# Preble Soil & Water Conservation District

*Conserving our Natural Resources*

**May 2023**

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

# CONSERVATION COMMENTS

***BOARD OF SUPERVISORS***

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Brian Deaton
Kip Denlinger
Donald Hays
James Leedy

***DISTRICT STAFF***

BJ Price - District Administrator & Technician
Jason Chappel - Technician
Savannah Ballweg - District Educator & Technician
Austin Kosier - Intern

***NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE***

Jeff Barnes - District Conservationist
Brooke White - Soil Conservationist

***PHEASANTS FOREVER FARM BILL BIOLOGIST***

Renee Buck

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Get updates on our website:
**www.prebleswcd.org**

## Pond Clinic

Mark your calendars for this year's pond clinic!
Unger Farm
4781 Crawford Tom's Run Road,
Brookville, OH 45309
Thursday, June 8th
RSVP to Montgomery SWCD at (937) 854-7645

A free picnic dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by presentations on pond species management, pond construction and maintenance, and liability. The clinic will conclude at 8:00 p.m. Be sure to bring lawn chairs!

## Plat Books

Curious who owns that place down the road? $27 gets you a spiral bound Plat Book containing parcel maps complete with aerial imagery. Stop by the office to pick up your copy today!

## Annual Meeting

We are very excited to announce the date for our 74th Annual Meeting, and hope you join us!

Hueston Woods State Park Lodge

5201 Lodge Road, College Corner, OH 45003

Tuesday, August 22nd

In the afternoon, guests will enjoy an exciting tour of Acton Lake departing from the Lodge via pontoon boat ride. The meeting will take place that evening in the Lodge beginning with the Board of Supervisors Election and followed by a complimentary dinner. We will then welcome researchers from Miami University's Center for Aquatics and Watershed Sciences to share their important research on nutrient management in our local watersheds and their effects on Lake Acton. You won't want to miss it! No need to RSVP just yet, but mark your calendar now and watch for more details in our next newsletter.

## Conservation Day Camp

Preble SWCD is hosting our 8th annual Conservation Day Camp on June 20th-22nd. Registration is open now to 2nd through 6th graders. Campers will be joining us for three days of hands-on outdoor fun at the Preble County Historical Society and Nature Reserve. Campers can look forward to a combination of returning favorite stations, as well as brand new activities! Applications are available on our website, and can be mailed or dropped off at the office along with the camper registration fee of $40 in cash or check.

We are also in search of enthusiastic and responsible helpers and counselors! 7th through 8th graders may apply as youth helpers, and 9th grade through college students may apply as counselors. This is a great opportunity to earn volunteer hours and leadership experience. Both the youth helper and counselor forms are available on the District website. For any questions, call Savannah at (937) 456-5159 or email at sballweg@prebleswcd.org.

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## Grassed Waterway Maintenance

Grassed waterways require frequent maintenance to perform properly and lengthen their useful life. Waterways need to be inspected regularly to identify potential problems. Damaged waterways should be repaired in a timely manner to prevent further deterioration and more costly repairs.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) waterways must be maintained at their original designed width, including any buffers along the sides, to remain in compliance with CRP program rules. Here are some guidelines to assist you in maintaining your grassed waterway:

- Mow to control unwanted brush and weed species in the waterway. CRP waterways can be mowed any time without FSA permission. Typically, grass height should be maintained at 6-12 inches tall. The more often waterways are mowed it is more likely that the waterways will function better and longer.
- Raise tillage implements and planters up and turn sprayers off when crossing waterways. "Outline" waterways with sprayers and avoid spray drift onto the grass. Grassed waterways being accidentally sprayed is arguably the number one cause of waterway damage.
- Tillage and row direction should be perpendicular to the grassed waterway. This allows surface water to drain into the waterway and prevents water from flowing along the edges.
- Repair broken tile immediately.
- Seed and mulch any bare areas.

For more information on waterway maintenance, contact the Preble NRCS/SWCD office at (937) 456-4211 ext 3.

