

»»» WAYNE SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT «««



Winter 2026



CONSERVATION TRAILS

“Follow the Trail of Natural Resource Conservation”

www.wayneswcd.org



Inside this issue: Supervisor Election/Breakfast Recap, Educator Award, Conservation Farm Award, Fond Farewells, Poster Contest, Stream Sign Design Contest Winner, Big Tree Contest, Fair Guessing Contest Winner, Fish Sale & Tree Sale (INSERT), John Knapp Retires, News in Nature

»»» SUPERVISOR ELECTION & BREAKFAST RECAP by Stacey Hiller

On November 6, 2025, Wayne Soil & Water Conservation District hosted its 78th Supervisor Election and Annual Gathering at Sonnenberg Village. The morning featured an open house-style buffet breakfast, providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere for community members to connect.

Honoring Outgoing Supervisors: Two long-serving board members chose not to seek re-election: Scott Stoller 14 years of dedicated service; and Dustin Ramsier, 9 years of committed leadership. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to both Scott and Dustin for their years of service and contributions to conservation in Wayne County.

With two board seats open, we were grateful to have four Wayne County residents step forward as candidates: Marissa Dillon, Tate Emerson, Matt Falb and Tom White.

Early voting began in our office on October 8 and culminated at the annual event. We were thrilled to see so many residents stop by and cast their votes. After ballots were counted, we are excited to welcome Marissa Dillon and Tate Emerson to the Wayne SWCD Board of Supervisors! Their terms will run from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029. (Visit our website to read their bios).

A sincere thank you to all four candidates for their willingness to serve and their interest in conservation leadership.

The morning also included recognition of outstanding conservation efforts with the 2025 awards presentations: Solitary Bee House Contest - Norwayne FFA Winners, Big Tree Contest- Roger Baker, winning with a magnificent shagbark hickory; Conservation Education Award - Tom Dilyard; and Conservation Farm Award - Roger Baker of Baker’s Acres. Congratulations to all of our 2025 award recipients for their dedication to conservation and stewardship in Wayne County!



We'd like to welcome Marissa Dillon and Tate Emerson to the Wayne SWCD Board of Supervisors!



2025 EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR- TOM DILYARD by Kelly Riley

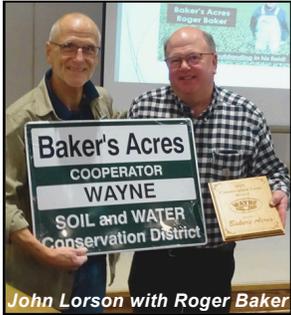


If you ever attended the Wayne County Fair, then perhaps you were oblivious to your connection to Tom Dilyard. But that's what is so special about him! From cardboard, plastic bottles to food waste, RECYCLING is his passion. To read about Tom's conservation efforts, his award and view past winners, please visit <https://www.wayneswcd.org/educator-of-the-year> . Thanks Tom!



Kelly Riley with Zane, Tom, and Jake Dilyard

BAKER'S ACRES EARNS 2025 CONSERVATION FARM AWARD by John Lorson



John Lorson with Roger Baker

The 2025 Conservation Farm Award was presented to Roger Baker. A western Wayne County grain and hay operation, Baker's Acres is grounded in the philosophy that healthy soil is more resilient in the face of weather woes, is less susceptible to erosion, requires fewer chemical inputs and can lead to healthier, stronger and more productive crops. Baker has worked to maximize that health for decades. He explains it as a lifelong pursuit that continues to grow and evolve. No-till, minimum till, cover crops, planting green—the whole soil health ball of wax; Baker is equal parts eager observer and bold experimenter.

“My mission is to have something growing on every single acre going into winter,” he said of his current 1,100-acre operation. When notified that the Wayne SWCD Board had selected Baker's Acres for the honor, Roger was quick to mention that he didn't do it alone. “I've been blessed with the support of family, friends, neighbors and a host of great relationships in the broader community,” he said. “I have always had someone believe in me even when they didn't even have a reason to.” Roger is a passionate guy. If he cares about something he is all in all the time. That's the way he feels about his land and it shows. That's why the Conservation Farm award means so much to him, and why he's the perfect recipient for it.

A FOND FARWELL TO A PAIR OF GREAT SUPERVISORS by John Lorson

At any Conservation District, the Board of Supervisors functions as the heart of the operation. “Supervisors” guide our work through their selfless service each contributing their own unique perspective and expertise to our mission.

As Scott Stoller retires from the board we thank him for 14 years of calm, introspective leadership honed through a lifetime of faith, family and hard work on his family's organic dairy farm. We will miss his thoughtful decision-making, quick wit and endless optimism.

Having spent the majority of his 9-year tenure as the board's fiscal agent, Dustin Ramsier leaves us on admirable financial ground with impeccable records to prove it. We learned to look to Dustin for thoughtful leadership from a focused listener and we will miss his ability to boil it all down to the best possible solution.

On behalf of the Wayne SWCD staff, Board of Supervisors and the entire conservation community in Wayne County and beyond, we offer a huge heartfelt “Thank You!” to Scott and Dustin.

POSTER CONTEST by Kathy Burley

The 2026 Poster Contest theme for the National Association of Conservation Districts is **“Soil. Where it all Begins”** celebrating the incredible power of soil to support life in all its forms. Posters must have this theme displayed as the title!

The poster contest is for any student in Wayne County grades K-12 to learn about conservation by expressing their creative artistic skills. For more information go to the following link: www.nacdnet.org - click on the “Get Involved” tab and look for Contests, or visit <https://www.wayneswcd.org/poster-contest>. Posters must be submitted to our office by 4:30 pm on April 24, 2026.

