



The Conservation Express

Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District

Volume 1, Issue 1

Fayette SWCD Elects New Supervisors

Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District held their 60th Annual Meeting and Election on September 18, 2007 at the Fayette Ag Service Center. This years meeting featured a meal catered by McCoy's Catering from Wilmington, Ohio and an informational presentation regarding the Rockies Express Pipeline that is set to go through much of Fayette County. There were several other awards presented through out the evening as well.

terms, representing the board at various local and state meetings. Mr. Hidy was a huge asset to the Fayette soil and water conservation board. We thank him for his years of service.



A congratulations goes out to our newly elected supervisor, Richard Davidson Jr. He will begin his 3 year term on January 1, 2008. Supervisor James Garland was also re-elected to the board, Mr. Garland has been a supervisor since 1999. The district is sad to see Wayne Hidy step down from the board. Wayne served on the FSWCD board for 2

The recipient of the 2007 James E. Waddle memorial scholarship was Kyle Joseph, a Washington Senior High School Graduate. Mr. Joseph is attending Hocking College with a major in wildlife management. The FSWCD Conservationist of the year was Bill Davis of Washington

C.H. Over the past two years Bill has planted 77.8 acres of CREP filter strips in areas prone to flooding and heavy erosion. With the remainder of his farm he practices conservation tillage along with conservation rotations. Mr. Davis is also in the process of completing an EQIP contract on his farm. If you are interested in becoming a board member please give our office a call.

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2008 Board of Supervisors
Chairman-Gordon Conn
Vice Chair-Fred Melvin
Secretary-Richard Davidson
Fiscal Agent- Gary Reiterman
Education Coordinator-James Garland

Staff And Supervisors
Scott Cormany-GIS Coordinator
Bob Groff-Drainage Coordinator
Eric Lamb-District Technician
Chet Murphy-District Administrator
David Payne-District Technician
Ashley Wilson-Outreach Specialist

Doug Gorby-Wildlife Biologist
Mike Goudy-CET
Mark Lucas-CET
Sara Morris-District Conservationist

CREP: What Happens Next?

By Sara Morris, District Conservationist



The time of year is quickly approaching for those who have CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) contracts to plant your native warm season or cool season grasses. Cool season grasses are typically easy to establish and can be planted with conventional seeding equipment. Warm season grasses are slower to establish and require more patience than cool season varieties. Warm season grass stands are typically thin the first year because most of their energy is being spent developing root systems. A specialized drill is typically used to establish warm season grasses because the seed is very light and fluffy and must be planted very shallow. Standard drills typically do not produce acceptable results. You may plant these grasses your-

self, or hire a contractor to do the work. For a list of contractors, please stop by the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District office.

When the time comes to plant these grasses, it is the contract holder's responsibility to flag out their acres according to what is listed on the conservation plan and job sheets that were provided. If necessary, you may purchase flags at the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District office.

Fayette County has received a very high number of requests for CREP. Almost every request has turned into a contract for a variety of different practices. We have several wetlands that have been restored through this program, as well as thousands of acres of trees and warm and cool season grasses. The countless benefits of the CREP program will be recognized in Fayette County for many years to come! For assistance with the CREP program and other conservation programs, please contact Sara Morris, NRCS District Conservationist, at (740) 335-6201.

What is GIS?

By Scott Cormany, FSWCD GIS Coordinator

With the assistance and guidance of The Fayette County Commissioners, County Auditor, and Fayette County Engineer the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District has taken the Lead in Developing a County Wide GIS Program in Fayette County. So, what is GIS? A Geographic Information System (GIS) is an organized collection of computer hardware, software, data, and personnel designed to efficiently create, capture, manage, update, manipulate, analyze, and display all forms of geographically referenced information. In short, a GIS doesn't just hold maps or pictures - it holds a database.

A GIS gives the ability to associate information with a feature on a map and to create relationships that can determine the suitability of various sites for development, evaluate environmental impact, identify the best location for a new facility, and so on. It has been estimated that over 75% of information local government works with has a geographic component. Landowners, producers, homeowners, utility locations, township boundaries and fire hydrants share a common thread to a specific location. When data is created, collected, interpreted, and integrated the implementation of GIS technology in Fayette County can enhance the public's access to current and accurate information on tax assessment, planning, zoning, infrastructure, emergency response and economic development. The successful implementation of GIS technology in Fayette County can improve service to citizens thereby reducing the overall cost of government. If you have any questions concerning GIS please call Scott David Cormany, GIS Coordinator at 740-636-0279

Ohio's history is linked to drainage

Ohio's early settlers may have a reputation as rugged individualists, but for much of the state, creating productive homesteads out of wilderness took more than individual efforts. It took drainage, and drainage required cooperation with other landowners.

The first land settled was ground that drains well naturally, but more than half of the state's land was too wet to be farmed productively. Some land was barely habitable because stagnant water never drained away. Reports from settlers describe a persistent odor of decay, mold-encrusted belongings, and vicious biting insects, including mosquitoes that carried malaria. Even so, early Ohioans saw new possibilities in the rich soil of the state's wetlands.

