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A Word from our Director— Mike Libben

Greetings fellow Conservationists,

One year removed from the Toledo water “crisis” and Lake Erie is back in the news with tales of green water and potential drinking bans on the horizon. Nitrate levels have been high in the central Ohio area. Record rain falls have challenged our storm water infrastructure.

Sometimes it doesn't seem like we are doing our job as soil and water professionals, does it? Challenging times can make our work more difficult and yet more rewarding if we find success and make a difference. I assure you; our SWCD's across the state are doing their job and doing it at an exemplary level.

What would the headlines be if we were not out on the front lines working for our farmers, homeowners, subdivisions, and local governments? SWCD's are making a difference in all corners of the state. We need to make sure that our stakeholders know what we are doing...who we are educating...where we have made an impact. Take your district highlights and accomplishments out into the community. I see some great newsletters come through my e-mail from other districts. I challenge you to make sure those same stories are reaching the general public through your local papers, TV stations, and personal visits. Go to Rotary and Kiwanis meetings. Give them your SWCD message. Most importantly, make that

close relationship with your commissioners and legislators.

We invite you to join your other SWCD professionals on September 3rd at the Farm Science Review site to help get it ready for the big show. Take a day away from the office and field for a little mental break and network with your counterparts. It will be a day well spent to refresh and say hello to some old and new friends. Lunch is on us so get your RSVP in and grab your rake!

Sincerely,

Mike Libben

P.S. I promise we will serve algae free water!

Professional Development Corner

We have all been there, staring at a cursor on the screen trying to find the right words as you compose an email. And unfortunately, we do not always do a good job when we decide what to write. In fact, as many as 50% of emails are misunderstood. That is a lot of wasted time,

energy, and a domino effect of miscommunication. In light of these issues, let's talk about some ways to improve our email communications.

The first line of defense is to think about whether the topic is truly worthy of an email. If you

can achieve your intended goal in a short phone conversation, then I would recommend that you pick up the phone. Additionally, if your meaning might be misunderstood because the content is brand new, very old, or just plain confusing, pick up the phone. On the other hand,

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Professional Development (continued)

the perfect avenue if you know the person is out of the office, if you need to send a consistent message to a group of people, if you need written documentation or want to include attachments. Additionally, if it is your first time reaching out to a person, I recommend a quick phone call letting them know you plan to send something their way. The phone call gives you a great opportunity to gauge their interest and knowledge. It also lets you give them a summary of the project and your ideal timeline so you can ensure they respond in a helpful way.

Now, you have decided that an email is appropriate. Next, think about what the recipient will see. The subject needs to be relevant now and searchable when they file it away. For example, if you are sending our Federation President an email about funding, instead of making the subject "Funding" you could try "Warren

County Funding 2015", this is much more valuable for the recipient and for your own records.

You should make your point in the first sentence of the email and keep the entire email to only one to two paragraphs with any additional content attached. Let your reader know your purpose in writing, what you hope to get from them, and when. The hardest emails to respond to are open ended and lengthy ones. Certainly we do not want to be abrupt, but we also do not want to belabor a topic via email or leave the reader wondering if/when/how to respond.

Proof reading is a must. We can draft an email in 30 seconds, but that is not enough time to think through grammar, context, and general etiquette. I would even recommend asking someone close to you to proof read an email before you send it if you are unsure about how to convey

your message. Take the time to make your correspondence complete, without error, and polite. If you cannot do those things, then you should consider going back to step one and make a phone call instead.

It is also important to remember that emails are legal documents and public records. Once you hit send, the content is out of your hands. It is not wise to send anything that you would not want your entire professional network to see.

Let your electronic communication work for you and not against you. If you find that you often get no response or do not get the response that you hope for when you send emails, then you may want to ask a peer for some tips and feedback. Email is the most common form of communication in the professional world, let's all make an effort to use it well.

- Written by Caitlin Botschner

Sherry West Scholarship Winner— Mia Hafer

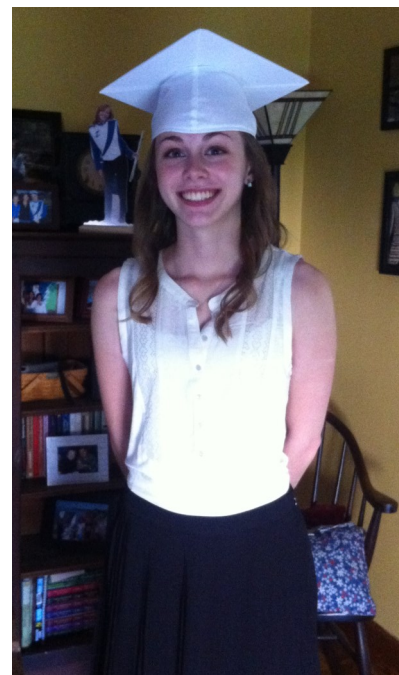
Mia Hafer is the recipient of the 2015 Sherry West Scholarship. The Employee Association is thrilled to support Mia in her education and career with this scholarship.

