

NEWS

& views

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Ohio Envirothon Celebrates Its 15th Anniversary!

Back in 1989 it was just a little affair involving three counties (Muskingum, Coshocton and Knox) and six teams (3-5 members each) of high school students. The students worked in school-based teams to answer questions about soil, forestry, wildlife and aquatic ecology at Muskingum Area Technical College's nature center. The East Knox High School FFA team won, and later that summer traveled to Massachusetts to compete against teams from that state and Pennsylvania in the fledgling "National Envirothon."

This year – Ohio Envirothon's 15th anniversary – more than 1,700 high schoolers and 236 teacher-advisors participated in the five Area Envirothons across the state. Since its inception thousands of high school students and their advisors have been involved in this natural resources and environmental competition. Envirothon alumni have gone on to work for SWCDs, ODNR Divisions of Forestry and Soil and Water Conservation, Ohio Department of Agriculture and OSU School of Natural Resources.

The 2003 Ohio Envirothon, featuring the top four teams from the five Area Envirothons, was hosted in Champaign County by Area 4 SWCDs at Urbana University June 8-10. Field testing was conducted on the farm of Champaign SWCD board member



Mike Phelps. This year's current issue was "Agricultural Land Conservation and Preservation." The Chief Logan FFA Gold team from Logan High School in Hocking County won the event for the third year in a row and will represent Ohio at the Canon Envirothon July 26-31. The Chardon High School "Red" team from Geauga County finished in second place.

You can check out the entire 2003 Ohio Envirothon at the Division's website – <http://www.ohiodnr.com/soilandwater/> - click on "Environmental Education" then click "Envirothon." ■

Logan FFA "Gold" team members discuss possible answers to a question at the Aquatic Ecology Eco-Station during the 2003 Ohio Envirothon, hosted on the farm of Champaign SWCD board member Mike Phelps

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Say “Hello” and “Thanks”

The old adage ‘think globally and act locally’ seems a good fit with the swirl of activities and changes confronting us these days. For instance, how often have we looked at the weather on the television to see patterns of rain developing far out west and then tried to schedule work that needs to be done in the next couple of days around our

homes and farms? Another example can be seen in the effect a drought on a distant continent has on commodity prices on the crop we just planted in our own fields.

The budget and legislation moving through the halls of Congress are much the same. Both are massive and carry truly global impacts – that start literally in your neighborhood. The township trustee, county commissioner or state legislator is the building block to our ultimate success at the local, regional and national level. Their knowledge of your District program, and support of your operating budget, are fundamental parts of that success. In addition to conveying information about our programs to officials at various levels, we need to express a heartfelt “thanks” for their past support. Our “thanks” can come in a variety of forms – from the spoken word to an invitation to a field tour of your programs efforts. Whatever format you choose, the conversations that begin with a ‘hello’ should always end with a ‘thank you’... for their time, attention and support.

Our daughter was married this past May. As I stood with her at my side at the top of the aisle preparing to escort her into the church, I looked over at her and asked if she was ready. She replied with a single word: ‘ready.’ A new relationship was created that day. In our work at the local district we must always be ready to create new relationships, say hello to new customers, ask for financial support to carry out our mission and – most importantly – be ready to say ‘thank you’ locally and nationally. ■

Tom Reininger, President
Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

OSWCC Meets in Lake County

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) met in Lake County July 7 and 8 to determine the state matching funds formula for state funds to SWCDs for fiscal year 2004-2005 and to tour sites involved in Lake SWCD’s Primary Headwater Stream Initiative. The seven-member OSWCC consists of four members named by the governor, and representatives from the Ohio Department of Agriculture, The Ohio State University’s College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences, and the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources serves as an ex-officio member, and the chief of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation as executive secretary. ■



OSWCC members (left to right) Kevin Elder (representing ODA), Tom Price, Dave Gilmore, Gary Mullins, Susan Reeves, Tom Reininger, Randy Mott, and executive secretary David Hanselmann met July 7&8 in Lake County.

CONSERVATION CALENDAR

August 3-5

Summer Supervisors School – Toledo

August 12-13-14

Education Workshop – Deer Creek State Park

September 16-17-18

Farm Science Review – London

October 7-8-9

NASCA North Central Meeting – Deer Creek State Park

Focus on Education

By Jeanne Russell, Nonpoint Source Education Coordinator

What In The World???

“The world goes up and the world goes down, And the sunshine follows the rain...”

Students in Henry County will have a chance to prove these words of English author Charles Kingsley as they take part in the international GLOBE Program. GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) is a worldwide, hands-on, primary and secondary school-based education program.

As part of this program, students take scientifically valid measurements in the fields of atmosphere and climate, soils, water, land cover, and biology. They learn to use GPS units, create maps and graphs, and report their data through the Internet. This gives them the opportunity to collaborate with scientists and other GLOBE students around the country and around the world.

