



Montgomery
Soil and
Water
Conservation
District

The Conservation Advocate

MARCH 2010

Mission Statement: The Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District connects the residents, businesses, governments and agriculture of Montgomery County with education, best management practices, and technical leadership of water quality, water management, conservation, and wildlife habitat. We are the community's natural resource stewards for a livable community today and tomorrow.

Spring into Action - Stormwater Management Tips

What is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow. It flows from rooftops, over paved streets, sidewalks and parking lots, across bare soil and lawns and into storm drains. As it flows, runoff collects and transports soil, pet waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, litter and other pollutants. This water drains directly into the Miami Valley's creeks, streams and rivers, without receiving any treatment at sewage plants.



Here's what you can do to help prevent stormwater runoff, a major pollutant of our rivers, lakes, and streams.

- ✂ Plant trees, shrubs and ground cover to help rainwater soak into the ground. Keep the soil covered; bare soil is the primary cause of erosion. Mulch bare areas with straw, grass clippings, stones or wood chips.
- ✂ Redirect rain gutter downspouts into landscaped areas instead of onto paved surfaces such as driveways. Rain that falls onto paved areas washes pollutants into the storm drains.
- ✂ Consider growing clover in your lawn; it's hardy, stands up to wear and produces nitrogen needed by other lawn grasses.
- ✂ Mulching your grass clippings and leaving them on your lawn will provide nutrients to your lawn allowing you to lower your dependence on chemical lawn fertilizers.

Scholarships Available!

Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) encourages college bound freshmen to consider pursuing careers in conservation or agriculture. Our society faces natural resource challenges that require people with fresh ideas, dedication, and leadership abilities. Educating and supporting youth in this regard is one of the main objectives of the District's Conservation Education Program. The District offers a \$500 scholarship to graduating high school seniors. The eligibility requirements to apply for this scholarship are that the applicant has to plan to major in a Natural Resources Management or an Agricultural Field, attend a college or university offering degrees in these areas, provide proof of enrollment and be a resident of Montgomery County, Ohio. Applications have to be postmarked by Saturday, May 1st. The award notification will be on Tuesday, June 1st. If you are or know a high school senior who is going into a natural resource or agricultural field and is a Montgomery county resident have them apply!

Also this year Montgomery SWCD is offering a scholarship for a high school student to attend Forestry Camp. To attend this camp you have to be at least 15 years of age and have completed the 8th grade. Application must be postmarked by April 16th and award notification will be on May 7th. To be eligible to apply you must be a Montgomery County resident.

The applications can be found on our website www.montgomeryswcd.org or it can be mailed to the applicant by contacting our office at 937-854-7645.

The Conservation Advocate is published in January, March, August, November

Conservation Funding for Organic Growers

For a second year, Ohio farmers transitioning to organic agriculture or those who are currently certified organic have the opportunity to receive assistance for meeting their conservation goals through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) organic initiative. The deadline to apply for this assistance is Friday, March 19, 2010.

The EQIP organic initiative is designed to provide financial assistance in the form of payments of 75 percent of the average cost of a conservation practice or 90 percent of the average cost of the practice if the producer is in a traditionally underserved group, such as limited resource farmers, beginning farmers, or minority farmers. Technical assistance in the form of conservation planning is offered by NRCS conservation planners to assist the producer meet their conservation goals.

Through the EQIP organic initiative, organic producers or producers transitioning to organic have a unique opportunity to receive assistance. Applications for EQIP selected for funding is a competitive process. By separating organic and transitioning organic producers into a special group, applicants in this group only compete among other organic producers for funding.

A number of conservation practices may be funded through the EQIP organic program, including cover crops, conservation crop rotations, fencing and watering for rotational grazing, high tunnels, and forage harvest management, as well as many others.

For more information about EQIP, go to <http://www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/> or stop by our office located at 10025 Amity Rd Brookville, OH 45309 (937) 854-7646 ext 102, Lee Green, District Conservationist.

Did you
know that
you can
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receive
updates
about
current
events and
other news .

Build Your Own Rain Barrel



A rain barrel is a rainwater collection system that stores rooftop runoff to be used later for activities such as lawn and garden watering, car washing, and even window cleaning. Collecting rainwater from your roof during storms by using a rain barrel can not only lower your water bills, but also help to decrease water demand during the hot summer months. Rainwater collection and reuse is beneficial to the environment because the stored water would otherwise run off into the storm sewers, bringing pollutants such as oil and grease, bacteria, and nutrients with it.

