

CELEBRATING SOIL & WATER'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Since 1944, Licking County Soil & Water Conservation District exists to promote wise use of our land and water. During those 75 years, Licking Soil & Water has worked with countless landowners to manage and protect natural resources on public and private lands. This year, for our 75th birthday, Licking Soil & Water is reflecting on our history in and impact on Licking County. Below is Part Three of a four-part series celebrating our legacy.

Conservation politics and legislative action dominated the 1970s. Although the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 only focused on point source pollution from industry and municipal sources, Licking Soil & Water prepared for the inclusion of non-point source pollution from farms and other land-disturbing operations such as construction sites. In 1971,



when the Clean Water Act was still being debated in the US Congress, Ohio Senate Bill 305 committed soil and water conservation districts to administer agriculture pollution and urban sediment pollution programs.

The Agricultural Nonpoint Pollution Abatement Program focused on four types of potential pollutants: agricultural erosion, agricultural chemicals, animal wastes and air pollution. Licking Soil & Water took a proactive approach and educated landowners with field days and outreach. The tagline *keep it under cover! FOR LAND'S SAKE!* was used on billboards to promote cover crops in the mid-70s.

The Urban Sediment Pollution Abatement Program's development was challenging due to diverse voices and concerns of excessive burdens on the construction industry. The intention of pollution abatement was to protect soil and water resources, but additional permit delays and added costs of construction were valid issues that Licking Soil & Water helped to address.

In 1975, Licking Soil & Water led the way in developing a detailed Soil Survey along with the Soil Conservation Service and support from the Licking County Commissioners. This intense undertaking took 10 years of soil scientists



walking the county, noting soil types on the 1940 aerial maps and creating the book *Soil Survey of Licking County*, published in 1985.

Legislation in the 80s impacted Licking Soil & Water's work and relationships with federal, state and local governments. The 1985 Farm Bill introduced Sod Buster and Swamp Buster provisions, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and the Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) management program.

The 1987 amendments to the federal Clean Water Act set in motion the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) program requiring cities to manage stormwater. It also created a federal fund to control nonpoint source pollution called 319. Using 319 funds in the 90s, Licking Soil & Water offered landowners free soil tests. As part of the 319 grant, education efforts promoted the importance of using soil test results to make wise land use decisions.

With additional responsibilities, the Licking Soil & Water team grew. At the beginning of the 70s, Licking Soil & Water employed two people, Gordon Postal, Executive Secretary and Jackie Hunter, Office Secretary. By the end of the 90s, there was a team of 6 conservation professionals led by Jim Kiracofe as District Program Administrator. 🌍

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Promoting conservation of natural resources through local leadership, education, and technical assistance.

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Emily Price

Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Monday–Friday
Closed Federal Holidays

The Soil & Water Board meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 4:30 pm at the Soil & Water office. The public is welcome to attend.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

New Budget Addresses A Plan For Ohio's Watersheds

"...Our water problems have accumulated over many years, and it will take a dedicated, long-term commitment to achieve real solutions to protect Ohio's water."

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, State of the State, March 5, 2019 – <http://h2.ohio.gov/>

The state's main operating budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 was signed into law by Governor Mike DeWine after being passed by the Ohio Legislature July 17, 2019. The budget includes support for agricultural organizations and water quality improvement efforts.

AGRICULTURE FUNDING

The budget increases funds for Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and OSU extension services. Licking Soil & Water will receive additional funds to invest back into the community to protect our natural resources. Program Administrator Denise Natoli Brooks says, "As our community grows and weather patterns change, our capacity to promote wise use of land and water must also grow. This funding boost will allow

us to better serve the conservation needs of the entire community."

