

Conservation News

Newsletter of
the Defiance
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



In Cooperation with the Defiance County Commissioners

Spring 2011

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2010 Ditch
Maintenance
Annual Report
Included

15th Annual Black Swamp Educators

The three day Black Swamp Educator's Workshop will be conducted on June 21 - 23, 2011 at the 577 Foundation in Perrysburg, Ohio. The workshop is designed for formal and non-formal educators looking for ways to "step-up" their programs and make education fun and interesting at the same time. This year's theme is "Homegrown - From Swamp to Sustainability" and will feature walking tours of the historic 577 Foundation, Bio-retention / rain garden, Ag incubator and Toledo Zoo Solar Sidewalk, just to name a few. Hands on sessions include: Baskets and Soaps, Pollinators, Wind and Water Technology and SWEETER - Waste Water.

The Black Swamp Educator's Team is made up of Soil and Water Conservation District Employees from Defiance, Wood, Ottawa, Williams, Fulton and Lucas County. Teachers are offered continuing education hours and / or college credit. To receive information on the 2011 workshop, please call Bill Grimes at 419-782-8751 or email bgrimes@defiance-county.com.

Comedian to Perform at 62nd Annual Banquet

Mark your calendars for an opportunity to be involved in your local SWCD - by electing future District leadership, reviewing goals and accomplishments of the District, all while enjoying an evening of dining and entertainment. Don't miss the comedy of John Rathbone - his comedy is sure to be a real crowd pleaser!

The Annual Meeting will be held at Hicksville Village School on Saturday, September 10th, with elections beginning at 5:00 p.m. Voting will conclude and dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. To purchase tickets, submit the form below, stop by the office or give us a call at (419) 782-8751.



John Rathbone to perform at the 62nd Annual Banquet

Get Your Tickets Now!

Name _____

Address _____

Number of Tickets _____ x \$12.50 = _____

Please make checks payable to:
Defiance SWCD

Amount Enclosed _____

Please return by
September 2, 2011



Ag Appreciation and Farmer's Share Breakfast

On March 15th, the Defiance SWCD & OSU Extension held our Annual Ag Appreciation and Farmer's Share Breakfast in celebration of National Ag Week. Approximately 150 people were in attendance at the K of C Hall in Defiance. For this event, attendees were asked to pay for their share of the meal which cost approximately \$2.00 of an \$8.00 breakfast. Bruce Clevenger of OSU Extension explained the details and ideas behind a Farmer's Share Breakfast and conducted a few survey questions about agriculture. Dale Minyo, the most widely recognized farm broadcaster in Ohio, was the keynote speaker for this year's event. We would like to thank all exhibitors and sponsors who took part in the Ag Appreciation and Farmer's Share Breakfast.

Exhibitors:

- Archbold Equipment Company
- Farm Credit Services
- The State Bank & Trust Company
- Defiance Clinic & Mercy Hospital of Defiance
- First Federal Bank
- Poet Biorefining Leipsic

Sponsors:

- American Agricultural Assets
- Hicksville Grain Company
- The Henry County Bank
- The Hicksville Bank
- Custom Agri Systems, LLC
- Spatial Ag Systems, LLC
- Arps Dairy, Inc
- Midwest Community Federal Credit Union
- Hall Crop Insurance Services, LLC
- Chuck Spallinger, Ag Consultant
- The Farmers Elevator Grain & Supply Ass'n.
- Shininger Surface Drainage
- McCalla Excavating
- Seed Consultants
- Williamson Insurance Agency



District Electronic Resources

Be sure to stay up to date with all the Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District events and information. With a click of a mouse our electronic resources provide office hours, contact info, order forms, online newsletters, rental equipment and numerous educational resources. All this information can be found in one location at:

<http://www.defiance-county.com/swcd/index.html>

Also, become a friend or fan of the Defiance SWCD on Facebook. Stay up to date with the District through pictures, events and updates. Not on Facebook? Join, and then, head on over to the link below for all of the latest news and photos.



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Defiance-OH/Defiance-Soil-and-Water-Conservation-District>

Don't forget that the *Conservation News* newsletter can also be mailed directly to your e-mail inbox in lieu of receiving a paper copy. Just send an email to jasonroehrig@defiance-county.com requesting to be added to the electronic mailing list.

SWCD Office Hours

Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The SWCD Board of Supervisors holds its regular monthly meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month and is open to the public. Please call the office for starting time.

The Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibit discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. The USDA and Defiance SWCD are equal opportunity providers and employers.



