



Conservation Connection

Summer 2022

Dust Off Your Party Shoes

Kelly Crout, District Director

They say you can tell a lot about a man from his shoes. The saying could also go "you can tell a lot about an agency by their shoes." This year Butler Soil and Water Conservation District turns 80. A lot has changed since we were one of the first ten Soil and Water Conservation Districts created in Ohio back in 1942.

Born out of the Dust Bowl, entrusted with forming a bond with our landowners to conserve our soil. From there we continued to assist farmers and landowners with best management practices on their land to promote soil conservation. As our county grew in population and suburban/urban sprawl took place, Butler Soil and Water began to issue erosion and soil permits, checking construction sites, and submitting plan reviews. In the late 2000s we stopped conducting lot inspections and permits, and instead assisted the Storm Water District by focusing on the educational Phase II component of the MS4 program.

Throughout the years we have assisted residents and also provided education and resources to all ages on a wide range of conservation topics. With the H2Ohio program and water quality concerns taking precedent, we are continuing to focus on watersheds and what potential projects could be implemented or installed. In 80 years our shoes have walked the freshly plowed soil, hopped over a silt fence at a construction site, slipped in the clay along a stream bank, stepped in a wet spot in a yard, and echoed on the tiles of a school hallway. Yes, these shoes have walked a lot of miles in 80 years, and I think we have many miles to go.

This year, we celebrate turning 80 - when you've been around that long you want to have some fun. So, we invite all of you to our 80th birthday bash, held at Pohlman Lanes. Yes, we are indeed having a bowling party, with an 80s theme and lots of neon colors! We will give out our yearly awards, you will have an opportunity to vote in our board of supervisors elections, and dinner will be served!

Then we will spend the rest of the evening having a good time, celebrating with all of you. We hope that you will join in on the fun, dust off your party shoes, and wear your 80s attire.

Yes, at 80 "we all just wanna have fun!"



Butler SWCD 80th Birthday

Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Location: Pohlman Lanes, 954 Pyramid Hill Blvd (RT 128), Hamilton, Ohio 45013

RSVP: Phone - (513)887-3720 or Email butlerswcd@butlercountyohio.org

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Butler SWCD Board

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Linda Peters
Secretary

Nathan Gillespie
Member

Election Legal Notice

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission will cause an election of Supervisors of the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to be held in accordance with Chapter 940 of the Ohio Revised Code. Individuals who own or occupy land within the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District and are 18 years of age or older may vote for Supervisor.

There are 5 ways an eligible voter can cast a ballot:

- 1.) At the SWCD office, 1802 Princeton Rd., Suite 300, Hamilton, Ohio 45011 from July 28, 2022 until August, 26, 2022 during normal business hours; **or**
- 2.) At the Butler County Fair Livestock Auction, which will take place at 1715 Fairgrove Ave., Hamilton, Ohio 45011 on July 30, 2022 from 9:00 AM—12:00 PM; **or**
- 3.) At the Cover Crop Field Day, which will take place at 1802 Princeton Rd., Hamilton, Ohio 45011 on August 20, 2022 from 8:30 AM—12:00 PM; **or**
- 4.) At the SWCD Annual Meeting, which will take place at Pohlman Lanes, 954 Pyramid Hill Blvd., Hamilton, Ohio 45013 on August 23, 2022 from 6:00 PM—8:00 PM; **or**
- 5.) Voting absentee from July 28, 2022 until August 26, 2022, by requesting the ballot application and election ballot from the SWCD office at the following address 1802 Princeton Rd., Suite 300, Hamilton, Ohio 45011, by calling (513)887-3720, or email butlerswcd@butlercountyohio.org. All absentee ballots must be requested by August 19, 2022.

Absentee ballots must be received by the Butler SWCD office by August 26, 2022 at 1:00 PM.

Two Supervisors will be elected to a three-year term commencing January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2025.

Nominees are:

1. Katherine J. Collins
2. Nathan E. Gillespie
3. Linda Peters



Board Responsibilities

The term of current Supervisors, Nathan E. Gillespie & Linda Peters, will expire December 31, 2022.

The five member board of supervisors is responsible for developing and administering the conservation assistance programs offered through the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District and conducted in Butler County. They are public officials, serving without pay, responsible to the people of the district and state.

Candidates:



Katherine J. Collins, lives in the City of Hamilton with her husband Tom of 41 years. She has two children, T.J. and Megan and three grandchildren.

Katherine has been teaching for 45 years, including teaching in Wisconsin and Minnesota. She taught at St. Ann's and then Badin High School. She had a year of retirement and then this year she just finished teaching 6th grade at St. Ann's again.

Katherine enjoys reading, cooking, and traveling. She especially enjoys traveling to presidential sites.

Katherine decided to run in the election partly because she was asked, but also because she has been involved with Butler SWCD and with the Envirothon program when she taught science at Badin. While at Badin, she also received our Land Lab Grant to create a garden for the school. Katherine has also served on the nominating committee in the past.

