

Conservation Quarterly

Agricultural Drainage Workshop on August 9



Due to shifting climates, major rainfall events are on the rise in Ohio. The number of heavy downpours have increased 30% above the 1901 - 1960 average. The increased water flow has resulted in increased tiling into rural drainage systems that may not have enough capacity. In addition, soil erosion

and fertilizer runoff can be prevalent if left unmanaged. Who is responsible when excess water has undesirable impacts?

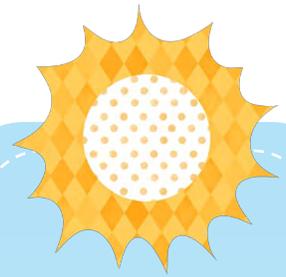
The Madison Soil & Water Conservation District is hosting an Agricultural Drainage Workshop on Thursday, August 9th, from 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at the Procter Conference Center, 11235 St. Rt. 38 SE, London, Ohio to provide information on drainage laws and best management practices to reduce the effects of flooding, poor drainage, and erosion. Long term benefits include better neighbor relations and better water quality, while achieving economic goals from improved crop production.

Speakers and sponsors of this event include the Natural Resource Conservation Service, The Ohio State University Extension, the Ohio Environmental Education Fund, the Madison County Engineer, and the Madison County Farm Bureau.

Topics that will be covered throughout the morning include impacts of climate change on agriculture, understanding drainage laws, and the county ditch petition process. After lunch, speakers will talk about stewardship of natural resources and various drainage control practices as well as sustainable techniques that will help improve soil health.

"If you have been impacted by poor drainage or increased erosion and runoff, you are not alone," said Brian Hackett, District Technician, "Our goal in having this workshop is to help landowners avoid muddy situations with their neighbors and on their property by providing useful information and giving them an opportunity to network with their peers."

This is a free event, open to anyone with an interest in learning more about agricultural drainage. Lunch will be provided by Madison County Farm Bureau. Space is limited. Please call (740) 852-4003 or email Brian Hackett at brian.hackett@oh.nacdn.net by July 26th to reserve a seat.



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Important Dates

7/8-7/14	Madison County Fair
7/24	Grazing Workshop
7/28	Prairie Bike Ride
8/9	Ag Drainage Workshop
9/18-9/20	Farm Science Review



Grazing Workshop

Tuesday, July 24, 2018

6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Millstone Creek Farm

9061 Grabill Rd.

Hillsboro, Ohio

- By Highland Soil & Water Conservation District, ODA, USDA, OSU and ODNR Division of Wildlife
- Dinner by Highland County Cattleman Association and Union Stockyards.
- Covers cool and warm season pasture management; warm season grass pastures establishment; and conservation program options
- RSVP Highland SWCD at 937-393-1922 or pam.bushelman@oh.nacdn.net
- Free!

Grazing is for the birds

Private landowners are part of the solution to the declining population of Bobwhite Quail. NRCS has technical and financial assistance for producers with livestock who are interested in providing sustainable grazing year round, improving profits, and benefiting the Bobwhite Quail.

Since World War II, the landscape has changed quite dramatically. Equipment has gotten larger, fence rows are less common, we've lost habitat and we've changed to using nonnative (cool season) grasses in our pastures. Since 1965, a million acres of hay land has been lost in Ohio while we added nearly 3 million acres of soybeans.

Bobwhites depend on early successional habitat, grasslands and shrubby areas. All of which have become less common throughout the East. These habitats have the forbs, legumes and insects that bobwhite need for food and the heavy or brushy cover for nesting, brooding and safety.

NRCS will help landowners replace a portion of their non-native grasses with native grasses, forbs and legumes that benefit bobwhite and other wildlife, while creating alternative healthy grazing options for livestock.

There is a misconception that warm season grasses are too hard to establish, too hard to manage, and there is a period of overlap with the cool season grasses in the spring. However, in reality, these are manageable hills with a real prize on top of it.

The technical and financial assistance is provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, a conservation program of the Farm Bill, the largest funding source for conservation on private lands.

Want to learn more? See for yourself at the grazing workshop in Highland County (details in the side bar).

Omnibus Bill Nixes DUNS and SAM Requirements for Ohio Farmers

Effectively immediately, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) financial assistance program participants will no longer need a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Number System (DUNS) number, or to register in the System for Award Management (SAM). The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (2018 Omnibus Bill), signed by President Donald Trump on March 23, eliminated these requirements.

