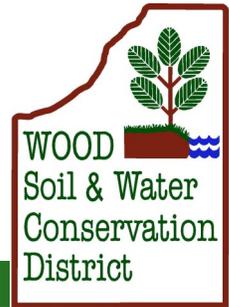


# Eye on Conservation

WORKING LOCALLY, THINKING REGIONALLY



Wood Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter SPRING 2017



Kris Swartz, a Wood SWCD supervisor and past president of the Ohio Federation of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, testified in Columbus before the House Finance: Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources Subcommittee. Kris also joined others from Ohio for the annual Fly-In in Washington D.C. The Fly-In gives the districts the opportunity to voice concerns, share successes, and communicate

plans and projects making a difference in the quality and conservation of local natural resources.

The Wood SWCD supervisors and staff work locally to offer assistance and education on soil health and water quality, but think beyond our borders at the bigger picture and impact we all have on conservation.

Thank you to the local, state, and federal legislators for taking the time to hear our story.

*"In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught."*

- Baba Dioum

**Congratulations** to Jim Carter for 20 years of service with the Wood Soil and Water Conservation District. Jim serves as a district administrator and engineering and technical coordinator.



As a generational farmer, Jim practices what he teaches. He values necessity of soil health and quality water resources. His expertise and good nature is an asset to the district and the community organizations he serves.



L to R: Lee Sundermeier, Bernie Scott, Ron Snyder, Dennis Ferrell, and Kris Swartz

WOOD SWCD  
OFFICE HOURS  
7:30 A.M.—4:30 P.M.  
MONDAY—FRIDAY



The Wood SWCD Board of Supervisors holds regular monthly meetings the third Friday of each month at 8:00 a.m. at the district office.



The Continental Divide of the Americas

## “Boots on the Ground” provided by Bernie Scott

From one mile high to over two miles high in an hour and a half to the Continental Divide! This bus tour was the summarizing event of our NACD conference in Denver!

At Berthoud Pass, 11,307' elevation and verified by the elevation app on my smart phone, my mind was racing about seeing the "Headwaters" of the Colorado River that supports life and agriculture for 19 down river states and extending into Mexico. All from the Colorado Rockies snowfall and resulting snow pack.

From the snow melt, water is captured, impounded, banked, dispersed, allocated, and/or diverted back to eastern Colorado through 16 channels and pipes to 80% of the states population and main agricultural region.

The states population is growing at an alarming rate not necessarily from liberal marijuana use, but more from industrial growth and preferred lifestyles.

My conclusion and take away, after 38 years of teaching high school soils and conservation and 18 years with Wood SWCD, water use and soil conservation, along with the new healthy soils movement, now has urgency. This urgency takes on higher meaning when we combine the loss of agricultural land to development of 9 acres per hour while the world's population grows 9,000 during the same hour.

Hence we all need to be at the food table appreciating soils and conservation and especially "WATER"!

*“Boots on the Ground” is an addition to our quarterly newsletter highlighting an experience, quotes, quips, and commentary offered by the supervisors and staff of the district.*

## Join us for a Pond Clinic

on  
Monday, April 24  
6:00-8:30 pm  
at

W. W. Knight Preserve  
29530 White Rd  
Perrysburg, OH 43551

Bill Cody, the “Pond Doctor,” and Craig Everett, OSU Extension, will share general information on pond care and maintenance.

Bring your questions for an open Q & A! They'll have answers!

*The event is free and open to the community. Please contact the district office to register for adequate materials.*

**\*Fish sale order forms can be found online or at the district office. \***



***There is the same amount of water on Earth as there was when the Earth was formed. The water from your faucet could contain molecules that dinosaurs drank.***

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

# WE NEED THEM

By Hal Mann, President Wild Ones Oak Openings Region Chapter

(all photos by author)

Over one-third of our food comes directly from the action of pollinators. That's right. One of every three bites of food we take is made possible due to the pollination services of insects, with bees the most effective of them all. If you look at the typical produce section of a grocery store and remove all the fruits and vegetables that came from pollination, the offerings would be pretty bleak indeed. And that's the section of the store with the healthiest food.