When asked what she would like to accomplish if she became a board member, Katherine stated "I believe I bring a unique set of skills to Butler SWCD as I have been an educator for 45 years (1987 - present) in Butler County. I see the county becoming less agricultural, and the need to educate citizens about soil and water is more important now than ever."



Incumbent, **Nathan E. Gillespie**, is a 4th generation farmer in Milford Township, and has lived in Butler County all his life. He and his wife Angie have three children, Austin, A.J., and Morgan. Nathan is a full-time farmer and owns 65 acres, which have been in his family for over 100 years. He farms corn, wheat, soybeans, hay, and also does custom farming. Nathan also owns and operates Gillespie Feed and Farm Supply. Nathan enjoys raising registered Herefords and showing them with his family. He also has a cow/calf operation selling freezer beef.

Nathan has installed 4,810 feet of waterways, a 40 x 58 dry stack animal waste facility, a 40 x 96 waste storage facility, and a comprehensive nutrient management plan on his farm. 75% of his crop is no-till and the rest is minimum tillage. He and his family have cover crops on 25% of their ground, and also use variable rate fertilizer.

Nathan graduated from Talawanda High School and Hobart Institute of Welding Technology as a combination welder. His family attends St. Matthews Lutheran Church in Darrrtown, Ohio. Nathan is a lifetime Talawanda FFA

member and is a board member of the Butler County Cattleman's Association. Nathan served on the Milford Township Fire Department for 25 years, and has been on the Butler County Farm Bureau Board.

"After completing my Fourth term I have learned a lot about conservation and how Soil and Water Districts operate and make a positive impact on our County. I have also met some great people not only in our County, but around the State, and even the Nation. I would like to continue serving the county representing rural and urban residents alike. With the current and future environmental issues facing agriculture on the horizon, I feel my knowledge and input can still continue to be a valuable asset to the board."



Incumbent, **Linda Peters**, is a 42-year resident of Liberty Township and a lifetime resident of Butler County. She and her husband Frank have two grown daughters, Laura and Sara and two grandchildren.

Now retired from teaching, Linda taught for 25 years first at Middletown City Schools and then at Lakota Local Schools. During her teaching career, she was chair of her department, served on several building and district committees, and helped develop curriculum for the

science and social studies departments.

Linda's community activities included 4 years as PTA president, 30 years with Girl Scouting, where she served as troop leader. Several of their projects centered around pond building and outdoor learning centers within the Lakota Schools. Linda also served as District Manager, and for 9 years she coordinated and ran Girl Scout Day Camps and camporees. Many of the camp activities Linda developed instructed scouts about outdoor education and conservation of the land.

She is actively involved with the Mason Ohio Star Quilting Group, serving as the president.

"I am currently finishing my second term as a member of the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District Board. I have attended trainings and meetings across Ohio, meeting many people who have shared ways to introduce new conservation programs that help future generations understand that our natural resources are important. I hope to continue using my teaching background to enhance the understanding of Butler County residents on how we must intertwine the urban and rural areas of our county to preserve our land and water for future generations. I want to continue expanding the Butler SWCD educational and outreach programs which are utilized by hundreds of Butler County residents each year."

Resident Request for Absentee Ballot

Butler

I, _____, hereby request an absentee voter ballot and envelope from Butler Soil and Water Conservation District. If requesting a ballot for other members who reside in the same household (spouse, partner, children, etc.) please print each name below.

I am an eligible voter of Butler SWCD, being 18 years of age or older and reside within the District:

Print Name(s)

Please Mail absentee voter ballot(s) and envelope(s) to the following address:

Resident Name (Please Print Clearly): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

The absentee ballot request form is provided for you above. Please fill out all of the information, cut out on dotted line, and mail to **Butler SWCD, 1802 Princeton Road, Suite 300, Hamilton, OH 45011**. Please note, all requested absentee ballots must be requested by **August 19, 2022**.

Summer Pond

Management Concerns

Brady Smith, Rural Specialist

Summertime pond management can be a risky business. During this season, many of the summer annuals are in full force, algae growth increases, and water temperatures are rising. Though many of these problems began during the first warm days we had in March and April. Some plants have already finished their growth and reproductive stages and subsided for the year. It may be wise to take a step back, identify the issues at hand, and develop a treatment strategy for next year. The ideal season to begin treatments for algae and aquatic weed growth is in the early spring, rather than during hot, windless, dry summer days when there is a higher risk of fish kills.

The top three mistakes made when beginning a pond treatment program are:

1. Incorrect Product

Aquatic weed and algae are entirely different classes of organisms and need different products and methods in order to treat them. Incorrect products can cause water toxicity or even spur a fish kill. It is important to contact Butler SWCD or another independent biologist to correctly identify and recommend a safe solution.

2. Incorrect Application

Not following the label can cause fish kills, damage environmental resources, and more serious repercussions could occur. Remember that the label is the law!

