

# FAIRFIELD FEATURES



December 2022  
Volume 24 Issue 3

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

## 79TH ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

This year marked the 79th anniversary of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The annual meeting was held on September 15, 2022, at the Fairfield County Ag Center. The evening started off with a Board of Supervisors election. Amber Hoisington was elected to serve a three-year term beginning January 1, 2023. Scott Shearer, OSU Department of Food, Ag & Bio Engineering Professor & Chair, gave a presentation on the future of ag.

The 2021 Cooperator of the Year Awards were presented to Gary Kohler and Robert Ross (Ross Farms). 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. Award recipients receive a sign to post on their farms.

The Conservation Partner of the Year Award honors partners who have demonstrated outstanding efforts in promoting conservation programs in Fairfield County. Tony Zerkle, Wildlife Officer with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, was chosen to receive the 2021 Conservation Partner of the Year Award. Congratulations to all of our award winners!



Robert Ross (Ross Farms) pictured with son Blake, was awarded a 2021 Cooperator of the Year Award



Gary Kohler was awarded a 2021 Cooperator of the Year Award



Tony Zerkle was awarded the 2021 Conservation Partner of the Year Award

# Happy Holidays!

## FARM PRESERVED BY DONATED EASEMENT

The Fairfield Land Preservation Association (FLPA) secured a donated conservation easement on 98 acres with the Crow-Stitzlein family of Liberty Township. The development restrictions placed and enforced in perpetuity allow for conservation of soil and water resources, wildlife and agricultural uses well into the future. The Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District holds a Memorandum of Understanding to assist the FLPA in bringing these donated easements to completion in support of the 2002/2018 Fairfield County Land Use Plans.



The FLPA continues to seek members to support their mission. You can learn more about the group by visiting [fairfieldlandpreservation.com](http://fairfieldlandpreservation.com). If you are seeking ways to support the FLPA and their mission, please contact the Fairfield County Foundation and consider donating directly to the Fairfield Land Preservation Fund or mail them directly at: Fairfield Land Preservation Association, PO Box 1033, Lancaster, OH 43130.



*Pictured left to right: FLPA Board Members Joe Steiger, Doug Cronin, Christy George and Bill Myers; John Stitzlein, Nancy Crow, Nathaniel Stitzlein and Jonathan Ferbrache, FSWCD Resource Specialist.*

## OBSERVING SYCAMORE CREEK

Earlier this summer local agencies, conservation organizations, educators and residents gathered to further a “Sycamore Creek Partnership” to improve public engagement and education on stream health of Sycamore Creek in Violet Township and the City of Pickerington. This informal group of teachers and curriculum coordinators at Pickerington Local School District, Coyote Run, Fairfield County Park District, OSU Extension Fairfield County, concerned citizens and our own Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District staff decided to move quickly and not wait to engage the community.

On September 26, Tommy Springer with the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District helped coordinate over 60 Pickerington Central and North AP environmental science students and teachers for instream observations of Sycamore Creek. Thanks to Coyote Run for welcoming these students to the world of conservation right in their backyard. Thanks to the educator team of Adam Salberg and Adam Philpott who lead the group to increase awareness of our human impact on our streams.

A little further upstream two residents also wanted to gain knowledge of their section of the stream on their land. “There’s nothing more fun and exciting than to learn about the tiny critters in our local stream” according to Cathy Jerbic who collaborated to inventory a stretch of Sycamore Creek on her property in northern Violet Township. Cookie O’Neal got in as well and feels that “...as citizens, we can contribute to this community effort to protect a precious natural resource--water.”

Please like and share the “The Sycamore Creek Report-Walnut Creek Watershed” on Facebook!



# BE SEPTIC SMART!

Joe Ebel, Fairfield County Health Commissioner

Nearly one-fifth of American households depend on a household sewage treatment system (HSTS) to treat their wastewater. Sometimes these systems are referred to as “Septic Systems”, but may include septic tanks, leaching tile fields, mound systems, an aerobic treatment unit (ATU) or “Aerator”, and other on-site treatment systems and components. Failure to maintain any of these sewage treatment systems can lead to backups, malfunctions and early failures that can result in costly repairs, pollute local streams, and spread disease.

