Department of Agriculture
Soil and Water Conservation

ODA Updates for SWCD Board Meetings
October 2025

ODA Updates

Calendar Overview

- October 2nd	TDP – Ponds I&E
- Oct. 22nd–23rd	Ohio Educator's Conference, Mohican Lodge and Conference Center in Perrysville
- October 28th	ADP – Auditor of State, Records Management, & Cyber Security Requirements
- November 4th	Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) Meeting
- Nov. 5th & 6th	TDP – Livestock Watering Facilities
- November 6th	ADA Website Compliance Virtual Training (10 am)
- Nov. 12th & 13th	Water Management Association of Ohio (WMAO) Annual Conference
- November 19th	OASWCDE Leadership Training
- November 20th	Board Works – Partnerships, 6 pm (Virtual)
- December 2nd	Area 1 Winter Meeting-Old Mill Stream Center (Hancock Co.)
- December 3rd	Area 2 Winter Meeting-Williams on the Lake (Medina Co.)
- December 8th	Area 4 Winter Meeting-Der Dutchman (Union Co.)
- December 9th	Area 3 Winter Meeting-Pritchard Laughlin Center (Guernsey Co.)
- December 10th	Area 5 Winter Meeting-Emmett Chapel (Pickaway Co.)
- Feb. 9th-11th	OFSWCD Partnership Meeting (Columbus)

Updates & Reminders

Cover Crop Seed Testing - As farmers are getting ready for fall cover crop seedings it's a good time to remind that if bin run seed is used it should be tested. USDA and state cost-share programs follow NRCS practice standards and testing bin run seed is a requirement of these standards. Bin run seed can be submitted to ODA for testing or another lab capable of seed testing can be used. Attached is an informational flyer on ODA's cover crop seed testing.

New Cyber Security Requirements – Ohio HB 96, requires political subdivisions to establish and implement a cybersecurity program aligned with industry best practices. The program must ensure data availability, confidentiality, and integrity, including annual employee training, risk assessment, threat detection, and a cyber incident response plan. Additional information can be found by clicking here and will be provided as part of the ADP session scheduled for October 28th.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Website Compliance - In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice published a rule that sets technical requirements for state and local governments to follow making sure their websites, social media accounts, and mobile apps are accessible to people with disabilities. Working with OSU Extension a virtual training has been scheduled for November 6th at 10:00 am to provide an overview of the rule and what it means regarding website management. The following link provides additional insight into the rule https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/ or to join the training on November 6th at 10:00 am click the following link. ADA Website Compliance Overview

Drought Response - Attached is a two-page fact sheet on pasture management, that was developed in response to the 2024 drought. With current conditions, the information is relevant again and can be distributed to producers. Districts interested in providing drought management programming in their counties please contact Jarrod Hittle jarrod.hittle@agri.ohio.gov

Drought Impacts- While much of the state did receive some rain over the last week, dry weather is still in the forecast. As drought conditions persist across the state at some level, you can contribute real time conditions and data through a national database. Citizen science contributions for current drought conditions in your area are very helpful and can be made by utilizing the Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) System. This can be a helpful tool to help capture the real-time conditions that are occurring locally in your area. The drought impacts fact sheet attached will walk you through the steps for submitting a local conditions report for your area.

8995 East Main Street
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068
U.S.A.

614 | 265 6610
614 | 728 6201
agri.ohio.gov

The State of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of ADA Services

Ohio Hay Directory - The Ohio Hay Directory is continually updated and maintained if there are producers looking for hay this year. You can access the directory through the attached QR code or on ODA's website at https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/administration/resources/ohio-hay-directory

Training and Development

Board Member HR Training Series – As a continuation of the OFSWCD HR Initiative and in partnership with WorkSpring 3 trainings have been planned. The next training will be on **October 2nd** – Constructive Feedback and Difficult Conversations, Hiring Smart and Employment Compliance. The training is free of charge with lunch provided. Registration is required.
A schedule and registration information for these trainings is available here, and on the DSWC Resources for SWCD webpage under the "Administrative Development Program" tab.

