



The Fairfield Features is published bimonthly by the Fairfield Soil & Water Conservation District  
831 College Avenue, Suite B, Lancaster, Ohio 43130 Phone: 740-653-8154



February 2006  
Volume 8 Issue 1

The Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District is adding a new item to our "Fairfield Features" newsletter in which we will be featuring conservation practices that are found here in Fairfield County. Hopefully this will answer some questions you may have, spur your interest in conservation practices, and allow you to see some of these practices "in action". Our first article features the Rushcreek Conservancy District, who they are and what they do.

## RUSHCREEK CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

The Rushcreek Conservancy District was established by the U.S. Congress on February 24, 1961, as part of Public Law 566. The intent of this law was controlling local flooding, managing stream flows and building a series of dams. Construction on the first flood-retarding structures began in August of 1966. Since Conservancy Districts are determined by watershed area, this District covers nearly 160,000 acres in parts of Fairfield, Hocking, and Perry Counties. This area encompasses 237 square miles.

The actual stream, Rush Creek, begins in Perry County near New Lexington, and drains west through Bremen, and continues south into Hocking County. It joins the Hocking River near the village of Sugar Grove. A second tributary, Little Rush Creek, begins near Rushville and flows south to Bremen, where it joins the mainstem of Rush Creek.

For many years these two streams were subject to frequent flooding, which impacted many local communities, including Bremen. Rushcreek Conservancy District consists of 19 flood control dams, 17 miles of channel improvement and 2.1 miles of dikes. This entire system combines to control floodwaters in the area that once devastated villages, homes and families. Rush Creek Lake (also referred to by the Conservancy as 6A), 300 acres in size, is the largest structure built. This lake and five others are open for public hunting and fishing. Over 700 adjoining acres of wildlife habitat are located next to the lake. Many of these acres are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program and are managed for wildlife in cooperation with the Ohio Division of Wildlife.



*Sunoco Gas Station on Strayer Avenue and Winding Street in Bremen (Flooding of March 1964)*

*(Continued on next page)*



**2006 Wildlife/Tree Packet  
Sale Order Form Inside!!**

*(Rushcreek Conservancy District - continued)*

One of the most recent projects that the Conservancy District has done was planting over 23 acres of older habitat adjacent to Rush Creek Lake with warm-season grasses in the spring of 2005. These native prairie grasses provide excellent wildlife habitat, especially during the winter. This project was accomplished through the generous assistance of the Southeast Ohio Chapter of Pheasants Forever. This Chapter supplied the seed and labor to plant the fields. Practices such as these also help to improve water quality and reduce erosion near the lake. Other conservation practices in the watershed area include no-till cropping, crop rotations, and rotational grazing practices.

Monies for the Conservancy District have come from federal and state dollars, and through assessments to local landowners in the watershed. Maintenance of dams and flood control structures are continually being monitored by the Conservancy District.

Rushcreek Conservancy District is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Common Pleas judges of each of the three counties in the watershed, (Fairfield, Hocking and Perry). The Conservancy District has a current office staff of two, as well as two maintenance workers. Their office is located at 134 Mulberry Street, PO Box 56, in Bremen, and their phone number is (740) 569-4500. They maintain office hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

---

## **NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBER SWORN IN**



Joe Young of Rushville, newly elected Supervisor of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), was sworn into office by Ohio Supreme Court Justice Terrence O'Donnell during the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD) held in Columbus on January 17-18, 2006. Elected to a three-year term, Joe joins Jim Davis, Kelly Hurst, Steve Miller, and Tim White in administering the Fairfield SWCD's natural resource conservation programs.

## **USDA CONSERVATION PROGRAM SIGN-UP FOR OHIO FARMERS NOW UNDERWAY**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has received over \$12 million for Ohio farmers through the 2006 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This program provides farmers with cost-share and incentive payments for conservation activities that help limit soil erosion, improve water and air quality, and protect wildlife habitat.

"Funding for EQIP in Ohio this year is about level with last year," explains NRCS State Conservationist Terry Cosby. "Counties will receive an allocation of EQIP funds to address the most critical natural resource problems at the local level." "Last year, Fairfield County received over \$250,000 through EQIP," says David Libben, District Conservationist in Fairfield County. Fertilizer containment facilities, livestock watering systems and heavy use pads were popular conservation practices with county farmers. Timber stand improvement practices are also available. These practices addressed the local natural resource concerns of soil and water conservation. Practices such as precision farming, manure management plans, cover crops, and practices that extend the normal grazing season are also encouraged.

