



OASWCDE news & updates

December | 2022



Upcoming Events

December

- Area 2 Winter Meeting, December 2, 2022
- Area 4 Winter Meeting, December 6, 2022
- Area 5 Winter Meeting, December 7, 2022
- Area 1 Winter Meeting, December 8, 2022
- Area 3 Winter Meeting, December 13, 2022

February

- OFSWCD Winter Partnership Meeting, February 21-22, 2023

Remember to visit the [OASWCDE website](#) for other events and training opportunities.

If you would like to have your event added to the next newsletter please send details to **Sara Fehring** by February 17th.

Membership: 225 Total Members

- Area 1 - 73 Members
- Area 2 - 36 Members
- Area 3 - 37 Members
- Area 4 - 45 Members
- Area 5 - 34 Members

Awards:

- Outstanding District Employee: Mary Aungst, Medina County SWCD
- Outstanding District Board Supervisor: Brad Luckey, Carroll SWCD

Scholarship:

- Sherry West Memorial Scholarship: Lynnae Crock, daughter of Lisa Crock at Muskingum SWCD

Notable Achievements:

- 5 Mental Health First Aid workshops were offered in person for each area.
- Major landscaping improvements at the Farm Science Review.
- Creation of the SWCD Job Postings and Education & Events pages on our website.

OASWCDE Annual Staff and Board Awards

Every day Ohio's staff and board members prove their dedication to protecting our valuable natural resources. Why not acknowledge the contributions of these special individuals by nominating them for Outstanding Conservation District Professional or Outstanding District Board Member for 2022?

Nominations are due February 1st.

[Award Application](#)

The Benefits of Membership

By: Matthew Browne

While all Soil & Water Conservation District employees are considered members of the Ohio Association of Soil & Water Conservation Employees, only dues-paying members are able to take full advantage of their membership benefits.

The benefits of being a dues-paying member include:

- Ability to apply for scholarships.
- Discounts for registration at select workshops.
- Yearly membership gift.



Find the membership form [here](#). Now is a great time to renew or enroll in membership! Did you know that for many districts, the membership fee is covered by their board?

Employee Survey and Looking into the Future

By: Matthew Browne

Back in March, the Employee's Association put out a survey to gather information regarding the needs, concerns, and issues that employees were facing in regard to their jobs, pay, and training. The results from this survey have been used to inform discussions at OASWCDE meetings and will continue to help guide the OASWCDE in the future. Your OASWCDE Directors are currently working towards developing new educational opportunities and resources that will be beneficial in strengthening your position within your district and advancing your career goals.

In coordination with ODA-DSWC, OFSWCD, and other agency partners, OASWCDE will continue to be a proponent for the employees of SWCDs across the state by facilitating ongoing discussions about pay, benefits, and available resources.

Please be on the lookout for new resources and opportunities coming in 2023 from OASWCDE. As always feel free to contact any of the OASWCDE Directors with ideas, concerns, or comments you may have.

Also, be sure to check out the survey results [here](#).

We want YOU for the OASWCDE Board of Directors!

By: Rebecca Longsmith



We are currently looking for SWCD employees interested in running for our Board of Directors in **Areas 1 and 5**. Please contact Board President, [Chad Stang](#) if you are interested in running.

The OASWCDE Board is composed of ten members, two from each of the five areas in the state. The term of a director is 3 years and there are no term limits. Meetings are usually held on the third Monday of each month at 9:30 am, via zoom or telephone conference call.

Directors must be a current employee of an SWCD located in their area, as well as a paying member of the OASWCDE.

The Board of Directors is most effective when we have a strong board with members of diverse areas of expertise and a commitment to serve! While it is no secret, district activities can vary widely based on local needs, our goal is to represent and support all Ohio SWCD employees. Elections will be held at the OFSWCD Annual Conservation Partnership Meeting from February 20-22, 2023. We look forward to seeing you there in person to catch up with colleagues from

How to not throw out all your eco-conscious goals during the Holidays

By: Gwen Roth and Sarah Meadows

During the holidays, the mantra tends to be more, more, more! More gifts, more food, more stress on ourselves. Let's flip the script this year and continue those sustainable practices we have developed throughout the year. Here are some great tips to continue being sustainable through the wonderful holiday season.



The food:

Did you know, according to [savethefood.com](https://www.savethefood.com), 40% of all food in America is wasted? Wasted food not only wastes food but water, energy, petroleum, and many other resources. So how can we help?

- Buy the right amount of food. Use tools like the [Guest-imator](#) to figure out how much food you need for all those get-togethers.
- Try to buy whole foods and food in bulk. Buying a fresh apple instead of a sliced apple in a plastic bag is better for you and the planet. Buying in bulk also helps to cut down on packaging and is oftentimes much cheaper by weight/volume.
- Buy local. The closer our food is grown to the consumption point the fewer resources needed to transport it and the fresher it will be.
- Share the leftovers with all those guests and compost any food scraps along the way.
- Ditch single-use items, nearly everything we use before, during, and after a meal is available in a reusable form. This includes grocery bags, plates, napkins, cutlery, cups, dishcloths (rather than paper towels), and containers for leftovers.

Gifting:

Oh, the stress of finding the perfect gift. Wandering for hours through the mall or endlessly clicking through emails and internet ads can be very stressful and take hours of our precious time. So what can we do?

