

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER - VOL. 13, No. 2

THE CONSERVATION ADVOCATE



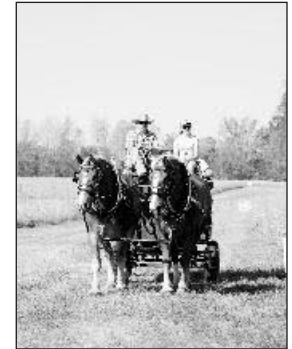
“Wise Stewardship of Our Natural Heritage”

SAVE THE DATE

MONTGOMERY SWCD ANNUAL FALL FEST MEETING

The Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) warmly invites you to its 78th Annual Fall Fest Meeting, a free, family-friendly celebration of agriculture, conservation, and community.

Saturday, September 12th, 2026 • 10AM-4PM
3225 N. Lutheran Church Rd., Trotwood, OH 45426
(Corner of Wolf Creek Pike & Lutheran Church Road)



A Day of Fun on the Farm

Fall Fest is a cherished annual tradition offering something for everyone. Bring the whole family (AND FRIENDS) and enjoy a wide range of activities, including:

- Horse-drawn wagon rides provided by Hagemeyer Homestead
- Kids' games and hands-on activities
- Sheep shearing demonstrations
- A petting zoo with farm animals
- Displays of modern and antique farm equipment
- Past favorites have included: pony rides, the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District soils trailer, steam engines, wheat threshing demonstrations, and interactive ranges hosted by the ODNR Division of Wildlife.

Board of Supervisors Election

Voting for the SWCD Board of Supervisors will take place during the event from **10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**.

Board members serve three-year terms and may seek re-election. Eligible voters must be 18 years or older and residents, landowners, or representatives of firms/corporations that own land in Montgomery County.

There will be two supervisor's positions available for election.

Delicious Local Eats

We're excited to welcome back some crowd-pleasers (pending confirmation):

- **BROKE SMOKERS BBQ!**
- **ULLERY'S HOMEMADE ICE CREAM!**
- **GRANDPA BILLY'S KETTLE CORN!**

Live Music

Kim Campbell & The Southern Memories Band,
a local favorite performing on the main stage from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

NATIVE PLANTS AND FARM MARKET ITEMS WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL VENDORS

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TO CONTACT US

Dial 937-854-7646, followed by the employee extension:

Montgomery SWCD Staff

Cynthia Berk	Ext. 0528
<i>BerkC@mcoho.org</i>	
Stefan Bridenbaugh.....	Ext. 0518
<i>BridenbaughS@mcoho.org</i>	
Holly Buchanan	Ext. 0514
<i>BuchananH@mcoho.org</i>	
Ed Everman.....	Ext. 0516
<i>EvermanE@mcoho.org</i>	
Michael Mullen.....	Ext. 0521
<i>MullenM@mcoho.org</i>	
Hailey Henderson	Ext. 0662
<i>HendersonH@mcoho.org</i>	
Dalton Marshall.....	Ext. 0520
<i>MarshallD@mcoho.org</i>	
Andrew Rickard	Ext. 0519
<i>RickardA@mcoho.org</i>	

NRCS Staff

Jeff Barnes.....	Ext. 0515
<i>jeff.barnes@usda.gov</i>	
Nathan Weber	Ext. 0525
<i>nathan.weber@usda.gov</i>	
Tyler White.....	Ext. 0522
<i>tyler.white@oh.usda.gov</i>	
Jeremy Huggler.....	Ext. 0524
<i>jeremy.huggler@usda.gov</i>	
Chris Lutz	(937) 456-5159 x2795
<i>christopher.lutz@usda.gov</i>	
Erin Schritz	(937) 456-5159 x2788
<i>nathan.weber@usda.gov</i>	
Denae Washington ...	(937) 456-5159 x2783
<i>denae.washington@usda.gov</i>	
Renee Buck	(937) 456-5159 x2783
<i>rbuck@pheasantsforever.org</i>	

Partner Staff

Alison Manning.....	(937) 854-7645
<i>alison.manning@agri.ohio.gov</i>	
Ben Eaton.....	Ext. 0525
<i>benjamin.eaton@agri.ohio.gov</i>	

Board of Supervisors

Bruce Flora, Fred Glander, Dr. Mark Judy,
Andrew O'Diam, Billy Myers

TREE & PLANT SALE RECAP

Community Support Drives Successful Annual Tree & Plant Sale

Thanks to the strong support of our community, this year's annual Tree and Plant Sale was a remarkable success. A total of **9,350 trees and 550 native potted plants** were sold, reflecting a shared commitment to improving our local environment.



