



# OASWCDE news & updates

June | 2021

## Upcoming Events

**July 25-27**

- Summer Supervisor School

**July 31**

- NACD Poster Contest Deadline

**September 21-23**

- Farm Science Review

If you would like to have your event added to the next newsletter please send details to [Sara Fehring](#) by August 20th.



## Summer Supervisor School

By: Janelle Mead



We are excited to see everyone this summer, in-person, for Summer Supervisor School in Berlin, OH. The event will be held at the Berlin Encore Hotel. [Click here](#), to view the schedule of events and to register.

## The Sherry West Memorial Scholarship

By: Rebecca Longsmith

The OASWCDE is proud to be able to offer three distinct scholarship options to its members. For complete details and application forms, visit the [employee association website](#).

**The OASWCDE Training Scholarship** is meant to provide an option for members whose districts may not have the funds available to send staff to professional development opportunities. Possible applications include webinars, workshops, trainings, or seminars. Members may receive up to \$50 per person and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.



**The SWCD Staff Continuing Education Scholarship** is available for dues-paying OASWCDE members of three years or more. This scholarship provides up to \$300 for continuing education of an SWCD employee, such as tuition, registration, or books. The deadline for this year is August 1st, 2021.

**The Sherry West Memorial Scholarship** provides a \$500 college scholarship to a child of an OASWCDE member of three years or more. Children of current members, or those of members who have retired, are disabled, or deceased, are all eligible to apply. Recipients must be enrolled in an accredited two or four-year college or university and must have completed at least one full semester or two quarters. The deadline for this year is August 1st, 2021.

## USDA Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

By: Sara Fehring

Does your district material include the USDA Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Statement? The EEO Statement should be included in all district newsletters, job announcements, and any material that is generated and produced for the public. Please review your district material and ensure that the EEO Statement is included.

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement  
"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

## Cell Phone Usage While Driving

By: Rebecca Longsmith



How often do you use a cellphone, tablet, or laptop for district business on the go? What about while driving? All three of these devices are considered an “electronic wireless communications device” as defined by Section 4511.204 of the Ohio Revised Code. This section of the code already regulates the use of these devices while driving, but a recently introduced bill might be upping those restrictions even more.

In early May, Representatives Cindy Abrams, R-Harrison, and Brian Lampton, R-Beavercreek, introduced House Bill 283 that

would essentially prohibit any type of device use that is not “hands-free.” While there are exceptions for things like emergencies and “single-swipe” actions to answer calls, violations would include holding or even “physically supporting with any part of the person’s body” a device while driving. The other notable change introduced by HB 283 would be elevating prohibited device use from a secondary to a primary offense, meaning that no other violation is needed for law enforcement officers to pull someone over.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol reports that between 2016 and 2020, there were more than 66,000 crashes and 212 fatalities due to distracted drivers. Ohio has already been working on cracking down on distracted driving through the implementation of several “Distracted Driving Corridors” throughout the state, such as interstates 70 and 470 in Belmont County, 76 and 80 near Youngstown, 71 through Delaware and Morrow County, and US 33 in Franklin and Fairfield County. Passage of HB 238, expected to be signed by Governor DeWine if it makes it through the House and Senate, would bring Ohio in line with 25 other states in the US that have “hands-free” laws in place.

What kind of difference can these “hands-free” restrictions make as compared to what is already in place? A study commissioned by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) comparing hand-held and hands-free cell phone use found the following sobering facts:

- Text messaging, browsing, and dialing of numbers were the activities resulting in the longest time spans of drivers taking their eyes off the road.
- Text messaging increased the risk of a crash or near-crash by 2 times, with drivers taking their eyes off the road for an average of 23 seconds.
- Activities performed when completing a phone call (such as reaching for the phone or dialing) increased crash risk by 3 times.

While I hope all district, employees are already following safety practices when it comes to device use (or lack thereof!) while driving, I think it is important for employees and board members to consider the implications of the possibility of such a legislative change on district business. Phone calls, GPS navigation, and asset management software use come to mind when thinking about activities staff members may do while out in the field or away from the office. Have you discussed with your board about the importance of hands-free devices such as phone mounts, headsets, or integration with your vehicle’s hands-free system? Does your district have an existing mobile device policy, and even more importantly, are all employees aware of and compliant with this policy? As it looks like we will all be traveling a bit more in the coming months, remember to be safe and put the phone down!

