



CONSERVATION CONNECTION

The Montgomery County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

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Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- April 6th: April SWCD Board Meeting in the USDA Service Center conference room at 8 am
- April 7th: Office Closed
- April 16th: War of the Weeds shifts at Bachner Nature Preserve 10 am-1 pm and 1 pm- 4 pm
- April 20th: CISMA steering committee meeting in the USDA Service Center conference room at 5 pm
- May 2nd: Office Closed
- May 4th: May SWCD Board Meeting in the USDA Service Center conference room at 8 am
- May 29: Office Closed
- SAVE THE DATE! Our 3rd annual Farmer Float Trip will be July 25th! We welcome all farmers plus their families for a FREE canoe trip on Sugar Creek. Lunch is included! Thank you farmers for all that you do for conservation! Please RSVP to canoe@friendsofsugarcreek.org to secure your spot!



81st Annual Meeting

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our Annual Meeting in February. We had about 75 people in attendance. An additional thank you to Lali Hess and the Juniper Spoon team for a delicious meal. Thank you to our speaker sponsor, Farm Credit, and our 2023 sponsors so far Nutrien Ag Solutions and Geswein Farm and Land for your support.

During the meeting, we were able to reflect on last year. Kristen shared a video documenting just some of what we were able to accomplish. If you missed the video check out our Facebook page for a link to view it! We also heard a great talk on streambank erosion from Robert Barr, a research scientist at IUPUI. Raoul Moore was re-elected to serve a 3-year term on our board. He has been a supervisor on our board for two years now and we appreciate the knowledge he brings to the role and his dedication to serving the citizens of Montgomery County.

We also bid farewell to Megan Sweeney. She was our Program Coordinator for the last year and a half. We thank her for her hard work and wish her the best of luck on her new journey in Ohio. We have hired a new Program Coordinator who will be starting in mid-April. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for the welcome announcement!

Upper Sugar Creek Watershed Project

5th Quarter Update: November 18th- February 17th

Sara Peel, Arion Consultants

The third draft of the Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was submitted to IDEM on February 13, 2023. Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) preliminary runs are complete. The data needs to be field checked and pushed out to conservation partners. These activities will occur in the next quarter.

Water chemistry monitoring occurred on December 21, 2022, this quarter, and was the final session. Macroinvertebrate community identification is complete and the species list and IBI, mIBI, and QHEI data are included in the most recent draft of the Watershed Management Plan.

The Upper Sugar Creek steering committee met on January 24, 2023, and reviewed stakeholder concerns then discussed problems, causes, and sources. The Recreation Listening Session occurred on January 24, 2023, with 38 people in attendance. Comments and responses are being compiled and will be incorporated into the WMP. The project website was updated within the Montgomery County SWCD website and has been updated several times since its creation. The Montgomery County SWCD social media will be used to promote the project and has been updated 22 times with information relevant to the project during this quarter. The Upper Sugar Creek informational brochure continues to be distributed including at the farmer listening session and at high-profile locations. The SWCD newsletter was distributed in December 2022 and contained an update on the Sugar Creek project. A press release promoting the Recreational Listening Session was sent on December 10, 2022. The social survey mailing occurred this quarter and will continue into the next with the first letter mailed on January 3, the first survey mailed on January 10 and the postcard mailed on January 24, 2023. The second survey mailing occurred on February 7 and the final reminder letter will be mailed on February 21, 2023. As of February 5, 2023, 108 survey responses have been received from 459 sent with quality addresses for a response rate of 24%. Boone County SWCD held a cover crop/regenerative ag workshop on February 1, 2023. Plans to launch farmer meetings revolving around ACPF data outputs are underway - this will occur in the next quarter.

Franz Reynolds Farm Awarded Conservationist of the Year

Franz Reynolds Farm is the recipient of this year's Conservationist of the Year Award. This farm is a total of 191 acres and is run by siblings Barb, Tom, and Nancy. Nancy Burkett accepted the award on behalf of the farm. In 1927, the first 97 acres were purchased by Franz Reynolds the grandpa of Barb, Tom, and Nancy.

The entire farm operation has had various conservation techniques and practices put in over the years. The farm has been no-tilled for the past 30 years to help preserve the soil health of the cropland. Gulley and ephemeral erosion were addressed through the development of a few grassed waterways. In the coming years, warm-season grasses will be planted through the CRP program with various field borders.

In the past, cattle were allowed to roam and graze on areas of the property that area is now in trees. After some time, the cattle were removed from the land and the siblings noticed they were unable to move through their forest as easily as before because of all of the overgrowth. This led them to bring in two foresters to explain invasive species and the importance of managing them. After this talk, they were encouraged to take action to manage the invasive species in their woods. The Franz Reynolds Farm is now in the 3rd year of an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract to remove the invasive species in their forest.

Get to Know Us!

Jordan Gillenwater, Chairman

Jordan lives with his wife in the northern part of the county near Darlington. This is where they farm and raise cows and pigs. They are part owners of a local grocery store called Four Seasons Local Market where they sell a lot of their products. Some conservation projects the Gillenwaters participate in include multiple EQIP projects, a high tunnel, heavy-use areas for livestock, some CRP acres, fencing projects for rotational grazing, and pasture improvement projects.



Daniel Bullerdick, Supervisor

Daniel joined the board in 2021 as Supervisor. He and his dad have a small family farm where they produce corn and soybeans. They have used various conservation practices on their farm over the years. They have no-tilled soybeans for about 30 years and no-tilled corn since the mid-2000s. The Bullerdicks also have a considerable amount of CRP (Conservation Reserve Program). A personal goal of his on their farm is to reduce surface runoff and the leaching of nutrients from the soil.