WATER QUALITY SUPPORT

The budget created the H2Ohio fund and allocated \$172 million over the next two years. H2Ohio is the water quality initiative Governor DeWine introduced to invest in targeted, long-term solutions to ensure clean and safe water in Lake Erie and throughout Ohio. "We are thankful for Governor DeWine's leadership in creating H2Ohio because it reinvigorates our initiatives for clean water and fertile soil," said Brooks. H2Ohio funds will be used for water programs across the state for efforts such as:

- Prevention and land-based management programs
- Water-based restoration programs
- Science, research, and measurement

ALL OHIO STATS

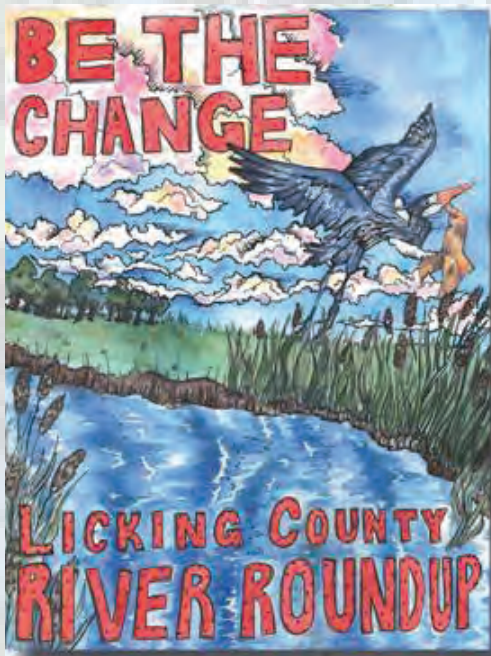


Seeking Conservation-Minded Leaders for the Board of Supervisors

The Licking Soil & Water Board of Supervisors is actively seeking interested, conservation-minded leaders to continue the mission of promoting conservation of natural resources through local leadership, education, and technical assistance. Elected by county residents and landowners, the Supervisors help chart the course for soil and water conservation and natural resources management in Licking County. The Supervisors also provide supervision to the Program Administrator, oversight of fiscal decisions, and technical expertise. Information on programs and services is available at LickingSWCD.com.

Representatives from agricultural and urban backgrounds, educators, and technical experts compose the Board. Supervisors serve a three-year terms as publicly-elected officials. One Supervisor will be elected Wednesday, November 6, 2019 during the Annual Banquet and Volunteer Recognition at The Grove by the River, 840 Hollander St, Newark, OH 43055.

Interested individuals must submit a Candidate Information Form by September 11, 2019. Please contact the Nominating Committee at 740-670-5330 or Information@LickingSWCD.com with any questions regarding candidacy, the election or serving as a Supervisor.



Join US!

Saturday, Sept. 7, 2019

Whatever floats your boat! Join us for walking, wading, or canoeing. On land only options include helping with check-in, logistics and post-event clean up. Visit [@RiverRoundUp](#) on [Facebook](#) or go to [Eventbrite.com](#) to get involved.

LICKING
COUNTY
**RIVER
ROUNDUP**



REGISTER TODAY!

River Round Up began as a Newark City Litter Initiative in 1988 to clean up the Licking River. The annual river clean up brings out hundreds of volunteers who pull shopping carts, tires and lots of trash from streams and riverbanks. Through these efforts, a neglected river has seen a rebirth of wildlife, beauty and community pride.

The Licking County River Round Up Committee's goal is to recruit more businesses, community organizations, and youth groups to form teams to clean up more miles of rivers and streams throughout the county. The 2019 cleanup is the 25th time our community will come together to take care of nearly 30 miles of rivers and streams.

The Committee also wants the River Round Up to be a year round initiative, so that anytime you are walking, or boating, you think about keeping our water clean. As a key member on the Committee, Licking Soil & Water encourages school-aged children to participate in the River Round Up Poster Contest each year.

With the school year just beginning, the Committee hopes K–12 teachers will fit the poster contest into their lesson plans between now and the February 3, 2020 deadline. The posters should reflect water pollution awareness and volunteer participation in the River Round Up. The winning poster is used for promotional materials on brochures, flyers, websites, and more. Not only that, but the grand prize includes a cash prize to the winning student and to their school, as well as a cash prize for the two runner-ups' schools. The cash prizes are for advancing youth science and art programs. 🌍



ANOTHER GREAT WEEK AT THE FAIR

Find us on
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The Natural Resources Area at the Hartford Fair provided free programs for all ages during the fair, August 4–10, 2019. A great time was had by all!



