



Conservation News

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FALL 2024

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Union SWCD

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79th Annual Meeting Highlights

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Union Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Meeting & Banquet on August 7th at the Der Dutchman Restaurant in Plain City, Ohio.

An election of supervisors started off the evening. Larry Morris was elected to the Union SWCD board replacing retiring supervisor Matt Staley. Larry's three-year term will begin January 1, 2025.

We had a great evening with 72 people in attendance.

Congratulations Larry!



Attendees enjoyed a presentation given by Emily Mullen of The Mullen Dairy and Creamery.

Emily's presentation explained how she diversified her family's dairy operation and the inspiration behind its success.

THANK YOU!

Union SWCD and Staff would like to thank the following supporters for helping make our 79th Annual Meeting a success.

Affiliate Members

Al's Leather Craft LTD

Bahan Excavating, LLC

Benny's Pizza

Bokes Creek Orchard

Bokes Creek Hot Shots

Connolly Companies

Cook Real Estate

Dean Cook Nationwide Insurance

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Richwood Tire Center

Seed Center, The

Seed Consultants

Select Sires, Inc.

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Bokes Creek Orchard

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Cherry Hawk Farm Apple Orchard

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Fender's Fish Hatchery

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Scott's Miracle-Gro Company

Smart Oil, LLC

Stillwater Mums, LLC

Studio 31 Salons

Suds Brothers (Connolly Companies)

Teresa Rockenbaugh

Union Station 1820

Union Soil & Water Conservation District

2024 Affiliate Members

Diamond Memberships



Platinum Memberships



YOUR SUCCESS *Our Passion.*



Gold Memberships



Silver Memberships



Drainage Maintenance Update

Drainage Maintenance Crews have been working on restoring Dry basins in the Jerome Village Community. This process involves removing sediment and cattails from the basin. Crews then inspect the underdrain and repair if needed.



If you have any drainage related questions, please contact our office Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the contact information listed below.

Joe Eads
Drainage Maintenance Supervisor
18000 State Route 4, Ste. D
Marysville, OH 43040
937-209-2236
jeads@unioncountyohio.gov
<https://www.unioncountyohio.gov/USWC>

Technical Activities

Union SWCD has completed another successful season of grassed waterway construction. With the help of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA), we have installed approximately 17 acres of grassed waterway in 2024. As the season comes to a close, we have finally started to see some rain around the county which has allowed our new seedings to begin growing.

Establishing a healthy grass stand on a newly constructed waterway is essential for its functioning.



Newly installed waterway with mulch netting in place and grass growing.



Soil erosion and exposed tile in Union County prior to grassed waterway installation

If your farm has soil erosion problems, we may be able to help!

Contact Union County FSA at 937-642-6741 (extension 2) for additional information and eligibility.

Technical Trivia: Low Water Crossings

Covering conservation and drainage topics on a quarterly basis.

What is it? A low water crossing, also known as a low ford crossing, is a stabilized area constructed across a stream channel or ditch to allow livestock or equipment to cross the channel without damaging the stream bottom or causing erosion. They are typically constructed with shallow entrance and exit slopes to allow for easy access. Most are constructed using stone or concrete as stabilizing material.

Low water crossings can be a cost-effective and efficient alternative to a bridge crossing or culvert pipe. Properly constructed crossings do not limit the flow capacity of a stream channel, and thus won't back up water. However, they may not allow for crossing during or immediately after large storm events as a culvert or bridge might.

Low water crossings can be a great option for stream or ditch crossings under the right circumstances. Feel free to reach out with questions!



Recently installed low water crossing



Established crossing with fence on either side

Up the Crick...

Using resources today, conserving for tomorrow.
Joseph Grove, Urban Technician - jgrove@unioncountyohio.gov



This Fall, Leave the Leaves!

As Autumn sets in across Ohio, leaves are beginning to fall to the ground. Rather than bagging them up to be hauled away, there are multiple ways that you can make your leaves work for you and your lawn (that also allow you to ditch the raking and blowing).