Animal waste management practices, such as manure storage structures and composting systems, will receive up to 75% cost share, as opposed to 50% cost share for other conservation practices. Limited resource farmers may be eligible to receive 90% cost share for the first \$5,000 of the contract.

Farmers interested in submitting an application for EQIP should visit the NRCS office at 831 College Avenue, Suite B, in Lancaster as soon as possible. Applications will be collected through March 3, 2006. For more information contact David Libben at (740) 653-1500.

---

## **FAIRFIELD SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REORGANIZE**

On January 12, 2006, the Fairfield SWCD Board of Supervisors selected the following officers for 2006:

Tim White - Chair  
Jim Davis - Vice Chair  
Steve Miller - Secretary  
Kelly Hurst - Treasurer/Fiscal Agent  
Joe Young - Member

The regular monthly board meetings will be held on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings. Since the time and date of the meetings can vary, please contact our office for information on any changes to the schedule.

## APPLICATIONS FOR CLEAN OHIO FUNDING OF AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS NOW AVAILABLE

The fifth round of applications for the Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program are now available. This statewide program aims to protect some of Ohio's most productive farmland from the pressures of urban growth. In the past four years the Ohio Department of Agriculture has approved the purchase of easements on over 10,000 acres of farmland costing over \$15,000,000. Fairfield County has been active in submitting many farms for funding. Over 1,200 acres on three farms have been accepted in Fairfield County in the past four years. The purchase of the agriculture easement means that the landowner sells the right to any future development or use other than agriculture. The deed for the farm can be sold or transferred, but only farmers would be interested in the purchase. For more information, contact either Brad Tolbert or Joe Steiger at the Fairfield SWCD office at (740) 653-8154.

---

## NEW ALTERNATIVE TO FARMLAND PRESERVATION

The Fairfield Land Preservation Association will give Fairfield County landowners a way to permanently preserve farms or other undeveloped acres through donation of conservation easements.

Fairfield Land Preservation Association is a nonprofit corporation that formed with the support of the Rural Advisory Committee of the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission. Initial board members are Fairfield County residents John Stitzlein of Baltimore, Randy Black of Canal Winchester, Jeff Johnson of Lancaster, Larry Neeley of Millersport, and Brad Tolbert of Sugar Grove. Joe Steiger of the Fairfield SWCD office will serve as the contact person and secretary. Carrie Snoke, an attorney with Dagger, Johnston, Miller, Ogilvie and Hampson, is legal counsel.

When fully in operation, the Association will negotiate donations called conservation easements with owners of acreages who want their land to remain as farms, forests, stream corridors or wetlands. Internal Revenue Service rules permit donors of conservation easements to file for charitable deductions for up to six years in which up to 30 percent of the donor's adjusted gross income is deducted.

The role of the Association will involve the stewardship of donated conservation easements on land tracts, thus differing from the Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program. In both cases, though, all other property rights remain with the landowner.

For more information about land preservation, contact Joe Steiger or Brad Tolbert at the Fairfield SWCD office at (740) 653-8154.

## STATEWIDE MUZZLELOADER SEASON COMES TO AN END

Hunters took 23,056 deer during Ohio's four-day muzzleloader season, December 27-30, 2005. Tuscarawas County again lead the state with 930 deer checked, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. Last year, a preliminary total of 27,749 deer was taken during muzzleloader season.

During the last two decades, Ohio's muzzleloader season has consistently grown in popularity. Twenty years ago, the statewide muzzleloader season accounted for 5 percent of the total deer kill, and today it constitutes 12 percent of the total annual deer harvest.

Hunters have killed a preliminary total of 190,718 deer across the state since Ohio's deer hunting seasons opened on October 1. Archery hunters took 41,859 deer during the first six weeks of the statewide archery season, which continues through January 31. In its third year, the youth season resulted in the bagging of 8,722 deer. Hunters checked 116,855 deer during the statewide deer-gun season. Another 226 deer were taken during the early muzzleloader deer season in October on three specific hunting areas.

Hunters who wish to share their success can submit a photo of themselves and the deer they killed this year. The web address for submitting a photo is: [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/hunting/deer/deerpics\\_05](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/hunting/deer/deerpics_05).

