



# Conservation Notes

Winter 2012

*"Local leadership for soil and water conservation"*

Newsletter for the

Medina County Soil & Water Conservation District



## **Board Member Steps Down**

The Board of Supervisors would like to thank Debbie Russell for serving 9 years on the Board. Debbie served all positions on the Board and was first elected in 2002. Debbie is the Chippewa Creek Subdistrict project manager and is very familiar with flood control improvements and their maintenance in the Chippewa Creek Watershed. Debbie has chosen to remain somewhat involved with the Board serving as an associate supervisor. Thank you for your service.

## **OIL & GAS**

Like it or not, for it or against it, the reality is, we will have drilling for deep test wells and then the new technology of horizontal drilling in Medina County. Our office is willing to help landowners assess their properties for resource sensitive areas in advance of leasing and or drilling. Assisting landowners with land problems of erosion, drainage and land management opportunities of woodland, wildlife, streams, ponds, livestock, etc. have gone on for 67 years with the creation of the District by a county referendum in 1944.

If successful with gas production from a well, the next challenge will be to hook into a transmission pipeline with a new feeder line, in some cases across adjoining properties, or in the right of way. Since the various transmission lines and companies owning them are not at the well site, the well head source will need to be connected by a new pipeline between the two. Tile line reconnections and proper erosion control seedings will have to be accounted for when these installations occur. We can assist you in these endeavors.

The County Oil and Gas Committee is working on county and township road guidelines for the drilling companies and their heavy equipment. They are also examining the impact on workers locally or brought in from who knows where.

Deep well fracking requires a large water source of around 3 million gallons. That would be the equivalent of a 1 acre pond averaging almost 10 feet deep or a 2 acre pond averaging 5 feet deep. If it was trucked in, it would take 250 deliveries by 42 foot tankers holding 12,000 gallons each. Pond storage on site would need to be refilled and maintained for a period of time.



**May 2012 bring you a year of health, wealth, and happiness.**

**Meet our staff .....**

**Board of Supervisors**

**Chairman, Steve Fulton**

**Vice Chairman, Jim Kamps**

**Secretary, Celia Kruggel**

**Treasurer, Justin Wolff**

**Fiscal Agent, Bill Jordan**

**District Staff**

**Dist. Manager, Jeff Van Loon**

**Admin. Assistant, Janet Kuthe**

**Dist. Technician, Jim Dieter**

**Education Spec. Beth Schnabel**

**Watershed Coord. Gary Norcia**

**NRCS Staff**

**Dist. Conservationist,**

**Dave Kopchak**



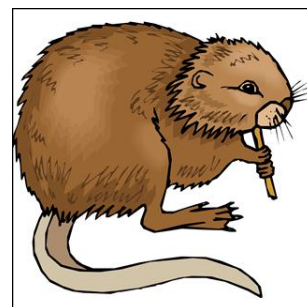
Newly elected Board member Justin Wolff of York Township is sworn in by Commissioner Adam Friedrich. Justin will serve a three-year term.

Beth Schnabel, Education Specialist, recently was awarded the WCTV, Wadsworth local access TV channel video production award. Beth has created numerous conservation videos for the local community. She received a monogrammed directors chair for her

## **Muskrats: What can I do?**

The burrowing muskrat can drive pond owners and managers crazy. When the owner notices the “V” formation from the swimming muskrat or the cattail cuttings that wash ashore from the previous nights feeding, or the subsided burrow that the lawn mower tire drops into suddenly, you know the muskrats have arrived.

Muskrats are rodents. However, unlike their cousins, they have a beautifully brown soft coat comprised of a thick undercoat and an outer coat of long, shining and waterproof hairs. Medina County’s ponds make a great habitat for the muskrats to call home.



Muskrats breed from February to August. The birthing activity takes place from March to September, with the peak in May. In as little as 26 days, a litter of 1 to 11 arrive. Average litter size is 6. There may be 2 to 3 litters or more per season. In 10 to 12 months newborns will be of breeding age. Even factoring in a high mortality rate, a breeding pair of muskrats can suddenly explode in numbers around your quiet pond. Muskrat lodges are seen in wetlands but in deeper water ponds may burrow into pond embankments, usually the dams. The dam is the area of the pond that digging should not be done.

To control the muskrat once they have invaded in your pond, is to trap them. You will need to recruit a trapper to harvest muskrats during the state wide furbearer season from November 10 through February 29. To trap out of side of the regulated season, on a case by case and county by county basis, state wildlife officers can issue a permit to legally trap muskrats. Otherwise it is not legal to trap muskrats outside of the state trapping season.

A none lethal tactic to deter muskrats from burring into pond embankments is to r riprapp (stone) the shoreline extending the stone well below the anticipated low water line or placing chain link fence along shorelines extending below the low water line and allowing vegetation to grow up into the flatten fence to anchor it to the shore line.

For many pond owners and mangers, muskrat management has become a perpetual maintenance issue. Never assume that once muskrats are perceived to be eliminated from the pond, that they are gone for good. They found your pond once they will find it again.

For additional information regarding trapping muskrats you can call The Division of Wildlife at (330) 644-3802 and ask for a list of nuisance trappers or The Soil and Water Conservation District at (330) 722-2628 ext 3.

**Expanded role . . .** Dave Kopchak, District Conservationist, NRCS, has begun serving two additional counties recently. His counties are now Cuyahoga, Loran, and Medina. Dave will still be housed here at the Medina office. Federal USDA budget reductions have caused this staffing change.