According to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, DUNS and SAM were designed for billion-dollar government contractors, not everyday farmers trying to support their families. These changes help stream-

line the customer experience of farmers, which is a top priority at USDA, he said.

"This change greatly simplifies the contracting process for our customers and staff," said Terry Cosby, NRCS State Conservationist in Ohio. "Conservation program participants will soon receive letters from their local NRCS office with more details."

The exemption does not apply to any current or future agreements or federal contracts with eligible entities, project sponsors, vendors, partners, or other non-exempt landowners or producers.



Check your nutrients!

Commercial fertilizers do not have the same bad rap as manure, but they can still be a cause of “eutrophication,” a dense growth of plant life, in lakes and ponds. In response, the Ohio Department of Agriculture has approved a spreadsheet that can be used as a nutrient management plan for commercial fertilizers. The spreadsheet has a records page for each field where a farmer can write down the time, date, field conditions, 2 day weather forecast, what product was applied, etc. Good record keeping is paramount for defense in the event of a complaint.

To use this spreadsheet, you would need a current soil test (less than 4 years old) for every field and the fertilizer products used, time of year they will be applied, and application method. The spreadsheet also provides a way to check if the Tri-State Fertilizer Guide is being followed by variable rate application based on soil grid sampling. Call us and we will work with you to fill out this spreadsheet correctly.

This tool is also valuable when you consider the economics of fertilizers. There are retailers that exceed the Tri-State guidelines. This means the farmer is spending more on fertilizers than is backed by university research.

For those who apply manure, the Manure Science Review is July 25 in Hardin County, Ohio. Learn how to avoid manure spills, limit spreading weeds with manure, and more. To register, contact Mary Wicks at 330.202.3533 or wicks.14@osu.edu.

Is your waterway in good shape?

Grass waterways are permanent strips of grass seeded in areas of cropland where water concentrates and flows off a field. The grass was planted to heal the land from a gully and it will continue to trap some sediment. In addition, the vegetation provides habitat for small animals and birds. Producers and landowners have to maintain them or they cannot fulfill their purpose.

For maintenance of grass waterways, it is recommended to:

- Lift equipment out of the ground and shut off spray equipment when crossing the waterway. Encourage commercial applicator to do the same.
- Avoid end rows planted parallel along the waterway. This may allow gullies to form on the waterway edge.
- Fertilize cool season grasses regularly at a rate of 30-40 pounds of nitrogen per acre between November and mid March. Many producers fertilize waterways when they top dress wheat.
- 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 a dense sod. Also, shorter, thick grass is more effective at trapping sediment than tall grass, which will lay over during an intense rain event
- If bare spots appear, reseed with sod-forming grasses.
- If gullies form; fill, reshape, and reseed.

Taking care of your waterway on a regular schedule is the cost effective way to keep it in shape. Thank you for your efforts to conserve the natural resources!

Upcoming OSU Extension programs

Unless otherwise noted, contact Mary Griffith to register and receive updated information on details. Email griffith.483@osu.edu or call 740-852-0975.

June 28: Fish at the Farmer's Market, 4-7pm., 306 Lafayette St., London. Learn how to fillet fish and sample fish tacos from Ohio Department of Natural Resources and OSU Extension. Cost: Free.

July 24: Hops Field Day, 9-3pm. Are you interested in growing hops or managing a hop yard? Field day covers pest management, irrigation, economics and start-up costs, as well as packaging and processing. Registration required by July 17th. Contact Douridas.g@osu.edu or 937-484-1526. Cost: \$25 includes lunch.

July 26: Pesticide & Fertilizer Applicator Certification, 9-3pm Beck's Hybrids, 720 US-40, London. Pre-registration is required. Cost: \$35 includes lunch.

August 10: Harvest Party, 6-9pm, Choc-taw Lake Lodge, London. Enjoy dinner catered by Red Brick Tavern, a cash bar, and entertainment from comedian Chris Bowers. All of the net proceeds from the event goes to support Extension programming and Madison County Farm Bureau scholarships to help students achieve their education goals. Purchase tickets at OSU Extension Office or online at madisonharvestparty.eventbrite.com Cost: \$20/person or \$150 table of 8.

August 29: Grain Bin Safety Program, 11-1pm, Madison County Fairgrounds. Agriculture safety experts with the Ohio State University will hold a demonstration to help educate growers on grain bin safety. Participants will have the opportunity to view the Grain Comprehensive Agriculture Rescue Trailer (CART) Cost: Free with pre-registration, includes lunch.

