



Ashtabula Soil & Water Conservation District

Conservation Almanac

Newsletter 3320

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Website: www.ashtabulaswcd.org

E-mail: ashtswcd@suite224.net

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SWCD OPEN HOUSE AND ELECTION

The Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors would like to invite the public to attend the District's Open House on Thursday, November 14, 2013 from noon to 6:00 pm at the District's office located 39 Wall Street, Jefferson.

Those interested in soil and water conservation issues within the county are welcome to visit the District's office and learn of the resources available. District staff will be available to answer questions landowners may have concerning soil and water conservation issues. The Ohio Soil and Water Commission will be conducting an election between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm for the purpose of electing two supervisors to serve on the five member board of supervisors.

RESIDENT REQUEST FOR ABSENTEE BALLOT

Residents wishing to vote absentee by mail must request an absentee ballot application no earlier than 21 days prior to the election and the District office must receive the request no later than 5 days prior to the election. The election for Ashtabula SWCD will be held on Nov. 14, 2013.

Residents wishing to vote absentee at the office must complete the resident request for absentee ballot form no earlier than 21 days prior to the election and no later than 4:00 p.m. on Nov. 14, 2013

Our monthly board meeting will be held immediately following the open house at 6:30 pm. The public is always invited. Contact the District office with any questions at 440-576-4946

Forestry Committee formed in Ashtabula County

The Ashtabula SWCD recently joined with OSU Extension, ODNr Division of Forestry and USDA NRCS staff and private forest owners to serve on a Forestry Committee for the county. The committee's goals are to conduct forestry related workshops yearly and form a woodland owner's group. The committee recently held the first workshop on Sept. 14th in Rome Twp. The topic was "Woodlot Stewardship Management Plan — Now What?" Over 50 attendees learned of woodlot management plans and how to follow the plans. The workshop was intended for those enrolled in the CAUV Commercial Timber Program and the Ohio Forest Tax Law Program.



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Special Points of Interest

Sept.	2 Labor Day Holiday
Sept.	12 Board Meeting 7:30 pm @ office
Sept.	22 Autumn Begins
Sept.	24 Fall Amur Sale Pick-up Day
October	10 Board Meeting 7:30 pm @ office
October	14 Columbus Day Holiday
Nov.	14 Open House Election



Up Coming Workshops of Interest

Ohio Woodland Stewards TREE workshops offered **Why Trees Matter Forum (October 16) and Winter Tree ID (November 1)**

WAYNE COUNTY - Full day WHY TREES MATTER FORUM is scheduled to be presented on Wednesday, October 16, 2013, (8:30am-4:00pm) at the Hilton Garden Inn, 959 Dover Rd, Wooster, OH 44691. Discover the social, economic and environmental impact of trees in your community. Lunch and materials are included in the cost of \$60 (early registration) for the workshop. See brochure for details. To register:

<http://woodlandstewards.osu.edu/workshops/2013-why-trees-matter-forum>
<https://www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=1275373>

MEDINA COUNTY – WINTER TREE ID - three-quarter day in-depth training and practice to identify trees without the leaves Friday, November 1, 2013, (9:30am-2:30pm) at The Lodge at Allardale, 141 Remsen Road, Medina, OH 44256. The class begins indoors with some introductory identification clues and samples that are used to work through a fruit and twig guide. Weather permitting, afternoon portion of the workshop will be in the field. Lunch and materials are included in the cost of \$35 for the workshop. See brochure for details. To register:

<http://woodlandstewards.osu.edu/classes/events/winter-tree-id>
<https://www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=1267147>

Keep an Eye Out for Conservation Needs During Harvest and Sign-Up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Applications submitted by November 15th will receive 1st priority for funding.