NATURAL RESOURCES AREA COMMITTEE:



SAVING SOIL WITH COVER CROPS

Implementing cover crops into a cash-crop farming operation can benefit the soil and the producer. Cover crops are generally planted in the fall into a growing cash-crop or shortly after harvest. However, the excessive rainfall and flooding this past spring prevented many producers from planting a cash crop. Rather than leave acres fallow, planting summer cover crops decreases erosion, improves plant conditions, decreases weed growth, and improves soil health.

To encourage the use of summer cover crops on unplanted fields, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offered a limited

amount of disaster recovery funding. In Licking County, producers applied 1,900 acres to the program, of which 1,375 acres received disaster recovery funding. While the window for disaster recovery is past, NRCS offers other financial assistance programs (Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program), that use cover crops in a cropping system along with other conservation practices.

Additionally, the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) and Licking Soil & Water continue to offer producers a cost-share opportunity for planting fall

cover crops. This year, over 2,900 acres were applied for in Licking County, of which all 2,900 acres received funding. Licking Soil & Water is in the process of organizing aerial application to fly over cover crops using a small airplane. This application method protects the soil by eliminating soil compaction caused by heavy tractors and seed drills.

Over the past four years of the cost-share program, approximately 8,350 tons of soil remained on the land and out of the streams and rivers. That is equivalent to over 2,500 pickup truck loads of soil! 🌍



PLAN AHEAD FOR FALL EQIP SIGN UP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion, and improved or created wildlife habitat. Through EQIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides agricultural producers with one-on-one help and financial assistance to plan and implement improvements, also called conservation practices.

Applications for EQIP financial assistance are accepted throughout

the year. However, NRCS anticipates a sign up to happen this fall. Specific state deadlines are set for ranking and funding. NRCS ranks and selects applications. Producers then enter into a contract with NRCS to receive financial assistance for the cost of implementing conservation practices. Payment rates for conservation practices are reviewed and set each fiscal year.

Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while also improving agricultural operations. NRCS helps develop a conservation plan that meets the producer's goals and vision. This plan becomes a roadmap for

selecting the right conservation practices for specific land.

NRCS offers about 200 unique practices designed for working farms, ranches, and forests. Some of these practices include: Heavy Use Area Protection, Livestock Watering Facilities, Seasonal High Tunnels, Pollinator Seedings, Brush Management, and Forest Stand Improvement. NRCS financial assistance can cover part of the costs of implementing conservation practices. 🌍

For more information about [EQIP](#) and/or to apply, please contact Joe Koehler at (740) 258-6753 or joe.koehler@oh.usda.gov.

Be the Change for Clean Water is a central Ohio initiative that includes ten counties and a multitude of partners to provide education, resources, and opportunities to make it easier for all Central Ohio residents to Be the Change for Clean Water. Licking Soil & Water is proud to partner with this organization because when it comes to protecting our water resources, we all need to be part of the solution. To highlight this campaign, we will share unique Be The Change messages in each edition of our newsletter. More information is available at www.bethechangeformcleanwater.org.

AUTUMN CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cooler temperatures and changing colors mark the beginning of fall. With the change in seasons, many homeowners work hard to prepare their lawns and gardens for winter. Fall cleanup chores help our homes look their best, but they also provide opportunities to make a positive impact on our land and water.


Determining what the lawn needs to be its healthiest is easy with a simple soil test. OSU Extension provides an affordable soil testing service. The soil test results help identify the type and amount of fertilizer needed. Fertilizer includes grass clippings, shredded leaves, and purchased products. Just like in agricultural applications, homeowners should follow the *4R Tomorrow* nutrient management to ensure:

- 1) **Right Place:** Avoid applying fertilizers in areas prone to nutrient runoff, such as slopes, driveways, sidewalks, ditches, and near streams.

- 2) **Right Rate:** The right rate depends on the existing nutrients contained in your soil. Have your soil tested to dial in the appropriate application rate.
- 3) **Right Time:** Fall is a great time to fertilize lawns consisting of cool season grasses (e.g. Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass). Check the weather! Never apply fertilizer when rain/wind are in the forecast.
- 4) **Right Type:** Your soil test will help determine which type of fertilizer is right for you. Slow-release, phosphate-free organic fertilizers are best for lawns.