September 18-20: Farm Science Review



Not all that is green is gold: Time to rethink lawns? - Brian Hackett, District Technician

A chill in the air accompanied by a wave of yellows, oranges, and reds across the landscape signals the approach of another autumn season. As many animals begin to prepare for winter and hibernation, some prepare for a journey. It is here that we find a young Monarch butterfly, flitting through a field of late blooming wildflowers along Ohio's Interstate 71. The bright orange butterfly flies from flower to flower collecting as much nectar as she can, preparing for the trip of a lifetime. She is the second generation of the summer, and is the generation tasked with the 3,000 mile migration down to Mexico and back next spring. The field of wildflowers is a welcome sight for the Monarch. She has found it harder and harder to find such an oasis of color, and with it, the life-sustaining fluid that she will rely on to make her journey. She will need to find many more of these spots to re-fuel, in order to make the full trip to the overwintering grounds. As she leaves the last flower, full with nectar, she is ready for the task at hand. As the butterfly floats higher and higher, she catches a gentle fall breeze and heads south.



Envision a map of the United States. According to a State of the Land address, in 2002, 61% of the land in the U.S. is privately owned. That is, what is done with it is controlled by you and me, not the government. A 2005 study by Environmental Management reports that an estimated 40 million acres of the United States is turf grass. That is three times the acreage of irrigated corn, making it the most irrigated "crop" in Ameri-

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Over the years, pollinators such as the Monarch, have been put in jeopardy from factors such as habitat fragmentation, loss of plant biodiversity, and diseases. The word "pollinator" refers to any animal that contributes to the pollination of plant species. They can range from butterflies and moths to bees and flies, bats and birds to beetles and reptiles. Pollinators are responsible for billions of dollars of crop revenue every year equating to over a quarter of the world's food production. Life for humans as we know it is heavily reliant on pollinators doing their jobs. The decline of pollinator populations is a serious issue that threatens ecosystems, the economy, and human life itself. Luckily for us, we can do something about this.



ca. As urban growth continues, so does suburban growth. With that shift comes more land being converted to expansive, well-manicured lawns offering little to no ecological benefits.

Grass lawns are taxing on our wallets, the environment, and our time. Over \$30 billion per year is spent on lawn care in the U.S. This includes synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Fuel to run lawnmowers is included in that number, which contribute to no less than 5% of carbon-emissions. In addition to fuel and fertilizer is water. According to the same study, 50-75% of residential water use is for outdoor purposes. Americans use a substantial amount of drinking water to maintain a healthy lawn.

See Lawns next page



Lawns continued

These factors, in addition to the huge time commitment to mow and maintain a lawn, are cause to consider a cultural shift in the way we view grass lawns.

Habitat fragmentation is the division of large continuous habitat, creating small isolated patches. There simply aren't enough nearby habitats to sustain pollinator populations. Re-imagining private lawns could have a major impact on that. Planting small patches of wildflowers in your yard will go a long way. In addition, wildflowers are aesthetically pleasing and require almost no additional maintenance. Plant wildflowers that bloom at different times of the year to keep a splash of color in your yard and provide nectar to pollinators throughout the year.



Planting native trees such as oak, black cherry, and elm is another critical step. Many insect species only utilize plants with which they share an evolutionary history for reproduction. A single oak tree can sustain hundreds of caterpillars from many species. Whereas the introduced ginkgo, labelled as "pest free" by retailers, host none. You will be turning a dead landscape

into a living landscape. You'll be amazed at the number of birds that decide to take up residence in your yard.

Other ways you can help would be to utilize a rain barrel to water gardens and lawns to save drinking water. Use grass clippings for fertilizer, and limit or cut out herbicide and pesticide use. Remember, just because a landscape is green, or a plant has flowers, doesn't mean that it is providing good habitat for pollinators. It is up to us, private landowners, to make these changes for the sake of these ecologically valuable species.