New Upper Maumee Watershed Coordinator

Just as rivers begin as small headwater streams, we here at Defiance Soil & Water Conservation District are in the beginning stages of developing a comprehensive management plan for the Upper Maumee Watershed. The Defiance Soil & Water Conservation District was recently awarded a four-year ODNR grant that allowed this program to become fully established. What this grant will allow is the organizing of a watershed plan, development of a watershed action plan, conducting educational outreach and implementing protection and restoration activities within the Upper Maumee River Watershed. Defiance SWCD is very excited about this opportunity and it will be a huge asset to our goal of protecting and improving the Upper Maumee Watershed.



That is where I come in. Let me introduce myself. My name is Nicole Grindley, and I am the new Upper Maumee Watershed Coordinator. I was born and raised in Alliance, Ohio which is located in Northeast Ohio. I then went off to college where I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio. After college, I made Defiance my home, and where I still reside today.

As Watershed Coordinator, I will be responsible for orchestrating watershed planning and activities for the Upper Maumee Watershed Partnership (UMWP), which was started in December of 2009. The group was spearheaded by the Defiance SWCD after receiving a grant from the Maumee Valley RC&D / NRCS for the formation of a community based watershed group. The UMWP has continued to host steering committee meetings to further guide the planning and direction of the group. Support from Indiana Department of Environmental Management, The Ohio State University Extension, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, local municipalities, and businesses all have continued to provide guidance. Stakeholders who regularly attend the meetings represent agriculture, business, construction, conservation, government, education and residents. The group continues to host diverse interests from agriculture to urban issues. The partnership has chosen two permanent locations for meetings, one in Woodburn, IN and one in Antwerp, OH. The group continues to have regular meetings alternating between sites each month.

In January 2010, the Partnership enacted its bylaws and finalized its name as the Upper Maumee Watershed Partnership. The vision and mission statement were approved and are as follows:

Vision Statement: *To promote conservation, restoration and appreciation of the natural resources of the Upper Maumee River Watershed.*

Mission Statement:

To protect and restore the Upper Maumee River Watershed through public education and participation via planning and implementation of best management practices with the goal of improving local and regional water quality, increasing habitat quality, promoting sustainable land use practices and providing ecological and recreational opportunities.



These statements encompass the purpose of the group and provide direction for the future. The website (www.uppermaumeewatershed.com) continues to provide the most up-to-date meeting locations and times and information about the partnership and the watershed.

“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

- Aldo Leopold





Rural Drainage

As one travels across Defiance County, it becomes quite obvious how important drainage is, not only for farm ground but for homes and businesses as well. With our nearly-level topography and heavy clay soils, flooding and standing water is a constant problem. To help alleviate these flooding and drainage problems, it is a must to have good open drainage ditches.

Early settlers to this area worked diligently to construct many of the open ditches that are located throughout our county in order to drain the land making it useable for raising crops and building homes. Since the original construction by these early settlers, some of these open ditches have been reconstructed and/or maintained by the landowners to provide adequate drainage, but many have not. Instead they have been left to grow in trees and brush which aid in the build-up of sediment within these ditches.

People often ask why landowners do not keep the trees and brush cut out of the ditches on their properties. The Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District believes it is due to several factors. First of all, more and more farmers have jobs off of the farm and do not have the time to go cut trees and brush out of the ditches. Also a lot more farms are owned by absentee landowners who do not live on the farms, and they just do not take the time to keep the trees and brush cleaned out of their ditches. We feel another factor is that in the past, there was more need for firewood, as most homes were heated by wood or coal. Cutting trees out of ditches years ago had a two-fold purpose; one was to keep the ditch clean and the other was for firewood for their homes. A final reason often heard from landowners as to why they do not cut trees and brush out of their ditches is that other peoples' water drains into the ditches, and they feel it is not just their responsibility to keep the ditches clean.

Whatever the reason, the bottom-line is that open ditches are usually not maintained by the individual landowners in the way that they were in the past. Therefore, more and more landowners are turning to our office for assistance to get these open ditches reconstructed.

Good drainage is important to nearly all land in Defiance County. When it rains or when the snow melts, this water runs off somewhere, and when it enters an open ditch that is full of trees and brush, it will more than likely flood out on someone's property. Therefore, your runoff water may be part of the flooding problem on someone else's property. When landowners do not have a ditch on their property and are not being flooded, it is difficult for them to understand why they should have to help pay for an open ditch reconstruction on someone else's property. Many landowners feel that if their property is draining fine, they do not have any responsibility for their runoff water. The truth is that the landowner's responsibility is more than just their need for drainage on their property. It includes seeing that their runoff water does not cause flooding or damage on downstream property with an open ditch which their water drains into.

