

January, 2006

# Conservation Notes

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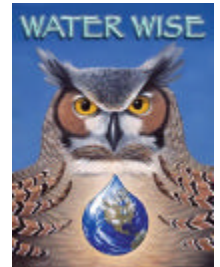
Steve Boeder

## Montgomery Soil & Water Conservation District

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*We are committed to promoting community stewardship of Montgomery County's natural resources by providing conservation education and technical assistance.*

## Spring Season Brings Reminders of Natural Beauty and Need for Continuous Conservation Education



Soil and Water Stewardship Week is one of the world's largest conservation-related observances. Since 1955, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has sponsored the national Soil and Water Stewardship Week program.

The concept of stewardship involves personal and social responsibility. We have a duty to learn about and improve natural resources as we use them wisely. By doing this we can achieve material and spiritual growth in our own lives, and leave a rich legacy for future generations.

Many people want to help improve the world. But sometimes the scope of the world's problems seems beyond the reach of one person. And sometimes, we are tempted to believe that large agencies and organizations will take care of this important work, without our help.

Soil and Water Stewardship Week helps remind us of the power of each person to conserve natural resources and improve the world. When people work together with their local conservation district, that power grows and grows. And as these good deeds multiply across the nation's network of conservation districts, the results can be spectacular!

Your Montgomery Soil & Water Conservation District observes Soil and Water Stewardship Week in two basic ways: we sponsor a poster contest and purchase promotional materials for churches to use in their litany. There are also educational activities appropriate for the classroom or Sunday School.

This year's theme is *Water Wise*. For our annual poster contest, there are five grade levels for competition: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Posters may be any size between 8 1/2" x 11" up to 22" x 28". The District offers cash prizes in each category, and winners have the chance to go on to state and national competition. The deadline for turning in posters to the District office is May 1st, 2006.

A good way to get students oriented to the theme *Water Wise* is through use of several different (free!) activity booklets available, appropriate to grades K-5. A Program Booklet provides background information on the theme, appropriate for middle and high school grade levels. Wide ranges of litany materials are also available for churches. All of this is provided to citizens and groups at no cost. Contact Education Specialist Caroline McColloch to find out more, at 854-7645. Participants should submit their request for promotional materials to the District office by March 8th, so we can get your order delivered before the end of April.

Additional information can also be attained through the official Stewardship Week web site at: <http://www.stewardshipweek.com>. The site offers detailed descriptions of all the materials available, some of which can be downloaded and printed for free. You can also download an order form. Another interesting page on the web site lists practical things we can all do in our homes and communities that together will make a strong impact on improved conservation of our soil, water, plant, and energy resources. Stewardship week is April 30 to May 7, 2006.

## Inside This Issue:



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*Conservation Notes is published in January, March, June, August, November*

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## Education Packet Developed for Group Drainage Projects

In the District's continuing efforts to implement group drainage projects with efficiency and timeliness, we have created a new educational packet of information. This will help landowners understand some of the technical and administrative aspects of what can often be a confusing process.

Although farmers are traditionally very familiar with all these aspects of a drainage project, homeowners new to rural areas usually have no experience with issues related to water drainage. With annual rainfall between 30 and 40 inches per year, Ohio doesn't exactly have water shortage problems. Combine this fact with our typical clay-laden soils and flat topography, and it isn't hard to understand that most of the state's glaciated regions were wetlands prior to European settlement.

Agriculture in this part of the state would not be possible without lowering the natural water table through subsurface drainage tile. This was accomplished across much of the state's agricultural areas during the period from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. Like any man-made system, it requires maintenance. Because of changes in land ownership however, there are many rural areas where drainage systems were not maintained and are therefore in need of reconstruction.

When farm ground is subdivided for residential parcels, it is important for the prospective homeowner to investigate the drainage characteristics of the lot. Is there existing tile? If so, is it functional? In this case it is vital that the construction process avoid disrupting whatever functioning tile may be in place. If the tile is not functional, one should ask whether or not this creates a drainage problem for the lot. These are the sorts of questions that can be answered by the township's zoning board, and Montgomery Soil & Water Conservation District.

A couple of good rainstorms will soon enough demonstrate whether or not there are drainage problems. Unfortunately, some lots that will be sold with significant drainage issues. Many people come to our office after they build and discover these costly but avoidable problems.

## Waitman North Project Receives Funding through Ohio Public Works Commission

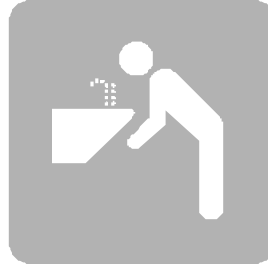
District Chairman Bill Wissinger is pleased to announce that a \$150,000 grant has been awarded by the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) for the Waitman North group drainage project. This accounts for 65% of the project cost. The improvements to be made include replacement of drainage tile in sections 12 and 13 in Clay Township. Construction will commence in February and be completed some time in April.