Jack McDowell's Prairie Bike Ride

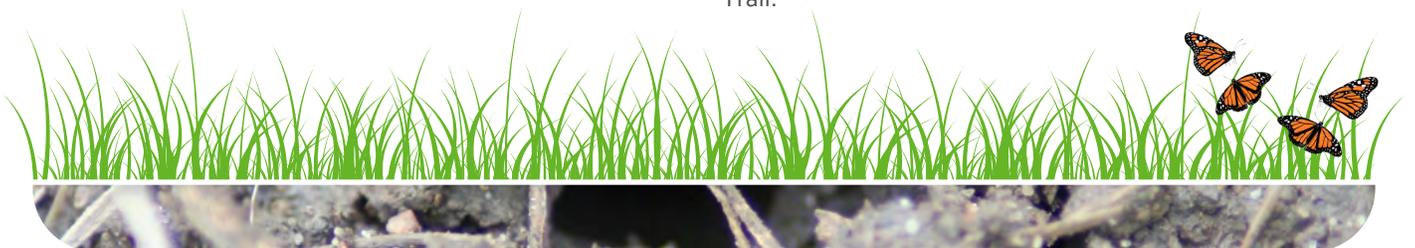
In honor of Jack McDowell, former supervisor of the Madison Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), the Friends of Madison County Parks and Trails and the SWCD will hold the 13th Annual Prairie Appreciation Ride. Leaving from the Prairie Grass Trailhead, Madison County Senior Center, 280 West High St., London, on Saturday July 28th at 8:00 a.m., riders will take a leisurely tour of several remnant prairies along the Ohio to Erie Trail.

The ride is a chance to discover the beauty of the historic prairies and how to protect them. The prairies have existed since before the time of the pioneer and were preserved by the railroad because the land could not be farmed. Now the prairies are maintained by volunteers who share Jack McDowell's vision of saving this heritage and providing educational opportunities through stewardship.



More hands the merrier. Volunteers help maintain the prairies, rain gardens and flower beds at the Prairie Grass Trail.

The ride includes stops with Julia Cumming, Program Administrator with Madison Soil and Water Conservation District; Matt Silveira, Corporate Environmental Manager, CEMEX US; botanist John Silvius, professor emeritus of biology at Cedarville University; and Karen Stombaugh and Monica Price, Madison County Master Gardeners. Visit FMCPT.com for more information on the Prairie Grass Trail.



Go Native—with trees

-Harriet Dana, Master Gardener

You're in the market for a tree. Perhaps you lost one or more Ash trees to the dreaded Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Now you have a bare spot, you feel exposed and you miss the shade. How do you go about choosing the appropriate tree? There are several factors to keep in mind.

Plan to go native! Why? Native trees have been around a very, very long time. Natural selection favored those trees which survived. Only the strongest, most adaptable survived. Natives can put up with our alkaline clay soil. They thrive regardless of floods one week and drought the next. Natives don't need fertilizing. You save money and help maintain a healthier environment. Natives conserve our most precious resource – water. Native trees are very effective in trapping greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. During the eons of adaptation, other species (bees, moths, birds, small animals) developed with these trees creating co-dependencies. By choosing a native tree, you are supporting a whole ecosystem.

While choosing your tree, carefully analyze the planting site. Is it moist or dry? What tree species would do best in your site? Sycamores like "wet feet". Freeman maples



Native trees sustain more insects on which birds depend to feed their young because they have evolved together.

insects does it attract (honey bees or Japanese beetles)? We once had a river birch next to our garage & backdoor. It was a beautiful tree, but every spring our cars and driveway were covered with long fuzzy flower pods called catkins which clung to the soles of our shoes. No tree is perfect. Do your homework so you can pick and choose what "vice" you're willing to put up with.

"By choosing a native tree, you are supporting a whole ecosystem"

are very drought tolerant. Sweetgums will tolerate moderate flooding as well as drought conditions. Do you get a lot of wind where you want to plant your tree? You will want a tree that can withstand harsh winds. Are there other trees that would shelter your new tree? Choose an understory species. What is the pH of the soil at the planting site? Will the tree be close to a road or sidewalk where salt is used as a de-icer?

Do you want the tree for shade, a screen to block out unsightliness, or as a stand-alone eye catcher? How big will your tree get? How fast will it grow? Is there enough room for the tree when it is fully mature? Are there obstacles to consider such as power lines? What is the overall shape of the mature tree? What shape are the leaves? Does it have color interest in the spring or fall? How long will the tree last – 50 years? 100 years or more?

How much maintenance is required? Will this tree require specialized pruning? Will the tree have suckers? What

Lastly, think about diversity. Are you one of those property owners who lost multiple ash trees? Most often the "bug" or blight is species specific. Emerald Ash Borers only attack ash trees – not maples or oaks. If you're planting more than one tree, play with the odds. Plant a variety of different species. Odds are good that the next "plague" will hit only one species and spare the rest.

