Preble Soil & Water Conservation District

Conserving our Natural Resources

May 2025

2789 US Rt. 35 E.
West Alexandria, OH 45381
(937) 456-5159
www.prebleswcd.org

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Get updates on our website:
www.prebleswcd.org

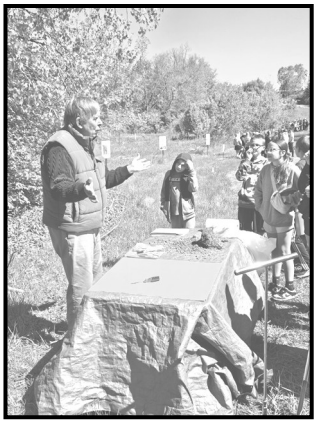
26th Annual Earth Day Event

The Preble Soil and Water Conservation District hosted our Earth Day Event on May 9 at the Preble County Historical Society Farm. This was our second year to hold the event there, and the facilities and natural areas at the Historical Society once again made for an ideal setting for Earth Day. This year, four of the five county schools in addition to one group of homeschool students each had the chance to see and hear from five different expert presenters.

Jane Marshall teaches about responsible land use

The rain came down early in the week, but Earth Day turned out to be dry and sunny. Our goal for the event over the years has been to bring students to an outdoor environment where they can learn about the wise use and conservation of our natural resources.

Lisa White gave a demonstration on food preservation inside the newly-restored smokehouse at the Historical Society. Longtime presenter David Isaacs came prepared with samples of maple syrup for students to sample as part of his talk. Ohio Department of Natural Resources State Service Forester Justin Law read about fire safety tactics while students tried on some forest fire fighting gear. Savannah Ballweg took students on a short botany hike in the woods. Retired NRCS District Conservationist Steve Boeder from Montgomery County shared his soils knowledge from his years of experience in the field. A crowd favorite was Mark Banks and the Southern Singers, sharing their Native American heritage with the students.



Steve Boeder talks about soils

Kendall Hauer demonstrates fossils

Though planning and organizing Earth Day can seem like a huge task, it all seems worthwhile when so many experts in their field get to spend a day outside educating the next generation of land owners and land users who will one day be making decisions about how to take care of the Earth.

Upcoming Pond Clinic to be held in Montgomery County

Whether you own a pond, are thinking of constructing a pond, or are just interested in ponds, you are invited to the Preble-Montgomery County Pond Clinic on Thursday, June 12th. Alex Ress from Jones Fish Farms will be speaking on Pond Management. Following Alex, Michael Buchanan of Stillwater Spring Trout Farms and Buchanan Wildlife Removal will share about his facility in addition to dealing with pond pests. Lastly, Montgomery SWCD staff will offer pond advice to round out the evening.

Here are all the details:

When: Thursday, June 12 at 5:30 p.m.

Where: Salem Church of God Pond
6500 Southway Rd #1
Clayton, OH 45315

The FREE hot dog dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by our presenters. There will be plenty of time for questions from the crowd. The clinic will conclude around 8:00 p.m. Be sure to bring your appetite and your lawn chairs! Please RSVP by June 9 to Preble SWCD at (937) 456-5159.

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Gone but not forgotten

By: BJ Price, Preble SWCD Administrator/Technician

Looking back on the last six months, we've lost no less than 15 members of the farming community in Preble County, many of whom we've had the chance to work with over the years at the Preble Soil and Water Conservation District. A few were well into their 90's but a handful of them never saw the age of 60.

While it's not my place to mention any specific names here, it does seem appropriate to list some of the things I remembered about them or the qualities I admired in them.

A story was told to me about one of them who was a hog farmer years ago. Back in the 1960's, he got ahold of day-old items from a bakery to feed as part of his hog ration, and there were some cookies piled up in one of the barns. A group of high-school students came over to the farm for soil judging practice, and one of the high-schoolers remembers sitting on a plow, munching on the cookies that were apparently still fit for human consumption, too.

Some of them farmed full-time and some worked off the farm and farmed on the side. Many of them loved to work on machinery, whether it be steam engines, tractors, cars, semi trucks, or anything else that moved. A few just really loved to drive a truck. Quite a few of them raised livestock at one point in the past and either turned it over to someone else or got out of it altogether, proving that there really is 'life after livestock.' Several left behind sons or daughters who are carrying the torch with the family operation, while others leave behind cash-rented acreage with their name on it and tenants trying to make plans for the future.

I have walked the farms where many of these folks made their living, often meeting with them to discuss their concerns with drainage, erosion, or a failing conservation practice that had way outlived its lifespan. They could often remember what year certain projects were done on their farm, who the contractor was, and other specifics no one else would recall.