1. Mow them and leave them

Researchers have found that finely chopping leaves and letting them stay on the grass will return valuable nutrients to the soil, which can help give your plants a little boost in the Spring. They also provide food for earthworms, insects, and microbes that are good for your soil, they help hold moisture (which is important in a drought), and they help build soil from the top down.

First, make sure the leaves are dry and then make a couple passes over them to chop them into fine pieces. That's it! However, as simple as that is, you do need to repeat this periodically to make sure that the leaves don't build up too thickly on the lawn before mowing (too thick a layer of chopped leaves can choke out grass). If your lawn has already become inundated with leaves, it may be better to choose another use for them.

Additionally, you should exercise care if mowing oak or cottonwood leaves, as these take longer to decompose. Black walnut leaves should not be left on the lawn as they contain juglone, a chemical that prevents other plants from growing.

2. Mulch Perennials

Leaves make a great blanket for protecting perennials and other woody plants during the winter months. They help insulate the plants' roots and keep them at a consistent temperature. This can reduce stress on the plant when Ohio weather can't decide which season it is and swings between temperatures.

3. Compost them

Rotting, dead plants can be composted into an organic material that, when tilled into the soil, holds water and nutrients for plants to use. This a great, natural fertilizer to have on hand in Spring!

Wild About Wildlife

Brent Nickel, Union SWCD Wildlife Specialist.
brent.nickel@unioncountyohio.gov

Fall Wildlife and Habitat Interests and Concerns

Share Your Love for the Outdoors - Take A Kid Hunting

Hunting season is here and now's the time to get into that Hunter's Education Class. The Division of Wildlife offers three types of certification courses; instructor-led training, home study courses, and online. The online course has a \$15 fee, but all other options are Free!

For more information about when and where these classes are available, see the web page below:

[ODNR : Hunter Education Courses](#)

If your young one isn't quite ready for Hunter's Education, check out the Hunter's Apprentice Program. Apprentice hunting licenses or fur taker permits allow new hunters and trappers, both adults and youth, to sample the experience of hunting under the mentorship of a licensed adult prior to taking a hunter or trapper education course.

Wetland Dike Problems?



For anyone experiencing chronic damage from muskrats, now is the time to recruit trappers to reduce the explosive muskrat population. In Union County, the regulated muskrat trapping season is from **November 10, 2024** through **February 28, 2025**. I have a list of willing trappers in my office if you need someone to assist you.

OLHAP



OHIO LANDOWNER/HUNTER ACCESS PARTNERSHIP

- This is private property open to access for the purpose of wildlife-based recreation.
- OLHAP permit is required.
- Please practice leave no trace by packing all trash out.
- Funding for OLHAP is partially funded by grant monies in the VPA section of the Farm Bill.
- For more information on this program or to obtain your OLHAP permit visit ohiodnr.gov.



DIVISION OF WILDLIFE
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

NEED A PLACE TO HUNT?
OLHAP
has you covered!

The Ohio Landowner/Hunter Access Partnership program is up and running!

Check out the great properties enrolled in this program to expand your hunting opportunities.

What's In-Season

Hunting Regulations:

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/wildlife/hunting-trapping>

Fishing Regulations:

<https://ohiodnr.gov/buy-and-apply/hunting-fishing-boating/fishing-resources>

"Hunting With Permission" forms and **Hunting Regulations** and **Fishing Regulations** are available at our office.

The Division of Wildlife has an "APP" for that!

<https://ohiodnr.gov/buy-and-apply/hunting-fishing-boating/hunting-resources/huntfishoh-mobile-app>

Get the APP and do all of your Division of Wildlife business right from your phone! Don't forget to update your APP on an annual basis for updated hunting and fishing regulations!

Wildlife Conflict Management

...Forget Control!

Experiencing wildlife conflicts? Try the solutions associated with this wildlife conflict resolution website!

The Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management:

<http://www.icwdm.org/>

Tallgrass Truths—Revealed! Management is your Friend...

