



OASWCDE news & updates

September | 2020

Upcoming Events

Virtual Farm Science Review

- September 22-24, 2020

Stormwater Awareness Week

- October 18-24, 2020

Community + Conservation + the 3 C's

- October 22, 2020
- 6-7 pm
- Registration opens on 9/14/20

Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River

- October 24, 2020
- 9 am - Noon



Thank you, Nikki!

By: Matthew Browne

Nikki Hawk has long been a proponent of conservation practices and an advocate for the Employee's Association. Formerly the District Administrator for Mercer SWCD, Nikki joined the OASWCDE board as an Area IV representative in 2015. Nikki has been an outspoken and courageous member of the Soil & Water world, dealing with issues in Grand Lake St. Mary's and providing guidance in other watersheds-in-distress discussions. She has worked with various other committees and groups such as State Technical Committee, Farm Science Review, Ohio Soil & Water Conservation Commission,



legislative events, partnership meetings, and eventually became the President of the OASWCDE Board of Directors. Nikki has always been an energetic and outgoing supporter of the Employee Association, the SWCDs, and conservation in general.

Nikki will be missed from the OASWCDE board and we wish her well in her new position as Project Leader for The Ohio Agricultural Conservation Initiative.

Welcome New OASWCDE Board Members and President Chad Stang

Meet OASWCDE Board President, Chad Stang. Chad Stang is the District Administrator for the Huron Soil and Water Conservation District. Chad was born and raised in Huron County where he grew up on a family farm participating in 4-H and FFA. Chad attended Ohio State ATI and received an Associate's Degree in Agricultural Commerce. After living and working for 10 years in Columbus, Chad returned home to take the Administrator position in 2014. Along with the administrative duties, Chad handles drainage, and Ag Pollution Abatement complaints.

In his Spare time Chad enjoys playing softball, hunting, fishing, going to the gym, and spending time with friends and family.



We would also like to give a warm welcome to four new OASWCDE Board Members.

- Matthew Browne - Lucas SWCD
- Beth Diesch - Seneca CD
- Sara Fehring - Hamilton County SWCD
- Rebecca Longsmith - Delaware SWCD

Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative

By: Matthew Browne



Milkweed is an important part of our landscape and environment, providing habitat and food for many pollinators, including the monarch butterfly. The [Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative](#) (OPHI) is continuing their mission of creating and improving pollinator habitat throughout the state. One way they do this is through the annual milkweed seed pod collection that takes

place in partnership with the SWCDs.

The annual seed pod collection is still happening this year, but with some new safety parameters due to COVID:

- Place the collection bins outside in an area protected from the elements that also allows space for social distancing.
 - Make sure the bins are properly labeled so that trash does not get placed in them by mistake.
- Use paper bags or cardboard boxes to store pods.
- Use PPE such as face masks and disposable gloves when transferring or handling pods.
 - Sanitize and wash your hands after handling pods and bags.
 - PPE not only helps reduce the risk of COVID, but it also useful to protect yourself from the milkweed sap and fluff.

There may be issues and delays with the milkweed pods being processed by ODRC this year, so OPHI is asking for help from districts. Please let OPHI know if your district has the ability to store pods for a longer period of time and/or if you have any community groups or organizations that would be willing to help with pod cleaning. Please send all questions via email to [Michael Retterer](#).

News and Updates from Areas 4 and 5

By: Sara Fehring

With all in person meetings, workshops, webinars and trainings being moved to virtual platforms it is easy to lose track of what is occurring outside of your area, in other parts of the state. I reached out to Program Specialist from Areas 4 and 5 to see what has been going on in their Areas. Thank you to the Area Specialists who were able to provide us with an update. Look for updates on Areas 1, 2 & 3 in the next newsletter.

