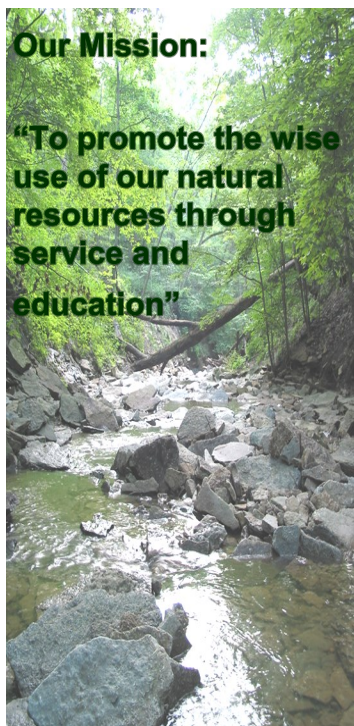


Summer 2009

Our Mission:

“To promote the wise use of our natural resources through service and education”

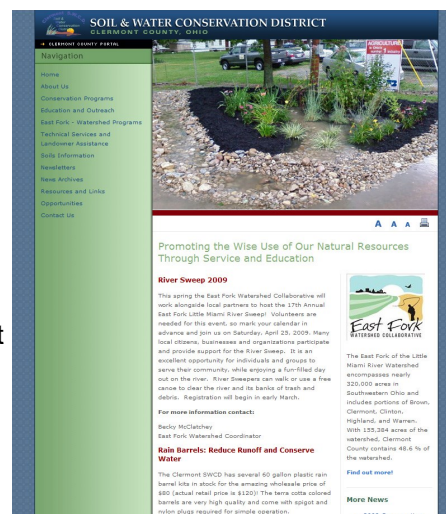


Visit Our New District Website!

Visit clermontswcd.org and you will notice lots of exciting changes. The site now offers expanded resources to assist landowners with natural resource related issues and concerns. Topics include soils information, erosion prevention and drainage solutions, land preservation options, agricultural cost share programs, rain gardens and other storm water programs, adult/youth conservation education programs, and many others.

“The upgraded site gives us a new format that has loads of potential for launching new material and resources for assisting landowners throughout Clermont County,” states District Administrator Paul Berringer.

“People can expect a much more dynamic site with frequent upgrades – you will definitely want to add us to your favorites list and check regularly for new programs, projects and opportunities.” The new web site is hosted by the Clermont County Commissioners.



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- David Anspach
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NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Lori Hillman - District Conservationist

DISTRICT STAFF

- Paul Berringer
- Judy Krebs
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- Becky McClatchey
- Jacob Hahn

Rain Barrels & Compost Bins Still Available!

The Clermont SWCD has a limited supply of plastic rain barrels and compost bins in stock. The rain barrels sell for \$80 (actual retail price is \$120) and the compost bins are \$45. The 60 gallon terra cotta colored barrels come with spigot and nylon plugs required for simple operation. Rain barrels are great for storing rainwater runoff to irrigate your home garden or landscaping. They also lessen the stress put on local rivers and streams by capturing rooftop runoff.



You can purchase yours today by visiting our office on the Clermont County Fairgrounds. We accept cash or check; for more information, call 732-7075.

For those of you who have already purchased a rain barrel, use Armor All Protectant® or an equivalent UV protectant to help maintain barrel color as recommended by the manufacturer.

Rain Gardens Spring Up at Clermont Schools

Ten Clermont County schools are going green, thanks to a \$50,000 Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) grant received by the Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Student-designed rain gardens are being planted throughout the month of May.

Rain gardens are an infiltration technique; water is captured in a garden that



Williamsburg High School Rain Garden

features native plantings, and the water has a chance to slowly filter into the ground, rather than run off into the storm sewer. It is a popular way to reduce nonpoint source pollution and protect our lakes and streams.

“We are very fortunate to have the chance to work with so many different schools on this exciting project. The rain gardens will provide wonderful learning opportunities for current and future students,” said Clermont SWCD Administrator Paul Berringer.

Rain gardens will be created at Pattison Elementary in Milford, Felicity-Franklin High School, Goshen High School, Clough Pike Elementary in West Clermont, Bethel-Tate Middle School, Batavia High School, Clermont Northeastern High School, Milford Junior High School, and the Grant Career Center.

Other grant partners include the Clermont County Stormwater Department, Clermont County Educational Services and Greenacres Foundation. The partners are also developing a curricula using Ohio Academic Content Standards, which will allow the schools to utilize the gardens as formal

DID YOU KNOW

Clermont County is home to the current Ohio state record Pitch Pine (Bethel) and Eastern Red Cedar (Amelia) .

Check out ODNR Division of Forestry website for more information on the Ohio and National Big Tree Program.

Pond Management: Key to Success

Careful management of a pond is key to its long term success and enjoyment. Knowing some basics and a keen eye will increase your chances of determining a problem and fixing it before unneeded costs mount. Careful inspection especially after heavy rain events is needed to ensure that your pond is functioning as designed.

The dam is the highest priority for assessing pond problems. It should be kept free of woody debris, mowed periodically to prevent groundhog habitation, and monitored for any seeps or erosion that may compromise the safety of the dam. Any problems should be dealt with immediately as costly expenses and safety issues may drastically increase in the future if left untreated.



