



CONSERVATION TRAILS

Phone # 330-263-5376

"Follow the Trail of Natural Resource Conservation"

www.wayneswcd.org



Inside this issue: Killbuck Project; Stormwater Management; Cover Crop Program; Rain Trackers; Conquest; Seeking Supervisor Candidates; Wild Things Workshop; Big Tree Contest; Staff Updates; News in Nature

»»» KILLBUCK CREEK PROJECT WILL ENHANCE WATER QUALITY & BENEFIT WILDLIFE

When it comes to water quality, wetlands are the undisputed "kidneys of the planet." Here in Ohio, the state's largest inland wetland stretches along the banks of Killbuck Creek in southern Wayne and northern Holmes Counties, much of it lying within the boundaries of the 5,703-acre Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area.

The curious thing about the relationship between Killbuck Creek and the marsh by the same name is that even though the two evolved together as the last ice age retreated, they've been largely disconnected from each other for over 100 years. Straightening and channelization in the early years of the 20th century effectively cut off the previously sinuous stream from its surrounding floodplain. While water moves more swiftly (sometimes ferociously) through the Killbuck Valley, one of the primary benefits of the wetland—allowing water to spread out, slow down and drop sediments—was eliminated. Aquatic wildlife suffered doubly when easy access between river and critical wetland habitats was wiped out as well.

Through a grant funded by the state's H2Ohio program Wayne SWCD has partnered with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife to restore the connection between wetland and waterway through the Killbuck Creek Wetland Reconnection Project. The work, to be completed this spring, will see six water control structures plumbed through the banks of Killbuck Creek. Wildlife Area officials will then be able to manage water levels throughout the wetlands in a manner that benefits wildlife while at the same time enhancing water quality.



Construction in progress at Killbuck Creek

H2Ohio funding, first targeted entirely at addressing harmful algal blooms in the Western Lake Erie basin, became available for high-impact water quality projects throughout the balance of Ohio's 88 counties in 2023. According to a 2026 study conducted by Earth Economics, for every \$1 invested in wetland restoration through H2Ohio, residents saw a return of \$8 in economic benefits. Wayne SWCD is proud to have brought over \$1 million back to Wayne County through conservation projects such as this.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT



When you think about stormwater, sometimes it is easy to forget that every drop of rain that falls ultimately ends up back in a stream. As rain droplets travel across the surface of the ground, they are exposed to and pick up the numerous pollutants that are a part of our everyday life. There are a few small, easy steps you can take to prevent or reduce the pollutive impacts of some of these contaminants. Test your soil to determine how much, if any, fertilizer is needed. If you choose to fertilize your lawn, use the correct amount and remove any excess fertilizer from hard surfaces to ensure that it does not ultimately end up in a stream. When mowing your lawn, you should opt to mow at the correct height to mulch the clippings into the grass or collect the clippings for composting rather than throwing them away. Similarly, participate in City leaf pickups or compost your leaves to keep them out of waterways and avoid excess nutrient pollution.

One of the largest nonpoint polluters to waterways is sediment pollution, largely driven through agriculture and construction. When you are building a new home or disturbing land, seed and mulch exposed ground as soon as possible to establish vegetation to prevent sediment from running into a ditch and being discharged in a nearby stream. Plan work at a time of the year when you can get vegetation established so that the bare ground is not exposed for long periods of time. Another source of pollution that commonly finds its way into waterways is motor fluids from cars. It is important to ensure that excess automotive oil is not dumped in nearby catch basins, automobile leaks are fixed, and gas or other fluids are kept from running into nearby ditches or catch basins. Salt on the roads and sidewalks has also been a major pollutant to waterways, so it is important to sweep and throw away any excess salt that is used throughout the winter. While these actions may seem small, their impact in fighting pollution and preserving our waterways is significant.

2026 COVER CROP PROGRAM



Jeff Gochnaur uses a crimper to terminate a cover crop.

Just before spring planting is a great time to start planning your cover crops for late summer/fall of 2026. Cover crops are crucial in preventing erosion, can work to improve soil health and can ultimately aid in farm profitability. The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) provides funding for landowners to seed cover crops. For 2026, the cost share is \$12 per acre, and a cap of 175-acres applies to areas outside of MWCD lake watersheds. Acres within those lake watersheds—Sugar Creek and its tributaries are above Beach City Reservoir for instance—are not subject to the cap. If this program is of interest to you and you would like more details email info@wayneswcd.org or call (330)-263-5376. Applications must be submitted to Wayne SWCD prior to the sign-up deadline of June 26, 2026.

HOW MUCH RAIN DID WE GET?



Have you ever wondered how much rain we got last night? Well, you can check online at two different sites (both offer phone apps). Visit <https://precip.ai/> or www.raindrop.farm/rainfall-totals/zipcode and just put in your ZIP CODE! The online sites are free to use. Enjoy mother nature as she replenishes our groundwater and reservoirs. We cannot control it, but we can prepare for it.

EDUCATOR RESOURCES



SCAN & visit
CONQUEST

Calling all Educators! If you are in Wayne County, and you did not receive the Spring Issue of **CONQUEST** at your school, or if you homeschool or just want to be included in more fun, educational, conservation news, please let Kelly Riley know! Contact her at kriley@wayneohio.org. She will include you in her e-list! You can view all past issues on our website as well by going to <https://www.wayneswcd.org/newsletters>



SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board Supervisors guide the district, its staff, and cooperating agencies in efforts to implement conservation programs in the county that address management and conservation of soil, water and related resources. Board members are volunteers elected for 3 year terms. They should have an interest in conservation and the enthusiasm, dedication, and time to serve as elected officials. Candidates must be over 18 years old and a resident of Wayne County. Attendance at occasional outside meetings, events, or trainings is required. Board meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the Wayne SWCD Office at 428 W. Liberty Street, Wooster, Ohio 44691, at 8:30 a.m. and typically last between 1 to 2 hours. One supervisor will be elected at the 2026 Annual Breakfast which will be held on November 4th, 2026 at Sonnenberg Village.

