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FAIRFIELD COUNTY HISTORICAL PARKS

The Fairfield County Historical Parks Commission has a mission of procuring unique natural resources, historical settings, and open space for education, preservation, conservation management, and passive leisure activities for the people of Fairfield County. Current parks in Fairfield County include:

Lockville Park	Johnston Covered Bridge
Stonewall Cemetery	Turkey Run Church
Cross Mound Park	Hanaway Covered Bridge
Zeller Soccer Park	Rockmill
Mink Hollow Bridge	Smeck Farm Park, Village and Museum
Clear Creek Community Club	Hansel Nature Preserve

For the past seven years, Dave Fey has been the Director of the Fairfield County Historical Parks. Dave took on this job because of his interest in local history and culture and wanting to help others to see and understand the "people behind the stories" as he likes to tell it. To date, Dave says he has done over 300 presentations to the community regarding the Historical Parks. Dave formerly taught Biology at Bexley High School.

The Smeck Farm Park is located on the west side of Basil Road, just south of Baltimore. This 50 acre farm was donated to the Park District in 1999 by Harold Smeck. When completed, the park will contain a reproduction of a nineteenth century Fairfield County village. "It will represent a progression of time more than a specific year", says Dave. "We hope to see this as an economic engine for the county as well as drawing folks into the Smeck Farm Village to see and teach them nearly lost arts". Some of the features of the living history/functional farm will include blacksmithing with the use of a huge double forge furnace, spinning, weaving, basket making, a church, a school, fire department, doctors office, and boat house to build the canal boat which will be used for the restored two mile section of the Ohio-Erie canal.

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Thomas Fetter barn reconstruction at Smeck Farm Historical Village site.

Fairfield SWCD's 63rd Annual Meeting Set for September 14

The Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District will be holding its 63rd Annual Meeting/Banquet on September 14, 2006, at the Goslin Nature Education Center at Alley Park. Look for more information in the next newsletter!

Parks (continued from front page)

Another main attraction will be the barn (pictured on front) which was recently moved from the Thomas Fetter property on St Rt 37. This 1841 barn is a double forebay design with a sandstone face, one of its kind in Ohio. The barn, complete with grain storage and a threshing floor, will be used as a community center. An outdoor amphitheater is planned, along with an orchard and nut trees. Three ravines are visible on the Smeck Farm that were carved out by glacial melt waters. The site will also be the home of the Museum for the History of the American Farmer.

The Historical Park District was created in 1981 by the Fairfield County Probate Court under Chapter 1545 of the Ohio Revised Code. It is an independent political subdivision of Park Commissioners with three Board members (three-year terms) appointed by the Probate Judge. Stop out and visit one of the parks.

Soil Scientist Retires

After 40+ years of "life in the trenches" and bringing soil home in his pockets, Fairfield SWCD Soil Scientist Joe Steiger has decided to retire.

Joe started his career as a Science teacher in Delaware, Ohio. From there he hired on with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now known as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). During his tenure with NRCS, Joe walked, probed, and mapped his way through Montgomery, Summit, and Medina Counties as a Soil Scientist. Joe was promoted to Soil Survey Project Leader status and was responsible for mapping and compiling data for the soil survey books in Crawford, Wyandot, Muskingum and Fairfield Counties. Joe was detailed to Montana for a short while to learn about different terrain and landforms, as well as study and compare mountain soils with plains/prairie soils found here in Ohio. Joe retired from NRCS in 1996 after 30 years.

In 1996 Joe hired on with the Fairfield SWCD office and has assisted virtually every county department on the drainage needs, best management practices, capability, and limitations of our county soils. He has given advice on basement sites as well as potential home, septic, and pond sites. Joe has given class presentations on soils, helped with FFA soil judging contests and high school Envirothon contests, and more recently talked with GIS/Environmental Engineering classes.

Joe's passions are Farmland Preservation, peaceful drives through the country looking at landforms and evidence of "days gone by", and barns. Joe was always in a good mood and more than happy to help and teach others. You always learned something when you took a ride with Joe. He will be missed.

Attention Loggers and Woodland Property Owners!