## How do you know if you have a household sewage treatment system?

If you pay a monthly sewer bill to your city or county water and sewer district, then you are on a public sewer system, where your wastewater discharges through the sewer lines to a sewage treatment plant that processes the wastewater and assures that it meets all health and environmental safety requirements before it is discharged back into our streams and rivers.

If you are not paying a sewer bill, then you are probably on some type of household sewage treatment system. The most common HSTS types in Fairfield County include septic tanks with a leaching tile field or mound, or an aeration system that discharges to a shallow leaching tile field or mound, or for older aeration systems, may discharge directly to a stream, ditch, or tile.

## How do you know if your HSTS is working?

A foul odor isn’t always the first sign of a malfunctioning sewage system. Call a professional if you notice any of the following: wastewater backing up into household drains, bright green, spongy grass in the yard, even during dry weather, pooling water or muddy soil around your septic system or in your basement, or a strong odor around the septic tank and leach field.

For aeration systems (ATUs), most problems are due to the aerator motor failing. Aerators have a motor or pump that mixes the sewage in the tank with oxygen, to help the bacteria in the wastewater break down the sewage and digest the waste. If the motor fails, the system may continue to discharge untreated wastewater to the leaching tile field, causing a failure, or worse, discharge wastewater directly to area steams where children, pets, and others may come in contact with the sewage. That is why we recommend having your aerator under a service contract with a service professional who will check the operation of the system and do routine maintenance at least once a year. If you know that you have an aerator and you notice a foul odor, that the motor hasn’t been running, or if a warning light appears on the control panel, have the system serviced right away.

## Why should you maintain your sewage system?

Doing routine maintenance of your sewage treatment system is good for your wallet, good for the environment, and good for your health. Regular maintenance fees and pumping your tank every 3-5 years is a bargain compared to the cost of repairing or replacing a malfunctioning system, which can cost up to tens of thousands of dollars. The frequency of pumping required for your system depends on how many people live in your home and the size of the system.

Keeping ahead of failures protects your property value. An unusable sewage system or one in disrepair will lower your property value and will need to be disclosed to any potential buyer, not to mention pose a potentially costly legal liability.

Household wastewater is loaded with disease-causing bacteria and viruses, as well as high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. If a sewage system is well-maintained and working properly, it will remove most of these pollutants. Insufficiently treated sewage from sewage treatment systems can cause groundwater contamination, which can spread disease in humans and animals. Improperly treated sewage also poses the risk of contaminating nearby surface waters, significantly increasing the chance of children and pets contracting a variety of infectious diseases.

## How can you extend the life of your sewage treatment system?

**Don’t overload the commode.** Don’t flush diapers, wipes, or other items meant for a trashcan, down the toilet.

**Think at the sink.** Limit use of your garbage disposal and avoid pouring fats, grease, solids and harsh chemicals down the drain. Your sewage system contains a collection of living organisms that digest and treat household waste. Pouring toxins down your drain can kill these organisms and harm your sewage system. Whether you’re at the kitchen sink, bathtub, or utility sink: Avoid chemical drain openers for a clogged drain. Instead, use boiling water or a drain snake. Never pour cooking oil or grease down the drain! Never pour oil-based paints, solvents, or large volumes of toxic cleaners down the drain. Even latex paint waste should be minimized.

**Don’t strain your drain.** Use water efficiently and stagger use of appliances that use a lot of water, such as your washing machine or dishwasher. Repair leaking faucets and toilets to avoid flooding your system.

**Pump your tank.** Household septic tanks are typically pumped every three to five years. Aeration systems or systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components need to be inspected more often, generally at least once a year. A service contract is important for these systems because they have mechanical/moving parts.

**Shield your field.** Divert rain and surface water away and avoid parking vehicles and planting trees on your leach field or near your tanks. Keep It Clean. If you are on a well, test your drinking water regularly to ensure it remains clean and free of contamination.

