Preble Soil & Water Conservation District

Conserving our Natural Resources

November 2024

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

CONSERVATION COMMENTS

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Kip Denlinger
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James Leedy

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BJ Price - District Administrator & Technician
Jason Chappel - Technician
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NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Jeff Barnes - District Conservationist
Erin Schritz - Resource Conservationist
Brooke White - Soil Conservationist
Tyler White - Soil Conservationist

PHEASANTS FOREVER FARM BILL BIOLOGIST

Renee Buck

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Get updates on our website:

www.prebleswcd.org

Annual Meeting and 75th Anniversary Celebration

Seventy-five years and still going strong! On August 17th we celebrated our 75th anniversary and had our annual meeting at the same time. The day started around 3:00 in the afternoon at the Preble County Historical Society with the buildings on site open for all to see. The Blue Jacket Boys jammed out while everyone enjoyed the company of friends and soaked in history. Behind the bank barn were wagon rides to highlight the conservation work the Historical Society has been doing.

Meal time under the new pavilion

The weather had been going back and forth all day. We made it under the newly constructed pavilion just in time for the rain to come. To start off the banquet, Shoelaces Catering served a delicious meal fit for a king. Before our keynote presenter, we were able to wrangle up a good number of former employees and supervisors of Preble SWCD as well as past SCS/NRCS employees for photographs and to give them a round of applause. It would be deemed impossible to be successful for 75 years without everyone's efforts. After enjoying our dinner, Brad Kramer gave an excellent talk on the original land survey of Preble County along with background for those who haven't had as much surveying in their back pocket. The Outstanding Cooperator award went to Mark Cottingim for the extensive conservation practices he has installed on his land over a few decades. The Conservation Hall of Fame award went to Jim Mitchell Jr. It was an absolute honor to give those awards to both gentleman, as they certainly deserved it.

Mark Cottingim receives his award

Following all of the awards was the always popular Conservation Trivia, as narrated by BJ Price. There were no perfect scores this go round. However, the highest scorers were able to pick out a door prize! The jars of honey were certainly a sweet deal, as they were snatched up quick. The Supervisor election results were given. We welcomed Josh Ruebush as a new Board Supervisor! The Price Brothers with special guest Sam Ball performed an impromptu show in the pavilion since the rain chased them inside. That was quite a treat; I thought you had to be old to play the banjo. As promised, the night ended with a real bang with an astounding fireworks show and popcorn from Deaton Farms.

Jim Mitchell, Jr. joins Hall of Fame

We were so glad to see more than 240 of our closest friends come out to support us, not to mention the sponsors that truly helped our dream become reality. A big thanks goes out to Eaton Hometowne Furniture, Somerville Bank, Reid Health, The Preble County Chamber of Commerce, Brubaker Grain and Chemical, Preble County Farm Bureau, John's Tire Service, Quality Tile and Drainage Systems LLC, and the Jim Arnett Family. Also a very special thanks to the Preble County Historical Society for allowing us to use the grounds and having all hands on deck for us in assisting with setup and teardown. Once more, thank you to all of you that came out. We appreciate your support and wouldn't have a job without you! We hope you enjoyed the evening as much as we did. Here's to another 75 years!

Blue Jacket Boys performing

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2025 Private and Commercial Pesticide and Fertilizer Recertification

Save the date for our upcoming Private and Commercial Pesticide and Fertilizer Recertification Class! Cooperators must renew their pesticide applicator licenses every three years. This four-hour course is approved by the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and fulfills all core and specialty requirements needed for license renewal. Alice Harris, BASF Ohio Tech Service Representative since 2018, will give details on ways to prevent pesticide exposure and how to respond. Julie Lamberson is employed by Keystone Cooperative as a Safety and Risk Coordinator. She will speak on the security and storage of pesticides, as well as proper fertilizer setbacks and rates. Frances Springer will give a presentation on using manure as an alternative fertilizer source. Bill Bowers, Jarrod Hittle, and Rex Brubaker will also be on hand that day.

When: Tuesday, January 28th, 2025

Where: Eaton First Church of God

601 East Lexington Rd, Eaton, OH 45320

RSVP: Please call Preble SWCD at 937-456-5159 **before January 10th**

Private Categories - Core, 1, 2, 6, and 15

Commercial Categories - Core, 2C, 9C, 10C, and 15C

Be sure to preregister for this course in order to receive a complimentary lunch! Lunch will **not** be available for walk-ins. Double check which categories you need to fulfill versus what we are offering.

Remember that payment for this class is in addition to the payment made to ODA for license renewal.

Forestry Workshop Review

Who knew that pulled pork, history, and the love for the great outdoors could ever come together in such harmony? On September 10th, the Preble SWCD hosted our annual forestry workshop in which we achieved just that. We spent the nice evening at the Preble County Historical Farm with a record number of excited faces, and not just for the food either!

Wagon Rides

We began the evening with a delicious meal catered by Cathy Price. I think we all wanted the dessert recipe after that! Our fantastic wagon driver, Jason Chappel, took the reins of his John Deere and escorted nearly everyone; minus a few brave souls, across Aukerman Creek. We also brought friends from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) along for the ride.