If you are interested in becoming a Board Supervisor for Wayne SWCD, please contact our office at 330-263-5376 or email info@wayneswcd.org

WILD THINGS WORKSHOP

What: Discover and learn about animals, plants, ecosystems, and more!

When: June 10-11, 2026, 9 am - 12 pm

Where: Wooster Memorial Park

Who: Young explorers ages 7-11



This event is sponsored by Wayne SWCD, the Friends of Wooster Memorial Park, and volunteers from the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program. Registration is open now through May 29, 2026 through the Wooster Parks and Recreation. Check our website and social media for more details.

2026 BIG TREE CONTEST



This year we're seeking Sycamores! You have until July 17th 2026, to get your nominations in to us! It's simple and easy to do! Fill out the form. Let us do the rest. We will send you a confirmation of your entry to verify we have received the forms. We visit and score the trees in July. Winning nominator gets a \$25 gift card and the winning tree owner gets a special plaque. Stop by our office or visit our website at <https://www.wayneswcd.org/big-tree-contest> for more information. Please give us something to crow about or caw caw about!



STAFF UPDATES: BEST WISHES CODY & WELCOME RUTHANNE



As the seasons change, so too does our staff. In March we said a bittersweet farewell to Cody Beale, who is going full-time with his own business. As the Ag Resources Coordinator he provided support for numerous farmers and landowners with conservation practices. After five years with Wayne SWCD, we thank Cody for his many contributions to the county and wish him the best!

We welcomed Ruthanne Bandy to our staff in February as the new Administrative Assistant. Ruthanne was born in Texas, grew up in Loudonville, attended college in Boston, studied abroad in Spain and Costa Rica, and worked on a farm outside of Columbus before moving to Wooster in 2022. Ruthanne enjoys collecting new hobbies and spending time with her cat, Ninja. Ruthanne is available via email at rbandy@wayneohio.org.



Wayne Soil & Water Conservation District
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<https://www.wayneswcd.org/>
info@wayneswcd.org

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
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Wooster, OH

Wayne SWCD Board of Supervisors:

Jeff Gochnauer, Chairman
Matt Peart, Vice Chairman
Randy Tegtmeier, Fiscal Officer
Marissa Dillon, Secretary
Tate Emerson, Public Relations
Rodney Mackey, Associate Supervisor



SAVE THE DATE NOV. 4, 2026
WAYNE SWCD 79TH SUPERVISOR ELECTION
& ANNUAL BREAKFAST
SONNENBERG VILLAGE 8:00-10:00AM
DETAILS IN OUR FALL NEWSLETTER!

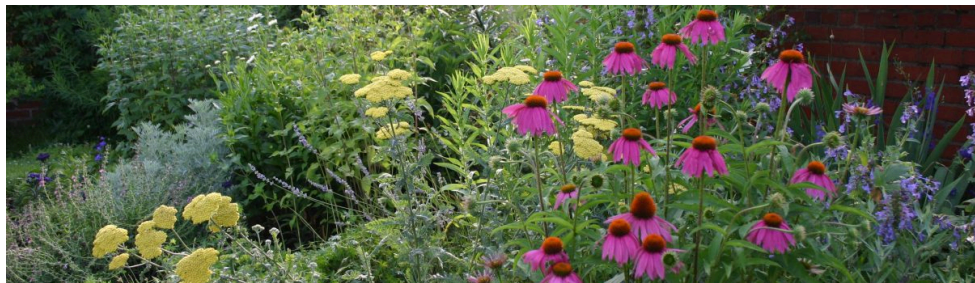


Wayne SWCD Staff:

Ruthanne Bandy, Administrative Asst.
Kathy Burley, Secretary
Rob Kastner, Water Management Engineer
John Lorson, District Program Administrator
Ricky Papay, Water Resources Specialist
Kelly Riley, Education Specialist

➤➤➤ NEWS IN NATURE

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NATIVE PLANTS AND POLLINATORS

Native plants are uniquely adapted to local soils, climates, and seasonal cycles, making them far more effective at sustaining pollinators than non-native or ornamental species. Once established, they require less water, fertilizer and maintenance. By gradually replacing high-maintenance or non-native plants, you'll be creating a garden or landscape that's both beautiful and sustainable. Even a modest cluster of early and later blooming varieties can provide food and habitat for local pollinators, birds and beneficial insects throughout the seasons.

Visit www.pollinator.org/learning-center/gardens for ideas.

Over time you'll be able to observe more wildlife and enjoy a landscape that feels connected to the natural beauty of your region. Every small step counts – so why not start today?

Dates to Remember

May 12 - Board Meeting 8:30 am
*May 25 - Memorial Day
June 9 - Board Meeting 8:30 am
June 10-11: Wild Things Workshop
*June 19 - Juneteenth
June 26 - Cover Crop Deadline
*July 4 - Independence Day
(observed *July 3)
July 14 - Board Meeting 8:30 am
August 11 - Board Meeting 8:30 am
*September 7 - Labor Day
September 8 - Board Meeting 8:30 am
September 12-17 - Wayne County Fair
*Office will be closed

Contact us to receive this Newsletter by E-MAIL! Then you will be able to click on all of the cool hyper-links!