For more information about sewage treatment system maintenance, please visit [www.epa.gov/septicmart](http://www.epa.gov/septicmart), contact the Fairfield County Health Department at (740) 652-2800, or visit [www.fairfieldhealth.org](http://www.fairfieldhealth.org). For water conservation tips, visit <https://www.epa.gov/watersense>.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN AND UPDATE TO THE 2018 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

Fairfield County has initiated a six month Economic Development Strategic Plan and Update to the 2018 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The effort is being Coordinated by the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Office.

As the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in Ohio with an 8.7% population increase from 2010 to 2020, continuing to monitor and respond to development factors that influence Fairfield County is critical to us all. Please contact the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission at (740) 652-4713 for upcoming meetings and presentations.

---

### OSU EXTENSION—PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR FARM

This workshop is designed to help farm families learn to successfully create a succession and estate plan that will help transfer farm ownership, management, and assets to the next generation. Join us in welcoming OSU Farm Management Field Specialist, David Marrison, and Attorney with OSU Agricultural & Resource Law Program, Robert Moore.

Workshop topics include:

- Developing Goals for Estate and Succession
- Planning for the Transition of Control
- Planning for the Unexpected
- Legal Tools and Strategies
- Developing Your Team
- Selecting an Attorney
- Communication and Conflict Management during Farm Transfer

When: Thursday, January 19, 2023, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Where: Fairfield County Agriculture Center, 831 College Ave, Lancaster, OH 43130

Cost: \$30 covers 2 family members and 1 set of course materials.

Lunch is included, courtesy of Farm Credit. Cash or check accepted the day of the event.

To register, visit [go.osu.edu/farmplan2023](http://go.osu.edu/farmplan2023) or call (740) 653-5419. Contact Carrie Brown, [brown.2766@osu.edu](mailto:brown.2766@osu.edu) or (740) 653-5419 with questions.

## LOCAL AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

If you are interested in applying for the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program for 2023, sponsored locally by the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners, we ask that you declare

your interest by completing a simple form available in our office no later than **Friday, January 13, 2023**. We may not know the results of the applications for six months.

The biggest 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 per applicant farm and maximums based on funding distribution capacity in Fairfield County is anticipated to be limited to \$187,198. All applicant properties will be reviewed by the County Engineer for adequate road right-of-way and adjacent 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.



### UPCOMING DATES

DEC 26	Office closed for Christmas Holiday (Observed)
JAN 2	Office closed for New Years Holiday (Observed)
JAN 12	SWCD Board Meeting 5 p.m.
JAN 16	Office closed for Martin Luther King Holiday
FEB 9	SWCD Board Meeting 5 p.m.
FEB 20	Office closed for Presidents' Day Holiday
MAR 9	SWCD Board Meeting 5 p.m.

# Hugus Fruit Farm



Old Rushville Road  
Rushville, OH 43150  
740-536-9590  
HugusFruitFarm.com

*Fresh from Our Orchard to Your Hands*

In Season: Peaches - Plums - Pears - Apples - Cider



## Agricultural Drainage

Tile Installation (*Trenching & Plowing*)  
Waterway Construction (*Grading/Dirt Blowing*)

## Seeding Services

CRP ♦ Commercial  
Residential ♦ Erosion Control

**RUFF**  
AGRI-SERVICES, LLC

Circleville, Ohio  
1-800-372-2438

www.rufffarms.com mruff@rufffarms.com



FARM AND CROP INSURANCE  
www.bickleinsurance.com | 740-536-7425

Michael Sweeney  
VP of Bickle Farm Solutions

Jenny Cox  
Communications Director

Alisha Hawkins  
Crop Account Manager



## MILLER DITCHING

5265 Richland Road, N.E.  
740-468-3587  
Cell 740-808-4860  
Pleasantville, Ohio 43148



It Pays to Plant Ruff's Seeds  
SEED CORN - GRASS SEED  
SOYBEANS - OATS - WHEAT

## RUFF'S SEED FARMS

Amanda, Ohio 43102 Phone 740-969-2600

## FALER FEED STORE, INC.

*Sweet Peet, Grass Seed and Fertilizer, Bird Seed, Lawn and Garden Supplies, Bulk Garden Seeds*

4360 Cedar Hill Road  
Lithopolis, Ohio 43136 See us on Facebook at Faler Feed 614-837-4494

We give

We help rural residents build,  
farms grow and businesses expand.

