

# Inside Your OASWCDE



December 2014

## Inside this issue:

Scholarship Winners	2
Scholarship Opportunities	2
Social Media Class	2
A Word from Tim	3
Update to Bylaws	3
Area Directors	4 - 5
Membership Info	6

## Upcoming Training:

- ◆ NACD Annual Meeting  
New Orleans, LA  
February 2-4, 2015
- ◆ OFSWCD/Partners Meeting  
Columbus, OH  
February 22-24, 2015



## Are Professional Organizations Worth It? - Dan Donaldson

I chose the value of joining professional organizations for this edition of director's viewpoint because soil and water conservation districts as a whole in Ohio appear to be at a very interesting crossroad, some say a vital crossroad.

We have several very serious natural resource issues occurring across Ohio right now. The hazardous algal bloom in Lake Erie, Hemlock woolly adelgid, Asian carp, worms, and other invasive species to name just a few. If soil and water district staffs are going to be part of the solution, they need to be engaged in the professional natural resource community.

Yes, the OASWCDE is a good start. The OASWCDE is working hard to provide relevant trainings and forums for Ohio's SWCD employees. Another logical network to join is the Environmental Professionals Network (EPN), run by none other than our own David Hanselmann. The EPN has both a social and virtual network, including a monthly breakfast at The Ohio State University. Visit <http://epn.osu.edu> for more information.

So are these and other professional organizations worth joining? The consensus is yes. Beyond the soil and water world, it's generally accepted that people that are active in professional networking organizations are more successful.

## Directors Wanted!

The OASWCDE Board of Directors is looking for candidates from Areas 2 and 4 who are interested in serving as a director.

The term of an OASWCDE director is 3 years. The director representing an area must

be an employee of a SWCD in the designated area and a member of the OASWCDE.

The Board of Directors need individuals from the various areas of expertise to serve as Directors to make sure all areas are represented.

The Board of Directors is only as effective as those willing to serve.

Please contact the current directors in your area (listed on the back page) if you are interested in serving.

The five major benefits of joining are:

**Jobs** - Many professional organizations help their members find jobs or offer listings of opening in their membership and other related careers.

**Mentoring** - A tool that we in the SWCD world probably do not use often enough, especially for our newer employees.

**Professional Development** - Most organizations offer professional development opportunities such as workshops, publications and website shared materials. They also can keep members up-to-date on current information on relevant issues.

**Networking** - Most organizations have annual conferences or dinners that enable networking with other similar professionals, recruiters and organizations. It's just a good way to keep you on the mind of others in your field of expertise.

**Scholarships** - Just like the OASWCDE, many of these organizations have scholarships for members or students studying in that field.

So consider branching out beyond your normal professional organizations to further your own professional goals and the goals of your conservation district.

## Congratulations to Our 2014 Scholarship Winners

**Sherry West Scholarship**  
Lisa Barkalow was valedictorian from Valley View high school in 2013. Her activities included National Honor Society, Interact club, Academic Team, Project Charlie mentor, and Fast Pitch Softball. She finished her first year at the University of Cincinnati where she is studying Mechanical Engineering and hopes to use this degree in the alternative energy industry. She stays



*Lisa Barkalow*  
*Sherry West Scholarship Winner*

involved volunteering at Threads clothing ministry and teaching an environmental awareness program at an afterschool center through the Girl Scouts organization. Lisa is a great example of why the scholarship program is worth supporting.

### SWCD Staff Continuing Education Scholarship

Gwen Roth was recently accepted into the Advanced Inquire Program at Miami University, where she will work to receive her Master of

Arts in Teaching in Biological Sciences. It is a unique Master's Degree program that is a partnership between the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden and Miami University's Project Dragonfly. The degree program courses on education, conservation and community leadership. It is specifically designed for teachers and informal educators like Gwen. We wish Gwen the best in her 2 ½ year program! We are sure it will help her in her future career goals.



*Gwen Roth, Education Specialist*  
*Hamilton County SWCD*  
*Continuing Education Scholarship Winner*

## Show Me the Money!

**SWCD Staff Continuing Education Scholarship- \$300**  
Must be current member of OASWCDE who has been a dues paying member for 3 years. The intent of scholarship is to assist with professional development of employees tuition, registration, & books.

**Sherry West Scholarship - \$500**  
Applicants eligible to apply are:  
1. A son or daughter (including step children) of a current member of the OASWCDE who has been a dues paying member of a minimum of three years prior to application deadline.  
2. A son or daughter (including step children) of a retired,

disabled or deceased district employee who was an OASWCDE who was a dues paying member for a minimum of three years prior to their separation from service.