Thirty households on three hundred thirty seven acres will be benefited by installation of a main tile and two laterals for subsurface drainage. Currently, the original tile is broken down and estimated to be carrying only 50% of its original water volume capacity.

The Ohio Public Works Commission provides grants and loans for local governments to build and maintain their infrastructure through the State Capital Improvement (SCIP) and the Local Transportation Improvement (LTIP) programs. Roads, bridges, culverts, water supply, wastewater systems, storm water collection and solid waste facilities are eligible for assistance. Local governments apply for funding through one of the nineteen District Public Works Integrating Committees in Ohio.

For questions related to the Waitman North group drainage project, please call Stefan Bridenbaugh at 854-7645. Questions related to funding through SCIP and LTIP should be directed to the Ohio Public Works Commission at (614) 466-0880.

## Water Quality Credit Trading Program



The Great Miami River Watershed Water Quality Credit Trading Program is announcing the availability of \$390,000 for funding agricultural management practices that reduce nutrient discharges into rivers and streams in the Great Miami River Watershed. Projects will be chosen for funding by the Trading Program's Project Advisory Group and be ranked by the lowest cost per pound of nutrient reduction. Projects that are chosen for funding will enter into a Project Agreement with the Miami Conservancy District and receive funding as soon as the Project Agreement is executed by both parties. Selected projects will require an annual inspection by Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff.

SWCDs within the Great Miami River Watershed may submit project proposals for funding. Eligible owner/operators must reside in the Great Miami River Watershed and be NRCS EQIP-eligible. Other requirements include not exceeding their \$450,000 Payment Limitation, not exceeding the Adjusted Gross Income provision, and complying with the Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetlands Conservation provisions.

The kinds of practices that would likely qualify for this program includes the following: buffers, certain types of wetland, two-stage ditches, water table management, organic farming, grid sampling, sediment control basins, and reforestation of cropland. Basically any change in land use that reduces erosion from runoff containing nutrients, is eligible if not already enrolled in another cost share program. Existing practices may also qualify if enrollment period in another cost share program is ending.

Interested landowners must contact Jim Dillon at the District office no later than February 17th.

## Conservation Cost Share Programs for 2006

Today more than ever, USDA's conservation programs provide cost sharing and incentives to install conservation practices on the land. These programs are voluntary and are recognized by farmers as a common sense approach to conservation. Here are a few examples of USDA conservation programs that are available for Montgomery County farmers.

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

This program offers financial incentives to install practices that will reduce soil erosion and improve water quality on livestock and grain farms. These practices include waste storage structures, heavy use pads, livestock watering systems and prescribed grazing systems. Agri-chemical / fertilizer containment facilities and precision nutrient placement / grid sampling are also available for funding. Applications are being accepted for 2006 funding. The applications will be evaluated and ranked for funding in late March.

*Continued, next page*

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## Conservation Cost Share Programs for 2006, *Continued*

### EQIP Forestry Program

This program has special emphasis on improving forestland by controlling invasive species such as honeysuckle and grapevine. Cost share is available for removal of these invasive species and for tree planting. To participate you must have an existing written Forestry Stewardship Plan prior to making the application.

### Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP)

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) provides cost share incentives and soil rental payments for conservation enhancement practices such as grassed waterways, filter strips, and habitat buffers for upland birds. This program has a continuous sign up with applications being approved locally if all eligibility criteria are met. Cost share may be as high as 90% of a set cost with rental payments for 10-15 years based on the length of the agreement. This program is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) with the NRCS / SWCD office providing technical assistance.

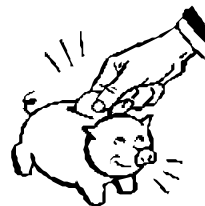
### Conservation Program 33 (CP33)

The CP33 program is designed to provide habitat buffers for numerous types of upland game. This program has an automatic enrollment of eligible acres with no competitive ranking. It is designed to be placed along borders of agricultural fields and maintain a width of at least 30 feet and no more than 120 feet in width. This is a voluntary signup CRP program that provides annual rental payments and starting January 2006 there is a \$50 per acre first time sign up bonus that will be provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife.

### Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The WHIP program encourages the installation of wildlife habitat practices on private agricultural land by offering cost share incentives and technical assistance. Funding is allocated to applicants based on a ranking score determined by the proposed practices and physical features of the land. Agreements may be made for a 5-15 year period. A wildlife habitat development plan must be followed. Land that is currently enrolled in other CRP, EQIP, or similar programs is not eligible for the WHIP Program.

For additional information on these and other USDA Conservation Programs visit the Ohio NRCS website at: [www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/](http://www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/)




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