As important as good drainage is in Defiance County, unfortunately, getting an open ditch cleaned can cause hard feelings between landowners. Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District has worked with landowners on open ditch projects, and the cause of these hard feelings still has not totally been figured out. All landowners on a project have a certain responsibility and, therefore, should not be upset with their neighbor who wants a ditch cleaned to alleviate flood problems.

If we want to keep farmland, homes and businesses from being damaged by flooding or standing water, open ditches that have not been cleaned or maintained over the years will someday soon need cleaned. We see this in our office by the number of requests to have ditches cleaned that we receive from landowners. So, hopefully if you find yourself involved in one of these ditch projects that your runoff water drains into, you will understand your responsibility to help pay for the open ditch reconstruction project.

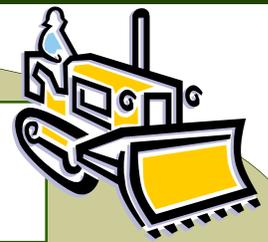
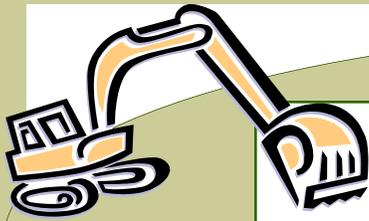
Congratulations!



The winter puzzle contest prize was awarded to Barbara Dimock of Defiance. Barbara received a Farmer's Almanac Calendar, two conservation puzzles and a wildlife bag for completing and sending in the "Winter" word puzzle from the Winter Edition of 'Conservation News'. All correct puzzle responses were entered and a random winner was drawn. This puzzle contest had the most puzzle entries that have ever been completed for our quarterly drawing. We thank everyone for participating and wish you luck in our future give way contests!



Barbara Dimock receiving her puzzle contest prizes.



2010

Ditch Maintenance Annual Report

Administered by Defiance Soil & Water Conservation
District in cooperation with the Defiance County
Commissioners & Defiance County Engineer

Ditch Maintenance Report

In December of 1989, the Defiance County Commissioners and the Defiance County Engineer entered into an agreement with the Board of Supervisors to manage and operate the Defiance County Ditch Maintenance Program as required by the O.R.C. Since that time there have been 68 improvements added to the program. Currently, we have 196 improvements under maintenance, totaling 350 miles. The Soil and Water office also has 16 petitions for new Conservation Works of Improvement projects.

The Defiance County Ditch Maintenance Department treats drainage improvements as vital infrastructure to Northwest Ohio. Agricultural producers and rural landowners in Northwest Ohio have been concerned with the need to dispose of excess water. For agricultural



Work Completed in 2010

- 5.5 miles bottom cleaned
- 158 miles brush and cattail control
- 2,290 ton of rock for bank protection and erosion control
- 1,500 pounds grass seed and fertilizer
- 43 improvements repaired
- 1,504 feet tile/pipe replaced
- 14.5 miles of leaning tree/log jam removal

producers, excess water means delays in plantings, replanting, soil compaction, reduced yields and delay in harvesting. For homeowners in the urban area, excess water can mean damage due to flooding of dwellings and property.

The cost of new construction or the reconstruction of drainage improvements greatly exceeds the cost of maintaining the improvement once construction is completed. That is why, once a project is constructed, the County Commissioners are required by law to place the improvement under the Defiance County Ditch Maintenance program.



DITCH MAINTENANCE ANNUAL REPORT cont.

2010 Revenue

Local	\$335,306.79
Other Counties' Taxes	\$45,997.47
Equipment Maintenance/Other	\$8,276.72
Total Receipts	\$426,095.10
Total Revenue	\$426,095.10

2010 Disbursements

Salaries	\$110,639.82
Benefits	\$23,805.83
Materials/Supplies	\$69,775.23
Equipment	\$44,929.03
Fuel	\$19,750.87
Contracted Services	\$57,200.75
Contracted Repairs	\$4,689.52
Utilities	\$2,375.54
Advertising/Printing	\$1,500.00
Other Expenses (Jt. Projects)	\$7,667.09
Total Disbursements	\$347,966.63

Ditch Maintenance Steering Board

Warren Schlatter
Otto Nicely
Tom Kime
James Harris, Jr.
Mike Zeedyk
Louis Shininger
Gary Mavis
Dan Vetter
Keith Schroeder
Tom Beck
Paul Nusbaum
Leonard Siebenaler
Lynn Davis
Dale Krill
Jeff Green
Jeff Ankney
Ben Gerken

Equipment Rentals

The Defiance SWCD has conservation equipment for rent. As farming practices have evolved over the years, our equipment selection has also changed. We no longer rent the large 15-foot no-till drain drills, deep rippers or spring residue managers. Our current rental selection is geared more towards installing your own conservation practices around your property. A 10-foot Great Plains no-till grass drill, a 10-foot Brillion conventional drill, a 3-point tree planter with tractor, a pull behind tree planter and a straw mulcher are available for rent.