Unlike many neighboring states, Ohio does not currently have a permit program regulating timber harvests. Voluntary implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) is the foundation of Ohio's Pollution Abatement Law. Your continued help is needed to protect Ohio's streams.

One of the ways you can help is by filing Timber Harvest Plans with your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). These new plans have replaced the Operation and Management Plans (O&M) used in the past. These plans are still **voluntary**, but they do provide significant benefits:

- Under Ohio Law, Timber Harvest Plans can be used as an affirmative defense in a civil case against the logging company and landowner (if being followed).
- The plans can serve as blueprints to help you remove logs in a logical way which can help the logger improve profitability and help the landowner understand exactly what to expect during the harvest.
- Provides a positive environmental image for your logging company and the landowner.
- Opens the door to technical assistance from conservation professionals at the SWCD for landowners and loggers.
- They are required to be filed when logging on State of Ohio property and lands owned by some corporations.

Timber Harvest Plans are based on the Best Management Practices found in the book, BMP's for Erosion Control for Logging Practices in Ohio. This book is available from the SWCD office or on-line at http://ohioline.osu.edu/b916/index.html. Planning, selecting and implementing these BMP's helps to ensure compliance with Ohio's Agricultural Pollution Abatement Law.

Once the Timber Harvest Plan has been completed, simply submit the plan to the SWCD office. We will review the plan (make suggestions or request changes if applicable) and approve the plan at our next Board Meeting. (Please note: our Board Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month, so be sure and submit the plan prior to starting the timber harvest). Once approved, we will send you a confirmation letter stating the plan has been approved or needs revision.

If for any reason you are unable to complete the entire Timber Harvest Plan, you should still consider filling out the "Notice of Intent" section of the form and return it to the SWCD office. The NOI contains basic information such as contact numbers and harvest dates. Unlike a complete Timber Harvest Plan, the NOI cannot be used as an affirmative defense, but it is a great tool to help build a solid working relationship between the landowners, logger and SWCD office.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of a Timber Harvest Plan, please contact the Fairfield SWCD office at (740) 653-8154.

Weed Trouble - What to do now?

We often get several calls a day during the spring and summer from people who own or manage ponds who wonder how to control the problem weeds or algae they are seeing. In this article we hope to clear up some of the confusion on how to treat the vegetation that you're seeing that may be keeping you from enjoying your pond.

For starters, we need to identify what is growing in your pond. In the space here it is not possible to show examples of every plant that might be causing you problems. Instead, let's break them down into a few general types.

Algae

Algae is often among the first types of problem vegetation to begin growing in many ponds. This will start to grow soon after ice-out, or generally in late February as the days start to lengthen. Algae starts to grow in contact with the pond bottom, where most of the phosphorus that enters the pond settles out. Algae is a form of colonial one-cell plants that grow in long chains. Two of the more common types in ponds are Pithophera and Spirogyra. They are commonly a problem in shallow areas of ponds that are less than 4 feet deep. One of the best ways to keep algae from getting out of control is early treatment. Copper in granular or liquid forms is toxic to algae. Treating a pond early (late March or early April) will help you keep ahead of the algae. Trade names for liquid copper sulfate or chelated copper products include AlgaePro or Cutrine Plus. These are usually sold in one or 2.5 gallon containers. Granular copper sulfate products are sold under many trade names in two to five pound bags. When using the liquid or granular copper products, remember to apply them early in the day on a sunny day if possible. During these conditions, algae is most active and will take up more of the copper. If you have lots of floating mats of algae on the surface of your pond, try raking some of it out. This will make the chemical more effective, as it won't be tied up on these floating mats. Removing the algae will also help to remove some of the nutrients causing the growth, so less algae will form in the future. As temperatures rise, use caution in applying any chemical. Treating only half of the pond at a time will help to prevent any oxygen problems. As any vegetation decays, it will use up oxygen, which can cause fish kills during extreme heat.

There is also a blue dye commonly called Aquashade or a variety of other trade names that is used to color the pond water enough that sunlight can't reach the bottom. However, unless you are applying this dye early in February or March, the algae will have enough of a "head start" that the dye won't be effective. These dyes are often in the range of $40 to $50 per gallon. One other caution on the use of these products is that if your pond has spring or ground water entering and quickly flushing out, then the dye will be diluted too quickly to be effective.