Forms are available at: <http://www.oaswcde.org/Forms.html>.

## Social Media - Julia Cumming

In early November, the Ohio Association of SWCD Employees coordinated a social media class at The Computer Workshop in Dublin. The topics covered were Google Plus, Linked In, Facebook and Twitter. Eleven people attended the class, with a variety of experience.

Almost everyone in attendance was helping their district with a Facebook page. Only one person reported using Twitter. If you were a beginner in one of these topics, it was a great way to get your feet wet. I, for one, finally understand what a hashtag is and how to use it.

The day ended early, so we had time for open discussion. The question of the day was, "You have these tools, now what?" The challenge is reaching your target audience. You can build the most amazing Facebook page with beautiful photos and relevant stories, but what good is it if your district only has 100 followers?



"Social" continued on next page



## A Word From Our President - Tim White

The kind of work some of us do in our job classification requires us to step away from the computer screen now and then – thankfully – and head for the great outdoors, just to make sure that good conservation practices are being applied effectively on the land and in the effort to protect our water resources. Sometimes in life, just as in nature, “storms” may rise up against us. Some are more intense and may last a little longer than others. Yet, like someone once stated, “difficulties may challenge our energy and our perseverance but bring the strongest qualities of the soul to life”, if you don’t give up! We may get discouraged at times, though we don’t have to accept defeat. Keep doing all the good things you do, folks; the sun always shines after the storm!

## Proposed Changes to the Bylaws

The Directors recently submitted changes to the bylaws to the OFSWCD Board of Directors. Once approved, the changes will be submitted to the OASWCDE members for their approval. The OASWCDE will email the changes for your review 30 days prior to voting at the annual meeting.

One update is to allow the ability to meet by telephone conference call. With

directors traveling from across the state, it is a much needed time and money saver.

Another proposed change is to eliminate term limits. One concern is that the board will not have an influx of new ideas if only the same people keep running and serving on the board. However, turnover for the sake of turnover does not lead to progress either.

It was decided that the best way to have a great board is to recruit good people to run without limiting someone’s ability to serve by an arbitrary term limit.

Other changes include fixing typos and updating name changes.

Our original bylaws are posted on the website at <http://www.oaswcde.org/Bylaws.html>.

“Turnover for the sake of turnover does not lead to progress either.”

## Social – continued from page 2



The success of social media depends on our ability to network. If we increase the number of ways we connect by adopting these tools, it will be easier for our audience to find us. I have spoken with employees who are uncertain about the value of social media but would like to give it a try. There is much potential growth if we can help each other with these tools.

OASWCDE could play a role in building the employee’s ability to participate in social networking. For example, Linked In is a social media site directed specifically to the business community. If OASWCDE were to set up a Linked In page, members could use it to build connections with each other and give us feedback on our organization. Externally, it is a way for our customers to research the capabilities of district staff to find the right contact for a situation that one may be facing.

The social media class introduced me to new tools to help my district reach more customers. I appreciated the opportunity to take a class with other district employees and learned from them as well. I have gained a new appreciation of the benefits of social media as well.

## Directors of the OASWCDE



**Caitlin Botschner**

"I have been in the Soil and Water family at Warren County for nearly seven years. It's a pleasure to serve on the employee association board of directors as we seek to promote professional development and build community throughout our organization. It's especially rewarding to be able to give back to the employees and their families through scholarship awards." - *Caitlin Botschner*



**Julia Cumming**

"I have been the Program Administrator for Madison Soil and Water Conservation District for almost 15 years. Serving on the OASWCDE board has given me a new appreciation of the and integrity of SWCD employees because no one is there for success of themselves, but for the organization as a whole." - *Julia Cumming*

## Allow us to introduce ourselves!

**We hope you will take time to say hello when you see us at meetings. Please let us know your thoughts on how we can strengthen local SWCD programs.**



**Bonnie Dailey**

"As a new SWCD member and treasurer to the association, I am looking forward to networking with district staff throughout the state. Our desire is to support all employees in their quest to provide the best natural resource information possible. We encourage you to share your ideas and to get involved." - *Bonnie Dailey*

"I am the District Administrator of Lake SWCD. I became an OASWCDE director to help shape the future of SWCDs in Ohio. I've always been very proud of the professional employees and the work we do in the soil and water world, and I've used my time on the OASWCDE to assist in the ever-changing professional development needs of our employee network." - *Dan Donaldson*



