

FAIRFIELD FEATURES



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74th ANNUAL MEETING/BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

This year marked the 74th anniversary of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The annual meeting/banquet was held on September 14, 2017, at the Goslin Nature Education Center on the grounds of Alley Park. The evening started off with a Board of Supervisors election. This year's candidates were Mark Boving of Canal Winchester, Paul Kemmer and Tim White of Lancaster. Mark and Tim were both elected to serve another three-year term beginning January 1, 2018.

Mark Thomas was the featured speaker this year, and he shared many stories of his experiences as an underwater photographer.

The 2016 Cooperator of the Year Awards were presented to the following: Kilbarger Brothers (Roger and Ryan) and Ruffwing Farms (John and Cindy Albert). Cooperators are selected annually based on their consistent work to improve their land by reducing soil loss due to erosion, installing conservation practices and participating in educational outreach to the community. Each cooperator received a sign to post on their farm.

The Conservation Partner Award honors partners that have demonstrated outstanding efforts in promoting conservation programs in Fairfield County. The Fairfield Union Land Lab Committee received the 2016 Conservation Partner of the Year Award for their work in revitalizing the school's land lab for student education. The award was accepted by Kevin Kemmerer and Nancy Bonhomme.

The Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award is presented annually 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 2016 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award was given to Eric Vivian, teacher at Fairfield Union High School.

Congratulations to all of our award winners!

CONGRATULATIONS to Dave Engle of Lancaster for being chosen as the winner in a drawing for a bluebird box at our booth at the 2017 Fairfield County Fair. Thanks to everyone who visited us in the AGmazing Agri-Center!

Happy Holidays!

74TH ANNUAL MEETING/BANQUET AWARD WINNERS



Roger & Ryan Kilbarger (Kilbarger Brothers) were presented with a 2016 Cooperator of the Year Award.



John & Cindy Albert (Ruffwing Farms) were awarded a 2016 Cooperator of the Year Award.



Eric Vivian, teacher at Fairfield Union High School, was awarded the 2016 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award.



The Fairfield Union Land Lab Committee was presented the 2016 Conservation Partner of the Year Award. Pictured are Kevin Kemmerer, Nancy Bonhomme, Eric Vivian & Chad Belville.

DATABASE NEAR COMPLETION

Our engineering project database is almost complete. For the last two years we have been scanning all conservation engineering plans from 1943-2017. Locations were then identified on aerial maps and coordinates assigned. We now have the capability to look at a parcel on our mapping system and pull up any associated plans with the click of a button. There are currently almost 3,000 records (as seen below).



HOWEVER, we need your help! Below is a list of a few stragglers that we were unable to identify the location of the plan, as they had limited information for identification. Please contact the SWCD office if you are familiar with the landowner or their property. Several could be across the Perry or Licking County lines.

Mabel Baker - tile plan installed in 1964
John Barrick - tile plan installed in 1961 (neighbor was John Rhodeback)
Clarabell Bickel - tile plan installed in 1962
R.F. Burdette - tile plan installed in 1970 (State Route 204)
Sam Dietz - tile plan installed in 1978
Leroy Ellinger , tile plan at a road intersection
Boles Hebron - tile plan
Clarence Heischman - tile plan installed in 1966 (Road 88)
Hiedorn - tile plan
Clay Metzger - tile plan installed in 1962
Dean Miller - tile plan
Dora Taylor - tile plan

CONSERVATION TAX REDUCTION IN CAUV COMING TO FAIRFIELD COUNTY IN 2019

Land devoted to conservation practices or enrolled in a federal land retirement or conservation program under an agreement with an agency of the federal government will be valued at the lowest value of all soil types beginning with the tax year the county completes a scheduled countywide revaluation for 2017 or thereafter (R.C. 573.31).

Fairfield County is scheduled to complete our next reappraisal in 2019. As a result, the newly developed Conservation Tax Reduction will not take effect until 2019. Our County Auditor's staff would encourage those seeking a tax reduction for conservation on their land for the CAUV program to submit supporting documentation in 2018 with your Renewal Application to allow them adequate time to determine actual acreages of conservation practices on your land. This year's CAUV renewal application requires itemized acreages of all uses including "conservation". We offer the following to help you begin the process this year as it may take some time to prepare:

1. For voluntary conservation under contract with the federal government: submit a map and a copy of the contract with the federal government programs like CRP/CREP, etc. The land must be enrolled as of the first day of January of the tax year to receive the lowest value of all soil types. We would encourage you to contact NRCS or FSA (740-415-3926) prior to February 1 if you have lost this paperwork.
2. For voluntary conservation not under contract with the federal government; if the land used for conservation practices comprises 25% or less of the total qualifying land on the farm, provide an explanation of how the conservation practices are used to abate soil erosion as required in the management of the farming operation. Attach a map showing the boundaries of the conservation practices.

Please note that "conservation practices" as outlined in R.C. 5713.30(E) are practices used to abate soil erosion as required in the management of the farming operation, and include, but are not limited to: the **installation, construction, development, planting, or use** of grass waterways, terraces, diversions, filter strips, field borders, windbreaks, riparian buffers, wetlands, ponds, and cover crops (*such as whole field CRP/CREP*) for that purpose.