## FARMERS CREDIT.



Call (855) 838-9965 or  
go to e-farmcredit.com

7835 Lancaster Newark Rd.,  
P.O. Box 68, Baltimore, OH 43105



PONDS & WATERWAYS - DITCH WORK  
FENCE ROWS CLEARED  
DITCHING MACHINE - FARM DRAINAGE  
WETLAND DEVELOPMENT



## KULL EXCAVATING

LOGJAM REMOVAL 740-225-2501 TILE WORK  
GRAVEL HAULING LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED LIME DELIVERY



**Walnut Creek Seeds, LLC.**  
SIMPLE. SUSTAINABLE.

Carroll, OH 330-475-6352 www.WalnutCreekSeeds.com

Cover Crop Seeds for Soil Health and Profitability

Agriculture - Forages - Gardens - Custom Mixing - Seed Cleaning

## Millersport Agri Service

*The Hoover Family*

Agricultural Equipment • Grain Storage • Handling & Drying Systems  
10221 Lancaster-Newark Road • Millersport, OH 43046  
Phone/Fax 740-467-2424 www.millersportagriservice.com



## SEALS CONSTRUCTION INC.

"WE CRUSH IT...WE SELL IT"



- Trucking
- Recycled Aggregates

614-836-7200

- Topsoil
- Custom Crushing

www.SealsCoInc.com  
www.SealsCoInc.net

10283 Busey Rd. Canal Winchester, OH 43110 info@sealscoinc.com



GRADING PONDS WATERWAYS DITCH WORK FARM DRAINAGE

FREE ESTIMATES

2225 Old Logan Road  
Lancaster, Ohio 43130  
Cell: 740-503-4079

## C & C Farms and Excavating, Inc.

32091 Beechcamp Road ~ Logan, Ohio 43138  
740-385-8395 ~ ccfarms1@juno.com

SITE WORK - FARM DRAINAGE - WATERWAYS  
PONDS and SPECIALIZED MOWING



LAW OFFICE OF  
**CARRIE LOTT**  
LLC



2130 W. FAIR AVENUE, LANCASTER  
740.652.1701

Carrie Snoke Lott, Title Agent

## CEDAR HILL BLANKETS

Distributor of Erosion Control Blankets  
G-Pins - Installation Tools

Greg Waidelich 740-969-4295  
1915 Cedar Hill Road Amanda, OH 43102

## K&K Lime & Fertilizer Spreading & Hauling



Aaron Kull 740-225-2501  
Seth Kull 740-225-3298

## Beveridge Trailers & Trucks



4510 Westfall Road  
Lancaster, Ohio 43130  
740-969-2814  
email: beveridgetrailers@gmail.com

## Pappy's Feed Store

Livestock and domestic animal feed and supplies

Kalmbach, Tribute Feeds. LG Seed Dealer

701 N. Walnut St., Baltimore OH 740-400-4268

# AGRICULTURAL 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 districts must be renewed every 5 years, and many of Fairfield County's agricultural districts expire in early 2023.

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 agricultural district program can be modified. Contact Greg Forquer at the Fairfield County Auditor's Office at (740) 652-7036 for more information.

---

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

---

## DISTRICT SUPERVISORS

Linda Claypool  
Wendy LaRue  
David Ochs  
Gregg Pontius  
Doug Tenney

## DISTRICT PERSONNEL

Nikki Drake  
Jonathan Ferbrache  
Molly Gilleland  
Christina Holt  
Chad Lucht  
Tommy Springer  
Josh Troyer

## NRCS PERSONNEL

Jacob Eldridge  
Dave Libben

Please Don't Trash Me — Pass Me!  
*I'm recycled and recyclable!*



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

831 COLLEGE AVENUE, SUITE B, LANCASTER, OH 43130



FAIRFIELD SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Non-Profit Org.  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
Lancaster, Ohio  
Permit No. 235