## CREP

Were your floodplain crops less than par this last year from all the wet conditions? If so, and you want to try something else that pays, try the CREP program. Administered by the FSA office in our building, the CREP program is designed to help do something with those perennial wet areas along ditches and streams where growing crops is a roll of the dice with flooding conditions.

Annual payments are made by FSA and possible bonus payments are paid by the SWCD as well. To learn more please contact Robin Smith at 330-722-2628 ext 100 or come into the office and find out the rules, requirements and the possibilities. Payments are based on soil types and practices installed like grass buffers or tree planting or wetland creations. Your land must be in the Black River or Rocky River watersheds.



## USDA Announces Ranking Dates for Four Major Conservation Initiatives

Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the ranking dates for the On-Farm Energy, Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel and Air Quality conservation initiatives. All four initiatives offer technical and financial assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year. There will be three ranking periods for the Organic, On-Farm Energy and Seasonal High Tunnel initiatives, all ending on February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012. Ranking periods for the Air Quality Initiative end February 3 and March 30, 2012. At the end of a ranking period, NRCS ranks all submitted applications for funding consideration. NRCS will notify all applicants of the results of the rankings and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.

For more information contact Dave Kopchak, District Conservationist, by calling 330.722.2628 ext. 110 or via

## EQIP for 2012

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is the US Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service's principal financial incentive program for assisting agricultural operations with the installation of conservation practices. A wide range of practices are eligible for incentive payments for qualifying practices. In recent years EQIP has been especially effective at reducing potential pollution associated with livestock operations. Manure management practices and managed grazing systems are two popular practices that have been applied across the state. EQIP's priorities include reductions in soil erosion, nonpoint source pollution from sources such as fertilizers, pesticides, and manure, as well as conservation of surface and groundwater resources.

Medina County's local priorities focus on livestock operations, preventing pollution from agricultural wastes and protecting water quality, reducing soil erosion, and improving soil quality. This year we expect a special initiative for Seasonal High Tunnels, and practices that address air quality problems, among others. Limited resource and beginning farmers who qualify may be eligible for a higher rate of incentive payments.

**Applications for EQIP funding can be submitted anytime..** Applicants must qualify as **eligible** agricultural producers for USDA programs before the application process can be completed. EQIP projects are accomplished by a **Contract** with USDA-NRCS, and therefore can involve a substantial amount of paperwork, to ensure all payments are legal and an appropriate expenditure of public money.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District prohibit discrimination in their programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at (202) 720-5881 (voice) or (202) 720-7808 (TDD). To file a complaint, write to the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or call (202) 720-7327 (voice).

**Medina County Soil & Water  
Conservation District**  
6090 Wedgewood Road  
Medina, Ohio 44256  
330.722.2628 ext. 3  
www.medinaswcd.org

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CURRENT RESIDENT OR

**WHO DO YOU CALL?**

Confused about which agency to call when you have soil and water problems?  
Use this handy chart for quick reference.

<p><b>Medina County Soil &amp; Water Conservation District</b> 330.722.2628 x3 Fax 330.725.5829 Soils information and evaluation; wetlands information; pond construction plans; waterways; animal waste structures; site reviews; erosion control; soil &amp; water management; subdivision sediment control; conservation planning; Farm Bill compliance; land lab and classroom assistance and Phase II assistance.</p>	<p><b>Ohio Division of Wildlife</b> 330.644.2293 Wildlife management &amp; technical assistance.</p>
<p><b>Medina County Cooperative Extension Service</b> 330.725.4911 Fax 330.764.8453 Plant diseases &amp; care; specialty crops; 4-H; recycling information; pond management.</p>	<p><b>Ohio Division of Water</b> 614.265.6717 <b>Well log reports, groundwater info.</b></p>
<p><b>Medina County Engineers</b> 330.723.9561 Fax 330.723.9661 Permits 330.723.9564 Pond and house construction permits; stormwater management &amp; sediment control permits which include bridge crossings, waterways, and erosion control.</p>	<p><b>Ohio Division of Oil &amp; Gas</b> 330.896.0616</p>
<p><b>Medina County Health Dept</b> 330.723.9523 Fax 330.723.9659 Water testing, well water &amp; septic info.</p>	<p><b>USDA FSA</b> 330.722.2628 x 1 Fax 725.5829 Conservation cost share; disaster assistance; feed, grain, &amp; wheat price supports; dairy, wool program, CRP, loan programs.</p>
<p><b>Medina County Park District</b> 330.722.9364 Fax 330.722.9366</p>	<p><b>Ohio EPA Twinsburg</b> 330.425.9171 Fax 330.487.0769 Solid waste issues and pollution control</p>
<p><b>Medina County Planning Comm.</b> 330.722.9219 Fax 330.764.8456 Subdivision &amp; housing plans.</p>	<p><b>U.S. Army Corp of Engineers</b> Buffalo (information) 716.879.4209 Huntington 304.529.5210 Wetland violations; river &amp; lake construction activities.</p>
<p><b>Ohio Division of Forestry</b> 419.938.6222 x2 John Jolliff, Perrysville (Wednesday) Tree planting design, woodlot management, forest tax incentive.</p>	<p><b>OTHER AGENCIES</b> C.A.U.V., Medina County 330.725.9767 Land Trust, Medina County 330.722.7313 Farm Bureau ,Medina County 330.264.9955 ODNR Div. of Soil &amp; Water Resources 614.265.6610</p>