

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

By legal definition an easement is a right, as a right of way, afforded a person to make limited use of another's real property. In our office we talk about conservation easements and transfer of development rights (TDR's). In a developing county such as Fairfield, conservation easements offer us choices in how we decide to use and utilize various tracts and acreages of land.

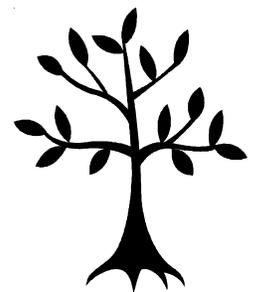
As with much of Ohio, Fairfield County was for years predominantly rural, with many families involved in agriculture and/or agricultural ventures. While agriculture and its related markets and businesses do employ one out of every six people in Ohio, actual acreage devoted to agriculture/open space has declined.

Fairfield County currently is converting about 2,000-3,000 acres per year from farmland to building sites. Fairfield County currently has about a 12% "high intensity urban acreage" classification which *does not* include the many existing 2-5 acre lots.

So why *do* we need agriculture/open space? How do we all benefit by keeping them? These seem to be questions that are frequently being asked. To answer some of these vital questions, the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District and Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission are sponsoring a Conservation Easement Forum on Tuesday, February 20, 2007, from 6 to 8 p.m. The forum will be held at the Agriculture Service Center in Lancaster located at 831 College Avenue, behind OU-L. Come learn from the experts about the following conservation easement programs available for your farm/property:

- Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program ~ Vicki Kohli, Education Specialist, Fairfield SWCD
- Agricultural Security Areas ~ Mike Bailey, Ohio Department of Agriculture/
Office of Farmland Preservation
- Fairfield Land Preservation Association ~ Jeff Johnson, Board Member of FLPA
- Tax Benefits/CAUV ~ Dave Miller Wright Law Offices

Growth is going to occur within any community and can be balanced to benefit all. We hope this workshop will help to inform county landowners so they can make informed choices. It is free and open to all Fairfield County citizens. Contact Vicki Kohli at the Fairfield SWCD office at (740) 653-8154 to register.



**2007 Tree & Wildlife
Packet Sale
information and
order form inside!**

OHIO WETLANDS HABITAT STAMP CELEBRATES 25-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The 2007 Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp, depicting the majestic northern pintail duck, marks 25 years of work by the program to conserve waterfowl habitat, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

“By purchasing habitat stamps, Ohio’s waterfowl hunters have made great contributions to wetland conservation both in Canada and Ohio. Thousands of acres of waterfowl habitat have been restored or enhanced through the stamp program,” said Steven A. Gray, chief of the Division of Wildlife.

The Ohio legislature initiated the “duck stamp” program in 1982, mandating that 40 percent of sale proceeds go to a “recognized wetlands conservation organization.” Ducks Unlimited (DU) has been Ohio’s longtime partner in this endeavor, using the program proceeds to secure wetlands in Canada, which are the “nursery” areas for many migratory waterfowl that pass through Ohio.

To date, \$2.8 million has been contributed to wetlands acquisition and preservation in Canada. Additionally, \$4.3 million has been used for wetlands enhancement, restoration, management and research in Ohio.

The first Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp was completed by internationally recognized Ohio resident artist John Ruthven. His stamp depicted two wood ducks, and to date is still the best-selling stamp, with 41,319 issued.

The first Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp juried art competition was held in 1983, with artist Harry Antis’ depiction of mallards selected as the winner. Ten of the 25 winning artists have come from Ohio. In 2004, Ohio artists swept the contest, with Adam Grimm’s wood duck selected as the winner, and Greg Clair and Dick Benson finishing second and third, respectively. Overall, artists from 15 states (including Ohio) have won the competition.

Ohioans Harold Roe and Lynn Kaatz have won the contest multiple times. Roe won four times; Kaatz won twice. Since 1996, judging of submitted artwork has been held in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited’s annual convention, extending the Division of Wildlife’s partnership with that organization.

DISTRICT COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

Don’t forget the district college scholarship of \$500 for any graduating senior that plans to study Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation, Environmental Education, Geology, Biology, and the like. Applications are available on our website at www.fairfieldswcd.org, with the Guidance Counselors at each High School, or at the SWCD office. Deadline to apply is March 31. Interviews will be completed in April, with a selection made by May 1.

WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN LANDOWNERS

This event will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2007, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources District 4 Headquarters Conference Room, 360 East State Street in Athens, Ohio.

This is a unique opportunity to learn about owning and managing land, a practical, hands-on workshop for the non-traditional landowner. You don't need to own land to attend this one-day event. All you need is an interest in being a good steward of your little patch of ground. Topics will include:

- Introduction to owning and managing land
- Working in your woods to make them a better place for you and your family
- Wildlife behavior, ecology, and management
- Landscaping, gardening, and backyard wildlife habitat
- Working with maps and aerial photographs
- Taking stock of what you have and figuring out how to get to where you want to be
- Land management agencies, groups, and programs

In addition, they will have their own Natural Resources Road Show. Bring items you would like to have identified or explained, and the panel of experts will do their best to identify them or explain them. You can also look forward to hearing about what other women have done on their own land in a Show-and-Tell. Finally, you'll get a chance to stretch your legs—and your brain during a Field Session on Plant Identification.

The workshop is open to the first 60 applicants, so send in your application as soon as you can. Attendees will be sent an information packet before the day of the workshop. There is no cost, but lunch and of course travel and lodging will be on your own. This workshop meets the educational requirements for new certifications under the Ohio Forest Tax Law (OFTL). For more information contact Terence Hanley, Ohio Division of Forestry Service Forester at (740) 589-9909.

NEWLY ELECTED SUPERVISORS SWORN IN

John Albert of Pleasant Township and Dick Kilbarger of Bremen were sworn into office by Ohio Supreme Court Justice Robert R. Cupp during the 64th Annual Meeting of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD) held in Columbus January 16-17. John and Dick were elected to the board at the district's annual meeting in September 2006.

Elected to three-year terms, John and Dick join fellow incumbent board members Steve Miller, Tim White, and Joe Young in administering the Fairfield SWCD's natural resource conservation programs.

The Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts was organized in 1943 to further the natural resource conservation mission of the state's 88 county-based SWCDs. As subdivisions of state government, soil and water conservation districts have legal authority to assist landowners with a wide range of soil, water, woodland and wildlife conservation objectives. Another important goal is to provide information and education programs on natural resource conservation and management topics for a wide range of county residents.



John Albert (left) with Ohio Supreme Court Justice Robert R. Cupp.



Dick Kilbarger (left) with Ohio Supreme Court Justice Robert R. Cupp.

TIM WHITE RECEIVES AWARD



Tim White, Editor of The Ohio Farmer Magazine, is shown here receiving the Presidential Award from Ken Riedlinger, past president of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Tim White recently received the President's Award from the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts during their annual banquet in January. Tim's outstanding coverage of conservation farm families and their agricultural undertakings in "The Ohio Farmer Magazine" generated this award. His plaque read "For Outstanding Service in Communicating Ohioans Conservation Efforts and Stewardship".

Tim is currently the Board Chair for the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The office staff and other board members congratulate Tim on his well-deserved award!

BENEFITS OF FROST SEEDING LEGUMES

Adding legumes to hay and pasture fields brings at least four benefits, and frost seeding is a simple but effective method. Broadcasting legume seed on the soil surface in late winter (Feb. 15 to March 15) allows the seeds to become covered as the soil freezes and thaws.

1) Higher yields The total yield of forage per acre is increased. For example, a study conducted at Lexington, Kentucky, compared renovating a fescue pasture using red clover to fertilizing the grass with nitrogen. In this study, adding 6 pounds of red clover seed to a fescue pasture produced higher yields than fescue fertilized with up to 180 lb. N/ac.

2) Improved quality Adding legumes to grass fields improves forage quality over grass alone. This added quality includes increases in palatability, intake, digestibility, and nutrient content. The result is improved animal performance. Research has shown that legumes improve animal growth rates, reproductive efficiency, and milk production.