The value of the GLOBE program can be seen in many arenas. GLOBE trains teachers to help students improve their achievement in science and their skill in the use of computers and network technology. It increases student awareness of their environment from a scientific viewpoint, and improves their understanding because it involves them in performing real science - taking measurements, analyzing data, and participating in research.

So how did the students in Henry County become GLOBE students? It happened through the initiative of Jeannie Detmer, Education Specialist with the Henry Soil and Water Conservation District. She worked with the school administrators in her county to get their approval before setting up a training event for her local teachers. Jodi Haney, a professor at Bowling Green State University and national GLOBE trainer, conducted the educator workshop. Participating teachers went back to their schools and conducted training for the rest of their staff. And Jeannie applied for and received a \$20,000+ grant from the Martha Holden-Jennings Foundation to purchase GLOBE equipment for sixteen Henry County



schools and the SWCD office.

The next time you ask a Henry County student, “What in the world did you do today,” you may be surprised at their answer. For more information on the GLOBE program, check out their website at www.globe.gov. ■

OFSWCD Auxiliary Awards Scholarships

The Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Auxiliary annually awards \$500 scholarships to college-age children or grandchildren of past or present SWCD supervisors. The Auxiliary awarded three scholarships this year.

The 2003 recipients were Michelle and Carla Reeves, and Holly Carr. All are the children or grandchildren of present or past Ohio SWCD board members.

Michelle will be a Senior at Wilmington College, majoring in Business Management.

Carla will also be a Senior at Wilmington College, majoring in Middle School Education. Both are daughters of Brown SWCD supervisor and OSWCC member Susan Reeves.

Holly, whose father served on the Highland SWCD board for more than 10 years, will be a Senior at The Ohio State University, majoring in Agriculture and Construction Systems. ■

Meet Your OFSWCD Executive Board

At the delegate session during the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts annual meeting in January, representatives from Ohio's 88 SWCDs voted to create an OFSWCD Executive Board, consisting of the officers and Area chairpersons.

The Area chairs will also head up the OFSWCD's five standing committees. In this edition we're profiling the chairs of the Federations Natural Resource and Environmental Policy Committee, Urban Committee, and Working Lands Committee. In the next edition we'll meet the chairs of the Education Committee and District Operations Committee.



Kent Stuckey **Area 1**

Kent was born a Hoosier and grew up on the family farm – a grain and you-pick fruit and vegetable operation that he eventually took over. Kent says his experiences as a child, “were quite extensive as I was part of the labor force from the beginning. As I got older I realized that I like the grain

aspect of things the most and that is where my energies were concentrated.”

While in high school, Kent started doing short-term mission work trips and has traveled within three continents and the Caribbean, experiencing many things. In 1991 he met his future wife Laura, who was on a different trip, although they happened to be staying at the same guest-house. A year and a half later they were married. An opportunity to join Laura's family dairy farm brought them to Ohio in 1994. Their farm currently consists of 900 acres and 320 milk cows with about 300 replacement heifers.

In 1997 Kent was elected to the Crawford SWCD Board of Supervisors. He is currently in his second year as an Area 1 Director. Kent also serves as Chair of the OFSWCD Natural Resource and Environmental Policy Committee.



Joe Glassmeyer **Area 4**

Prior to moving to the farm where he and wife Rosalie have lived since 1974, Joe, a graduate of Xavier University, managed apartment buildings. Today the family farm encompasses 510 acres of corn, soybeans, wheat, tobacco, hay, and pasture for the polled

Hereford cattle and Shetland ponies. Reduced tillage and minimum tillage predominate on the cropland acres. Joe is also a full-time bus driver for the Felicity-Franklin School District.

The Glassmeyers have three grown children. Joe III is a financial investment advisor and helps with field work on the farm. Susan has a PhD in environmental chemistry, and Sarah is a lawyer. Joe says, “I rely on their expertise and advice on a daily basis!”

Joe became a board member with the Clermont SWCD in 1986 and has held all positions on the district board. An Area 4 Director since 2000, Joe is currently serving as Area chairman. He is also chair of the Federation's Urban Committee.



Lawrence Burdell **Area 5**

Lawrence works the farm near Bidwell in Gallia County that was started by his grandfather in 1915 – and has lived there all his life. He and his wife Judy have 120 Hereford cows; they feed out all of the calves in their feedlot. The Burdells raise all of their own feed – hay for

haylage, corn for grain and silage. Conservation practices installed on the farm include spring developments, grassed waterways, woodlot improvements and a winter livestock feeding facility.

Lawrence taught high school biology and zoology at Jackson High School between 1968 and 1978. Since the 1980s he has been a member of the Solid Waste Management District Board.

