



Fall 2011

Conservation CloseUp



Hancock Soil & Water Conservation District

Welcome, Dan!



Dan Ellerbrock has joined the Hancock SWCD staff as a District Technician/Water Quality Coordinator. Dan will be working part-time starting October 3, 2011.

Dan has previously worked at Putnam SWCD and will continue to work part-time in the Allen SWCD office. Dan has primarily worked on group drainage projects with emphasis on projects completed using the Conservation Works of Improvement program or better known as the Senate Bill 160 process. Dan will be joining Hancock SWCD's two current technicians, Gary Tuttle and Brandon Ewing in assisting Hancock County landowners with drainage needs.

Supervisors and staff welcome Dan Ellerbrock to Hancock County and invite you to stop in and introduce yourself to our new technician!

Supervisors Elected

David Reese and Ronald Cornwell were re-elected to the Hancock SWCD Board of Supervisors at the 65th Annual Meeting, August 2, 2011.

David and Ronald will be sworn into office in January and will serve 3-year terms of office. David and Ronald will join current supervisors; Richard Gassman, Mark Shick and Linda Tuttle on the board.

CREP Buffer Award

The 2011 CREP Buffer Award was presented during the 65th Annual Meeting to Jason Durliat.

Mr. Durliat is an active participant in the CREP program with 16.2 acres in several projects. He has installed a contiguous Riparian Buffer with approximately 4,000 trees and a firebreak planted around the trees. He has installed a Wetland of 8.3 acres overall size with 1.5 acres of wetland area. The wetland also includes one water control structure to allow manipulation of the wetland area. There are 6.8 acres of Warm Season Grasses and Forbs planted around the wetland

Outstanding Cooperator

The Outstanding Cooperator award was presented during the 65th Annual Meeting to Rinehart Riverhill Farms.

The Rinehart Riverhill Farms have installed many conservation practices on their farms including: 9 individual Filter strips with 19.5 acres of cool season grass filter strips planted; 3.8 acres of cool season grasses maintained as a wetland buffer; 8 individual waterways for 3.8 acres in overall size; Wetland area with a total size of 16.8 acres; 10 acres of warm season grass buffer planted around the wetland; 6.8 acres of pooled water in the wetland; one rip-rap chute installed in the emergency spillway; 2,225 feet of subsurface drainage installed to route tile around the wetland; one water control structure installed; a total of 285.5 acres of cropland has a conservation plan developed to ensure that the land is managed appropriately including utilizing both conservation crop rotations and reduced tillage practices. This award and plaque are sponsored by Sparks Commercial Tire, Inc. We appreciate Terry Sparks interest and encouragement of sound conservation practices.

Tips for Maintaining Your Grass Waterways

Grass waterways are an important part of a farm's soil conservation plan, but producers and landowners need to work at maintaining them or they cannot fulfill their function.

Grass waterways are permanent strips of grass seeded in areas of cropland where water concentrates and flows off a field.

The purpose of the waterway is to carry runoff water from a field. The grass prevents the water from forming a gully and traps some sediment. The vegetation absorbs some of the chemicals and nutrients in the runoff water and provides habitat for small animals and birds.

Effective maintenance of grass waterways may include:

- * Lift equipment out of the ground and shut off spray equipment when crossing the waterway. Be careful not to till into the edges of the waterway.

- * Avoid end rows planted parallel along the waterway. They may allow gullies to form on the edge.

- * If bare spots appear, reseed with sod-forming grasses.

- * Do not use the waterway as a roadway. Tracks can turn into gullies in single, intense rain events.

- * If gullies form, fill, reshape, and reseed. Contact your local USDA NRCS office for recommendations on grass species to plant.

- * Mow periodically, but don't mow between April 20 and July 15 when birds are nesting. It's important to mow grass because it encourages the formation of dense sod. Also, shorter, thick grass is more effective at trapping sediment than tall grass, which will lay over in an intense rain event.

INTRODUCING WEST CENTRAL OHIO LAND CONSERVANCY



West Central Ohio Land Conservancy (WCOLC) is a non-profit, volunteer supported organization working with landowners interested in protecting their land including farmland, forests, historic sites, riparian corridors and open space. The primary tool used in this process is the conservation easement. A conservation easement is designed to exclude certain activities on private land, such as commercial development or residential subdivisions. Its primary purpose is to conserve natural or man-made resources on the land.

The easement is a legally binding covenant that is publicly recorded with the property deed. An easement does not grant ownership nor does it absolve the property owner from traditional owner responsibilities, i.e. property tax, upkeep, maintenance, or improvements. There are programs available through governmental agencies that may provide direct payment to the landowner for placing the easement on their property and offer potential tax benefits.

WCOLC has been working with landowners since 2006 in Allen, Auglaize, Hancock, Hardin, Mercer, Putnam and Van Wert Counties to protect property. In this process, we work with local Soil and Water offices, NRCS personnel and other government agencies. We recently completed application to the state's AEPP for landowners in Mercer County who will receive a direct payment for placing an agricultural easement on their 76 acre farm. To learn more

about the land protection process and the programs available to landowners, please visit our web site www.wcolc.org or call 567-204-9126.