Perhaps when you think of pollinators your mind runs to the Honeybee. That's the one that gets so much publicity and attention. However, our native bees are much more efficient at pollination than the imported Honeybee. In fact, there are crops that absolutely require buzz pollination which the imported Honeybee can't do. Tomato, Eggplant, Pepper, Blueberry, and Cranberry are a few examples of plants that can only be buzz pollinated. Our native Bumblebees are experts at providing this free service.

The flowers of many of plants are self-compatible, meaning the pollen from the same flower or plant can fertilize the flowers or plant from which it came, producing fruit. However, as Heather Holm notes in her newly-published book – "Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide," the result can be "poorly developed fruit." Other plants are self-incompatible and require cross pollination, that is, only the pollen of a genetically different plant of the same species can pollinate a flower to produce fruit. Some examples are apples, cherries, and plums. Holm further notes that "whether a bee-pollinated crop flower is self-compatible or not, pollination by bees typically improves the size, shape, and overall yield of crops." Cross pollination also serves to strengthen the genetic diversity of plant species, helping to provide for their long-term survival.



*Native Bumble bees (Bombus spp.)  
on Sneezeweed*

So how can we put this knowledge to use? Do you have a vegetable garden? Do you farm? Do you have an orchard? If you enlist the aid of our native pollinators, you can realize a larger harvest without the use of expensive fertilizers, and without paying for honeybee hives to be placed in your orchards.

Our pollinators are in trouble largely due to the use pesticides and loss of habitat. For example, the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, once common in Northwest Ohio, can no longer be found here and was just placed on the Endangered Species list. The iconic Monarch Butterfly whose populations have declined by 80%, has been submitted for protection under the Endangered Species Act. Pollinators are a keystone species, prime indicators of the health of our planet.



*Mason bee filling nest cavity in block of wood*

So how can we best conserve and support our native bee populations? Bees, like so many creatures, need two things: a place to nest, and safe, nutritious food. Most of our native bees nest in the ground. Because so many of them are solitary, they don't form colonies needing protection. For that reason, most of our native bees haven't developed stingers and aren't aggressive. Of those that do have stingers, most of their stingers are too small to even penetrate the skin. To enable these ground-nesting species to propagate, the practice of no-till farming is a huge help. In the home landscape, leaving bare, un-mulched ground also helps. Other species, like the highly effective mason bee, nest in small holes in dead trees and in the hollow core of plant stems. Leaving some dead trees and plants stems in place will provide good nest sites for these species.

Secondly, if you plant the deep-rooted plant species our native bees co-evolved with, you'll provide them with the essential nutrition they must have. ( continued on next page)

(continued from previous page) Using a variety of native plants that deliver a succession of blooms throughout the year will enable pollinators to get not only the nectar they need for themselves, but also the pollen and nectar they need to provision their nest for next year's generation. A small sample of these plants include False

Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*), Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) – (don't panic – this plant is well behaved and doesn't spread aggressively like Common Milkweed – *Asclepias syriaca*), Virginia Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*), Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*), New England Aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*), and Stiff Goldenrod (*Oligoneuron rigidum*). There are dozens and dozens of native flowering plants that you can add to this list. The key is that these plants must be the native species that our native pollinators co-evolved with. It's these plants that provide the nutritious nectar that perfectly fits the insects' biological needs.

Cultivars and hybrid plants commonly available in commercial nurseries and big box stores don't do that. Include a lot of these native plants in the filter strips at the edge of your farm fields, throughout your orchards, and in your home gardens, and you'll experience many more benefits than superior pollination.

Native bees not only co-evolved with these plants, but all of our native wildlife and plants co-evolved together, literally over thousands and thousands of years. For that reason, all our bees, butterflies, birds and other wildlife, all depend on each other. Additionally, the native plants we're talking about here are deep rooted, often reaching fifteen feet or more in length. The deep roots add to a long list of ecological benefits including filtering water, mitigating flooding, and sequestering carbon. Add to the benefit list the fact that native plants will attract and nurture a host of beneficial insects which provide natural pest control. For example, ladybugs are voracious consumers of aphids.