**Dan Donaldson**

## Directors of the OASWCDE cont.



**Tammy Jones**

"I have been the Program Manager of the Monroe SWCD for the past twelve years. Currently, I am serving my second elected term as a Director of the OASWCDE. As an organization, the Directors are here to ensure that all employees have the support and tools that they need to be successful in spreading the conservation message. In my previous position, I served as a Training Coordinator. I appreciate the value of having the proper training tools. I hope that every employee feels comfortable expressing their training needs to any of the ten directors." - *Tammy Jones*



**Julie Lause**

"As a new director for the employee association, I am looking forward to sharing stories, experiences, meeting fellow district employees and eager to seek out education and training opportunities for the association members. I see the OASWCDE as a wonderful platform for both professional and personal development." - *Julie Lause*



**Mike Libben**

"I started in 2004 as a technician and was appointed as DPA in 2011. I look forward to serving the Ohio employees through the Association. The past ten years have allowed me to work with many partners throughout the state and I hope to bring some of those relations to the table to help out SWCD's throughout the state." - *Mike Libben*

"The knowledge base, dedication and work ethic never ceases to amaze me when I work with other SWCD employees. I have been an SWCD employee for over 20 years and this is my second chance to serve on the OASWCDE Board. I am proud to be a Director of the Employees Association to help support the effort and professionalism of the hard working SWCD employees across the state." - *Linda Pettit*



**Linda Pettit**



**Tim White**

"Having been an employee for the Erie Conservation District for over 18 years, first as the Urban Stream Specialist, the District Director for 3 years, and the Wildlife Specialist for the past 11 years, the time spent doing the things I thoroughly enjoy has only increased my passion for what I do. I have also served as an Area Director for the OASWCDE for the past 5 years, the President of the Association over the past year. Along with my other duties as a Board member for our Association, I also look at this position as a great opportunity to encourage all District staff in their efforts to help people better take care of their natural resources. From the movie, *Shenandoah*, Jimmy Stewart's character said to those who doubted his chance for success, '...if we don't try, we won't do. And if we don't do, why are we here on this earth?' I may not always be as successful as I'd like to be, but I have to try!" - *Tim White*

## OASWCDE Directors

### Area I

Julie Lause, Wood SWCD (2014-2016)  
Mike Libben, Ottawa SWCD (2014-2016)

### Area II

Dan Donaldson, Lake SWCD (2012-2014)  
Tim White, Erie SWCD (2012-2014)

### Area III

Tammy Jones, Monroe SWCD (2014-2016)  
Vacant

### Area IV

Caitlin Botschner, Warren SWCD (2012-2014)  
Julia Cumming, Madison SWCD (2012-2014)

### Area V

Bonnie Dailey, Delaware SWCD (2014-2016)  
Linda Pettit, Franklin SWCD (2014-2016)

AN ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS PROVIDING TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO ITS MEMBERSHIP

We're on the web!  
<http://oaswcde.org/>

## The Mission of the OASWCDE

To strengthen local SWCD 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.
- Foster a sense of belonging for employees that extends beyond individual Districts and binds dedicated people to the cause of conservation.



## Are you a member of the Ohio Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Employees? Why not?! Now is the time to join. - Julie Lause

The OASWCDE is a professional organization for conservation districts and affiliates. Professional development opportunities are offered at the Annual Meeting and throughout the year as well as through newsletters and social media.

The elected directors of the association work together on your behalf at the state and federal levels not only for conservation concerns, but with employee concerns. The Catastrophic Level Program is managed by the OASWCDE on behalf of the employees through ORC 1515.091.

Membership opens the door for scholarship opportunities for you and your family. Each year, \$800 is available in scholarship funds in education for eligible applicants with a minimum 3 year membership.

It is an affordable \$15 per year. Present it to the Board of Supervisors, many boards will cover the expense on your behalf.

As a paid member, you will receive a photo ID membership card. Many businesses (car rental agencies, hotels, cell phone companies, etc.) offer a government rate. It just might pay to ask if a discount is available with proof of ID.

The OASWCDE was established in 1994 as a means of strengthening and empowering employees. For the past 20 years, this organization has offered opportunities for personal and professional development. Please share your ideas, recommendations, concerns, and successes to better provide for your needs. We look forward to you joining us in 2015!

For your convenience, the membership form is attached or go to <http://www.oaswcde.org/Forms.html> to download your membership form.

***New this year is a membership card with photo ID so that you can use it to request government discounts—It doesn't hurt to ask!***