Montgomery SWCD will be holding a Build Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop on Saturday May 15 from 10:00 - 12:00 pm. These rain barrels will be constructed using used 55 gallon food grade barrels. Rain water is naturally soft water and devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride and other chemicals so it will help improve the health of your gardens, lawn and trees when the captured water provided from the rain barrel is used.

For more information and for a registration form contact Felicia Schirack at 937-854-7646 ext. 109 or visit our website www.montgomeryswcd.org



2010 Test Your Well Fair

Ninety-eight percent of people living in the Great Miami River watershed rely on groundwater as their primary source of drinking water. Rural residents living outside communities with public water systems depend on their own private well for all of their household water needs. Many well owners use their wells for years without performing any groundwater quality testing for contaminants. Often well owners are simply unsure of whether or not they should have their drinking water tested for contaminants, what types of things they can do to safeguard their water supply, and how to properly maintain their well. Test Your Well targets these private well owners with an educational event to motivate them to take better care of their own drinking water.

Starting in 2007, the Miami Conservancy District has partnered with local soil and water conservation districts, health departments, OSU Extension offices, and FFA chapters to provide this informational service for local residents in nine of the counties that drain to the Great Miami River. During the Test Your Well "fair" event, homeowners bring water samples for confidential testing to a local high school or other public venue. While they wait to find out if the nitrates are at a safe level, they can enjoy informational displays and ask questions of local groundwater experts. This year, Test Your Well in Montgomery County included an opportunity to have a Total Coliform test performed for only \$10 from the Miami Conservancy District.

This year's event was held March 11th at Miami Valley Career Technology Center. 44 samples were tested for nitrates while 21 homeowners also had their water tested for Total Coliform by the Montgomery County Environmental Lab. To read about nitrates and coliforms in well water and to find about next year's event visit www.montgomeryswcd.org for more information.

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Pond Clinic



Montgomery SWCD and Preble SWCD will be sponsoring the Annual Pond Clinic for both counties. The Pond Clinic is scheduled on Thursday June 3, 2010 at Sycamore Farm, 3225 N. Lutheran Church Road, Trotwood from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Bill Lynch from Ohio State University will be the main presenter of the evening.

Free hotdogs and drinks will be served at the event from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. This is a free program, for more information, call 937-854-7645.

*The Pond Clinic
will be held
June 3, from
5:30 - 8:30 pm
at Sycamore
Farm.*

Contractor Workshop

The Montgomery SWCD hosted a Contractor Workshop at the District office on February 23. District staff and representatives from our partner agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, reviewed topics such as grassed waterway seeding, drainage tile installation standards, the "cost-share" application and payment process, and underground utilities protection and safety. 14 drainage and excavating contractors attended from throughout the area, and were treated to coffee and donuts by the District staff.

GMR Trading Credits Program

Tremendous improvements in surface water quality have been made over the last three decades. This progress has primarily been the result of reducing pollution from industry and wastewater treatment plants. Despite these gains, about half of the nation's rivers, streams, and lakes still fail to meet water quality standards. To address the remaining water quality challenges, new incentive-based strategies will be necessary. Water quality credit trading is an innovative, market-driven way of spending every dollar to improve surface water quality in the best way possible.

The Great Miami River Watershed Water Quality Trading Program (Trading Program) utilizes a watershed framework to improve water quality. For example, a downstream wastewater treatment plant is facing expensive upgrade requirements which will require them to reduce the amount of pollutants they discharge as allowed in their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. They could invest money upstream that will fund less expensive agricultural management practices and achieve better water quality. Because the improvements are made upstream the quality of the water that flows past the downstream treatment plant will improve and so does all of the water in between. The customers of the wastewater treatment plant benefit from lower costs because expensive upgrades are avoided and everybody benefits from cleaner water. The Water Conservation Subdistrict (WCS) of The Miami Conservancy District is implementing this Water Quality Credit Trading Program so that the Great Miami River Watershed and other downstream receiving waters can benefit from this innovative strategy.

Water quality credits are generated from the pounds of phosphorus (TP) and pounds of nitrogen (TN) that are prevented from discharging into the Great Miami River Watershed's rivers and streams. Water quality credits only originate from an activity undertaken voluntarily i.e. not otherwise required by local, state, or federal law or existing contractual agreement. Water quality credits may be purchased by permitted dischargers, who become eligible buyers, for the purpose of complying with regulations related to the particular nutrient for which the credit is generated.