(Continued on Page 5)

17th Annual East Fork River Sweep

On Saturday, April 25, 2009 over 200 volunteers worked together to give the East Fork Little Miami River a proper spring cleaning.



Volunteers enjoyed the warm and sunny weather as they cleaned 16 miles of riverbank and shoreline at Valley View in Milford, East Fork State Park, Stonelick State Park and downtown Batavia.

The hard working River Sweepers collected 170 bags of trash (60 gallon trash bags), along with 38 tires, 6 propane tanks, and 2 barrels (55-gallon). Some other, more interesting items included a mailbox, a mattress, 6 lawn chairs, an industrial fan, and a go-cart frame. The River Sweep has been held at the same 4 sites for the last few years and overall, the riverbanks and shorelines were in good condition—volunteers have definitely made a positive impact at these sites over the years.

Many local organizations and businesses participated and provided support for the (Continued on Page) 6

SWCD Staff Assist in Reforestation

On a beautiful spring day, district staff assisted Fritz and Wanda Bakscheider of Batavia Township in the planting of over 400 hardwood trees on their farm. This is the first of many acres the Bakscheiders' hope to complete over the coming years. Their goal is to clear an overgrown field full of undesirable plants that has reverted due to natural succession into a future stand of timber that their grandchildren can enjoy.

A mixture of black walnut, red oak, yellow poplar, and sugar maple were selected for site suitability, wildlife habitat, and future timber resources. Bare root seedlings 6-24" in height were placed on a ten foot by ten foot spacing. Planting was achieved by utilizing a tree planter from the Division of Forestry (DOF). Tim Wilson, DOF service forester, also assisted in the design and planting.



The proper management of forests, even the small farm lots found in Clermont County, can provide many benefits to the landowner. Some may include fuelwood, reduced wind and water erosion, timber value, and reduced heating/cooling costs. Along with the management of undesirable species, such as the dreaded invasive bush honeysuckle, a landowner can take pride and reap the benefits of a properly managed landscape.

The SWCD provides technical expertise in tree planting, forest management, firewood recommendations, honey suckle and multiflora rose control, and wildlife habitat creation. If you have a woods and don't know what to do, or have an old field that won't produce anymore, let us assist you in reaching your goals as a landowner.

Tree planting bars are now available on loan, please contact SWCD office for information at 732-7075.

For larger jobs, contact the DOF for information on utilizing their tree planter at 937-378-4920.

Silent Auction Items Wanted!

The District will be hosting a silent auction to benefit conservation at its 2009 Annual Banquet to be held in October at the Fairgrounds. If you have something of value that you would like to donate to the cause (new or slightly used but in new condition) please call the District office at 732-7075. Current auction items include framed artwork, rain barrel, compost bin, horse riding lessons, lodging at bed & breakfast, and fly fishing lessons. Your support is greatly appreciated!

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Clermont County Grazing School To Be Offered Again

Bob Hendershot, Ohio NRCS Grazing Specialist, will teach a three night grazing school. When landowners finish the three night course, they will have developed a Grazing Management Plan for their operation. The grazing management plan will outline the conservation practices and management needed on your farm to improve forage production and animal performance in a way that increases farm profitability and protects soil and water. The last night will include a farm visit to look at grazing management practices in the field. This program is designed with emphasis on beef cattle but is open to anyone needing information on pasture management.



Classes will be held on **August 4th, 5th and 12th** at the Felicity Community Center. Different topics will be discussed each night. Times will be determined at a later date.

Cost of the event is \$35 and covers all materials, including a "Pasture for Profit" handbook and grazing stick. Persons not needing material may attend at no charge, but need to RSVP. Please **RSVP by July 24, 2009**. Contact the SWCD office at 732-7075 or email lori.hillman@oh.usda.gov with name, phone number, and number attending. Refreshments will be provided for each class.

Event is sponsored by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), OSU Extension, Ohio Forage and Grassland Council, and Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District.

Save Money and Improve Soil with Cover Crops

Cover crops have numerous benefits, both to the landowner and the environment. While the benefits are too numerous to mention, some of the most important include: erosion control, soil quality improvement, carbon sequestration, increased organic matter, improved water holding capacity, weed and pest suppression, loosens the subsoil, and depending on what type is planted, can also be a great source of nitrogen. Cover crops also protect water quality by reducing nutrient leaching and runoff and holding the topsoil in place. The topsoil compared to subsoil is the difference between gold and rock. This thin layer generally has very high soil fertility and good soil structure. This allows for water infiltration and holds water and nutrients for use by the plant due to its content of organic matter.



Inspecting clover cover crops

The cover crops are grown on cropped ground and typically planted in the fall after harvest. They hold the soil in place over the winter and early spring when the land is most sensitive to erosion. They also hold nutrients over the winter, making them available in the spring and following summer for crop uptake. The cost to plant these cover crops is generally overcome by the above mentioned benefits, particularly decreasing the use of fertilizers and pesticides. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides incentive payments to farmers for various conservation practices on crop ground including cover crops through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The incentive payment is three years and ranges from \$29.00 - \$42.00 /acre/year reimbursement. Please contact Lori Hillman, NRCS, if you are interested in this program at 732-7075.