*Mining bee (Andrena sp.), one of our buzz-pollinator species, on Bloodroot*

Several words of caution must be injected here. Obviously, we can't use pesticides that harm the creatures we're enlisting to help us get abundant, affordable, and healthy food. There is a group of chemical pesticides, banned in Europe, that we use with abandon here. They are Neonicotinoids, or "neonics" for short. These are systemic and infuse every single cell of a plant with a toxin. Everything that eats that plant gets poisoned. Every bee, butterfly, or moth that gets nectar or pollen from that plant is poisoned. There are places in China where they have to hand pollinate their apple and pear orchards because they've wiped out their pollinators with the use of pesticides. Don't let that happen here. You already hear about the plight of the imported Honeybee. Our native bee species are even more susceptible to these chemicals than the non-native Honeybee. These neonics line the shelves at our garden centers. Do not use them. Search for the document "Help the Honeybees" at CenterForFoodSafety.org to get a list of the most common garden chemicals with neonics. Furthermore, many of the plants sold at our garden centers are loaded with neonics. Sometimes the stores don't even know it (*continued on next page*)

#### BEE VISITATION TO COMMON FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CROPS

	Bombus	Peponapis	Andrena	Osmia	Lasioglossum	Halictus
apple	X		X	X		
pear	X		X	X		
cherry	X		X	X		
plum	X		X	X		
raspberry	X		X		X	X
blueberry	X		X	X	X	X
strawberry			X	X	X	X
gooseberry	X		X	X		
currant	X		X	X		
tomato	X					
eggplant	X					
pepper	X					
melon	X	X			X	X
pumpkin	X	X			X	X
squash	X	X			X	X

Data and graphic courtesy Heather Holm, <http://www.pollinatorsnativeplants.com>

*(continued from previous page)* because they didn't grow the plants and it is their supplier that used the long lasting neonic pesticide. If you want to harness the power of our natural ecosystem services, like pollination, do not use these chemicals or buy plants treated with them.

Astonishingly, we actually have over 4,000 species of native bees in North America. In any given area of our country, you can find between 200 and 400 different species of these creatures. There is a growing practice of rearing and using commercial Bumblebee colonies in greenhouses. This may be contributing to the decline of our wild bee populations by spreading disease. If you provide the habitat our wild bees need and avoid harmful pesticides, they will thrive. There's no need to buy or import bees for pollination purposes.

I grew up being afraid of bees, maybe being told they inflicted a painful sting, or perhaps actually being stung by a wasp or yellow jacket and not understanding the difference between bees and wasps. Since most of our native bees don't have stingers, I have become totally comfortable getting up close and photographing these important insects. Get to know some native bees and you'll be impressed with how focused and effective they are in collecting pollen and nectar.

Some excellent references for you to use are: "Bees, an Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide" and "Pollinators of Native Plants", both by Heather Holm; and Xerces Society books: "Attracting Native Pollinators", and "Farming with Native Beneficial Insects."

Use plenty of native plants at your farms and homes. Provide nesting places for our native pollinators. You'll get to enjoy healthier and more abundant harvests, and help the ecological health of our planet. Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments at [hfmann@bex.net](mailto:hfmann@bex.net).



**Hal Mann, Ohio Certified  
Volunteer Naturalist and Master  
Gardener Volunteer.**

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## **How the No-Till Farmer can Help Keep 'P' in Their Fields and Out of Water Sources**

(Summarized from an article in a National No-Till magazine publication)

Researchers have found that regardless of the practice, phosphorus is leaving the fields and getting into the water sources. This ultimately impacts Lake Erie and waters leading to and going from the lake. So, the big question right now is, what can farmers do to help this issue? Here are some tips that researchers are recommending farmers use or at least consider.

1. **Soil Testing**- Is P actually needed? The plant can only use what it needs.
2. **Timing** The risk of runoff is the greatest when the ground is frozen.
3. **Take Things Deeper** Although tillage is not recommended, incorporating soil fertilizer a few inches at a slow speed will keep the fertilizer from literally falling through the cracks.
4. **Control the Flow** Nutrients move when water moves. If water in a farmer's field can be controlled, than the issues that Lake Erie is facing could potentially be controlled.
5. **Gypsum Application** Gypsum improves the structure of the soil, this in turn allows more water to move through the soil and then into the tile.
6. **Cover your Soils** Cover crops build organic matter. The greater the organic matter in the soil, the higher content of water it can hold. The amount of runoff can decrease.