Justin Law, Service Forester from the Division of Forestry, spoke on the ways to manage woodlands for what you are looking to achieve. The opportunities in a forest are almost limitless. From wildlife habitat to timber harvesting, you can make your forest work for you. Mike Saylor from ODNR - Division of Wildlife, broadened our forestry knowledge by speaking on forest succession. Mike explained what we can do at each stage in the life of a forest to benefit the woods and wildlife. Invasive species removal and tree and shrub plantings can be quite beneficial in the long run of an early stage forest. BJ Price spoke at the site of the former water-powered sawmill near Aukerman Creek.

Mike Saylor of ODNR

Please contact our office with any questions. If we missed you this time, we hope to see you at the next one!

BJ's Philosophy Box

Two heads are better than one.
Twenty heads are worse than two dogs.
-Dr. Mark Ulrich

Manure Stockpiling Reminders

The Preble Soil and Water Conservation District would like to take a moment to remind producers to use best management practices on your land while stockpiling manure. Please keep in mind these requirements and siting setbacks when you temporarily stockpile manure:

Requirements for a manure stockpile:

1. Must be solid manure with bedding (minimum of 25% solids) or dry poultry manure.
2. Planned stockpile cannot be stored for more than a 6-month period.
3. If the storage period will extend beyond 4 months or over winter, a 75-foot-wide vegetative buffer will be required.
4. Must be located on soils that are deep to bedrock (>40 inches to bedrock).
5. May not be located on soils with a rapid or very rapid permeability (>2.0 in./hr.) in the topsoil, subsoil, or substratum to a depth of 40 in.
6. May not be located on slopes greater than 6%.
7. May not be located on occasionally or frequently flooded soils or below the 100-year floodplain elevation.
8. Limit the height of the pile to 7' and shape it to shed precipitation.
9. Locate manure stockpiles in or near the field in which the manure is to be applied. The volume of manure should approximately equal the amount that will be applied to the field at agronomic rates.
10. Consider covering the manure stockpile if storing more than 4 months, or over winter.

Siting Setback Requirements:

1. Must be located a minimum of 300 feet from spring water collection systems, wells, or sink holes.
2. Must be located a minimum of 1500 feet from any public surface water drinking intakes.
3. Must be located a minimum of 500 feet from neighboring residences.
4. Must be located a minimum of 300 feet from areas of concentrated flow such as waterways or surface drains.
5. Must be located a minimum of 300 feet from any ponds, streams, or waters of the state.
6. Must be a minimum of 300 feet from a tile inlet or broken tile.
7. Must be a minimum of 100 feet from a public road.

Farmers and applicators need to guard water quality throughout the year by following the current USDA/NRCS Practice Standards for manure application. These guidelines, if implemented, will greatly reduce the potential for nutrients to enter into watercourses.

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Dates to Remember:

November 20 - Board Meeting at 7:00 a.m.
November 28 & 29 - Office Closed for Thanksgiving
December 11 - Board Meeting at 7:00 a.m.
December 24 & 25 - Office Closed for Christmas
January 1 - Office Closed for New Years Day
January 15 - Board Meeting at 7:00 a.m.
January 20 - Office Closed for MLK Day

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FFA Soil Judging

On Friday, September 13, all five county high school FFA soil judging chapters banded together at BJ Price's farm for the Preble County Soil Judging Contest. There were over 100 eager high schoolers hopping off the buses into the near perfect weather. The pits were a bit dryer than last year for those who can remember. No students were lost during the day; only a couple pencils and spray bottles.

The winner of the County Ag contest was Luke Menke from TVS. The winner for the County Urban contest was Julianne Deaton from Eaton. Congrats to the both of you! A big thanks to BJ for letting everyone tread on his property and for digging the soil pits.

The District soil judging contest occurred on the fine morning of September 25, at the Preble County Historical Society. A total of 31 schools were representing the ag portion; while there were 22 schools representing the Urban portion from the district. We tried to give the students something a little different than the "normal" including pit in the woods! As lunchtime rolled around and students were finishing up their tests, our grill masters cooked up 400 hotdogs for everyone. We hope everyone enjoyed learning about soil like we do and we truly appreciated everyone that put in their time and effort to make this event happen.

Little Bird, Big Problem

As their name indicates, European starlings are native to Europe and parts of Asia and Africa. People made multiple attempts to establish the starling in North America in the 1800s, and the final successful release was part of an effort around 1890 to introduce birds mentioned in Shakespeare's writings. Initially, the starling population was found only close the release site in New York City, but gradually starlings expanded to nearly all of the U.S. and Canada. From the original 80-100 birds; to the near 200 Million that exist today.

Starlings aggregate where humans provide supplemental food, including agricultural areas and refuse dumps. Their varied diet allows them to find food almost anywhere. Starlings eat many types of invertebrates, including insects, snails, and worms, and plant material, including fruits, berries, acorns, and grains. Generally, starlings impact native bird species through competition for nesting cavities. However, there is little evidence of any serious ecological effect on native birds. Starlings appear to outcompete the sapsucker group of woodpeckers for tree cavities, but other cavity-nesting birds are seemingly unaffected. Humans have allowed starlings to become one of the most abundant bird species on earth. Thus, starlings can account for much of the vertebrate biomass in many ecosystems in North America.

Economic damages from starlings are widespread. Damage or consumption of crops, including fruits and grains, total millions of dollars annually. Where livestock is fed outdoors, starlings take feed and deposit feces in feeding troughs. While we know little about their impacts, starlings are vectors for parasites, plus bacterial, fungal, and viral pathogens. - **University of Illinois**