Ohio Educator Workshop – Registration is open for the SWCD Educator's workshop on October 22nd and 23rd at Mohican State Park Lodge and Conference Center. The 2-day workshop will include classroom presentations, in-field and hands-on learning opportunities along with idea sharing and information on current topics. Registration and the draft agenda can be found on the OFSWCD website at https://ofswcd.org/news-events/event-calendar.html/event/2025/10/23/ohio-educator-s-conference/532560 . Unfortunately, the Bird Sanctuary Tour has reached capacity, however there is still plenty of space in the Recycling Center Tour. OEPA is once again hosting a training the afternoon before the conference, on October 21st. This year's training will be on Advanced Soils training. There is no cost to attend, but you will need to register through the Educator's Conference for the training.

Technician Development Program (TDP)-: You can register for any TDP courses currently available for enrollment through the following website: https://www.apps.agri.ohio.gov/SWCD/

Administrative Development Program (ADP) - Records management and retention, cash basis reporting, HB 96 cyber security requirements, and Auditor of State updates will be the focus of the ADP session scheduled for October 28th in Reynoldsburg. This training is open to all SWCD staff and board members. The deadline to register is October 21st. You can register by clicking here, or on the DSWC Resources for SWCD webpage under the "Administrative Development Program" tab.

End-of-Year Friendly Reminders: .

- As you finish District staff and Board Supervisor evaluations, sample documents and tools can be found in the HR toolkit on the OFSWCD website. User Name: **member-resources** Password: **S0il-W4ter-Fed**
- Please start reviewing Beehive technical and education events to ensure all information is entered for end of year queries, due January 30, 2026.
- Please review and update policy manuals and annual plans of work for 2026 Board approval.
- Please submit necessary Notice of Exemptions from CPIM Training if you have done so in this calendar year. Additional information can be found by clicking here.

Programs

Water Management Association of Ohio (WMAO) Conference *November 12-13th*
Location: Marriot Columbus NW, 5605 Blazer Pkwy Dublin, Ohio
Description: The WMAO Annual Conference is a two-day conference of plenary sessions, contributed papers, poster presentations, and networking events focused on all aspects of Ohio's water resources. The conference brings professionals from across the state and is an excellent opportunity to learn, connect, and share information. Registration link:
https://wmao.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=259593&module_id=350265
Watershed Program - Reminder to check the Funding Opportunities Page which is frequently updated as new information about grants becomes available.

Ohio Watershed Leaders (OWLs) Conference – in Review
The Ohio Watershed Leaders (OWLs) conference was held Sept. 4-5th in Athens Ohio. Attendees toured local conservation sites on Thursday, followed by a day of presentations on Friday. Topics included the Racoon Creek restoration and Scenic River designation, acid mine drainage, nutrient management and grazing, central Ohio water study, TMDLs, forestry pollution mitigation, and more. It was a great conference, and attendance was at full capacity! Next year's conference will likely be held in northeast Ohio – we hope to see you there!

Conservation Ditch Program- Now accepting applications for 2025 in all 88 counties. The deadline for applications is **June 1st, 2026**. This year's rules are identical to 2024 with one major exception: applications will be reviewed individually on a first-come-first-serve basis until the deadline or until funding runs out (whichever comes first). So, don't wait too long to apply if you have a good project! We are not hosting a rollout webinar this year, but you can view the 2024 rollout webinar at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2pXayxvNy8. Or, contact justin.mcbride@agri.ohio.gov for more details. Application forms can be found at https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/soil-and-water-conservation/resources/ODA-Announces-Statewide-H2Ohio-Conservation-Ditch-Program.

