



# Conservation Comments

April - May - June 2008

*LOCAL CONSERVATION  
EVENTS AND INFORMATION  
FOR GSWCD COOPERATORS*

Greene SWCD — 1363 Burnett Drive — Xenia, OH 45385-5681 — Phone (937) 372-4478 — Fax (937) 372-8774

Mark your calendar for the  
**GSWCD  
Annual Meeting**  
Monday,  
September 8,  
2008



More details in  
our next newsletter

## How To Get On The Ballot

**A**ny resident 18 years of age or older, who resides within Greene County can seek election to the Greene Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Names can be placed on the ballot in one of two ways.

**C**andidates can be nominated by the GSWCD nominating committee. This committee works throughout the year looking for candidates who are interested in the conservation and protection of natural resources within the county.

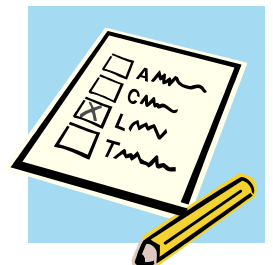
**I**nterested individuals may also stop by the GSWCD office, 1363 Burnett Drive, Xenia, Ohio and pick up a nomination petition form. Potential candidates need to secure at least 10 signatures from residents and/or landowners from the county and submit the petition to the district by the close of business on **August 4<sup>th</sup>**. Candidates meeting the eligibility requirements and deadline will be listed on the ballot for the special election, which will take place on September 8, 2008 at the Annual Meeting. We will be electing one supervisor for a three year term.

**S**oil and Water Conservation Districts, located in all 88 counties, are legal subdivisions of state government that provide natural resource management assistance to county landowners and other units of local government. The district is funded by the Greene County Commissioners, and county funds are supplemented by funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The district is governed by a five-member board of county residents. Board members serve staggered three-year terms.



The **2008  
Farm Bill**  
was passed into  
law recently and it  
includes a strong  
Conservation Title.

As we learn of  
changes to the  
existing conserva-  
tion programs and  
details of new  
ones we will pass  
them on to you.  
Stay tuned.



## Start Planning Now for 2009 EQIP Improvements

**E**QIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) is a conservation cost share program that producers can use to install a variety of practices. Commonly used structural practices in Greene County, such as rebuilding grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins, rotational grazing systems, manure storage structures, and stream bank fencing are eligible to be funded through EQIP. The program also provides incentive payments for producers to use certain management practices, including conversion to no-till or prescription farming, and developing nutrient management plans.

**T**o be eligible for EQIP, landowners need to have produced at least \$1000 of income in each of the last three years, or have filed a Schedule F on their tax returns. There may be some changes to the program with passage of the 2008 Farm Bill, but the planning process should continue full speed. For more information or to schedule a planning visit call Steve Hall at 937-372-4478.



## DEFA Loan Program

**I**n 2003, the Upper Little Miami / Caesars Creek (ULM/CC) Watershed Joint Board of Supervisors helped to establish, with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), below-market loans that are used for non-point source pollution control activities. This was possible as this watershed was able to receive an approved watershed plan developed in the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study. Funds for these loans come through the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) linked deposit program, which is administered through the OEPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA). So, we often refer to them as DEFA loans.

**L**ocally, the ULM/CC Joint Board of Supervisors have a key part in the loan program. Only land within the Upper Little Miami / Caesars Creek Watershed is eligible. The steps in the DEFA Loan program are as follows:

- The cooperator develops, with their local SWCD/NRCS, an individual soil and water conservation plan.
- The cooperator obtains a Certificate of Qualification from the ULM/CC Joint Board of Supervisors, identifying the proposed improvements or purchases eligible for the WPCLF Linked Deposit Program.
- The cooperator applies for a loan from one of the local area banks participating in the WPCLF Linked Deposit Program.
- The Bank evaluates the credit-worthiness of the cooperator using its criteria. If these criteria are met, then the bank enters into a loan agreement with the cooperator.
- The bank sends an investment request form, which identifies the cooperator, amount, term, and the interest rate of the loan, and a copy of the cooperator's Certificate of Qualification to the OEPA.
- Upon approval, OEPA and the Ohio Water Development Authority will invest in a Certificate of Deposit (CD) for the amount and term of the loan to the cooperator. The rate on the CD will be discounted by up to 5 percent below the bank's normal cost of funds, as determined by comparison to the interest rate of the U.S. Treasury notes and bonds. The term of the deposit is equal to the term of the bank's loan with the cooperator, but in no case longer than 20 years.
- The interest rate of the bank's loan to the cooperator is reduced by the same amount as the discount the bank received from the WPCLF.

**T**here are many items eligible for this program, not only structures but equipment. The important point is the purchase shows a positive impact on water quality and is part of an approved conservation plan. For additional information contact Don Leeds at 937-372-4478.