Lawrence has been a Gallia SWCD board member since 1984 and an Area 5 Director for four years. He has been a member of the OFSWCD Education and Communications Committee for many years (and annually reviews nominations for Conservation Education District-of-the-Year and Teacher-of-the-Year) and also chairs the Federation's Working Lands Committee. ■

Consider the Soil First Please!

By Tim Gerber, Administrator, Soil Inventory and Evaluation Section

“Consider the soil first” is a slogan that describes a basic principle for the American conservation movement of the 20th century. Most petitions submitted after 1947 to the Ohio Soil Conservation Committee for the organization of Soil Conservation Districts included a hand-colored “Generalized Soil Type Association Map,” because committee members considered information from even the most primitive of soil resource inventories in their decisions. Furthermore, a key component of each farmer’s blue Conservation Plan folder was a detailed soil map, color-coded to indicate the land capability class of each soil type on the farm.

Some people in the Ohio Conservation Partnership still claim at special events that information in soil surveys is the “backbone” of soil and water conservation work. Personally, I’m not so sure. I certainly would like to think that the lines and symbols I marked on aerial photos in 1970 are still considered in conservation planning, but I haven’t asked anyone lately. So, I am inviting you to accept a challenge.

How to take the “CTSF Challenge”

1. Take a copy of your county’s soil survey book (or one for a county in your area or watershed), and identify two of the most contrasting soils in the county. Most counties in Ohio have at least a few soil map units with well drained soils and others with poorly drained soils. Likewise, most counties have at least a few soil map units with sandy or relatively coarse textures and others with clayey or relatively fine textures.
2. Make a list of the construction and management practices you most

commonly design or recommend.

3. Ask yourself the following two questions:
 - Would I expect those construction or management practices to work equally well on the two contrasting soils I selected in the first step?
 - Do the designs or recommendations I commonly offer vary for the two contrasting soils?

If you answered “no” to both questions, then soils information already available in your county apparently is not the backbone of soil and water conservation for you. And if that’s the case, then members of the Soil Inventory & Evaluation Section need your help in identifying how we can make that information more useful to you. Are new interpretation tables needed? Would a few hours or days of training in the use of soils information make a difference?

Our soil scientists expect to complete

commitments to Clinton, Columbiana, Preble, and Wood SWCDs for soil survey update projects over the next few years, and official digital soils information is scheduled to become available for at least most counties in the state by 2006. Now, we’re starting to wonder if the information we’re producing is still as relevant to SWCDs as it could be. And, if not, why not?

To answer these questions, Neil Martin, leader of the regional soil survey project office in Marietta, will devote a few weeks in the next year to learning how soils information is currently being used by soil and water professionals with a variety of roles in the partnership. Neil’s findings could suggest that our section change its direction at least temporarily in order to accomplish its long-standing mission, “to improve the usefulness and maintain the relevancy of soils information.” ■



Clues such as soil color can indicate whether homes constructed during dry summer months will have wet basements during wet winters. Considering the soil first can help avoid costly and long-lasting problems.

NRCS Presents \$2.5 Million to Great Lakes Commission

Lake Erie water quality will receive a boost in federal conservation funds for erosion and sediment control and protective land use practices in Ohio and throughout the Great Lakes region, thanks to \$2.5 million from the NRCS. The funds will strengthen the Great Lakes Commission's Great Lakes Basin Program (GLBP) for soil erosion and sediment control.

The GLBP has supported 34 erosion and sediment control projects totaling \$966,195 in Ohio since 1991 to address soil erosion and sediment control projects.

Current GLB projects in Ohio include:

- Restoring Portage River Oxbow and Floodplain Connections: \$100,000
Wood Soil and Water Conservation District
- Ottawa River Watershed Sediment Control Demonstration Project: \$100,000
Ottawa River Coalition
- Primary Headwater Stream Initiative: \$29,803
Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Reducing Soil and Nutrient Loss By Cutting Nitrogen Rates: \$29,500
Conservation Action Project
- Streamside Vegetation for Education: \$30,000
Ohio Lake Management Society

In presenting a check for \$2.5 million to Great Lakes Commission President Michael Donahue and GLC Chairman Sam Speck, State Conservationist Kevin Brown said, "Ohio's technical assistance and demonstration projects in the Great Lakes region have focused on agricultural, streambank, and urban erosion. NRCS, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and others have partnered with the GLC to prevent the loss of topsoil on about 2,300 acres which prevents a great deal of phosphorus and nitrogen from polluting surface waters every year." ■



NRCS State Conservationist Kevin Brown (right) presents a check for \$2.5 million to Great Lakes Commission President and CEO Michael Donahue (left) and ODNR Director Sam Speck, who also serves as Great Lakes Commission Chairman, during a ceremony at ODNR headquarters in Columbus on July 11.



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