



OFSWCD 2017

A YEAR IN REVIEW

75 YEARS!

This year, it was tremendous celebrating the SWCDs who celebrated 75 years! The challenges, accomplishments and relationships established throughout these years have truly made a remarkable difference to Ohio's landscape, natural resources and economy — but most importantly the quality of life for Ohio's constituents. Congrats to those who celebrated this year: Butler, Clark, Columbiana, Coshocton, Highland, Guernsey, Monroe, Morrow, Noble, and Tuscarawas!

EVENT SUCCESS

Annual Meeting

The 2017 Annual Conservation Partnership Meeting titled "All In" once again saw increased numbers of participation and excitement as conservation partners met in Columbus. With Special Guests Jim Richardson and Randy Frazier sharing great presentations, a very well attended legislative reception at the Statehouse Rotunda, and tremendous individuals recognized through special awards, it was an event that will be hard to beat!

Budget Outreach

As mentioned above, we had a fantastic Legislative Reception during our annual meeting. In addition, we conducted a "Planting Day" at the Statehouse to share the importance of SWCD funding and the need for the 1:1 match restored. Furthermore, President Neuenschwander testified in the Senate seeking support.

NACD Federal Issue Fly-in

A small group of leaders with the OFSWCD participated in the NACD Fly-in to discuss the importance of Farm Bill funding, Conservation Technical Assistance and much more. It was a great opportunity to visit with key members and staff, as well as represent Ohio before the NACD leadership.

Leadership Training

Ohio was able to send several to leadership training through NRCS/NACD and NCDEA. During that event, our leaders were able to share how our state has been impacted by change and how we've handled it! Good stuff is happening as a result of our stronger partnership!

SSS

Summer Supervisor School, "Conservation Gems: Bright Lights, Queen City" in Cincinnati was also a tremendous success. Area 4 stepped up and provided a diverse event that included fun events, great tours and excellent workshops!

Farm Science Review

The 55th Annual Farm Science Review was also well attended. While rain impacted the first day, the crowd was good and our area remained busy throughout the three-day experience. Our focus on pollinators, soil health, cover crops, and more conservation efforts was a success. Not to mention the distribution of Scotts-Miracle Gro was crazy!

(Highlights from Page 1 continued....)

Ag BMPS

Working with the Ohio Soybean Council and OSU Extension, SWCDs in the Western Lake Erie Basin have received a grant to promote Ag BMPs as a result of a website OSU created with conservation professionals, including various SWCDs.

Committee Work

**President Neuenschwander commissioned a number of committees to work on a number of focus areas throughout the next couple of years! Here's a quick glimpse!*

75th Committee

The OFSWCD will be celebrating its' 75th Anniversary in 2018. A committee, led by Secretary-Treasurer Jack Hazelbaker has been working to develop items for the upcoming year that will be used to highlight conservation's 75th in a big way! You'll see much of the focus at the upcoming Annual Meeting, "From Dust to Diamonds: Honoring the Past, Treasuring the Present, Shaping the Future." During the Annual Meeting, there will be a Town Hall Ohio segment taped highlighting the 75th and other special features, including a special Tuesday evening banquet. Additionally, the committee felt as though the whole year should be "A Year of Conservation" and will use other special events, including Summer School, Farm Science Review and a special Legislative offering to celebrate the history of the organization and the work being done!

Annual Meeting Committee

An annual meeting committee chaired by OASWCDE President Nikki Hawk has been working with a number of individuals to prepare for the upcoming annual meeting, including determining the guest featured speakers, training workshops, and special event preparations. The committee has met multiple times and is currently finalizing workshop details so that the Annual Meeting registration can go live, if possible, but mid to the end of December. Guest Speaker Ernie Shea, Solutions from the Land, is lined up and he will share the SFL Initiative and how the development of integrated sustainable solutions to the challenges of climate change, food security, economic development, and biodiversity conservation will impact conservation throughout the future. Additionally, Dr. Hans Kok and many others are lined up as we celebrate 75 years, "From Dust to Diamonds: Honoring the Past, Treasuring the Present, Shaping the Future."

Legislative Committee

A legislative committee chaired by Vice President Short has been working to address funding and other legislative initiatives. To date, the committee approved material to go to Senator Eklund, who introduced legislation to increase the Municipal Solid Waste fee by \$.25 cents to further aide conservation. The bill has been referred to the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Hearings are expected to start in January. Additionally, the committee has worked on a legislative draft to address urban issues. Language is currently being drafted by the Legislative Service Commission that will be reviewed and discussed with agency partners in the days ahead. The Legislative Committee will also be working on outreach information and other tools to better help Districts as relationships with legislators are further cultivated in the days ahead.

Communications Committee

A communications committee chaired by Second Vice President Peart has been working to come up with media and outreach materials (video ideas) that can be used to showcase conservation efforts and share the importance of our organization. The concepts have been developed and now an effort is underway to move ahead with the initiative. Additionally, work with the Ohio Soybean Council is being done as a result of their interest in developing conservation videos highlighting farmers focused on conservation practices to further help in the soil health and water quality efforts.

(Committees Continued)

Urban-Agriculture Committee

An urban-ag committee has been developed and will be chaired by Past President Swartz. This committee will be meeting in the new year to address urban-rural efforts and better promote unified conservation messaging across the state.