Landowners, there is nothing wrong or "illegal" with mowing random and curving "hunt trails", or walkways, through the voluntary Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grassland practices. It is always best to mow to an eight-inch height. Hunting trails that wind through the tall and thick vegetation will not place the landowner in "non-compliance" with the voluntary conservation practices' contracts. Up to 20% of your acreage can be mowed per year under your contract without penalty. If done in sections or strips, this will not only open up the field for wildlife to use but will also open it up more for you to use and be easier to hunt. Be sure to address any woody vegetation growth during this mowing opportunity



Ohio Pollinator
Habitat Initiative

Annual Milkweed Pod Collection
October 1st - 31st

Contact Your Local Soil and Water Conservation District for More Information

Injured—or what appears to be Helpless Wildlife?

Call or contact the **Ohio Wildlife Center** – 614-793-WILD (9453) – then follow their every instruction!

<http://www.ohiowildlifecenter.org>

"Humans are often wildlife's last hope for survival – not necessarily their best hope."

Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative Annual Milkweed Pod Collection

Our 2024 collection is open!

A large green collection bin with a yellow lid is located outside of our office at 18000 State Route 4, Ste. D, Marysville, OH 43040 from October 1 - 31, 2024. Stop by anytime to drop off your seed pods!

Each year, Soil and Water Conservation Districts across Ohio partner with the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative to collect Milkweed Seed. Since the project began in 2015, volunteers have collected tens of thousands of gallons of milkweed seed pods, totaling over 22 million seeds! ODOT sows the on to "conservation corridors" designated areas along highways planted with native prairie perennials.

The Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative is a nonprofit organization working to improve and create pollinator habitat in the state of Ohio. We also strive to raise awareness for all Ohioans about the importance of pollinators. OPHI is a collaborative effort, and we invite you to join us to promote pollinator conservation!

Milkweed is the only host plant for the Monarch butterfly for egg-laying and caterpillar rearing. It also serves as a food source for Monarchs and many other pollinator species. The disappearance of milkweed across the U.S. has contributed to the 80% decline of the eastern monarch butterfly population over the last 20 years. We are working hard to change this, and you can help! Follow these simple tips to make our 2024 even better:

- * Make sure that before you collect seed, you become familiar with the common milkweed to avoid harvesting pods from similar plants such as hemp dogbane and swamp milkweed.
- * It is best to collect the pods when they are dry, grey, or brown. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHECK THIS.**
- * If the center seam pops with gentle pressure, they can be harvested.
- * Store the pods in paper bags; plastic bags collect unwanted moisture.
- * Put the date and county collected on the bag when you turn them in.
- * Keep the pods in a cool, dry area until you can deliver them to the nearest collection site.
- * Leave some pods (10-25%) on the plants so that seeds have a chance to naturally disperse and do their job as an important food source for milkweed bugs and other critters.

We thank you for your help to promote native plants and save the Monarch Butterfly!



Upcoming Events / Office Closures:

October 1, 2024	Union SWCD Annual Fingerling Sale, pickup 9:30 a.m. in the back parking lot
October 10, 2024	Union SWCD Board Meeting, 6:00 pm in the Ag Center - Buckeye Mtg Room
October 14, 2024	Holiday: Columbus Day
November 11, 2024	Holiday: Veterans Day
November 14, 2024	Union SWCD Board Meeting, 6:00 pm in the Ag Center - Buckeye Mtg Room
November 28 & 29, 2024	Holiday: Thanksgiving Day and for the day after.
December 12, 2024	Union SWCD Board Meeting, 6:00 pm in the Ag Center - Buckeye Mtg Room
December 24 & 25, 2024	Holiday: Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
December 31, 2024	Holiday: New Year's Eve off @ noon

**Would you like to receive our Conservation News by email quarterly?
Email bnickel@unioncountyohio.gov to be included on our list.**

Union Soil and Water Conservation District and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibit discrimination in their programs based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.

Mailing Address Goes Here

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Marysville, OH 43040