Emergent Plants

Emergent plants are those such as cattails that begin beneath the water surface and grow above the water level, frequently in large numbers. These include cattails, water lilies, arrowhead or bulrushes. Most of these plants have their peak growth in Ohio before July. After that they are simply sending as much energy as they can down to the roots, which are often 1.5 to 2.5 inches in diameter. Pond owners often get frustrated when they apply control chemicals too early and don't see the results that they expected. These plants are best treated after July 4th, when the uptake of herbicides down to the roots is greatest. There are two types of herbicides that are effective in controlling these persistent plants, Reward (diquat dibromide) and Rodeo (glyphosate). Reward is a contact herbicide and controls only the parts of the plant that it touches. Because Reward does not travel through the plant to the roots, annual application is probably required to kill the problem growth. Rodeo is a systemic herbicide, it will travel through the plant to kill the roots and any green growth that you see. Because Rodeo has a better effect, it is usually more expensive than Reward. Both chemicals are sold by the gallon.

For both of these herbicides, an ounce per gallon of a non-ionic surfactant should be applied to help "stick" the treatment chemical to the plant leaf. Surfactants are usually less than $5 per pint.

Other options for these emergent weeds include pulling out new growth (if you have a strong back) and frequent cutting of the new growth. Both of these options will eventually rob the root system of the energy needed to survive the winter. One last note on these plant types; they are not eaten by grass carp. You will hear many claims to the contrary, but this is not the case!

Submerged Plants

These are the most common cause for frustration by pond owners. As mentioned in the section on algae, any areas of the pond less than four feet in depth will have some plant growth. There are many species of submerged plants that cause headaches and proper identification is needed to control them. For example, there are 6 or 7 species of pondweed in Ohio, and 5 to 8 different types of other plant species that are common nuisances. If you cannot identify the plant that is causing you problems, please call to request a field visit or bring a sample of the plant in water into the office for identification.

Once the plant has been identified, there are three herbicides that are most effective. Although other treatment options exist, the three discussed below have the best track record of killing the nuisance plant growth, without causing other problems (i.e. fish kills). For most pondweeds, Aquathol-K in liquid or granular form is very effective. This product is used in a tank or 1-3 gallon hand sprayer without any surfactant. It is a contact herbicide, so the chemical touching the actively growing plant will kill the leaves but not the root system. Aquathol-K is effective for nearly all submerged plants except coontail and watermilfoil. For these two plant species, Reward is a better option. A third herbicide called Sonar, or Avast, is also very effective. It is sold in pint or quart containers. The active ingredient is fluridone. This is the only aquatic herbicide on the market that has a timed-release;

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(Weed Trouble-What to do now? continued)

it also has a systemic mode of action. Although the cost is much more than Aquathol-K or Reward, it can control weed growth for more than one season in many ponds. Remember to treat early before submerged aquatic plants become too dense. Apply herbicide control to only half of the pond at one time, then wait 7-10 days before treating the other half to prevent oxygen problems. Grass carp are effective at controlling these aquatic plants in most cases. The usual stocking rate is 4 to 6 fish per surface acre of water. More is not better! These fish can consume every plant in the pond if stocked at too high a rate.

Free-floating plants

This group of plants are one of the worst problems. Watermeal and duckweed often grow the best in older ponds with many years of accumulated nutrients and little circulation or wind movement. These two plants appear as tiny green granules (watermeal), or as slightly larger green plants about the size of a match head with a visible white root attached underneath (duckweed). When we see these two plants in large numbers, the pond with the problem is often over 30 years old. There is really only one treatment option that is effective, which is Sonar or Avast. The best sequence is applying half of a full treatment dose with a non-ionic surfactant to attach the chemical to the tiny plants on the pond surface. Wait for a week and apply the other half of the needed treatment without a surfactant. In this way both the floating plants on the surface are controlled, as well as the plants forming near the bottom.