Urban Committee

The urban committee under the leadership of Chris Wible and Jennifer Fish at Franklin SWCD continues and is mentioned in the Legislative Committee.

Education/Envirothon Committee

More focus will continue to education opportunities and outreach efforts for SWCDs. Watch for more news coming in this particular area!

Program Success

**SWCDs have experienced much success in many areas involving Water Quality and Soil Health initiatives, involvement in field days, grazing and cover crop workshops, conservation focused tours on Water Quality, the Blanchard River Demonstration Farms and so many more. It's hard to capture everything — so please do not take it personally if we missed things!*

Farm Bill Program Delivery

Thanks to NRCS, funding for our Contribution Agreement was increased this year to enable more EQIP and CRP projects to be completed. Thanks to all the districts who stepped up and continue focusing on the delivery of Farm Bill initiatives. Nearly 60 districts have been involved in this initiative. And thanks for your help in getting Local Workgroup meetings together to plan!!

RCCP Delivery

Thanks to the Western Lake Erie Basin SWCDs for their continued efforts associated with the Lake Erie RCCP program. Conservation efforts are making a difference. Please keep it up!

Ohio Envirothon

The Envirothon program continues having great success! After this year's State Envirothon Competition at Ohio Christian University, Chardon High School finished 5th at the National NCF Envirothon in Maryland. In 2018, this event will take place in Area 4 at Cedarville University and the NCF National Envirothon will take place in Idaho.

Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative

Working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA, ODA, ODNR Division of Wildlife, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, nearly all SWCDs continue to be involved in the OPHI efforts to help pollinators through the collection of Milkweed and the promotion of the importance Pollinators play in the daily lives.

Earth Team Volunteers

Working with our partners, NRCS and each of you, we heavily promoted the Earth Team / Volunteer effort throughout the year. This is a yearly effort and as a result, we believe Ohio will be recognized again with the top award as a result of this effort.

4R Certified

The 4R Certified Program continues to thrive and grow. Launched through the Ohio Agribusiness Association, the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program encourages agricultural retailers, service providers and other certified professional to adopt proven best practices through the 4Rs. This voluntary program was originally developed for the Lake Erie Watershed, but has since been expanded. Additionally, other states are entertaining similar programs.

Healthy Water Ohio

A coalition of the Ohio Farm Bureau, TNC, Farm Credit Services of Mid America, Anheuser Busch, OSU and others, continue work to develop funding strategy for water resources management in Ohio – not only water quality, but also water quantity. We anticipate more dialogue and a potential ballot initiative to occur within the next few years to ensure that Ohio is able to meet the current and future water needs while enhancing the economy and quality of life for all Ohioans.

Policy Areas

Legislative Initiatives

The OFSWCD was heavily involved and monitoring legislative proposals this past year with the State Biennial Budget being passed, along with several additional initiatives focused on Lake Erie Water Quality. While we were not successful achieving the 1:1 match, we were successful in keeping our budget from further erosion.

Bylaws and Resolutions

During the Delegate session at the Annual Meeting, four resolutions were passed by the Delegate body. Two of these resolutions have been forwarded the NACD, which will take these up during the NACD Annual Meeting. In addition, the officer election occurred. During the election, President Elect Neuenschwander welcomed First Vice President Bob Short, and Second Vice President Matt Peart to the ranks. During the OFSWCD Board of Directors meeting, Secretary-Treasurer Hazelbaker was appointed to another term.

Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission

The OFSWCD is pleased to announce that 2 of the OSWCC meetings will once again be rolled into our Annual Conservation Partnership Meeting and during our Summer Supervisor School meeting. This past year, it was great having the Commission members present during our events! And it is a great opportunity for our meeting participants to participate more in the Commission meetings, as well as getting better acquainted with the members! The commission has been involved in Ag. Pollution Abatement Rules updates, funding and election issues including forming a committee to address 3 OFSWCD resolutions pertaining to the election process. We anticipate more action involving these issues to come in the meetings ahead.

Website Improvements

Recently, the OFSWCD has transitioned our website over from Word Press to a new platform with Firespring. In the process, we have added greater capacity to add events to our schedule so that all districts are aware of activities happening statewide, sharing more programs, fundraising opportunities, and now adding the ability for registration of our own events instead of using a special registration site. We are still working on this transition — but so far so good. Our page has experienced tremendous site visits already and we are excited about the opportunity to add more tools for districts to use.

Great Lakes Initiatives

The programs focused on the Lake Erie Watershed continue to be of great priority. This year, we continued our involvement in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Western Lake Erie Basin program, and the RCPP. In addition, we have added two WLEB-ACT employees in the basin through agreements with Lucas and Seneca SWCDs. This positions will continue throughout the year and provide further assistance in water quality efforts in the region.

Upcoming Events

75th Anniversary Celebrations! Watch your email for more information!

Annual Winter Area Meetings!

Annual Conservation Partnership Meeting, “From Dust to Diamonds”, February 25-27, 2018, Columbus Renaissance Hotel;
Registration coming soon on www.ofswcd.org!

SSS, July 15-17, Toledo Renaissance Hotel

Farm Science Review, September 18-20, Molly Caren Center, London, Ohio

Here's to a great 2018!

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