Climate change is happening, whether we like it or not. Researchers have taken note of the amounts of rainfall over the last few decades and the intensity of those rainfalls. History shows that precipitation has increased in the fall, this is causing fertilizer application to take place in the spring. This time change in fertilizer application has changed the time period when P moves into Lake Erie and could be some of the reasoning for Lake Erie's issues. As long as farmers continue to be proactive and willing to try new things we should see improvement in the Western Lake Erie Basin (W.L.E.B.).

***Go to [woodswcd.blogspot.com](http://woodswcd.blogspot.com) to read more on each of the six ways to reduce P.***



## Ohio's Historic Family Farms

Wood County is honored to have 43 Century Farms awarded in the state of Ohio. The United States agricultural industry remains an essential part of the global economy. Recognizing the history of our local family farms reminds us of

the determination, ingenuity, and challenges the generations before us endured as the many farmers immigrated to the U.S. seeking a new life.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture recognizes the many social, economic, and historic contributions made by Ohio's founding farm families. Ohio's Historic Family Farms program was developed as a way to honor these families for their enduring legacy to our state.

The program grants three designations based on the number of years of same-family ownership:

- Century Farms (100-149 years);
- Sesquicentennial Farms (150-199 years); and
- Bicentennial Farms (200 years and more).

Qualified registrants receive an heirloom certificate signed by the Governor of Ohio and the Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

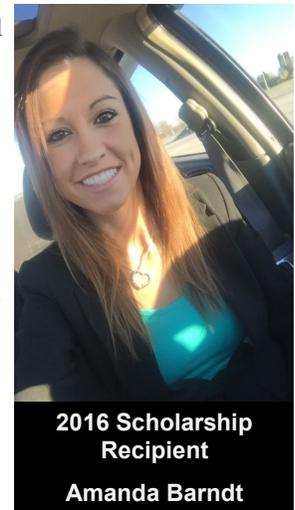
Follow the link on the Wood SWCD website to download and print the registration form to apply or contact the Wood SWCD for assistance. [www.woodswcd.com](http://www.woodswcd.com)

## John Hirzel Memorial Scholarship

John Hirzel, of Pemberville, served on the Wood Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors 1993-1998. His sincere interest in the success of the district programs encouraged the development of education programs and good stewardship practices within the county.

In appreciation of John's dedication and zeal for local conservation, the Wood SWCD established the *John Hirzel Memorial Scholarship*. The district funded scholarship is awarded annually, per board member approval, to a local student pursuing an agricultural or natural resource course of study entering their junior or senior year of college.

The application and criteria can be found on our website at [www.woodswcd.com](http://www.woodswcd.com). Application deadline is June 1 and the recipient will be recognized at the Wood SWCD Annual Meeting in September.



## Ohio Conservation Farm Family Award

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) is accepting nominations to honor Ohio farm families who are leaders in conservation for the 2017 Conservation Farm Family Awards. The Conservation Farm Family Award program has recognized Ohio farm families since 1984 for their efforts in managing natural and human resources while meeting both production and conservation goals.

Five area finalists will be selected from across the state and will be recognized at the annual Farm Science Review in September. They will also receive a \$400 award, courtesy of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, and be featured in the September issue of Ohio Farmer Magazine. Ron and Barb Snyder, of rural Pemberville, were awarded in 2015.

Individual farmers, partnerships or family farm corporations are eligible for nomination, provided a substantial portion of their income is derived from farming. An individual can self-nominate, however a majority of applicants are nominated by local soil and water conservation districts. The judging is based on the nominee's use of new and traditional conservation techniques, comprehensive management, individual initiative in applying conservation measures and the nominee's willingness to share conservation information, experiences and philosophy with others. Contact the Wood SWCD with nominations of family, friends, or neighbors.



# UPCOMING Events

## April

April 24 - Pond Clinic  
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
W.W. Knight, Perrysburg

April 27 - Orders due for  
Fingerling Fish Sale

## May

May 9 - Peek Inside the  
Farm  
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
Riker Farm Seed,  
Bowling Green

## June

June 5-8 - Kids' Outdoor  
Science Camp,  
Camp Palmer, Fayette

June 20,21, 22 - Black  
Swamp Educators  
Extravaganza  
Sauder Village, Archbold

## July

July 31-August 7  
Wood County Fair

## September -

September 16 - Annual  
Meeting & ATV Tour  
Ag Incubator Foundation,  
Bowling Green