Columbus, OH, Sept. 17, 2013 — It's the time of year Ohio farmers hit the fields to harvest, driving over the land planted last spring. As combines remove the crop, the land hidden beneath reveals areas that may benefit from conservation treatments to improve the health of the land and next year's crop. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employs professional conservationists who, together with the farmer, evaluate how the land may benefit from conservation treatment. They then develop a conservation plan outlining which conservation treatments, or practices, will improve the land. State Resource Conservationist Mark Smith describes a possible scenario. "When the farmer harvests a field, he or she may notice things like wheel tracks, gullies, or places where the crop didn't grow well. These may indicate areas of soil compaction, soil erosion, or some other problem. Cover crops, gaining popularity among farmers, can help improve soil health, reduce compaction, tie up nutrients, and improve the amount of water soil can hold." Dot Harris, Ohio's Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, manages the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and explains how EQIP can help with the cost of trying a new conservation practice like cover crops. "With a conservation plan in hand, the farmer applies for EQIP to pay for conservation practices like cover crops, drainage water management, rotational grazing, and much more. The financial assistance pays a part of the cost of trying these things, which may be just what's needed to make trying something new worthwhile." When it comes to cover crops, Dave Brandt, a Fairfield County farmer and cover crop advocate, believes that over time, cover crops actually increase profit and increase the value of farmland. Any eligible agricultural producer can apply for EQIP anytime. Periodically, NRCS reviews applications for those that provide the most environmental benefit, a process called ranking, and selects those that provide the highest benefit for funding depending on the availability of EQIP funds. Recognizing that it may be challenging to make an appointment with the local NRCS office to develop a conservation plan and apply for EQIP during harvest, those that do apply by November 15 will receive priority over those that apply after that date. NRCS will send letters to farmers who applied for EQIP last year but were not selected for funding, to determine if they want to re-submit their deferred applications for funding consideration now.

After NRCS selects applications for funding, the conservationist will contact the applicant to sign an EQIP contract describing which conservation practices the farmer agrees to apply, how much NRCS will pay for with EQIP funds, and develop a schedule that the farmer agrees to for applying or installing the conservation practice. After the farmer installs or applies the practice, he or she notifies NRCS. After NRCS verifies that the farmer installed or applied the conservation practice as agreed upon, the conservationist will certify the practice and initiate the payment process. Typically, the farmer agrees to maintain the practice for a given time-period, which is the average time of the practices' effectiveness. Acting State Conservationist Michelle Lohstroh says, "We at NRCS are committed to helping Ohio agriculture thrive by advising farmers on ways to improve their natural resources, especially keeping soil, the foundation of agriculture, healthy. Federal farm programs, like EQIP, help farmers pay for the initial cost of conservation because all American enjoy the resulting environmental benefits - cleaner air and water, diverse wildlife and plant populations, and productive soil." Agricultural producers interested in applying for EQIP and conservation planning assistance should contact their

Conservation Education Programs

The following programs are available through the Ashtabula SWCD for schools, students, youth and adult organizations upon request.

Stream Study with Macroinvertebrates!

A field trip to a local stream or river to explore and investigate the water is very exciting for students or adults. Exploring a stream for the “bugs” or macroinvertebrate which live in the stream can double the fun for the students and adults. These “bugs” however can provide us with a huge insight as to the quality of the water. Using a scientific method for collecting, identifying and processing the data students or adults can determine the water’s quality. Students or adults will learn how to identify the “Bug”, use the field equipment, complete the data form and learn the proper site characteristics required. A dry run demonstration can be completed right in the classroom or meeting room prior to visiting a stream.



WATERSHED EDUCATION

The *EnviroScape* model is a unique, interactive learning tool that helps students and adults make a visual connection between land use and water quality. Once they see it, they don’t forget it.

The *EnviroScape* dramatically demonstrates water pollution and its prevention. The three-dimensional landscapes illustrate residential, recreational, agricultural, agricultural, industrial and transportation areas—all representing possible sources of water pollution. Children and adults learn by using chemicals (drink mix) and loose soil (cocoa) throughout a typical community to see how their actions and those of others may affect your water quality. After the “pollution” is put in place, water is sprayed on the model to stimulate a rain shower. The polluted rainwater flows across the landscape and ends their journey in a lake, polluting it with a rainbow of colors. The *EnviroScape* actually emphasizes pollution prevention with a follow-up demonstration that shows how to prevent such pollution through the use of best management practices.

EnviroScapes models are engaging and effective in creating a real sense of understanding through experience and hands-on demonstration. This makes complex issues much clearer and helps people see how to prevent water pollution in their own communities. *EnviroScape* programs communicate to people of all ages that we share responsibilities in preventing water pollution.