Our rental policy requires that a rental liability agreement be completed by the renter prior to use of any equipment. The equipment can either be picked up at our office or the District can deliver and pick up the equipment for a \$10.00 charge each way. Any equipment requiring fuel must be refilled prior to returning rental equipment.

If you are interested in renting one of our pieces of equipment, stop by the office or give us a call for more information and to get your name on our schedule.





“Nonpoint Source Pollution” Word Puzzle

The puzzle below contains words pertaining to Nonpoint Source Pollution Awareness. Complete the puzzle and mail it back to the Defiance SWCD office by June 3, 2011. The words are located in the article and are green in color / underlined. An entry will be randomly drawn and will receive an Upper Maumee River Watershed t-shirt, water bottle and jar opener. The winner will be notified after June 3rd and can pick up their prize at the SWCD office. Thanks for reading *Conservation News* and Good Luck!

The United States has made tremendous advances since Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972 to clean up the aquatic environment by controlling pollution from industries and sewage treatment plants. Today, nonpoint source pollution remains the nation's largest source of water quality problems. Sometimes referred to as polluted runoff, nonpoint source pollution occurs when rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation runs over land or through the ground, picks up pollutants, and deposits them into surface waters or introduces them into ground water. The most common nonpoint source pollutants are sediments and nutrients. Other common nonpoint source pollutants include pesticides, pathogens, salts, oils, and excess fertilizer.

The watershed approach is the preferred way to restore a stream, river, or lake. It looks beyond the water body itself and examines the entire drainage area, including all the potential sources of pollution that drain into it. Water conservation uses practices and technologies that limit water use in the bathroom, kitchen, laundry room, lawn, driveway, and garden. Conserving water reduces the demand on existing water supplies and limits the amount of water that runs off the land. Runoff should also be minimized by using low impact development (LID) techniques, which work with the natural landscape and native plants to soak up more rainwater by improving infiltration. Low impact development solutions include rain gardens and green roofs, which treat rainwater as a precious resource. Other ways to control polluted runoff include erosion control techniques such as silt fencing around construction sites, establishment of riparian zones next to water bodies to filter out pollutants, and xeriscape landscaping, which incorporates native plants that minimize maintenance needs. Finally, many local groups organize volunteer monitoring efforts, which provide information that can help government agencies understand the impacts of nonpoint source pollution and solve problems. Working together, we can all make a difference.

- US Environmental Protection Agency Website



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O	D	I	D	V	O	C	M	D	J	T	J	E	G	R
C	T	N	E	M	N	O	R	I	V	N	E	T	R	E

Name _____

Telephone _____

Conservation News

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Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District

06879 Evansport Rd., Defiance , Ohio 43512
Phone 419-782-8751 Fax 419-782-1791
Email: swcd@defiance-county.com
Website: www.defiance-county.com/swcd

Board of Supervisors

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Gary Mavis
Keith Schroeder
Louis Shininger
Dan Vetter

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Jeff Ankney
Terri Agler
Ben Gerken
Jason Roehrig
Jennifer English
Niki Grindley (UMWC)
Kip Studer (WLEB)
Bill Grimes (part-time)
Kevin Hancock
Ed Walters
Dave Sines (part-time)

NRCS Personnel

Steve Snyder
Lori Shank
Mike Boff

“Eco-Mania” Conservation Camp

Do you know someone between the ages 9-14 or in 3rd-8th grade? Do they enjoy the outdoors, learning about nature, swimming, hiking, crafts and games and campfires? If so, Conservation Camp may be a perfect fit for them. The Defiance SWCD is co-sponsoring “Eco-Mania” with insects being this year’s theme. Located at Camp Palmer in northwestern Fulton County, Conservation Camp provides an excellent location for learning about conserving and protecting our natural resources. In addition to the activities listed above, campers will participate in dances, skits, crafts, canoeing and educational activities. Campers will also be able to participate in extra activities such as a High Ropes Course and Shooting Sports for an additional cost.

Camp will run from 6:15 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8 to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 11, 2011. Transportation will need to be supplied by the camper to and from camp. Camp registration deadline is May 25 and the cost will be \$120.00. Even though the capacity of Camp Palmer is quite large, it is not unlimited. Reservations are on a first-come first-serve basis until May 25th or until camp is full, whichever comes first. The camp will have 30 trained camp counselors, 20 adult staff and a registered nurse on hand. Health forms need to be returned with the registration form prior to May 25, 2011.

Scholarships of \$15.00 are available to Defiance County residents. For more information contact the Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District at (419)782-8751.



Just one of the many activities offered at Conservation Camp