hollett of Canal Winchester was the recipient of the drawing for a duck box made by the Lancaster High School FFA.

Rod Evans, Energy Advisor at South Central Power Co., had an energy display in the booth and Debbie Hanson of Amanda was the winner of the drawing for a energy conservation basket. Congratulations to all of the winners!