A few general reminders…

- Be sure of what plant you have.
- Use the proper chemical to do the job and make sure it is labeled for aquatic use!
- Read and follow the label instructions.
- For heavy plant or algae control during warm temperatures, only treat one-half of the pond at one time. Wait one week and treat the other half.
- **Some plant growth is helpful in a pond to serve as habitat for fish and other aquatic life! Any body of water will have plant growth, striking a proper balance is the key.**

If you have pond questions, please contact Perry Orndorff at (740) 653-8154.

****NOTICE****

The SWCD office would like to recognize century farm families at our upcoming Annual Meeting/ Banquet. Century farms are those that are at least 100 years old and have been maintained by the same family. If your farm meets these requirements, contact Brad Tolbert at (740) 653-8154.

Livestock Water Systems

One of the most important things in a good pasture grazing system is providing adequate water for the grazing animals. The importance of a good water source as close to the grazing areas as possible can be critical in yielding the most from your farm pastures. To obtain maximum yield from a grazing area the animals should not have to travel more than 800 feet to water. Forcing the animals to travel longer distances causes them to congregate around the water source resulting in reduced plant cover, soil erosion, concentrated nutrient buildup, and the invasion of broadleaf weeds. This also results in the under utilization of the pasture at the outer edges of the pasture.

Developing an existing water source such as springs or ponds is one of the ways to overcome this problem. Today there are different pump options available to help distribute water. Also, pipelines from wells can be used to get water to the under utilized parts of the pasture. They can be buried if year-round use is needed or laid on top of the ground if the only time they will be needed is during the grazing season.

For more information on developing water systems, call the Fairfield SWCD office at (740) 653-8154.

Agreement Reached for Continued Public Use of Former Mead Woodlands in Southern Ohio

Hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy continued public use of 43,000 acres of forested lands in seven southern Ohio counties, following a formal agreement (signed recently) between the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife and the Scioto Land Company.

"The state's hunters and anglers will continue to enjoy the uninterrupted use of this popular timber management and wildlife area," said Steven A. Gray, chief of the Division of Wildlife.

The acreage, formerly owned by Dayton-based Mead, lies in Vinton, Adams, Pike, Jackson, Gallia, Ross, and Hocking Counties. It was purchased by the Scioto Land Company in December as part of a large-scale acquisition of the former Mead woodlands. Since then, the fate of continued public use of these prime hunting areas has been in question. This new agreement assures the public of continued access. The Scioto Land Company has approximately 90,000 additional acres in southern Ohio that are in private leases with individual hunters and hunting clubs.

The parcels that are open to the public are posted with yellow and black wildlife area signs. Regulations and conditions of use for the land that existed under the previous agreement with Mead remain unchanged. The Division of Wildlife enforces all state laws on these lands including hunting and fishing regulations. Enforcement priorities include prohibiting littering, off-road vehicle use, and timber theft and destruction.

Smith Farm Accepted

The Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program has enrolled yet another Fairfield County farm that will be protected in perpetuity. The Smith Farm owned by Howard and Dixie Smith has been selected for protection through an agricultural easement. This easement will help the Smith's protect their farm ground and all of the natural resources that go along with it. This is the fourth Fairfield County farm selected in this program.

Ohio is losing its productive farmland at an astonishing rate. According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, Ohio had approximately 21 million acres of land in farms in 1950. By 2002, there were 14 million acres of farmland in Ohio. Preserved farmland provides all Ohioans with vital economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Part-time/Seasonal Drill Assistance

The Fairfield SWCD is seeking a part-time or seasonal employee that would assist with our no-till drill program.

This individual would deliver, setup and troubleshoot the drill for customers implementing conservation practices.

The Great Plains drill is used for seeding prairie grasses, pasture mixes, waterways, and cool-season conservation grasses. Training on the calibration and operation of this drill will be provided but a working knowledge of farm equipment or equivalent is needed. Approximately 80 percent of the drill usage occurs in April, May, and June. Plantings can also occur in August and September.

Billing and insurance verification for renters will be completed by SWCD staff. Employment options include wages per hour or per acre basis.

Please call the Fairfield SWCD office at (740) 653-8154 if you are interested.