## Earth Day

April 27th was a perfect day for the 25th annual Preble County Earth Day. That is a quarter of a century of Earth Day festivities! Preble SWCD welcomed 6th grade students from Eaton, Preble Shawnee, and Twin Valley South to Wilderness Ridge Retreat Center in Camden, OH. Our volunteer presenters hosted 16 unique stations and spent the day educating our youth about a variety of environmental awareness topics, such as pollinators, water quality, wildlife, land use, forestry, geology, sustainability, and history. Hands-on lessons featured rehabilitated birds of prey, maple syrup production, and Native American culture, among other exciting activities and demonstrations. We would like to express gratitude to our outstanding presenters, volunteers, and staff for making this entertaining and memorable learning event possible. Congratulations to National Trail's Zaylynn Vance for winning the Earth Day t-shirt design contest! Her entire grade at National Trail received shirts with her awesome design to celebrate her victory.

## Area IV Envirothon

The Area IV Envirothon was held on April 25th at the scenic Camp Friedlander in Loveland. 48 teams participated in the outdoor competition where they put their knowledge to the test in the categories of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and current environmental issues. Thank you to all of the students who put in hard work to participate in the competition. Also, a special thank you to the teachers who take the time out of their very busy schedules to encourage and lead their students through the subjects. Congratulations are in order for West Jefferson's team from Madison County, who took home first place this year! The next Area IV Envirothon will take place in Fayette County in 2024. We hope to see more Preble County students next year!

## BJ's Philosophy Box

Good fences make good neighbors.

-Unknown

## From the Editor's Desk

Every now and then, things don't go according to plan. That's true for life, that's true for work, that's true for farming, and that's true for conservation. For those whose livelihood involves working outdoors, whether it be farmers, landscapers, contractors, or others, we know that the weather can play havoc with our plans. As a wise person once said, "All signs fail in dry weather."

In recent years, the extremely dry late summer weather patterns have made grassed waterway seeding and cover crop establishment a little trickier than what we would care for. You know what has worked in the past. You know what should work. Now it's just a matter of getting it to work again. And nine times out of ten, it will. But that one time out of ten, it doesn't go right. You're a conscientious person and you did everything you knew to do. The theory was good, but reality didn't cooperate. Maybe your waterway was shaped, seeded, and blanketed just like every other one, but this time, reality really didn't cooperate and your waterway doesn't quite look like a golf green this spring.

So what's a person supposed to do? You could think of 50 or a hundred things you might have done differently if you could have predicted the weather. Maybe we all could think of things to do different. But here we are. Keep at it. Make the necessary repairs. Life doesn't come with a no-risk guarantee.

Preble Soil & Water Conservation District
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**Dates to Remember:**

June 8th - Pond Clinic 5:30 p.m.
June 14th - Board Meeting 7:00 a.m.
June 20th - 22nd - Conservation Camp
July 19 Board Meeting 7:00 a.m.
August 16th - Board Meeting 7:00 a.m.
August 22nd - Annual Meeting

*All programs and services of the Preble SWCD are offered on a nondiscrimination basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or handicap. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender*

## Invasive Plant Identification

We have finally reached that special time of year where birds are chirping, flowers are blooming, leaves are emerging… and invasive plants are emerging as well. Nasty species like Amur Honeysuckle, Autumn Olive, Poison Hemlock, and Wild Parsnip are already making their presence known in our neck of the woods. It is bad enough that these species will overtake our ecosystems, but some even pose serious risks to human health. Early treatment is key in management, and an accurate identification is needed to choose the best treatment option. You can save a lot of effort and money with a bit of time and research. There are many great online resources available, some of which are compiled by the USDA on this website - https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/subject/identification. Preble SWCD staff is also available to help you with identification and can provide materials with recommended treatment methods.

## Christening of the Office Bear

After months of un-BEAR-able suspense, our resident taxidermy bear has finally been bestowed a respectable name… Crosby! Many thanks to all our loyal readers who submitted creative, adorable, and punny names.

## Sprucing Up Preble County

Nearly 600 evergreen trees were donated across Preble County this past April. Following our annual tree sale, Preble SWCD donates evergreen tree seedlings to every 5th grade student in the county to promote the importance of trees in our environment. This year, students received White Spruces. Many students and teachers know the program well, and have had these special seedlings growing in their yard for years. The program teaches students about the amazing properties of trees, how trees are essential to humankind, and how to best take care of their seedling. We hope to hear from these students later on in life that they planted their tree and have taken an interest in the beauty of the natural world! We would also like to thank the Washington Township 4-H Club for enthusiastically helping the District pack each individual tree. All of our effort together makes for a brighter (or greener) future!