Soil.
Where it all Begins



NACD Stewardship Week 2026

STREAM SIGN DESIGN CONTEST WINNERS by Rob Kastner & Ricky Papay

Wayne SWCD ran a Stream Name Sign Design Contest this year – some of you may have entered a design while at our Fair barn. There were so many good entries it was hard to narrow it down to just one winner for each stream. After much deliberation, the winning entry for the Silver Creek was submitted by Kendall Stoller, 9th grade. Her design inspiration was – ‘My family and I love to walk on the trails together. I love seeing all the different types of wildlife.’ The winning entry for Tommy Run in Milton Township was submitted by Haylee Keeler. Her design inspiration was – ‘Water is precious; let’s keep our streams clean!’

Signs featuring their design will be installed along the road at the creek crossings. Keep an eye out for the signs along the Silver Creek which flows from north to south in Chippewa Township east of Doylestown and Tommy Run which flows from north to south in Milton Township just west of Rittman. Both streams empty into the Chippewa Creek. Also, each winner will receive a \$50 Amazon gift certificate courtesy of the Chippewa and Milton townships just in time for Christmas! Thank you to all who submitted entries and congratulations to our winners!



Silver Creek - Kendall Stoller



Tommy Run - Haley Keeler

2026 BIG TREE CONTEST by Kelly Riley



Sycamore are known for large patches of smooth "camo" bark!

We are seeking American Sycamores! You have until July 17, 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. The winning nominator gets a \$25 gift card and winning tree owner gets a special plaque. Forms and details are in the office or online. Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.wayneswcd.org/big-tree-contest>.



COUNTY FAIR GUESSING CONTEST: BIT'O HONEY, BIT'O FUN by Kelly Riley

Our annual guessing contest at the Wayne County Fair was once again a big hit, with over 700 guesses submitted! This year's challenge was to guess how many pieces of Bit O' Honey candy were in the jar. The correct answer was 171, and we had three participants tie for the closest guess of 170. To make it even sweeter, all three also nailed the tie-breaker question! 🍯 Congratulations to our winners: Drew Gottke of Smithville, Gabby Hiller of Wooster and Charlie Sharpton of Rittman. Each winner received a \$30 gift card. Fun fact—one of our winners is in kindergarten, proving that no matter your age, everyone can join in and have a chance to win!

Our contest also tied into this year's theme of "BEE-Pollinator Friendly" by helping raise awareness of different types of bees and their importance to our world. The tie-breaker question was:

🐝 "In the rainbow of colors in our beautiful world, what color do bees NOT see?"

The answer: **Red!** 🐝 While bees can't see red (they perceive it as black), they can see ultraviolet light, which reveals special patterns on flowers that act like maps leading them to nectar and pollen. Even red flowers may still attract bees by their scent. Learn more at <https://beeculture.com/bees-see-matters/> So, are you seeing red for not winning? Don't worry—you can always try again next year!

BEST WISHES STACEY!

We are sad to announce that Stacey Hiller, Administrative Assistant, will be leaving us after over 11+ years! Her last day will be January 5th, and we want to thank her for her hard work and commitment throughout the years.

Wayne Soil & Water Conservation District
428 W. Liberty Street
Wooster, OH 44691
330-263-5376
<https://www.wayneswcd.org/>
email: info@wayneswcd.org

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Wayne SWCD Board of Supervisors:

Randy Tegtmeier
Matt Peart, Secretary
Jeff Gochnauer
Marissa Dillon
Tate Emerson
Rodney Mackey, Associate Supervisor

New Website Launch!

We're excited to share that our brand-new website is live!

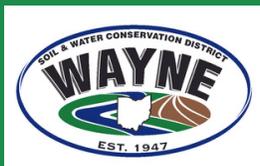
Visit www.wayneswcd.org to explore the updates and let us know what you think.



Conservation Trails Winter 2026

Wayne SWCD Staff:

- **Cody Beale**, Ag Resources Coordinator
- **Kathy Burley**, Secretary
- **Stacey Hiller**, Administrative Assistant
- **Rob Kastner**, Water Management Engineer
- **John Lorson**, District Program Administrator
- **Ricky Papay**, Water Resources Specialist
- **Kelly Riley**, Education Specialist



Contact us at:

P:(330)-263-5376

Website: www.wayneswcd.org

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/WayneSWCD>

X.com/WayneSWCD

e-mail: info@wayneswcd.org

Located at:

The County Administration Building
428 W. Liberty St./ Wooster, Oh 44691

➤➤➤ BEST WISHES TO JOHN KNAPP! by Kelly Riley

A very sincere debt of gratitude is owed to Mr. John Knapp for his countless years of service with NRCS as a District Conservationist. John officically retired in July 2025, with over 38 years of service in conservation. His boots crossed many farms and his ink is on many plans here in Northeast Ohio! We were lucky to have John start with us back in 2007 in Wayne County. We wish him the best in his retirement!



➤➤➤ NEWS IN NATURE by Kathy Burley

When to Start Spring Cleanup to Help Pollinators:

Native pollinators and beneficial insects spend their winter tucked into the leaf litter, burrowed into the soil and mulch, protected in cracks and crevices in trees and decaying wood, or hiding out in hollow stems of many decaying plants. To help pollinators thrive, try to delay spring cleanup until temperatures consistently reach 50°F (10°C) overnight. This allows beneficial insects, such as butterflies and bees, to emerge from winter habitats and find food.



PLEASE NOTE: Tree and Fish Order forms are both located on the insert in our newsletter.