Mia is entering her junior year at Case Western Reserve University where she double majors in Art History and Art Education. Her work study position is with the Cleveland Botanical Garden where she works with children of all ages and teaches about plants, plant communities, ecosystems, and environmental issues that threaten biodiversity. She is also a volunteer with Muskingum SWCD where she assists with Camp Adventure, Kids Conservation Camp, and helps with the District's stream monitoring

program as well other special events.

Mia's passion for conservation also extends across the globe to Uganda. Mia has helped set up technology to allow communication between children in Uganda and Conservation Campers in the United States which has brought a global component to the District's education programs. The project focuses on water quality and helping students here understand the importance of water resources abroad.

On behalf of all the association members we wish Mia well in all her endeavors!



Hobby Highlight- Bee Friendly!

Honeybees are under a great deal of stress lately. Honeybee populations have dropped 50% in the past 25 years. There are pests and diseases, pesticides and herbicides, genetically modified crops, lack of diversity and habitat loss that contribute to the decline of the honeybee. We've all heard that one in three bites we take is owed to the work of the honeybee. So why aren't we treating them better? There are simple things you can do to help and one of our new Directors is talking a lot about bees these days. Amy Roskilly has been keeping bees for over 10 years. "I got involved with honeybees, oddly, on a cold night in February. Some friends who worked at the Cleveland Botanical Garden were taking a class on beekeeping and I tagged along. I was fascinated from the first meeting. I began helping out with the new hives at the botanical garden and eventually moved into having a hive at my own house. Not only are they a vital part of our lives, they are endlessly fascinating. There are so many ways to help pollinators, in particular the bees. Keeping bees is not for everyone but if you want to learn more, there are myriad beekeeping organizations around the State of Ohio. Here are a few things you can do to help out our pollinators."

Plant for pollinators!

All pollinators need food and many of our home landscapes don't provide any. Think of taking a road trip and having no gas stations or food stops along the way; that is what a bee or other pollinator experiences when they cross most of our lawns that only have grass, shrubs and only a few flowers.

Plant flowers that bloom at various times of the year to diversify their food source.

This keeps your gardens beautiful Spring thru the Fall. Plants like Beebalm, Sunflower, Blazing Star, Cardinal Flower, Goldenrod, Asters, Lavender, Catnip, are just a few you can incorporate to help our pollinators.

Reducing or eliminating fertilizers and pesticide use in your yard.

Get your soil tested first to see if even need those. The first flower that bees forage on in the Spring are dandelions. While these have a bad reputation for being a 'weed' they are so important in providing food for bees seeking nourishment after a long winter.

Learn about our native bees!

There are over 4,000 types of native bees in North America. These include many types of bumblebees, mason bees, sweat bees, leafcutter bees, to name a few. Native bees are actually better pollinators than honeybees as they come out earlier and stay out later. A native bee hive is easy to make and is low maintenance. It's very 'Field of Dreams' in that if you build it and they will come.



- Written by Amy Roskilly



Upcoming Events— Mark your Calendar

Farm Science Review Work Day September 3rd

Join other SWCD employees from across the State to help get the Soil and Water Conservation Park site ready for the Farm Science Review. The association will provide lunch.

Time: 10am—3pm

RSVP to Bonnie Dailey (see attached flyer for details)



Farm Science Review September 22-24, 2015



Living Lands & Waters Cleanup Event This Fall

The employees association will partner with the Federation to clean up the Ohio River with Chad Pregracke's team from Living Lands and Waters.

Date: TBD



Ohio Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Employees

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The Mission of the OASWCDE is to strengthen local soil and water conservation district programs by:

- Promoting the professional development of employees.
- Enhancing cooperation between Districts through improved communication and information sharing.
- Establishing a platform for which to communicate with affiliated state and national associations.
- Offering the talent and expertise of all District employees throughout the state as a resource to assist, support and develop District programs.
- Fostering a sense of belonging for employees that extends beyond individual Districts and binds dedicated people to the cause of conservation.

If you are not already a member— join today!