For a list, descriptions and pictures of Ohio native trees, go to <http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov/trees>. The University of Illinois Extension Office has a wonderful website to help you select the best tree for your situation and gives detailed planting guides. See <http://extension.illinois.edu/treeselector/>. In addition, the Audubon Society has created an interesting database which matches location, native plants and types of birds. See <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>

Remember – Go native, select carefully and diversify!



Born wild, stay wild

-Matt Teders, Division of Wildlife

In the spring, you may have the good fortune of observing baby animals in the wild. Often, the babies you see will be unattended by a parent. Keep your distance and leave them alone. Human intervention is always a wild animal's last hope for survival. The best thing to do is to keep your distance and keep children and pets away from the young animal.

The most common wild animal often found is white-tailed deer fawns. Fawns are born nearly scentless with spots that serve as camouflage and will remain hidden. It is common for female deer to place fawns around backyards or flower beds where their mother felt it would be safe. To protect her fawn, the mother will spend very little time with it. This is to prevent attracting predators to the fawn's location. She will leave her fawn in various hiding places for long periods of time. By staying away, the mother is protecting it.

If you find a fawn, leave it alone. The mother is likely nearby. The doe will not return while you are present. If the fawn is in a dangerous location, move it to a safer location. When moving a fawn, face it away from the direction in which you plan to leave. Tap the fawn once or twice firmly between the shoulder blades, mimicking how the mother taps the fawn to tell the fawn to stay and wait until I come back. Quickly leave the area.

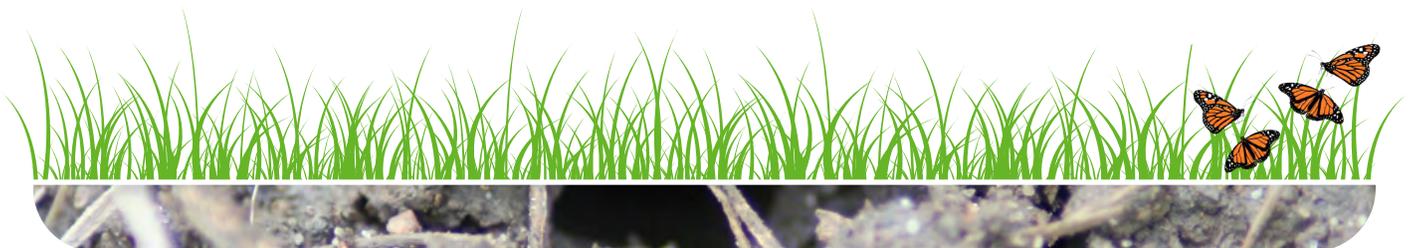
Never keep a fawn as a pet! Fawns are wild animals that belong in the wild. Your good intentions could cause harm to you and the animal. Raising a wild animal in captivity is illegal.



Photo courtesy of Alex Rumschlag

Earth Team Volunteers Wanted

The Earth Team Program is a volunteer program offered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Individuals interested in helping their community reduce soil erosion, conserve water and improve the quality of the environment that we live in are encouraged to apply. Our Earth Team Volunteers are an integral part of the positive change that takes place in Madison County. We can't thank them enough! If you are interested in becoming an Earth Team Volunteer, please call our office at 740-852-4003 option 3.



Pollinator plugs spring summary - Linnea Rowse, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

After a cold and wet spring, and before the scorching hot days of late May this spring, participants in the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and other landowners successfully planted native wildflower plugs in Madison County and across the state of Ohio. This was part of a large scale effort to improve habitat and food resources for pollinators, including the declining Monarch butterfly, beginning with existing CRP fields due for their "Mid-contract Management" activities.

In this first season of implementing pollinator plug planting as a part of CRP contracts in Ohio, the cooperation of all partners and landowners was critical to being successful. Pheasants Forever and the Madison Soil and Water Conservation District held a public workshop on April 25th to promote successful site preparation, planting methods, considerations about wildlife and pollinator habitat, and information about the native wildflowers. The SWCD ordered seven species of native wildflower plugs, and participants picked up their orders on May 17th.



This spring, milkweed plugs were planted in groups for ease of pollination. Grass was treated with Roundup a couple of days in advance to reduce competition with the new plugs.

Madison SWCD, in partnership with Pheasants Forever and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, plans to continue offering information and bulk ordering times this fall and next spring. We look forward to seeing more participants this fall.

Madison Soil and Water
Conservation District
831 US HWY 42 NE
London, Ohio 43140

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Mondays through Fridays
Phone: 740-852-4003 opt. 3

<http://co.madison.oh.us/swcd>
<https://www.facebook.com/madisonswcdohio>



Contact us

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