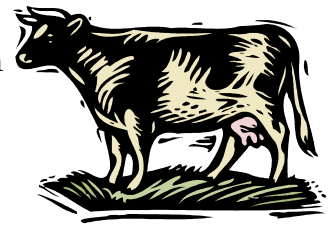
Cover crops are often times planted with new grass seedings as well. Since they only grow for one year, they tend to grow much faster and provide good cover temporarily until the grass can get established.

You can realize these same benefits with cover crops in your home garden. Try planting hairy vetch or another legume in your garden for a great nitrogen source for the following year, or rye or wheat for weed suppression. Hairy vetch should be broadcast at a rate of 25 to 30 lb/ac, 15 to 45 days before killing frost. You can till in the vetch in the spring before planting your garden. Rye can be planted in September or October at a rate of 90 to 120 lb/ac broadcast. Rye needs to be killed in the spring before the growth gets out of control, by either spraying if you choose to no-till plant your garden, or tilling under.

Choosing the best cover crop depends on several factors, including soil type. Wheat tends to do better in heavier, wet soils than rye. Hairy vetch and crimson clover does not do well in poorly drained soils. One can find a vast array of information on the internet for types well suited to this area. Give it a try and happy grow-

Grazing Events Planned...

A **PASTURE WALK** and dinner is being held the evening of June 15th at Mark and Mary Hatfield's farm in Felicity, Ohio, sponsored by the Clermont County Cattlemen's Association. Bob Hendershot, Grazing Specialist for Natural Resources Conservation Service in Ohio, will guide us on a walk and discuss some of the problems that were encountered with last year's drought. Other topics of discussion include pasture diversity, forage quality, livestock nutrition on pasture, soil fertility, layout and design, fence and water technology and the economics of alternative feeds and forage.



Register by May 27th at 732-7075. Pasture walk is free, but numbers are needed for dinner.

Horse & Pasture Management School Offered in August

Clermont SWCD and OSU Extension are once again offering a horse & pasture management school August 13th from 5:30 to 9:00 pm. We are excited to have Bob Hendershot, NRCS Grazing Specialist speak on small acreage pasture establishment and renovation. Bob will also do hay evaluations on samples participants bring to the school.

In addition, NRCS District Conservationist Lori Hillman will speak on 'Being a Good Neighbor – Maintaining Water Quality'. We are also honored to have Kelly Liming, DVM speak on current issues affecting horse health. Latham Farley, Ag. And Natural Resources Coordinator for Clermont OSU Extension will speak on fence law updates.

The cost for the school will be \$10.00, which will cover handouts and snacks. A horse nutrition book published by OSU Extension will be available for \$8.50. **Pre-registration is required.**

If you are interested in attending the horse and pasture management school, please call (513) 732-7075 or email (susie.steffensen@oh.nacdnet.net) and we will be sure to send you a brochure in July.



Pond Management: Key to Success *(Continued from Page 2)*



Other issues that need to be monitored:

- √ pondweed id and management
- √ overflow cleanout and corrosion mgt.
- √ management of muskrat and beaver
- √ nutrient and oxygen levels
- √ erosion around pond
- √ control of exotic species
- √ fish health

Pond weed management should be addressed early in the year when growth is small, and temperatures are lower. This will help reduce the chances of pond turn-over and eventual fish kill due to lack of oxygen used by decaying plant material. Proper identification will save money and prevent unwanted chemical release into the ecosystem.

The proactive approach to pond management will help prevent unnecessary costs to fix problems and lead to a longer lasting, healthier pond that all can enjoy. Additional benefits of properly managing your pond include healthier fish populations, cleaner/safer swimming area, and increased property values. SWCD staff is available for pond inspections and will assist you in your specific needs and objectives. Please visit our new website for additional information.

If your address is incorrect or you would like to be added / removed from our mailing list, please contact us at (513) 732-7075

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Calendar of Events

SWCD Board Meeting	June 10—6pm
Pasture Walk	June 15
SWCD Office Closed (Holiday)	July 3
SWCD Board Meeting	July 8 –6pm
Clermont County Fair	July 26-Aug. 1
SWCD Board Meeting	August 12 –6pm
Horse and Pasture School	August 13

East Fork River Sweep (Continued from Page 2)

event. We would like to thank the Clermont County Office of Environmental Quality, Clermont County Water and Sewer District, Valley View Foundation, ODNR State Parks, Clermont Park District, East Fork and Stonelick State Parks, the Harsha Lake Army Corps of Engineers, ODNR-Scenic Rivers Program, the Cincinnati Nature Center, Buckeye United Fly Fishers, the Grassy Run Historical Society, Stantec Engineers Inc., Meijer, Milford Tech Park, Riverside Coffee Mill, Kroger, and the Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District.



The event was partially funded by a grant received from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention. Special thanks also go to Mark Birkle for donating his time and skills to photograph the event.

Mark your calendars in advance — River Sweep 2010 will be held on Saturday, April 24!