## Trees: The Original Green Infrastructure

By: Jan Rybka

Those of us working in conservation understand the importance of trees and their benefits, both human and environmental. In Cuyahoga County an analysis of the urban tree canopy, revealed that the canopy is shrinking. Once known as the Forest City, Cleveland’s tree canopy has gone from abundant to abysmal, shrinking from 19% to 17% in less than a decade. Cuyahoga County’s overall canopy is only estimated at 34.7% and falling. As

expected, the city and inner ring communities have the greatest canopy loss, although development pressure in outlying areas has revealed a reduction of canopy in those areas as well.

In 2019, Cuyahoga County established the Healthy Urban Canopy Grant Program. Cuyahoga SWCD is an active member of the planning committee, which developed the grant program, evaluated the proposals, and helps to monitor planting activities. Since the SWCD staff firmly believes that trees are the original “green infrastructure” we are adamant about the importance of properly planting and maintenance to help grow trees!



If you Google “worldwide tree planting initiatives” you will find that the desire to plant trees has gone global. Cuyahoga SWCD has encouraged tree plantings in riparian areas for many years. In recent years we have provided opportunities for tree plantings and tree giveaways. So far this year 1903 trees have been planted. To get more trees on the ground, the SWCD Board approved creating the Legacy Tree Fund. Donations to the fund, which can be made in honor of friends or as a family legacy, will be matched by the board. Funds will be used exclusively to purchase and plant trees by staff and volunteers, and with the generous support of four communities that are collaborating with the District on this program.

Growing trees in our highly urban County is a perfect long-term goal for the SWCD. Trees provide additional habitat, better aesthetics, help clean the air, reduce stormwater runoff, and cut down on accelerated erosion. We are committed to doing our best to transform Northeast Ohio from the Rust Belt to the Green Belt!



**Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Poster Contest**

By: Janelle Mead

Entries are still being accepted for the Auxiliary Poster Contest. Posters can be scanned and emailed to **Lou Ann Albers** along with entry forms. The deadline to

submit entries is July 31st.



## Farm Science Review

By: Janelle Mead

The Farm Science Review (FSR) is currently being planned for September 21-23, in person. We will be looking for volunteers to help with the FSR, a workday will be hosted in August. Plans are currently in the works to update the space. If you have ideas or suggestions on things you would like to see, let **Janelle** know.



## Questions about pests?

By: Matthew Browne



Does your office get calls about various questions related to damaged plants and/or the insects that may be causing that damage? In case you haven't heard of it already, a great resource for finding answers is the "**Buckeye Yard & Garden Online**". This website & newsletter from The Ohio State University provides articles and updates regarding pests that are currently causing issues and some ideas on how to manage them.

## Welcome, New Hires!

By: Sara Fehring

**Muskingum SWCD**

**Putnam & Hancock SWCD**



Paul Campbell  
Urban Agriculture Specialist  
[paul.campbell@muskingumswcd.org](mailto:paul.campbell@muskingumswcd.org)



Mary Wilhelm  
Nutrient Management Specialist  
[mary.wilhelm@putnamcountyohio.gov](mailto:mary.wilhelm@putnamcountyohio.gov)

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### Wayne SWCD



Cody Beale  
Nutrient Mgmt. Specialist/District Tech.  
[cbeale@wayneoh.org](mailto:cbeale@wayneoh.org)

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### Delaware SWCD



Kristin Hilson  
Communications & Outreach Coord.  
[khilson@co.delaware.oh.us](mailto:khilson@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.

## 2020 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
- [Hannah Carpenter](#) - Belmont SWCD

### Area 4

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

## Area 5

- **Bonnie Dailey** - Delaware SWCD
- **Rebecca Longsmith** - Delaware SWCD



### Visit our [website](#) for:

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

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Ohio Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Employees | [OASWCDE.ORG](http://OASWCDE.ORG)