



# Preble Soil & Water Conservation District

*Conserving our Natural Resources*

**May 2024**

2789 US Rt. 35 E.  
West Alexandria, OH 45381  
(937) 456-5159  
www.prebleswcd.org

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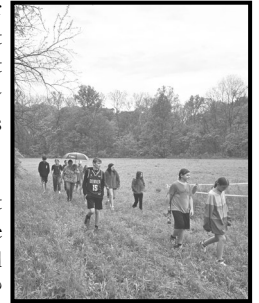
Earth Day  
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Get updates on our website:  
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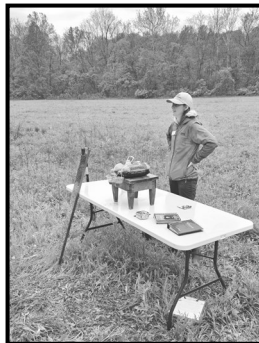
## **Earth Day Event**

The Preble Soil and Water Conservation District has been hosting an Earth Day event for sixth-grade students in Preble County since the end of the last century. To be exact, our event was started in 1999. It has been held at a few locations over the years, and this year we held it at the Preble County Historical Society Farm for the first time. Lisa, Harold, and all the crew there pulled out the stops to make it all happen. Sixth-grade teachers as well as principals from all five county schools worked to pick a date for the event that suited everyone.

The day started with a light rain that eventually cleared off. Students might have gotten a bit wet, but that didn't dampen their enthusiasm for the day! Our goal for the event is to have students outdoors learning about the wise use and conservation of natural resources. And besides, what student doesn't enjoy an outdoor field trip towards the end of the school year? 24 classes of public school students were there in addition to a group of homeschool students. Each class had the chance to hear about six different natural-resources related topics.



Students on the Move



Soil Scientist Jess Martin

Darke Rural Electric Cooperative brought along a brand-new safety display to show the many hazards associated with live electric wires. Ohio Department of Natural Resources State Service Forester Justin Law used tennis balls to demonstrate how seeds spread and how walnut trees regenerate. Brad Kramer, Director of Land Use Management for Preble County, brought his model village complete with intricately detailed plywood building cut-outs to show students how zoning allows for orderly development. Outdoor expert Jo Pratt brought along a clothesline strung up with all sorts of items that could have multiple uses while hiking or camping.

The Preble County Historical Society Farm made for an ideal site for Earth Day. Buses had plenty of parking available at the amphitheater, where students were able to gather first thing to hear about the schedule and receive directions for the day. The bee hives, log cabin, woods, wetland, prairie, bird blind, and other natural and man-made features all within easy walking distance of each other made for an ideal setting. We are looking forward to partnering with the Historical Farm to host Earth Day again in 2025!

## **Pond Clinic at the Preble County Historical Society Farm**

It's the Year of Conservation at the Preble County Historical Society, and you are invited to a Pond Clinic on Thursday, June 6th. The event will begin with a free fish fry! Eugene Braig will be speaking on pond management. He is the Aquatic Ecosystems Program Director at The Ohio State University Extension Service. In other words, he's a pond expert. A representative from Remlinger Fish Farm will give his recommendations for pond stocking in our part of the world. Lastly, Preble SWCD staff will offer some pond advice to close out the evening.

Here are all the details:

When: Thursday, June 6 beginning at 5:30 p.m.  
Where: Preble County Historical Society Farm  
7693 Swartsel Rd, Eaton, OH 45320 - Watch for signs

The FREE fried cod dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by our presenters. There will be plenty of time for questions from the crowd. The clinic will conclude around 8:00 p.m. Be sure to bring your appetite and your lawn chairs! Please RSVP by June 3 to Preble SWCD at (937) 456-5159.



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## CRP Grassed Waterway Mowing and Maintenance

Grassed waterways require frequent maintenance to perform properly and lengthen their useful life. Waterways need to be inspected regularly to identify potential problems. Damaged waterways should be repaired in a timely manner to prevent further deterioration and more costly repairs.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) waterways must be maintained at their original designed width, including any buffers along the sides, to remain in compliance with CRP program rules. Here are some guidelines to assist you in maintaining your grassed waterway:

- Mow to control unwanted brush or weed species encroaching in the waterway. CRP waterways can be mowed anytime without FSA permission. Typically grass height should be maintained at 6-12 inches tall. More frequent mowing increases the likelihood that waterways will function better and longer.
- Spring is a good time to mow those waterways that cannot be accessed during the growing season. In the fall after the crops are harvested is also a good time to mow waterways.
- Raise tillage implements and planters up and turn sprayers off when crossing waterways. "Outline" waterways with sprayers and avoid spray drift onto the grass. Grassed waterways being accidentally sprayed is probably the number one cause of waterway damage.
- Tillage and row direction should be perpendicular to the grassed waterway. This allows surface water to drain into the waterway and prevents water from flowing parallel to the waterway edges.
- Repair broken tile immediately.
- Seed and mulch any bare areas. Do not use waterways as a travel lane.

For more information on waterway maintenance, contact the Preble NRCS/SWCD office at (937) 456-4211 ext 3.