Every purchase made through the sale contributes directly to the health of our native ecosystem. Planting trees and native species helps restore natural habitats, supports pollinators and wildlife, improves air and water quality, and strengthens the resilience of our landscape against erosion and climate impacts.

Native plants play a vital role. Because they are adapted to our region, they require less maintenance, use fewer resources like water and fertilizer, and provide essential food and shelter for local species that depend on them.

We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who participated, whether by purchasing plants, volunteering, or helping spread the word. Your involvement is more than just a transaction; it's an investment in a healthier, more sustainable environment for our community.

Together, these efforts are planting the seeds for a greener future.

SAVE THE DATE

MULTI-COUNTY EDUCATOR WORKSHOP

America: Wild & Tree!

7/28/26 & 7/29/26

UVCC WILLOWBROOK LAND LAB

Piqua; more info to follow

featuring: **PROJECT LEARNING TREE OHIO** & **OHIO PROJECT WILD**

Project WILD materials are provided free of charge by the ODNR Division of Wildlife.

Questions?
Email: Mike Mullen Montgomery SWCD mullenm@mcoho.org,
Linda Raterman Miami SWCD lraterman@miamiswcd.org, or
Amanda Hurley Shelby SWCD amanda.hurley@oh.nacdnet.net

Come have fun and learn with us this July! Great for teacher's pre-k-12, informal educators, naturalists, homeschool teachers, parents who are just interested in adding nature based learning at home. It is laid back and everyone is welcome!

POND CLINIC

Whether or not you have a pond of your own, you are invited to the Preble-Montgomery County Pond Clinic just outside of New Paris on Thursday, June 4th. Our site is a former gravel pit that is now used as a recreational lake and a summer camp. Eugene Braig, Aquatic Ecologist from The Ohio State University, will speak about management issues with large bodies of water. A representative from the Preble County Water Rescue Team will speak about water safety and the team's response to an incident at this site just last year. Then our host will speak about what he has done with the property since becoming the owner. Lastly, Preble SWCD staff will offer pond advice to round out the evening.



Here are all the details:

What: Pond Clinic, free & open to the public

When: Thursday, June 4 at 5:30 p.m.

Where: Camp Mahanaim

6336 Guy Murray Rd

New Paris, OH 45347

A **FREE** fish dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by our presenters. There will be plenty of time for questions from the crowd. The clinic will end around 8:00 p.m. Be sure to bring your appetite and your lawn chairs!

Please RSVP by May 29 to Preble SWCD at (937) 456-5159.

CURRENT AGRICULTURAL USE VALUE (CAUV)

One of the many services MSWCD provides to residents of Montgomery County is the work we do hand-in-hand with Auditors office in performing soils assessment and site visits for CAUV.



- **Ten or more acres must be devoted exclusively to commercial agricultural use; or**
- **If under ten acres are devoted exclusively to commercial agricultural use, the farm must produce an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500.**

Applications for CAUV must be filed with the county auditor.

Visit the Montgomery County Auditors website.

<https://www.mcoho.org/1198/CAUV>

Contact

Phone: 937-496-3281

Email: mcrealestate@mcoho.org

General Information

For property tax purposes, farmland devoted exclusively to commercial agriculture may be valued according to its current use rather than at its "highest and best" potential use. This provision of Ohio law is known as the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) program. By permitting values to be set well below true market values, the CAUV normally results in a substantially lower tax bill for working farmers.

To qualify for the CAUV, land must meet one of the following requirements during the three years preceding an application for the CAUV:

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 3	.....	Board of Supervisors Meeting 0900
June 4	.....	Pond Clinic with Preble SWCD
June 17	.....	Pollinator Expo at WPAFB
July 1	.....	Board of Supervisors Meeting 0900
July 3	.....	Office Closed-Independence Day
July 14-19	.....	Montgomery County Fair
July 23-25	.....	Brookville Community Picnic
July 28-29	.....	Multi-County Teacher Workshop
August 5	.....	Board of Supervisors Meeting 0900
Sept 2	Board of Supervisors Meeting 0900
Sept 7	Office Closed-Labor Day
Sept 12	Fall Fest and Annual Meeting



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STORMWATER SOLUTIONS...

Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution
Andrew Rickard - Montgomery SWCD

April showers bring May flowers; they also bring stormwater pollution. As the weather warms up, and we all begin to spend more time outside, Montgomery SWCD encourages residents of Germantown to be mindful of what is getting into their storm sewer. Curb inlets outside your home lead to a larger system that is maintained by city staff and contributes to waterways like Twin Creek. With your help we can keep this system free of stormwater pollutants.

Many of the things that contribute to stormwater pollution are not often thought about. Below are a few small changes that can help keep our waterways clean.

Wash your car on the lawn - the soapy water is bad for aquatic ecosystems. The grass keeps that water from running into the storm sewer.

Don't throw yard waste in the street - leaves and sticks can wash into the storm sewer clogging it up. This can back up water and create work for city staff.

Properly dispose of oil - Dumping oil in the storm sewer or on the ground is bad for the environment. Most auto parts stores dispose of it for free!

Clean up trash - Trash on the streets can end up in the storm sewer. This can clog pipes and end up in our waterways.

Pick up after your pets - Pet waste left on the ground can wash into storm drains, adding harmful bacteria and nutrients to our waterways. Always bag it and trash it.

In making these small changes, residents can keep their waters free of stormwater pollutants.. If you want more information, please contact Montgomery SWCD to see how you can help!



ORDER YOUR RAIN BARRELS HERE...

ORDER ONLINE NOW!




DISTRICT EXPANDS DITCH MAINTENANCE PROGRAM TO BETTER SERVE LANDOWNERS

The Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD) continues to strengthen its ditch maintenance program in 2026, supporting local landowners and protecting vital drainage systems across the region.

This year's program includes **31 maintenance projects**, serving **2,061 landowners** and covering a drainage area of **23,647 acres**. In total, crews will maintain **264,200 feet of open ditch**, ensuring proper water flow and reducing the risk of flooding and erosion.

To improve efficiency and expand capacity, the district has upgraded its equipment fleet. MSWCD now oper-

ates **three tractors**, including **two new John Deere 6120M models equipped with side-arm mowers**, allowing crews to handle more work simultaneously. The existing **John Deere 6300 with a brush hog** will remain in service, providing additional flexibility when workload demands increase.



The district also welcomes **new ditch maintenance employee Neal Miller**, who joins the team as operations ramp up for the season.

2026 Maintenance Schedule

The ditch maintenance program follows a structured schedule throughout the year:

Evaluation

- Open Channel: April-June
- Pipe: March-April

Spraying

- Weeds & Brush: May-September
- Cattails: September-November

Mowing

- May/June-September

Repairs

- Open Channel: March-November
- Pipe: March-May

Adjustments to this year's schedule have been made in response to increasingly wet spring conditions, allowing crews to work more effectively and safely.

Landowner Cooperation Essential

District officials remind landowners that cooperation is key to maintaining safe and effective drainage systems. A 15-foot berm along ditches is required for safety and access, and residents are encouraged to help keep these areas clear.

"Giving us that 15 feet makes a big difference," staff noted, emphasizing that unobstructed access allows crews to complete maintenance quickly and safely.

In addition, the district plans to be reseeding berm areas where needed in 2026, helping stabilize soil and promote healthy vegetation along ditch banks.

Through continued investment, careful planning, and strong community cooperation, MSWCD's ditch maintenance program remains a critical part of protecting farmland, infrastructure, and water quality across the district.

The District held its semi-annual Ditch Maintenance Breakfast at Rob's in Brookville on April 16th with a representative from each project invited to attend.

**SEE YOU AT FALL FEST!
SEPTEMBER 12, 2026!**

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DOUG SCHWIETERMAN
CEO & FOUNDER

4240 SL Rl. 49
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WHAT IS ENVIROTHON?

The Ohio Area 4 Envirothon is a competitive, academic, outdoor team event for high school students which tests their knowledge in five areas: Aquatic Ecology, Current Environmental Issues (CEI), this year non-point pollution, Forestry, Soils and Wildlife. The event is designed to stimulate and reinforce the students' interest in our environment and our natural resources while encouraging cooperative decision making, team building and problem solving.



Students who participate gain a greater awareness of natural resources and environmental issues, a better understanding of interrelationships between living and non-living components of the environment and an increased interest in further science study. Teams consist of five members from the same school and though each student contributes his or her personal best, the score that counts at the end of the day is the team score.

The four top scoring teams then progress on to the State Envirothon Competition where the winning team then goes on to compete in the North American Envirothon Competition.

The Area 4 Envirothon encourages young people to become action-oriented members of society and promotes the spirit of inquiry, competition and excellence.