At first, some landowners tried digging their own ditches, and this worked for those who could connect directly with a creek or river. But most poorly drained land had no outlet for excess water. Eventually, groups of landowners began working together to build drainage systems. Then starting in the 1840s, the State Legislature began passing drainage laws to guide the construction and financing of drainage projects that would benefit multiple landowners. By 1884, an estimated 20,000 miles of ditches had been built, draining 11 million acres or over 40% of Ohio's land.

Today, Ohio's drainage infrastructure includes open ditches as well as buried tile

lines and streams that have been reshaped to enhance drainage. At least half the state's land is affected by this public drainage infrastructure.



Ohio's drainage laws have been updated many times as the state has grown and developed. And drainage systems that were originally built to enhance agricultural production have also made former wetlands suitable for communities, home sites and industrial development.

Today, municipalities manage water with their own set of drainage laws, but most rural drainage projects involving multiple landowners are organized under Ohio's Petition Ditch Law (Ohio Revised Code 6131) or Conservation Works of Improve-

ment (Ohio Revised Code 1515). While there are important differences in how these two legal processes work, both fund projects with assessments on affected landowners and require that the financial benefits of a project exceed its cost.

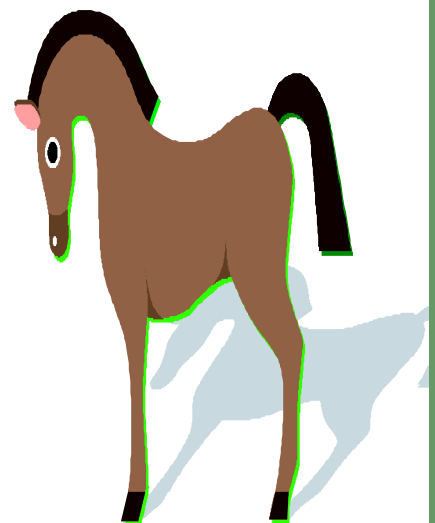
Unfortunately, one flaw in the early ditch laws was that they didn't include provisions for ongoing maintenance. In 1957, legislation was passed requiring maintenance provisions for new drainage projects, but many of today's rural land uses depend on the drainage infrastructure constructed a century ago or even earlier. As older projects continue to age, many of them will need to be reconstructed to continue providing the drainage landowners and homeowners rely on.

Just as the early settlers did, today's Ohioans must manage drainage to make ground suitable for land uses that will meet the state's goals for the future. If you have any drainage questions give the office a call at 740-636-0279

Before you Buy, By Ashley Wilson Outreach Specialist

The Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District would like to give all the potential home/land buyers a few pointers before they sign on the dotted line. Research the potential piece of land and or surrounding area. You can visit the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District to get information on soil types, 100 yr floodplain, general elevation data, and aerial photography where you are looking to build or buy. Some sites are not suitable for building, if these environmental variables are ignored this could lead to possible flooding which can lead to major problems and costly repairs. Be aware of your surrounding neighbors, do they have livestock, are they grain farmers? Buyers new to the rural area need to

keep that in mind when thinking about purchasing a home or land in the county. Also, when moving to the country and planning to buy livestock some research also needs to be done. No matter what species of animal you are considering purchasing they all have specific needs. For instance 1 mature horse requires a minimum of 2 acres of pasture. These are just a few pointers to get you on your way. If you have any questions please contact the FSWCD Office at 740-636-0279.





Winter Weather Complicates Manure Application

Protecting water quality would be a lot easier if farmers never needed to apply manure when fields are frozen or covered with snow. But the fact is, some farmers don't have enough storage capacity to get through the winter. Sometimes, even farmers with storage facilities need to apply manure in the winter because wet fall weather or other problems delayed application.

Unfortunately, uncooperative winter weather can lead to pollution, even for farmers who follow winter manure application guidelines. Last winter, for example, a quick thaw led to a rash of pollution complaints in early March. Manure applied earlier in the winter had remained frozen on fields for weeks or even months, but after the thaw surface flow carried it into streams.

To guard against such problems, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has revised the standard for application of manure on frozen and snow-covered soils. The new standard will significantly reduce the risk of pollution problems, but winter application can still be risky.

The new standard includes six criteria and all six must be followed to comply with the standard. The requirements include a 200-foot setback from waterways and streams, at least 90 percent surface residue cover, and specific application rate limits depending on manure moisture content. Manure should not be applied on more than 20 contiguous acres and additional criteria apply for fields with slopes greater than six percent.

Although some other states have prohibited manure application to frozen or snow-covered ground, it's still permitted under very careful management in Ohio. To protect this option, farmers need to guard water quality by minimizing winter application and by following the standard when winter application is unavoidable. Fayette SWCD can offer suggestions to help you through the process.

For some farmers, adding storage capacity would help, others might need to manage application more carefully. For example, farmers might adjust crop rotations to open up application sites earlier in the fall. Those who must apply manure in the winter might reserve fields farthest from waterways for winter application. Staking out application areas ahead of time could also make it easier to meet application criteria.

For more information about the new application criteria, or other manure management issues, contact Fayette SWCD at 740-636-0279

The Fayette SWCD, a political subdivision of the State of Ohio, is funded by ODNR and the General Assembly and the County Commissioners. The District is assisted by many local, state and federal conservation agencies. The District is administered by a board of five locally elected supervisors which helps ensure that the efforts of all of these agencies are coordinated to address the resource issues that local people feel are important.

The USDA and the Fayette SWCD prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)