Totals for Fairfield and other surrounding counties are shown below:

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
Fairfield	298	323
Hocking	573	544
Licking	696	684
Perry	433	604
Pickaway	141	221

---

## Win Savings Bonds with the SWCD Poster Contest

Kids in kindergarten through 12th grade can enter the 2006 Ohio Conservation Poster Contest. The contest is open to all kids in Fairfield County and is a great way to win money. Awards are given at the state and national levels of the contest in five age categories. The grade categories for the poster contest are: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12.

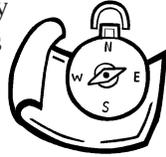
The theme for this year's contest is "Water Wise". For more information on the rules for the poster contest, please contact the Fairfield SWCD at (740) 653-8154 or 653-5320. The deadline to submit posters to the Fairfield SWCD is May 1, 2006.



## WOMEN IN THE OUTDOORS

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 25, 2006. A day long event is being planned to teach women outdoor skills. Some of the sessions include: trapping, "You Can't See the Forest for the Trees", blacksmithing/forging, map/compass, primitive cooking, deer skinning, and fly casting. Other potentials include: flint knapping, tomahawk throwing, and teepees.

There will be six sessions, three in the morning and three in the afternoon. Registration will begin around 8-8:30 a.m. and the day will end around 4 p.m. The event will be held at Alley Park in Lancaster and will include lunch. This event is sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation - Zane Trace Chapter. The cost is \$45 which includes registration, lunch, NWTf membership and Women in the Outdoors magazine subscription for one year. Call the SWCD office at (740) 653-8154 for more information.



## THANKS GREG!

Greg DeWitt served as Board supervisor for one three-year term. Greg joined the Board in 2002, serving as Secretary for one year, followed by two terms as Vice Chair. As supervisor he helped to make staffing decisions and guide our District through some very challenging times, both in terms of county growth and with reduced funding.

Greg worked with the District in 1998 and 1999 on several conservation practices prior to his term on the Board. These practices included an access road, a heavy use pad and a water and sediment control basin (WASCOB). He and his wife Phyllis are very active with the Fairfield County Cattlemen's Association and regularly prepare beef specialties for local field days, the County Fair, and numerous other events. Greg helped District staff to expand our grazing emphasis, as more local cattle producers have moved to pasture-based systems. We feel fortunate to have had Greg on the board for the past three years. Thanks for your insights and ideas Greg, good luck in all that you do!



## SWCD COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

The Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District will be awarding another \$500 Conservation Education Scholarship to a 2006 graduating senior in Fairfield County. The student will need to be pursuing a career in agriculture, natural resources, or a similar field, and must be a resident of and graduating from a Fairfield County High School. An application for prospective students to complete is available at high school guidance offices, the Fairfield SWCD office, and on our website at [www.fairfieldswcd.org](http://www.fairfieldswcd.org). The deadline to submit the applications to the Fairfield SWCD is March 31, 2006. Call the SWCD office at (740) 653-8154 with questions.

## EFFECTIVE TREE PLANTING

You've purchased your saplings and you're ready to put them in the ground, but what's the best method to maximize the growth of your trees?

The care you give your seedlings after they arrive from the nursery and during planting will have more bearing on their survival and early growth than how they are planted. Seedlings should be planted as soon as possible after they arrive. Open packages when they arrive and rewet roots if necessary. Bundled seedlings can be stored for several days in a cool, shady place if protected from freezing or stored for 2 to 4 weeks in cold storage (34 to 38 degrees F) without seriously deteriorating. Stack bundles so air can freely circulate around each bundle to prevent "heating" within the seedling bundles. Remember to keep the roots moist.

If the seedbed to be planted is sod, use a herbicide to burn down a 2 foot width. Planting can be done by hand using a dibble bar or with a tractor-pulled tree planter. In either method, all roots should be planted and not exposed to the air.

Before planting, soak seedling roots in water. **DO NOT SOAK THEM FOR MORE THAN 1 HOUR**, roots need oxygen to live. Keep seedlings moist when planting by carrying them in planting trays or canvas planting bags packed with moist peat.

Before you plant them, prune the seedlings' taproots to a length of 8 inches and all lateral roots to a length of 1 to 2 inches. If you shear off lateral roots you will reduce the number of potential sites for new root growth. Do not plant seedlings when there is snow on the ground, when soils are too wet, or if frost-heaving can still occur.