You are invited to attend our dinner and program on November 17th to be held at the Lost Creek Country Club in Lima, Ohio. Our featured speaker will be Kenneth Brunswick who will provide an entertaining presentation on the Loblolly Marsh Wetland Preserve located in Indiana. Check our website in the coming weeks for complete details.

3rd Grade Environmental Adventure Day

We anticipate clear skies and bright sunshine to greet the students and teachers attending the 3rd Grade Environmental Adventure Day at Van Buren State Park on October 13, 2011.

Park Naturalist, Natalie Miller, spearheaded this great educational event with cooperation from Hancock SWCD and Friends of the Van Buren State Park.

There were 18 stations for students to attend with topics ranging from; Rocks Rock, Fantastic Forestry, Hooked Beaks & Sharp Talons, Ohio Bats, What's Your Watershed Address, Hooked Beaks, Soil Chef, Incredible Edible Insects, Wonderful Weather in Our World, Mammals of Ohio, Seed Dispersal and more.

Thank you to all the great presenters and volunteers that are participating in this terrific event!



Why Plant a Windbreak?

The purpose of the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak program is to establish windbreaks on or adjacent to crop fields. Field windbreaks reduce wind erosion, protect crops and provide for wildlife habitat. The goal of the program is to encourage large systems which treat entire farms.

The program is not intended for farmstead, pasture, or home site plantings and orders will not be accepted solely for these purposes.

Incidental plantings adjacent to buildings may be accepted if they meet all of the following criteria: 1) the planting is bordered on one side by a crop field and each row adjacent to the building area is a continuation of field windbreak row that is planted at the same time. 2) The planting is part of a larger field windbreak system and the area adjacent to the buildings constitutes no more than ten percent (10%) of the total row feet planted 3) The total order constitutes a minimum of 3,500 row feet. 4) The section can be efficiently planted by the crew as part of the total job.

Wildlife Shrub Plantings - (CRP & CREP)

As a result of the increased interest for multiple row shrub plantings through the CRP& CREP, windbreaks having only wildlife shrubs as the species being planted are eligible to be planted through the

Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program. These windbreaks will be considered as hedgerow plantings. The following guidelines will be used for hedgerow plantings through the Northwest Program: 1) the windbreaks must be through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

2) The Division of Forestry agrees to plant the seedlings, apply a herbicide in the Spring, and return in the Fall to do a survival count and a second application of herbicide. There would not be a replant guarantee, but replacement seedlings would be offered to the landowners to plant themselves. 3) Field windbreak plantings in designated counties will have a priority over hedgerow plantings. The preferred method for hedgerow plantings is through district tree planters or private tree planting vendors. Hedgerow plantings may be planted through the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program to the extent that time allows.

Applications must be received by November 30, 2011. Contact Gary Tuttle at 419-422-6569 or visit

www.dnr.state.oh.us/forestry

for more information.



Windbreak being planted

Soil Judging Results

The Hancock County FFA Soil Judging competition was held in September during the Hardin Northern Invitational.

The Rural Team Results:

- 1) McComb-Rural 2
- 2) Liberty Benton-Rural 1
- 3) McComb-Rural 1
- 4) Arcadia-Rural 1
- 5) Arlington-Rural 2
- 6) Arlington-Rural 1
- 7) Cory-Rawson-Rural 1
- 8) Cory-Rawson-Rural 2
- 9) Liberty Benton-Rural 2

The Rural Individual Results:

- 1) Max Rader-McComb
- 2) Cassie Williams-LB
- 3) Mike Jones-McComb
- 4) Dakota Heistand-McComb
- 5) Nick Price-Arlington

The Urban Team results:

- 1) Liberty Benton-Urban 1
- 2) McComb-Urban 1
- 3) Arcadia-Urban 1
- 4) Cory-Rawson-Urban 1
- 5) Liberty Benton-Urban 2
- 6) McComb-Urban 2
- 7) Arlington-Urban 1

The Urban Individual results:

- 1) Cortlan Sheeks-McComb
- 2) Anthony Jones-LB
- 3) Steven Parmelee-LB
- 4) Evan Riggs-Arcadia
- 5) Bruce Cook-LB

Total Team Results for the Rotating Trophy results were:

- 1) Liberty Benton—3352
- 2) McComb—3247
- 3) Arcadia—3138.5
- 4) Cory-Rawson—2949.5
- 5) Arlington—2609.75

Congratulations to the Liberty-Benton FFA teams which brought home the Rotating Trophy for the 17th time in the past 20 years! The trophy is presented to the county school which has the highest combined rural and urban team scores.



Remember to visit our
Webpage at:
<http://www.hancockswcd.com>

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Jean Derr, DPA
Dominic Goshe, WLEB Conservationist
Brandon Ewing, District Technician
Dan Ellerbrock, District Technician

NRCS Staff

Matt Heitkamp, District Conservationist

All services of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) and Hancock SWCD are available to persons regardless of Race, Sex, Color, National Origin, Religion, Marital Status, Age, or Handicap.



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