Environmental interest has shown steady growth in the past years. More people of all ages are taking the time to get educated and to get involved in activities to protect and promote our natural resources.

The Envirothon, designed to take youthful curiosity one step farther, is all about getting involved and getting educated. It is our hope as resource professionals to push the minds of young people to realize the interrelationship of all living things and to look toward the future of resource management.

The Area IV Envirothon is one of five Area Envirothon's to be held throughout the state. From here, winners proceed to the State Envirothon where they are given the opportu-

nity to advance to the National Envirothon.

Test Questions and study material for the Envirothon are prepared and assembled by natural resource professionals from a variety of agencies, organizations, universities, and businesses. These individuals also staff the various resource stations at each competition.

The Envirothon is a competitive, academic outdoor event for high school students. The program has a few goals and objectives, including:

- *to promote greater awareness of natural resources and environmental issues*
- *to heighten understanding of the interrelationships between plants, animals, humans and the environment they share*
- *to increase student interest in further environmental and natural history study*
- *to celebrate the spirit of competition and excellence*
- *to encourage young people to become action-oriented members of society*
- *to interest students to explore natural resource environmental careers*

By preparing for and participating in Envirothon, students will develop interpersonal skills by working with other student team members in cooperative decision making and problem solving.

Students will also meet professionals from a variety of federal, state, and local natural resource conservation and management agencies and organizations and private industry. Students will benefit from exposure to various approaches to environmental questions. They will also have an opportunity to learn more about environmental career opportunities and responsibilities.

This year the Area IV Envirothon was held at the Preble County Historical Society. More than 60 teams from across southwest Ohio were present with more than 300 students participating. The teams with the highest score for each station were:

Soils- Summit County Day #3
Aquatics- Benjamin Logan HS #1
Wildlife- Miami Valley CTC #1
Forestry- Centerville #2
Current Issue- Cedarville

The teams advancing to the State competition June 1-3 to be held at Franciscan University in Steubenville are: Summit Country Day from Hamilton County, Benjamin Logan HS from Logan County, Bethel HS from Miami County and Miami Valley CTC from Montgomery County. Good luck to everyone and congratulations on the job well done.

If you're a high school teacher or home school educator interested in more information, contact Mike Mullen at mullenm@mcoho.org.

**SEE YOU AT FALL FEST!
SEPTEMBER 12, 2026!**

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811 For Homeowners

WHAT IS 811?

811 is the national call-before-you-dig phone number. Anyone who plans to dig should call **811** or go to the **Ohio 811** center's site a few business days before digging to request that the approximate location of buried utilities be marked with paint or flags so that you don't unintentionally dig into an underground utility line.

811 protects you and your community! Hitting a buried line while digging can disrupt utility service, cost money to repair, or cause serious injury or death. Always contact your **811** center, wait the required time for utilities to respond to your request, and ensure that all utilities have responded to your request before putting a shovel in the ground.

DO I NEED TO CONTACT 811?

Yes! Any digging requires contacting your **811** center, either by calling **811** or making a request through the **Ohio 811** center's website. Planting a garden? Installing a fence or mailbox? You must contact **811**.

When you dial **811**, you will automatically be connected to a representative from Ohio **811** who will ask you simple questions about the location and details of your digging project. If you make your request online, you will enter the same information into a form. Either way, you will receive a ticket number and instructions for much time utilities have to respond to your request, as well as how to confirm that all utilities have responded before you can safely dig.



PLAN AHEAD

Notify - Notify utilities of your intent to dig by calling **811** or making an online request a few days before you plan to break ground.

Your state **811** center will notify utility operators in your area that they need to mark any buried utility lines on your property with paint or flags.

Wait - Wait a few days to allow utilities to send out locators to mark buried lines with paint or flags. On average, between 7-8 utility operators are notified for each request.

Confirm - Confirm that all utilities have responded to your request. Use the process explained by your **811** call center representative or outlined on your **811** center ticket to confirm that each affected utility has responded.

Respect - Respect the utility marks (paint or flags). The marks provided by utility operators are the guide for the duration of your project.

If you are unable to maintain the marks during your project, or the project will continue past your request's expiration date, please contact your **811** center to ask for a re-mark.

DIG CAREFULLY

Try to avoid digging on top of or within 18-24" on all sides of utility marks, which may mean moving your project to another part of your yard less congested with buried lines.

If you must dig near the marks or use machinery of any kind, contact the Ohio **811** Center about the law in our state.

Even projects you might think are "small," like planting a garden, require you to contact 811.



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