## Envirothon - the natural challenge



**N**orth America's largest environmental high school competition, the Envirothon, impacted three Greene County high schools this spring. Beavercreek, Bellbrook, and Cedarville High Schools participated in this hands-on, outdoor testing opportunity. Teams of five students are challenged with questions involving soils, wildlife, aquatics, forestry, and a current environmental issue.

**O**pen only to Montgomery and Greene County teams, the Local Envirothon was held on April 23 at James Ranch Park in Xenia. Teams were rotated through five testing stations and then allowed to review areas of interest with resource specialists. The Local Envirothon is sponsored by the Montgomery and Greene Soil & Water Conservation Districts, the Centerville Washington Park District, and the Greene County Park District. Members of the Greene County Master Gardeners and Volunteer Naturalists helped lead groups to testing stations and score tests.

**A**ll southwest Ohio schools can participate in the Area Envirothon, held May 6 at Camp Kern YMCA Camp in Warren County. Seventy two teams participated, with the top four being eligible to go to the Ohio Envirothon. One of Beavercreek's teams placed third - qualifying for the next step! Check out [www.areaenvirothon.org](http://www.areaenvirothon.org) for pictures from the event and try your hand at some of the tests!

**U**rbanda University was the site for Ohio's 20th Envirothon June 8-10. Twenty teams from around the state competed for the opportunity to represent Ohio at the Canon Envirothon July 28 - August 3 in Flagstaff, Arizona. Besides outdoor testing, teams had to prepare a presentation promoting proper land use to a panel of judges. All teams come away from the competition with a greater understanding of and respect for our natural resources. Chardon High School, Geauga County, travels on to Flagstaff for the Canon Envirothon. Find out more about that competition at [www.envirothon.org](http://www.envirothon.org).

## Poster Contest Display

**X**enia Christian Elementary 5th graders took up our challenge to develop posters following the theme: Water is Life. Top three posters were: 1st - Logan Pethel; 2nd - Rachel Graver; and 3rd - Savannah Hart.

**T**hese will be on display, along with some honorable mentions, in the Conservation Building during the Greene County Fair, July 27 - August 2. Stop by to see these works of art!

## Conservation Reserve Program

**C**onservation Reserve Program (CRP) grass strips along streams and around field edges have increased in popularity over the past few years, as landowners have realized the financial and environmental pluses that they offer. On the financial side, cost-share incentives, especially in the Continuous CRP, have increased significantly, and producers commonly make more money with CRP than by farming the same land. CRP offers a \$100 per acre signup bonus, 90% reimbursement of seeding costs, and annual rental payments of up to \$130 per acre for 10 years.



**T**he environmental benefits are equally attractive. Grass filter strips intercept surface runoff water before it enters streams and ditches, capturing sediment, fertilizers and pesticides. As long as the adjacent cropland is managed properly, filters are very effective at removing these pollutants. Filter strips can provide good wildlife habitat for a variety of animals. By leaving the strips undisturbed until mid July, birds and other residents can complete their nesting cycle.

**G**rass buffers around field edges provide high quality for quail and many other species, where crop yields are generally low anyway because of shading. In developing areas where tension between rural homeowners and farmers is on the rise, attractive grass strips can improve the public's image of the farm community. If you would like more information on these opportunities, please call our office.



### Glenn's Weather Corner

Month	Rainfall	Avg. Temp
Jan	2.01"	31.3 degrees F
Feb	4.92"	31.0 degrees F
Mar	8.31"	40.7 degrees F
April	2.11"	55.6 degrees F
May	6.75"	59.8 degrees F
<b>Cumulative Rainfall</b>		
January - May	2008	24.10"
	2007	17.13"
	2006	16.65"

### Greene SWCD

#### Office Hours

Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

#### Greene SWCD Staff Members -

- Don Leeds - Program Administrator
- Nancy Boggs - Administrative Assistant
- Mary Duley - Secretary
- Warren McCarren - Technician
- Jeremiah McDowell - Technician
- Ken Middleton - Urban Erosion Control
- Jill O'Banion - Education Specialist

#### Greene NRCS Staff Members

Steve Hall - District Conservationist

#### GSWCD Supervisors:

Gary Clemans, Chuck Cooley, Dave Linkhart, David Quallen, Don Wolf, and Glenn Harner - Associate

All services of the Greene SWCD are free to the public. Our office is located in the Xenia Industrial Park.

# Conservation Comments

Check us out on the web:  
[www.co.greene.oh.us/soils](http://www.co.greene.oh.us/soils)

Funding to the Greene SWCD is provided by the Greene County Commissioners and Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Soil and Water Conservation provide assistance. Programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis.

Look Inside For >>>

- How to Get on the Ballot
- EQIP and CRP updates
- Envirothon & Poster Contest
- DEFA Loans

Address Correction Requested

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