Sustainability & Indigo Ag: With ODA's portion of the H2Ohio Budget being cut approximately 11% cut, ODA has started conversations with private companies to explore public-private partnerships to further H2Ohio. Many private companies are funding carbon, sustainability, and soil health initiatives with best management practices similar to H2Ohio's. ODA will continue to look for partnerships in this arena to expand the opportunity for Ohio Agriculture and work towards developing additional opportunities to H2Ohio participants. Current ODA is piloting an outreach effort with Indigo Ag focusing on cover crops in the Maumee Watershed. This is not an exclusive partnership and ODA will be searching out additional partnerships over the next year. **ODA will NOT** be sharing any H2Ohio data or receiving funds from any entities in this effort. ODA's efforts are focused on creating additional payments from the private sector that go directly to program participants.

Maumee Enrollment: 14 Counties in the Maumee Watershed opened up for enrollment on Sept. 15th, 2025. Eligible counties include: Allen, Auglaize, Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Lucas, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert, Williams, and Wood. Field Enrollment is exceeding expectations acres are coming in very quickly for this enrollment.

WLEB Enrollment: WLEB Enrollment wrapped up on Sept. 15th, 2025. Eligible Counties were Crawford, Erie, Huron, Marion, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Wyandot). Current Field enrollment is over 796,000 Acres within the 10-County project area. This is a 35% increase in acreage and field enrollment within these 10 Counties. SWCD staff will shift their focus to developing Nutrient Management Plans and contracts for H2Ohio, which will need to be completed later this winter.

Farmland Preservation – Counties, SWCDs, land trusts, cities and townships are invited to apply to the Office of Farmland Preservation for Local Sponsor Certification. The Deadline for Local Sponsor Certification is October 1, 2025. Any organization interested in being a local sponsor for the 2025 landowner application year must apply. The application and can be found at https://agri.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/oda/programs/farmland-preservation-office/local-sponsors/ Local sponsors who complete the above-mentioned Local Sponsor Certification application and qualify will be allocated a portion of the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP) 2026 funds. These funds are used to purchase agricultural easements on Ohio farms.

Partnerships

OSWCC
The next OSWCC meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2025. For more information about the meeting contact Emily Heppner emily.heppner@agri.ohio.gov.

OFSWCD
- Mark your calendars for the Annual Partnership Meeting, February 9-11, 2026 at the Hilton Columbus – Downtown. Send any ideas for breakouts or speakers to Janelle or Nikki. This is not a budget year so we will not have a delegate session.
- OFSWCD dues notices will be sent in October, let Nikki know if you have any questions.

- Area winter meetings are coming up soon…we hope to see you there!
    - December 2nd Area 1 Winter Meeting-Old Mill Stream Center (Hancock Co.)
    - December 3rd Area 2 Winter Meeting-Williams on the Lake (Medina Co.)
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- Special thanks to the folks who helped to host two meetings for the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership up in Area 1 this summer. We appreciate the support as we tried to navigate these meetings for our partners.
- Thank you to everyone who attended our Cover Crop Day and helped with clean up day and during the Farm Science Review. You are appreciated!
- Summer Supervisor School 2026 – July 26-28, 2026, at Cherry Valley Lodge in Newark.

OASWCDE

- OASWCDE is in search of SWCD employees to fill one vacancy in Area 2. If you have an interest in serving on board or on a committee, please contact Chad Stang chad.stang@oh.nacdnet.net
- The next OASWCDE Leadership Training will be held on November 19th. If you are a member of OASWCDE, there is no cost to attend. Registration and information can be found on the OASWCDE website; https://www.oaswcde.org/leadership-webinars.html.
- Nominations for SWCD employee and SWCD Board Member of the Year are due to OASWCDE by November 21st.
- Sherry West Memorial Scholarship Applications are due November 21st, https://www.oaswcde.org/scholarships.html
- The **National Conservation Outstanding District Professional and District Board Member awards** are sponsored by NCDEA. They are awarded annually to recognize professionalism and dedication in the people behind the nation's conservation district programs. Please contact one of your Ohio Employee Association Reps for the Application.