September 23—STEM in  
the Park  
BGSU Field House

*Follow the Wood Soil and  
Water Conservation  
District on Facebook, the  
blog and check the  
website for additional  
details on each event.*

**PEEK INSIDE THE FARM**  
Tuesday, May 9th  
4-7 PM  
Riker Farm Seed, 10732 East Poe Rd, BG

**RIKER FARM SEED EST. 1947**

**WOOD Soil & Water Conservation District**

see EQUIPMENT KIDS ACTIVITIES FARM ANIMALS

## Spring has arrived!

Visit Riker Farm Seed on May 9 from 4 to 7 to take a Peek Inside the Farm. Pet a few farm animals, play a few games, do a make-it-take project, and see the equipment used to plant the crops. Talk to the farmers about what crops they are planting and why. This is a great opportunity to 'talk ag' and find out what happens during planting season in Wood County.



## Black Swamp Educators Extravaganza is celebrating "Times of Change."

The 20th Annual Black Swamp Educators Extravaganza is June 20, 21, and 22 at the Sauder Village in Archbold, OH.

The workshop is open to educators, conservationist, gardeners, etc.. This is a unique opportunity to learn how conservation has evolved through time with hand-on activities, demonstrations, and field trips. Resource guides, links, and materials are provided. Lunch and snacks from local eateries are included in the cost. Participants will receive a certificate verifying attendance and contact hours.

Contact the Wood SWCD office for more information or visit [www.woodswcd.com](http://www.woodswcd.com) to find session descriptions and the registration form.

The workshop is a cooperative effort of the Northwest Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



We want to hear from you! Please go to [www.woodswcd.com/survey/](http://www.woodswcd.com/survey/) to complete a three question survey. The information you provide is to help us to better serve you!

### Board of Supervisors

Bernie Scott, Chairman  
Dennis Ferrell, Vice Chairman  
Kris Swartz, Fiscal Agent  
Ron Snyder, Secretary  
Lee Sundermeier, Member

### District Staff

Nicki Kale, District Administrator/  
Education Coordinator  
Jim Carter, District Administrator/  
Engineering & Technical Coordinator  
Jeremy Gerwin, District Technician  
Beth Landers, Portage River Watershed  
Coordinator  
Abby Wensink, Strategic Watershed  
Action Team Conservationist  
Julie Lause, Administrative Assistant

### NRCS Staff

Becky Duncan, District Conservationist  
Kelly Copeland, Resource Conservationist  
Jim Stafford, Hydraulic Engineer

***Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider***

### Equipment for Rent

**Great Plains Drill**  
(for CRP Practices only)  
•10' working width  
•7 1/2' row spacing  
•Minimum 65 hp with live hydraulics  
Rental Rate is \$10.00/acre (\$50 minimum)  
Delivery Charge \$20.00  
Cleanout Charge \$25.00 (if applicable)

**Dibble Bar**  
\$40 Refundable Deposit

**Tree Planter**  
\$25.00 First Day  
\$45.00 Each Additional Day

**Weed Wrench**  
\$225 Refundable Deposit  
\$20 Rental 1-3 Days  
\$20 Each Additional Day

***For Wood County Residents Use Only***

### Items for Sale

Floating Pond Filter	\$245.00
Pond Filter Float	\$ 92.00
Replacement Filter	\$ 55.00
Pond Safety Kit	\$110.00
Ring Buoy	\$ 64.00
Deep Water Sign	\$ 14.00
Rope (per foot)	\$ 0.25
Tile Probes	\$ 33-35
Soil Test Probe	\$63 & 95
Garden Soil Test Kits	\$ 25.00
Tree Protectors	\$ 2.50
Tree Wraps with Stake	\$ 4.00
Flags	\$ 0.10 ea
100 4x5	\$ 8.00
100 5x8	\$ 9.00
6' field flag	\$ 7.00
Nut Wizards®	\$ 40-45
Compost Bin	\$ 50.00
Rat Guards	
4"	\$ 5.00
6" stainless steel	\$ 10.00
8" stainless steel	\$ 12.00
10" stainless steel	\$10 & 18
12" stainless steel	\$15 & 28
15"	\$ 25.00

(Cash or Check payable upon receipt)

Promoting Conservation Ag to Urban Communities

## Contact Us

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