Though their methods didn't always look the same, at the end of the day, these folks put their effort into caring for the land the best they knew how, knowing that someday the land will be in the hands of someone else.

Annual Meeting Save-the-Date

The Preble Soil and Water Conservation District is celebrating 76 years of conservation in 2025. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, August 26 for our Annual Meeting and Banquet. There will be a great speaker, a delicious meal, and plenty of time to catch up with your friends and neighbors. Exact times and details will be announced as we get closer to the event.

BJ's Philosophy Box

'Tis better to give than to have it stolen.

-Homer Hickam

Bobwhite Quail Monitoring

The National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative's (NBGI) Coordinated Implementation Program is a range-wide restoration roadmap for Northern Bobwhite which contains research and monitoring, biological planning and conservation design, and conservation delivery. The research and monitoring portion is based out of the Department of Forestry and Environmental Conservation at Clemson University. Our goal is to monitor birds at landscape scales (often the size of a county) by using bird point counts and Auditory Recording Units (ARU). Point counts consist of a 5-minute in-person survey for target species at points of ARU placement. ARUs are like trail cameras (see below example), but they record bird sounds. These ARUs will be placed along roadsides in public right of ways or on private landowners' property, both placed with permissions. ARUs will be attached to trees or utility poles using a cable lock and will be left to record for up to 60 days while recording 1-2 hours each day just after sunrise. ARUs will be placed facing away from roadways and will be equipped with a sticker that briefly describes the purpose and contact information (see below example). If a particular unit is in someone's way, they simply need to call the number on the sticker and tell the unit number; it will then be moved within 48 hours. The results will feed into future predictive modeling to help map more effective and efficient delivery of management practices to benefit bird species such as Northern Bobwhite.

Auditory Recording Unit (ARU) used to monitor bird sounds

Seeking Supervisor Candidates

The Preble Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is governed by a five-member board of county residents who serve staggered three-year terms. Board members attend one regular meeting per month in addition to attending other area and statewide meetings throughout the year.

Any resident 18 years of age or older who resides within Preble County can seek election to the SWCD Board of Supervisors. Candidates can be nominated by the SWCD nominating committee or individuals may contact our office to obtain a copy of a nomination petition form. Potential candidates need to secure at least 10 signatures from residents and/or landowners within the county and submit the petition to the District.

For more details about serving as a Preble SWCD Supervisor, contact the Preble SWCD at (937) 456-5159.

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Dates to Remember:

June 12 - Pond Clinic at Montgomery County
June 18 - Board Meeting
June 24-26 - Conservation Day Camp
July 4 - Independence Day Holiday (office closed)
July 16 - Board Meeting

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$1,000 College Scholarship Winner

Each spring, the Preble Soil and Water Conservation District awards a $1,000 college scholarship to a Preble County student.

We are pleased to announce that Lydia Eilerman of Eaton was chosen to receive the scholarship. Lydia, the daughter of Steve and Mary Eilerman, will be a junior this fall majoring in Animal Science at The Ohio State University. Her goal is to become a food animal veterinarian.

Lydia grew to love agriculture through her involvement in 4-H and FFA, where she held many officer positions in both organizations. She took part in livestock showmanship and learned to excel at public speaking. Congratulations, Lydia!

Preble County Pasture Walk

It's been decades since the Preble Soil and Water Conservation District last hosted a pasture walk. That's all about to change! Whether you currently manage pasture, wish you had some pasture of your own, or if you just like being down on the farm for an evening, there's a place for you. Participants young and old are welcome.

On Thursday, July 17, join us for a pasture walk from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Price Farm. Five generations of the family have lived there, and General Anthony Wayne even camped on what is now cattle pasture. Participants will learn about the history of the site and some of the long-term plans for the operation. Bob Hendershot, Grazing Specialist with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), will be speaking from down in a soil pit, showing attendees how what is below the surface affects what is above ground. ODA Grazing Program Administrator Jarrod Hittle will talk about pasture management and the importance of rotation and rest for a pasture, plant identification, and proper access to water. There will be plenty of time for your questions along the way.

Where: 46 Kayler Rd, Eaton OH 45320 - Watch for signs
When: Thursday, July 17, 2025 - 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Pre-registration is not required. There will be a moderate amount of walking on steep terrain, so please wear sturdy shoes.

Conservation Day Camp Turns 10!

2025 is the tenth year of Conservation Day Camp! Mark your calendars for the exciting return of Conservation Day Camp from June 24-26. This year, Day Camp will include all the usual fun in addition to some special events to celebrate a decade of Day Camp! Registrations for campers has been extended through early June. We are looking forward to seeing our campers for another year of outdoor fun and learning! If you know of any students who have finished grades 2-6 and are interested in attending Day Camp, you can find the registration forms at www.prebleswcd.org.