### Walnut Council Annual Meeting Comes to Southwest Ohio

The Walnut Council is a science-based organization that encourages research, discussion, and application of knowledge about growing hardwood trees. This international association represents nearly 800 woodland owners, foresters, forest scientists, and wood-producing industry representatives. They promote sustainable forest management, conservation, reforestation, and utilization of American black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) and other fine hardwoods. The Walnut Council National Meeting will be held in Springfield, Ohio from July 28-30, 2024. Can't attend the entire event? Consider coming for just a day or two, as daily rates are available.

Sunday evening's activities will be hosted at Young's Jersey Dairy in Yellow Springs. Owned by the Carl Young family, this is a destination agritourism business. There will be a catered dinner and the opportunity to connect with other walnut enthusiasts to get to know them better. There will be the always popular Landowner Show and Tell with sharing of successes and failures by members.

Monday's field tour features the Brad & Diane Timmons property, formerly owned by the Carl Young family. The day will include a tour of a mixed hardwood stand, a walnut plantation, a maple syrup operation, and a soil pit. Eight different topics related to fine hardwood forest and plantation management will be discussed among the small groups.

Tuesday will be a day of expert presentations on fine hardwood management and landowner issues. This includes the ever-popular expert roundtables, where you can mill about several different topics and hear how others approach an issue. The deadline for early registration is July 10th, although later registrations will be accepted with a late fee. Those unable to attend the entire meeting may register for individual days. Find the complete agenda and registration online at [www.walnutcouncil.org/annual-meeting](http://www.walnutcouncil.org/annual-meeting).

### BJ's Philosophy Box

Don't make an easy thing hard.

-Elsie Hickam

### Plants and Your Pond

By: Bobby Hansford, Preble SWCD Technician

Aquatic plants are not considered desirable by many pond owners as they are viewed as a nuisance to pond activities such as swimming and fishing. However, all aquatic plants should not be viewed as undesirable, given the benefits they can provide. Many plants are critical to fish and wildlife communities in ponds because they provide cover, nesting areas, and food.

Ultimately, whether a plant provides a benefit or is considered a nuisance rests entirely with the pond owner and his/her goals for the pond. For example, a pond owner who desires a high-quality swimming pond often views any aquatic plant as undesirable and may go to great expense to eliminate these plants. Conversely, a pond successfully managed for wildlife will have a variety of aquatic plants present with only a few plant species being considered a nuisance.

Most aquatic plants provide benefits to the pond owner if they do not become overabundant. The "right" amount of plants to have and the "right" composition is up to the pond owner, with his/her primary goals for the pond playing a key role. Pond owners should realize the value of aquatic plants and develop a strategy to promote aquatic plant abundances to levels beneficial for the intended uses. No more than 15 to 20 percent of the pond surface should be covered by plants at any given time. This allows sunlight to reach much farther down into your pond's water.

Planktonic algae are critical to a pond's fish life and must be present for newly hatched fish to survive. Submerged and emergent plants in moderation provide valuable fish and wildlife benefits. Filamentous algae, duckweed, and watermeal provide few benefits and, in general, should be controlled in most ponds. These problematic species are the result of excessive nutrients, so nutrient reductions will often decrease the issue.

If you are interested in pond maintenance, general health or design, we may be able to assist you through many means. We could provide a site visit to your pond. Another option available is to join us for our pond clinic event on June 6<sup>th</sup>! If we can't answer your questions we can find someone who can. Information for this article was obtained from a fact sheet published by William Lynch Jr. with The Ohio State University Extension.

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### Dates to Remember:

May 27 - Memorial Day (Office Closed)

June 12 - Board Meeting at 7:00 a.m.

June 18 thru 20 - Conservation Day Camp

July 4 - Independence Day (Office Closed)

July 17 - Board Meeting at 7:00 a.m.

August 14 - Board Meeting at 7:00 a.m.

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## 2024 Scholarship Recipients

The Preble Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors typically awards just one scholarship to a current college student. This year, the board chose to award two scholarships to two very deserving students. The District would like to congratulate our 2024 Preble SWCD Scholarship Winners Elliana Hurst and Kendall Miller!

Elliana is a 2023 graduate of Twin Valley South High School and will be a Sophomore at Edison State Community College this fall, majoring in Agricultural Business. She currently works as a Membership Marketing Specialist at the Ohio Farm Bureau Buckeye Region, serving members in Butler, Hamilton, Montgomery, and Preble Counties.

Kendall is an Eaton High School class of 2023 graduate, and will be starting her Sophomore year at Wilmington College this fall with a major in Agriculture Educational Studies and Learning with a concentration in Animal Science. She has been employed at Wilmington College as a Student Ambassador in the Office of Admission.

Best wishes to Elliana and Kendall in their college studies.

## Annual Meeting Save-the-Date

The Preble Soil and Water Conservation District is turning 75 years old in 2024 and we want to celebrate in a big way! Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 17 for our 75th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Banquet. There will be music, a great meal, and activities for attendees of all ages. Exact times and details will be announced as we get closer to the big day.

**Saturday, August 17th**  
**Preble County**  
**Historical Society and**  
**Nature Reserve**  
**7693 Swartsel Rd**  
**Eaton, OH 45320**



## Conservation Day Camp

It's not too late to register for our upcoming Conservation Day Camp, to be held on June 18th-20th, 2024. Registrations for campers are still available in the office and on our website. We are looking forward to seeing our campers for another year of outdoor fun and learning! If you have junior high or high school age students interested in serving as camp helpers or counselors, the applications may be found at [www.prebleswcd.org](http://www.prebleswcd.org).