Area 4 Liz Cline and Jocelyn Henderson

Most Area 4 SWCDs are back in the offices and are open to the public or serving the public by appointments. The districts are fully staffed, rotating staffs or still offering some limited telework opportunities. Districts are progressing past COVID by filling vacancies and finishing up the summer technical workload. Congratulations to Preble SWCD as they move into new office space this Fall. Also we welcome the following new folks to the soil and water family:

New Area 4 Staff:

- Kat Zelak – Clermont Education Coordinator
- Gavin Alexander – Montgomery Technician (Not technically new to Area 4 as he was previously employed by Miami)
- Sean Hudson – Butler Water Resource Specialist
- Sarah Macy - Madison SWCD Technician
- Sean Drew - Mercer SWCD Watershed Technician
- Amanda Seger – Mercer SWCD H2Ohio Technician (Previously from Auglaize SWCD)

Many districts have cancelled their annual meetings this year due to COVID restrictions, but continue to push through in new and innovative ways. Cincinnati/Columbus/Cleveland will be offering a virtual annual meeting for the three districts on October 22nd, [Click here](#) for more info. Some districts are

hosting drive-up voting events that include educational outreach programs, displays for the Cooperator of the Year winner, and boxed meals. Great job thinking outside of the box everyone!

Area 5 Cody Hacker

As with the other Areas in the state, supervisor election season in Area 5 is well underway. Adams SWCD held a joint meeting with Adams County Farm Bureau. The event was an outdoor ice cream social where voting was conducted, and attendees were able to learn about the accomplishments of the district. Though voting for supervisor in Ross County was absentee only the district held their first ever virtual annual meeting. The meeting was conducted via Zoom (Thank You OFSWCD!!!). State Soil Specialist Steve Culman with The Ohio State University provided a preview to the updated Tri-State Fertilizer Guide, the district announced the Cooperator of Year, shared accomplishments and supervisor election results. A recording of the event can be found [here](#). Fairfield SWCD is planning a drive-thru election event and Franklin SWCD has partnered with Cuyahoga and Hamilton SWCD to host a virtual joint annual meeting on October 22nd. With the challenges districts have faced in 2020 Area 5 districts have continued to take advantage of opportunity and find success.

Scholarships

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 new for 2020 and 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 a SWCD employee, such as tuition, registration, or books. The deadline for this year is October 30th, 2020.
- **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 October

The History of Elections

By: Rebecca Longsmith

Mid-summer through late fall is normally the time of year where we all start to think about annual meetings and SWCD supervisor elections. While we know that 2020 is anything but a “normal” year, district employees are still busy finding ways to hold successful supervisor elections in the time of COVID. Drive-through voting, absentee ballots, and socially-distanced voting procedures are in full swing! Just as we are seeing varying ways of tackling supervisor elections across the state, elections and voting in general have taken many different forms across time.

Much of the early recorded history of voting comes from Ancient Greece and Rome. Votes were cast in a variety of situations, including elections, lawmaking, and in the court system.

The earliest voters would be asked to orally announce their vote or show support by a raising of hands. In Sparta, some voting was done by acclamation- where the candidate who received the loudest shouts from the crowd would be elected. Can you imagine? It wasn’t until a little later that voting became a private matter, by writing on a wooden tablet covered in wax or scrap shards of pottery.

While SWCD supervisor elections have a wide variety of ways voters can qualify, voting was mostly restricted to citizen men who were land-owning, or otherwise high-status, until relatively recently in history. In early US history, electoral votes didn’t even take a popular vote into account. George Washington was unanimously elected as the first president of the US with 69 electoral votes in 1789, the only president to ever achieve such universal support.

As for the eligibility requirements for SWCD supervisors, all candidates must reside within the boundaries of the district and be at least 18 years old. There’s a fair number of elections where someone decided to test the limits of eligibility requirements and run animals for office. In fact, dogs, cats, and goats have all held public office in the US. Some of these animals were even reelected!

Since 1947, all US states have had legislation outlining some form of conservation district organization that is governed locally by a board of officials. Not all states use elections to select their boards, and some use a combination of election and appointment. Regardless of form and selection method, I think that we can all agree that SWCD supervisors provide a huge service to districts and their employees.



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



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