Enviroscape Model

Ashtabula Soil & Water Conservation District
39 Wall Street, Jefferson, Ohio 44047-1137 Phone: 440-576-4946 FAX: 440-576-9546 E-mail ashtswcd@suite24.net
Board of Supervisors Web Page www.ashtabulaswcd.org

Dr. Paul Mechling - Chairman
Wendell Obernyer -Vice Chairman
Ron Smoker - Secretary
Robert Wilson - Treasurer/Fiscal Agent
Robin Boggs - Member

Hours of Operation: Monday thru Thursday 8:00am—4:30 pm

Associate Supervisor

Dan Decker

District Staff

Nathan Paskey-District Manager/Technician
Jim Welker-District Technician/Education Coordinator

Excellent Article on
Timber Theft from
Ohio Woodland
Stewardship Program
Fall 2013 Issue . We
thought many of you
would appreciate the
information.

Protect Yourself Against Timber Theft

**Dave Apsley, Natural Resources Specialist, Eric McConnell,
Ph.D., Forest Operations and Products Specialist, Peggy Kirk-
Hall, J.D., Agricultural and Resource Law Field Specialist**
This article is adapted from the upcoming OSU Extension fact
sheet which will be published later this summer.

Timber Theft in Ohio

When someone enters another person's property to remove timber without the permission of the landowner it is known as timber theft. Timber theft can be categorized as 1) part of an ongoing timber sale and 2) when a person intentionally enters a property with the exclusive purpose of stealing, or "poaching," timber. *Theft as Part of a Timber Sale* In this case it is often the word of the property owner against that of the buyer or contractor. Without a well written contract, it is often impossible to prove that a "theft" has occurred. Sale and property boundaries should be clearly and accurately delineated on a map and in the woodland with paint. Individual trees to be harvested should be marked with paint near the ground line at eye level. This makes it obvious and beyond any which trees are reasonable doubt involved in your sale. A record should also be kept by species and size for further verification. Contracts should clearly spell out the amount, method, and timing of payments from the sale of timber. A "lump-sum", "sealed-bid" timber sale is recommended. Not following these precautions puts both you and the logger at risk. Additionally, neighboring property owners can be placed in jeopardy of losing timber as well. Whether intentional or unintentional (on the part of the landowner or logger) the result is the same. *Intentional Timber Theft (a.k.a. "Poaching")* When no legitimate timber harvest is occurring, defining theft is much easier. In its simplest form a perpetrator enters the property of an unknowing landowner, harvests trees and removes them from the property. Sometimes the theft is more elaborate. Culprits in the past have posed as absentee landowners and contacted loggers to harvest sites. Unsuspecting and trusting loggers have paid fair prices for the timber... and been left to deal with the legal outcomes. In other instances, timber buyers have what is being offered in purchased from lessees and not the property owners, either unknowingly or in collaboration with the lessee. *Timber Theft has Occurred - Now What?* Immediately contact your county sheriff's office or the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Insist they investigate and file a report. If you do not get immediate response from law enforcement, document with photographs and notes. If logging is still in process, try to identify the violator (vehicle and equipment make and models, license plate numbers etc.) but do not attempt a confrontation. If a significant amount of timber was stolen, contact a consulting forester (<http://www.osafdirectory.com>) for assistance. This documentation can be used in court, for out of court settlements, and for tax purposes since stolen timber is a casualty loss (<http://www.timbertax.org>). *Ohio Laws Pertaining to Timber Theft* Injuring Vines, Bushes, Trees, or Crops on Land of Another (Ohio Revised Code 901.51) states "no person...shall recklessly cut, destroy, or injure crops, trees, vines, bushes, shrubs, or saplings growing on the land of another..." Doing so is a fourth-degree misdemeanor, which is subject to a maximum imprisonment of 30 days and a maximum fine of \$250. Damage payments to the property owner associated with this law are triple the amount of total loss to the property. These are treble damages, but the burden of proof is on the victim to show "reckless" cutting occurred for a civil action. If damages are less than \$3,000, another option for victims against an identified defendant is small claims court, where legal action can be pursued without an attorney. It is recommended to base any settlement amount on a certified forester's estimate of your lost timber.

More information on timber theft and the new 4 page fact sheet can be viewed at OSU Ohio Woodland Stewardship Program Web site: <http://woodlandstewards.osu.edu/newsletter/fall-2013-woodlands-water-wildlife>