Fall is the perfect time to clean out flower beds and garden plots. Consider leaving stems and roots in place when tidying up. Not only does this provide food and shelter for wildlife, leaving the roots in the soil promotes critical soil aeration and allows rainwater to soak deeply into the soil. This practice also reduces the potential for soil erosion and adds organic matter to the topsoil. Organic matter is free fertilizer.

Want some more free fertilizer? *Leaf It On Your Lawn and Garden.* Put on the garden in autumn when leaves actively fall, shredded leaves break down quickly and nourish the soil. If there is an overabundance of leaves, participate in community leaf collection, share leaves with neighbors that are tree-poor or compost them to use as fertilizer later. Just make sure there is *Only Rain Down the Drain and Ditches.* Leaves and garden waste can clog storm drains and ditches, adding harmful nutrients to rivers and streams.

If the flower bed or garden needs a serious boost, consider planting a cover crop to *Cover Your Assets.* A cover crop acts as a living fertilizer. Similar to that on a farm field, the cover crop increases soil health and water quality on an otherwise inactive garden. See cover crop article on page 5 to learn more about cover crops. 



HARVEST MILKWEED PODS FOR MONARCHS

To help foster the creation of monarch butterfly habitat, the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI), in cooperation with Licking Soil & Water offers a Statewide Milkweed Pod Collection spanning from September 1 to October 31.

Milkweed is essential to the survival of monarch butterflies and Ohio is a priority area for monarchs. The monarch butterflies that hatch here in the summer migrate to Mexico for the winter and are responsible for starting the life cycle all over again in the spring.

Drop Common Milkweed pods off between 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM at Licking Soil & Water, 771 East Main Street, Suite 100, Newark, OH 43055.



HOW TO COLLECT COMMON MILKWEED SEED PODS

- Pick pods that are dry and gray or brown in color.
- Pick the pods if the center seam pops with gentle pressure.
- Prevent pods from popping open further by gently putting a rubber band around them.
- Do not pick green pods because the seeds inside the pods will not be viable.
- Collect pods into paper bags or paper grocery sacks. Avoid using plastic bags because they attract moisture.
- Mark on the sack the county the pods came from and the collection date.
- Store pods in a cool, dry area until you can deliver to Licking Soil & Water.



CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Soil & Water Annual Banquet
November 6, 2019



Volunteer and Sponsor Appreciation Reception

5:30 – 6:30 PM

Enjoy complimentary appetizers and cash bar while we celebrate the wonderful volunteers who helped us in 2018.



Thank you gifts for all those who spent time volunteering throughout the year.



Board of Supervisors Election

5:30 – 6:30 PM

Every Licking County landowner can vote.

One Supervisor will be elected by landowners and residents of Licking County to help guide the District's mission.

**Your
Vote
Counts**



Dinner and Awards Celebration

6:30 – 8:00 PM

Awards presented for Cooperator, Volunteer and Educator of the Year. Celebrate the partnerships and successes in our 75th year of conserving our natural resources.



Visit www.LickingSWCD.com or call 740-670-5330 for details.

IMPORTANT DATES

Sep 7	Licking County River Round Up at various locations
Sep 10	Stream Team at Lobdell Reserve, disc golf course
Sep 11	Board Candidate Interest Form deadline
Sep 18	Soil & Water Board Meeting, Dawes Arboretum
Sep 27	@ Taste of Harvest on the square in downtown Newark
Oct 9	Soil & Water Board Meeting, Ag Services Center
Oct 14	Columbus Day - office closed
Oct 16	Absentee voting begins at Soil & Water office
Nov 6	Board Elections, The Grove by the River
Nov 6	Annual Meeting & Banquet, The Grove by the River
Nov 11	Veteran's Day - office closed
Nov 13	Soil & Water Board Meeting, Ag Service Center

For details, visit www.LickingSWCD.com.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION: START PLANNING NOW FOR 2020

Two more Licking County farms are funded for permanent preservation. With the addition of these 186 acres, Licking Soil & Water has helped preserve 2,978 acres of farmland since 2009. The next farmland preservation funding round will be in early 2020.

In the meantime, Program Assistant Briana Hodgson is available to meet with potential applicants to best prepare landowners that are considering submitting an application. More information is also available at LickingSWCD.com/what-we-do/land-preservation.html.