- Give experiences instead of 'things.' We all want to spend more time with the folks we love, so give the gift of time. Plan a staycation in your hometown or a weekend getaway. Cook dinner for loved ones, make time for a hike, or read a book together. The activity is wonderful but spending more time with the ones we love is priceless.
- If you can't be with someone, gift handmade items or buy things from local, small businesses. According to the [US Small Business Association](#), small businesses account for 44% of the economic activity in the US. Supporting these shops puts money directly back into your local community.
- Try to wrap all those gifts in sustainable packaging (who doesn't need a new hand or kitchen towel) or recyclable or reusable materials. Wrapping paper with foil and/or glitter is NOT recyclable.
- Consider what your gifts are made of and where they come from. Is the material sustainably harvested, is it only single use, and can it be recycled at

the end of its life? For example, choosing candles made of soy or other vegetable waxes with 100% cotton or wood wicks will burn toxin-free, while paraffin wax is non-renewable, petroleum-based, and releases multiple pollutants into the air.

Decorating:

Trying to make the season festive doesn't have to break the bank, in fact, it might not even cost a thing.

- Use items found in nature. Greenery, pinecones, and even some winter berries make great decorations in your home. Just make sure anything you bring in from outside is pet and child safe.
- Reuse decorations from year to year or host a decoration or ornament exchange with friends, family, or neighbors. Post usable items you don't want anymore on your neighborhood [Buy Nothing page](#) and search there for 'new' items for your home.
- Use energy-efficient holiday lighting. This means switching to LED (which uses nearly 90% less energy, lasts up to 10x longer, and poses lower fire risk), investing in a timer so your lights are only on when someone can enjoy them, and using fewer lights (use extension cords instead of more strands). You can even find solar lights, although these are less reliable on cloudy days. Of course, recycle your old lights, some municipalities, retailers, or park systems will take them.
- Real tree or not? Most artificial trees get shipped from across the globe and are not recyclable. Using a real tree supports forests by creating habitat and cleaning the air during their lifetime. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, farmers plant 1-3 seedlings for each tree that is purchased. At the end of the season, you recycle your spent tree with an organization that will use them to make mulch, compost, or create habitat in a forest or pond as they naturally decompose. You can use a potted tree and plant it at the end of the season, or even find a tree 'rental' program that will take back your potted Christmas tree and plant it in a park when you are done with it.

2023 Training Request

By: Rebecca Longsmith

The OASWCDE education committee is looking for training/workshop ideas for 2023. If you have any training ideas on your wishlist please email them to [Rebecca Longsmith](#).

NGLI Experience

By: Laura Boyd



In response to a high demand for conservation leaders, the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) launched the Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI) in 2019. This year-long leadership program provides conservation district leaders

with the opportunity to become national leaders through personal, civic, and organizational leadership development.

As district leaders, we have a unique opportunity to solve local conservation challenges in our communities. Thanks to the leadership training provided by NGLI, I not only feel prepared to take on these challenges locally but also feel empowered to participate in the larger conversation. NGLI has also given me a new group of friends and a network of conservation leaders to draw from. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Next Generation Leadership Institute.

NCF Fall Campaign

By: Sara Fehring



National Conservation Foundation

Leadership Institute. Ohio has had two representatives participate in the Next Generation Leadership Institute during the 2020 and 2022 cohorts.

[Donate Here](#)

This year consider supporting the National Conservation Foundation (NCF). NCF has a goal to raise \$75,000 by the end of the year. Funds raised will be used toward developing the next generation of conservation leaders through the NCF-Envirothon and the Next Generation

NACDE Update

By: Beth Diesch

Ohio SWCDs are proud to share with the North Central Region of the National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) that conservation work has been productive in 2022. I'll share three things that are notable.

1. The H2Ohio program is a new incentive payment program for farmers who follow a Voluntary Nutrient Management Plan and use other BMPs to reduce phosphorus in the Western Basin of Lake Erie. 24 of Ohio's 88 counties are eligible and have farmers enrolled.
2. The second notable work is a collaborative network that has been created for cascading waterways. This new practice is being demonstrated in multiple areas around Ohio and recent funding for research on nutrient inputs and discharges is about to kick off.
3. The final item that Ohio wants to share is our statewide HR Initiative. The Initiative is a strategic effort to ensure the humans we have working in Ohio have rewarding and fruitful careers and future humans who choose conservation to have the same opportunities. The committee is comprised of all levels of leadership and is focused on delivering tools, strategies and training that benefit all of Ohio.

Welcome, New Hire!



Matthew Kidd
Delaware SWCD
Resource Conservationist - Special
Project Coordinator
mkidd@co.Delaware.oh.us

As new staff members are added to your team please send an email and photo to [Sara Fehring](#). The goal is to highlight new staff members quarterly.

2022 Board of Directors

Area 1

- [Matthew Browne](#) - Lucas SWCD
- [Beth Diesch](#) - Seneca CD

Area 2

- [Amy Roskilly](#) - Cuyahoga SWCD
- [Chad Stang](#) - Huron SWCD

Area 3

- [Katie Kovaly](#) - Monroe SWCD
- [Amanda Tubaug](#) - Carroll SWCD

Area 4

- [Kelly Crout](#) - Butler SWCD
- [Sara Fehring](#) - Hamilton County CD

Area 5

- [David Runkle](#) - Vinton SWCD
- [Rebecca Longsmith](#) - Delaware SWCD



Visit our [website](#) for:

- Catastrophic Sick Leave Program
- Events and Education
- Membership Forms
- Scholarships and Awards
- By-laws

OFSWCD | 8995 E. Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

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