Eligible buyers are public entities that (1) hold a NPDES permit, (2) have their NPDES permit modified to reflect their participation in the Trading Program and (3) participate in funding the Trading Program.

Water quality credits will mainly be generated by implementing best management practices that reduce the discharge of nutrients from agricultural land uses. The specific agricultural management practices that generate credits will be proposed by local soil and water conservation professionals. They will work directly with agricultural producers to identify and propose management practices that work best to accomplish the desired nutrient reduction. Reductions will be quantified using Load Reduction Spreadsheets and verified through inspections. Water quality monitoring will be conducted by SWCDs at a portion of the projects where producers volunteer to allow monitoring. Water quality will also be measured with a continuous monitoring program on a subwatershed scale.

The Project Advisory Group, with broad-based stakeholder representation, developed project criteria and will use it to review proposals and make recommendations for funding specific projects. Project Proposals must be postmarked no later than Friday March 26th and addressed to:

The Miami Conservancy District,
ATTN: GMR Trading Program Project Proposal,
38 East Monument Avenue,
Dayton, Ohio 45402

Important

Dates:

Deadline for

Plant Sale

Order

March 12!

Plant Sale

Pick Up

Dates April

15th & 16th

Supervisor Fred Glander Sworn In



Fred Glander, a newly re-elected Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisor, was sworn into office on the floor of the Ohio House of Representatives Chamber by Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer during the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation District's 67th annual meeting held in Columbus. This meeting brought together nearly 400 conservation leaders throughout the state, including Supervisors and staff from Ohio's 88 county SWCDs, leaders of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, USDA Natural Resources Conservation

Service, National Association of Conservation Districts, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Ohio State University Extension, and many key conservation related Ohio businesses. The event focused on the theme "Conservation: Leading into the Future."

"I am excited to continue service to Montgomery County in the SWCD Supervisor role," said Fred. "Conservation is critical to our country and state - in the development of food, fiber, and other economic factors. SWCDs provide valuable technical assistance to property owners, and are truly leaders in conservation stewardship," concluded Fred Glander.

A few of the highlights of this year's event includes a taping of the OFBF's "Town Hall Ohio" radio show, a new leadership academy focused on conservation related issues, and a delegate session conducted in the Ohio House of Representatives Chamber located in the Ohio Statehouse.

Additionally, the meeting included a community service project which involved food and monetary donations made by the meeting participants to the Mid Ohio Foodbank. As a result of this two-day effort, 421 pounds of food and \$520 were donated to help feed Ohio's neediest individuals. According to the foodbank's representative, 421 meals resulted from this food donation and the bank will be able to purchase \$4,160 dollars worth of food from the monetary donations offered.

The OFSWCD is a non-profit organization providing support and assistance to Ohio's 88 county Soil and Water Conservation Districts. County SWCDs provide a variety of conservation related assistance and programs to landowners and user's of Ohio's working lands - working hard to keep soils productive and waters clean throughout the state of Ohio.

For more information on the Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District or the OFSWCD, please contact Cheryl Barkalow, Montgomery SWCD at (937) 854-7645 or visit the OFSWCD website: www.ofswcd.org.

Did You Know?

- ✂ Each year 6.4 billion tons of soils are eroded from land in the U.S.
- ✂ Trees are the best way to naturally limit water runoff and soil erosion.

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**Montgomery Soil and Water
Conservation District**

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Fax: 937-837-2241

E-mail: felicia.schirack@oh.nacdnet.net

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Dan Jackson

Felicia Schirack

**NRCS District
Conservationist**

Lee Green

Upcoming Events

-  April 7 - Board Meeting at 7:00 pm
-  April 15 & 16 - Plant Sale Hand Out 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
-  April 21 - County Envirothon at Phillips Park, Beavercreek
-  May 4 - Area IV Envirothon at VOA park in Butler County
-  May 5 - Children's Water Fest & Board Meeting at 7:00 pm
-  May 15 - Build Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop
-  May 31 - Memorial Day - Office Closed
-  June 2 - Board Meeting at 7:00 pm
-  June 3 - Pond Clinic at Sycamore Farm, Trotwood
-  July 5 - Independence Holiday - Office Closed
-  July 7 - Board Meeting at 7:00 pm
-  July 16 & 17 - Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River
-  August 4 - Board Meeting at 7:00 pm

All programs and services provided by the Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District are available to everyone without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, handicap or marital status.