3) Nitrogen fixation Legumes get their nitrogen needs from symbiotic bacteria that live in “knots” (nodules) on their roots. These bacteria are added when the legume seed is inoculated. This “fixed” nitrogen provides the nitrogen needed by the legumes and also grasses growing with them. Alfalfa usually fixes the most, between 200 and 300 pounds/acre/year, while annual lespedeza is on the low side with about 75 pounds. Red clovers can fix 100 to 200 pounds of nitrogen/acre/year. With nitrogen cost at 40 cents a pound, that equals 40 to 80 dollars an acre benefit in nitrogen alone. At the recommended seeding rates of 6 to 12 pounds (depending on conditions) and a cost of 2 dollars a pound, that equals 12 to 24 dollars.

4) More summer growth Most of the growth of cool-season grasses occurs during the spring and fall. Legumes make more growth during the summer months than cool-season grasses. Growing grasses and legumes together improves the seasonal distribution of forages and provides more growth during summer.

Controlling grass and weed competition in a new seeding is critical. Many attempts at renovation have failed simply because grass was allowed to grow and reduce the light, nutrients, and water available to the young legume plants. The grass must be kept short by grazing or mowing until the new legume plants are 3 to 4 inches tall. Stop grazing if the animals begin biting off the young legume leaves. Grazing and mowing should be stopped for several weeks to allow the legumes to become well established. After this, the field should be mowed or grazed on a schedule that will help keep the particular legumes used in good condition. A rotational grazing system helps keep legumes in the stand longer.

EARTH CAMP

Earth Camp will be held at Alley Park, June 12-14, 2007. It is free and open to all Fairfield County students going into third, fourth, and fifth grades in 2007-2008. Students must be attending a Fairfield County school and/or live in the county to be eligible. The themes for this year include: Survival Day, Ohio's Heritage Day, and Wet 'n' Wild Day. Sign up begins on May 1st and registrations will be accepted until the camp is full (maximum of 60 participants).

Also, we are in need of interested high schoolers/previous attendees to assist as group leaders, so if you know of anyone interested, please call Vicki Kohli at (740) 653-8154.

EARTH DAY

Earth Day will be held at Alley Park on Saturday, April 21, 2007. It will be held in conjunction with the “Friends of the Park” pancake breakfast. There will be activities and crafts downstairs in the Nature Center and various displays outside in the tent area. A tree seedling giveaway is also included. Come join us for information regarding our environment and a chance to talk with folks working in that field. Events begin at 8 a.m. and end by noon. Breakfast will be served from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Earth Day is a free family event open to all; however, the pancake breakfast is \$4 per person.

THE ADVANTAGES OF FARM DRAINAGE

The installation of subsurface drainage tile can benefit farm owners in multiple ways.

- Tile drainage improves soil structure. It also increases water holding capacity thereby reducing the severity of drought and erosion.
- It is less costly to install tile to efficiently increase production and income than to purchase more land. Drained land increases in value.
- Better drainage of pastures improves grazing management.
- Earlier plantings and later tillage are an advantage. Fields become more easily accessible throughout the year.
- Excess moisture is removed which lowers the water table. This promotes improved root growth and penetration which produces more moisture and nutrients for the plant to grow.
- Surface crusting and flooding are better prevented making herbicides and fertilizers more effective. As a result crop yields are increased.

Fairfield SWCD can assist with designs for these systems, but there is currently no cost-share.

NEW ODNR DIRECTOR NAMED

Governor-elect Ted Strickland has selected Columbiana County Commissioner Sean Logan to be the next director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. In the announcement, Strickland said "I was fortunate to work with Sean when I was a member of Congress representing Columbiana County and I know first hand how bright and hard-working he is. Sean truly believes in the potential of Ohio's parks and natural resources, and he's someone who will respect the rights of Ohio's sportsmen and women."

Logan currently sits on the Little Beaver Creek Scenic River Advisory Board. Logan received a bachelor's degree in political science and speech communications from Muskingum College and earned his law degree from Capital University in 2001. He is married with three children.

"From camping and hiking to hunting and fishing, our state parks and bountiful natural resources are a vast source of recreation—and economic strength—for our great state," Logan said in a statement. "I look forward to ensuring that Ohio's natural heritage will be enjoyed by Ohioans for generations to come." Logan replaces Sam Speck, a former president of Muskingum College."