Please note that "wetlands" has the same meaning as in section 6111.02 of the Revised Code. "Wetlands" means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration that are sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. "Wetlands" includes swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas **that are delineated in accordance with the 1987 United States Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual** and any other procedures and requirements adopted by the United States Army Corps of Engineers for delineating wetlands.

The easiest way for landowners to create maps may be the following: The Fairfield County Auditor's website <http://realestate.co.fairfield.oh.us/> provides the ability for you to pull up your farm by parcel number, utilize the area measurement tool (yellow ruler with green triangle) to trace the waterways and filter strips, then hit the print icon and add your statement of soil abatement in the text box and print. The latest imagery from the summer of 2017 is currently loaded on this website to aid you in identifying the areas that are cropped, in conservation, woodland, etc. The Auditor's staff will use this map to generate the conservation features necessary to complete the land breakdown calculations. Also note under "land" tab on the Auditor's website you can find a breakdown of current uses and acreages, but they do not include conservation. Do not over exaggerate the acres as they will be verified by the Auditor's staff. Please place only one practice per sheet as the area measurement tool will not allow for multiple measurements on the same page.

AG DISTRICT RENEWAL

Landowners can enroll in an agricultural district with their county auditor. The land must be at least 10 acres, or if less than 10 acres, have an average gross income of at least \$2,500 from agricultural production. While the requirements are the same as for the Current Agricultural Use Value program, a landowner must enroll in each program separately.

Agricultural district registration affords important benefits to landowners, including an affirmative defense in certain nuisance suits that might be filed against landowners for their agricultural activities. Other benefits concern assessments for water, sewer and electric and eminent domain review.

If land is in a municipality, the agricultural district enrollment must be approved by the city's legislative body and the benefits of the ag district program can be modified.



BUCKEYE LAKE FOR TOMORROW

Below are the closing remarks of Mervin G. Bartholow (1941-2017), our lakeside conservation partner, as we prepared for the next decade improving Buckeye Lake One Drop at a Time.

Two eyes, two ears and one mouth – as your parents emphasized, they should be used accordingly. Thus, became the framework for the policies of **Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow** as they set about the task of improving the water quality in Buckeye Lake and the surrounding watershed.

By watching and listening, we were better able to understand the special challenges of our farming neighbors in improving the overall health of their soil and the loss of nutrients that were occurring during heavy rainfalls.

A detailed inventory of the watershed, conducted by Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District, as part of a Nutrient Reduction Project developed through **Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow** for the Ohio EPA, helped to identify problem areas as well as the nutrient losses that were occurring. This information was not only valuable in mapping out the watershed, it also enabled farmers to pinpoint problem areas in their operations. We are unaware of any other inventory across the State of Ohio that has developed the level of information and data that is being utilized across the Buckeye Lake Watershed.

We have also learned that cover crops make possible the retention of valuable nutrients, especially during those early spring rains when valuable topsoil is lost and washed away from barren fields, while the field with a cover crop is retaining its original condition. Of course, there are always challenges and cover crops are no exception. However, as we experiment and learn more, there appear to be ways to overcome the challenges and make cover crops a win-win for everyone.

Variable rate technology is also making a significant impact across the watershed. More and more operations are realizing the value of mapping and taking samples from the various grids to determine the current level of nutrients in the soil and the need for additional applications, only applied where nutrients are needed. Initial costs can be high, but the return on that investment has proven to be significant over time.

By observing and listening to our farming neighbors, we have learned a great deal about the management of healthy soil and the impact that makes on the overall quality of the water across the watershed. By following our parent's advice, we have also come to learn that working with our neighbors is producing much better results than dictating changes that, in the final analysis, may or may not actually work.

Two eyes, two ears and one mouth – just might help us achieve our overall goal of Improving Buckeye Lake One Drop at a Time.—Merv Bartholow (June 18, 2017)

2018 LOCAL AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

If you are interested in applying for the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program for 2018, sponsored locally by the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners, we ask that you declare your interest by completing a simple form no later than **Friday, January 19, 2018**. We may not know the results of the applications for 6 months.

We will run the competition without the essay questions used in the first few years of the program. All other questions are generally the same and will be scored as they have been in the past. The one decision you need to make prior to application is how much money you require to have an agricultural easement purchased on your property.

To avoid any conflict, you must tell us in writing the lowest price per acre you are willing to accept to have the easement placed on the property. The program will never pay more than \$2,000 an acre with a cap of \$500,000 per applicant farm. Funding distribution capacity in Fairfield County is limited to \$469,850 for 2018. All applicant properties will be reviewed by the County Engineer for adequate road right-of-way and intersection alignment.

We encourage you to make a business decision as to the lowest price you can accept. Please contact Jonathan Ferbrache at (740) 415-3925 if you have interest in applying or questions about the program.



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CRP WATERWAY UPDATE

The SWCD office has been informed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) that engineering plans from Fairfield SWCD/NRCS are now required to sign up a grassed waterway or wetland in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This will require more preparation in advance. You may contact FSWCD any time to ask for a waterway engineering plan. Once you have a plan, contact FSA to inquire whether funding is available.

DID YOU NOTICE? We recently launched a new and improved website that is now mobile friendly!

www.fairfieldswcd.org

BRANDT HONORED



David Brandt was honored at this year's Farm Science Review with a bench for his 14 years of service as President of the Ohio No-Till Council. Pictured above are Dave & Kendra Brandt with their children Amy and Jay.

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