

FAIRFIELD FEATURES



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TWO MORE FARMS PROTECTED

Another 66 acres of prime farmland was permanently protected from non-agricultural development by the Board of Fairfield County Commissioners, Shady Maple Farms, Inc. and the Ohio Department of Agriculture-Clean Ohio Fund. The story of protecting this land began in 2009 with Edwin McLaughlin who was 91 at the time. It was selected as a back-up in 2013, but funding did not come through and Ed passed away in 2014. Ed's nieces and nephew continued to pursue protection despite living in Illinois, Arizona and California. It was selected for full funding in 2015, but before we could close one niece and the nephew passed away and those heirs chose to stop the process. Eventually, Shady Maple Farms Inc. acquired the farm and immediately applied to compete the farm once again. This is a story of estate planning and making sure your family understands your desires and plans. We celebrate the long-term success of all who made it happen, especially Shady Maple Farms and their commitment to the future of agriculture!

The Board of Fairfield County Commissioners also signed a deed of agricultural easement with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Grace Evangelical Church Colfax in Lancaster on their 100.53 acre farm east of Pleasantville. This marks an effort that began over a decade ago by the same group of neighbors mentioned above in the Little Rushcreek watershed that now protects around 1,672 acres of prime and locally unique farmland. This is a good reminder that it takes a long time to see these visions of the future come together. Without the Clean Ohio Fund to help make this happen for future generations of farmers, it might not be possible.

Unfortunately, we have been informed by the Ohio Department of Agriculture that there will not be funds available for the farmland preservation program in 2021.



**Happy
Holidays!**

APPLY NOW FOR EQIP

The application deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has been announced as **Friday, January 15, 2021**. Applications can be submitted all year long, but this is the deadline for this round of funding.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program which helps producers make conservation work for them. NRCS provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations.

Financial assistance is now available in a variety of agricultural categories such as cropland, pasture operations, and organic. Several special projects are also available which address water quality, forestry management, improving pollinator populations and wildlife habitat, pasture improvements and many more. Some practices include access roads/stream crossings, heavy use pads, livestock watering facilities, waterways, fencing, water and sediment control basins (wascobs), animal waste storage facilities, etc.

Eligible participants receive financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices, or activities like conservation planning, that address natural resource concerns on their land. Payments are made after items in the plan are implemented. Contracts can last up to ten years in duration.

Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm or ranch lands.

NRCS will help eligible producers develop an EQIP plan. EQIP applications are ranked based on a number of factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal. It is a voluntary, county competitive program. To apply contact Dave Libben, NRCS District Conservationist at 740-415-3921.

SWCD EMPLOYEE RECOGNIZED FOR 30 YEARS

Chad Lucht, Sr. Urban Specialist, was recognized recently for having 30 years of public service. He started his public service in 1990 with OSU and began working with us in 2001. Join us in thanking Chad for his service and for keeping things interesting around here!



SWCD ELECTION RESULTS

This year marked the 77th anniversary of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. Due to Covid 19, we were unable to hold our traditional Annual Meeting/Banquet. However, we did hold our election for Board of Supervisors. Gregg Pontius and David Ochs, both of Lancaster, were elected to serve a three-year term beginning January 1, 2021.

FAIRFIELD SWCD HAS A BLOG

Did you know that in addition to this newsletter, we release a weekly article on our online Fairfield Features Blog? Covering topics ranging from agriculture and wildlife to education and stormwater, blog posts are brief, entertaining, and illustrated with photos, videos & links to additional helpful resources. Learn more about cover crops in “Don’t Farm Naked” or where your stormwater ends up in “Only Rain Down the Drain.” Check out this week’s featured post on our website: <https://fairfieldswcd.org/fairfield-features-blog/>.

CONGRATULATIONS to our Fairfield County Fair Week Giveaway winners, and thanks to everyone that participated via Facebook.

Teresa Sullivan—2 swamp milkweed plants

Judy Kavander—bluebird box and ODNR field guides and CDs

Leslie Cooksey—Fairfield County Plat Book

Trish Preston—suet feeder and ODNR field guides and CDs

Issac Hill—wren/chickadee nesting box and ODNR field guides and CDs



CONSERVATION AT BUCKEYE LAKE

WHAT BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES CAN DO FOR YOUR FARM AND FOR YOUR WATER



Cover Crops provide ground cover over winter to protect soil, prevent nutrient runoff, and improve soil health. Examples include rye, oats, radish, wheat, sunflowers, and buckwheat. Some crops can even be grazed.

Best Management Practices

Nutrient Management Planning can give you information on when, where, and how much fertilizer to apply on your fields. By identifying nutrient needs you can reduce application without losing yields. Furthermore, precision application will reduce field runoff.



Filter Strips/Contour Strips are vegetated buffers that prevent soil and nutrient loss. Filter strips are grasses planted along stream corridors, and contour strips are crops planted on steep slopes.



Grassed Waterways are installed in areas where soil erosion is forming a gully in the drainage pattern. Width and depth of the waterway depends on watershed, slope, soils and land use. They are designed to be crossable with farm equipment.



Streambank Stabilization uses stones or vegetation to prevent soil loss from eroding streambanks. Because streams meander naturally, this sinuous movement can gradually dislodge soil, but stabilizing early will prevent erosion from expanding.



Wetlands are like shallow ponds, with water pooled at various depths, from 3' to mud flats. They are great for wildlife and for retaining nutrients. Sediment settles on wetland bottoms, and native vegetation absorbs pollutants.



Drainage Water Management for tile mains/systems is beneficial in that landowners can drain or back water up into the soil profile as needed. By slowing runoff, soil has time to absorb excess phosphorus. This practice is limited to flatter grounds.

The best management practices highlighted above represent only a handful of practices that can conserve nutrients and prevent soil erosion. If you are interested in applying any of these practices to your property, NRCS offers cost-share programs for landowners. **Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District to learn more: Fairfield County (740-653-8154), Licking County (740-670-5330), Perry County (740-743-1325).**

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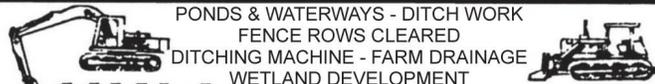
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ATTENTION EDUCATORS

As we all find ourselves adapting to new limits on public gatherings and school district restrictions for outside guest speakers, our education staff at the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District has been working to develop programs that can be delivered remotely and still provide the valuable information we have offered in the past. We have the capability to utilize many of the virtual communication methods such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and others, and we will work with you to design the presentation format that works best for your students or professional group.

Along with providing remote, live presentations, we may also have resources available that can be provided to supplement the virtual portion with a true hands-on activity. In order to best serve your needs, we encourage you to contact Tommy Springer, Education Specialist, at 740-415-3905 to discuss the specific requirements you may have for programming content, and we will work with you to work out the best solution.

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