3. Incorrect Identification

Differentiating plants from algae is important when selecting the proper herbicide or algaecide. Some species of aquatic weeds are only affected by specific chemicals. This is another important aspect that could save you the expense of buying a chemical that does not work correctly.

Always remember, take your time before making a decision that could cause a fish kill, damage downstream ecosystems, and create unnecessary costs. In some cases there are biological or mechanical control methods that have been found to be safer than, and just as effective as, the use of chemicals.

Again, the label is the law and exists to protect you and the environment. Chemical labels have mixing instructions, warnings, PPE requirements, and more. If you have any questions at all you can call the 1-800 number provided on the chemical label, and the hotline is a helpful resource for any questions you may have. Be safe and enjoy your pond!

If you have questions or concerns regarding your pond this summer, reach out to Butler SWCD by calling the office at (513)887-3720.

Invasive Pond Weed

Sacred Lotus Flower

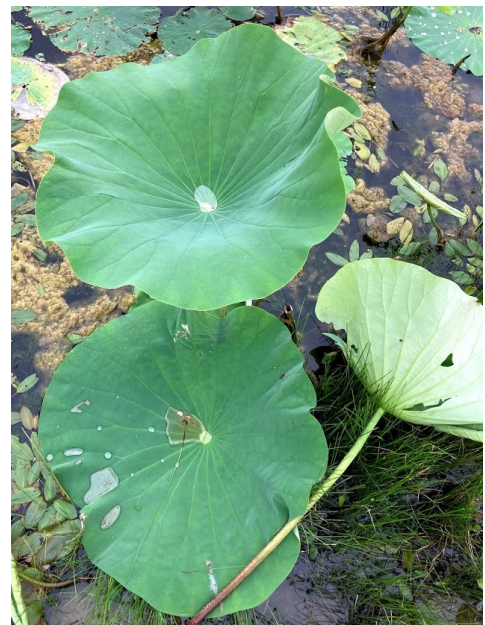
Nichole Banks, Natural Resource Technician

The sacred lotus, otherwise known as the Indian, Asian, or pink lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), is an invasive species to America and was introduced to Butler County less than 10 years ago. It's important to note that there are only two species of lotus worldwide, and one happens to be native to our area. The American lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) is our native lotus, and it is easily identified by its yellow blooms as opposed to the invasive non-native lotus, which has pink blooms.

Eradicating the sacred lotus is not the simplest task, but it has been successfully removed from waterways all over the United States, which gives us here at Butler SWCD hope. This plant spreads through its roots, called rhizomes, that travel underground and can push up new growth anywhere along its path. After the plant goes dormant in the winter it simply sprouts from its rhizomes again in the spring. This means it can take over an entire pond in just a few seasons!

The best elimination method, due to its root systems, is to take a rake and pull it along the entire bottom of the pond around where the plants are located. If there is an extreme infestation in your pond then this method may not be enough. The next step would be to use an aquatic herbicide with a 53.8% glyphosate solution, which will also target other plant species in your pond as well. Most aquatic herbicides require a permit, and always make sure to follow the label, it's the law!

If you see any sacred lotus plants growing in your pond and you want a second opinion, or if you want to know our recommendation for removal, please feel free to give us a call. We can provide you with assistance and help you properly identify the invasive lotus.



Importance of Ephemeral Streams

Ashlee Widener, Water Resource Specialist

The recent signing of House Bill 175 has brought to light concerns for ephemeral streams in Ohio. House Bill 175 aims at deregulating protections for ephemeral streams, or streams that flow following precipitation events. Deregulating these streams would benefit developments looking to dredge or fill these streams without worrying about consequences. Currently, any person hoping to fill or dredge these streams must apply for an Ohio EPA Isolated Wetland and Ephemeral Stream permit, requiring mitigation following impact. These regulations came into play following the loss of ephemeral stream protection at the federal level in 2020. Once these regulations are stripped, developments can dredge or fill the stream without permit requirements, threatening our ephemeral streams.

What are Ephemeral Streams?

Many ephemeral streams only have flowing water for short periods of time during the year, usually after precipitation events, contrasting with year-round flowing, or perennial, streams. Ohio EPA estimates that there are over 35,000 miles of ephemeral streams. The stream beds are located above the water table, serving an important role in the recharge of groundwater in aquifers. Here in Butler County, most of us get our drinking water from an underground source, the Great Miami Buried Valley Aquifer. Ephemeral streams in this county help refill this aquifer to ensure our drinking supply is plentiful. All water that flows in ephemeral streams will eventually make its way to larger streams and rivers, like the Great Miami River or the Ohio River.

Ephemeral streams typically provide the same hydrological and ecological functions as larger streams and rivers. They convey water and transport nutrients and sediments downstream, all of which are vital components to functional stream ecosystems. Ephemeral streams can also help filter out pollutants, like phosphorus, and reduce the flow downstream. These streams can also provide flood control and important habitat for amphibians, fish, and stream macroinvertebrates.

Protecting ephemeral streams is vital for maintaining healthy stream ecosystems. In watersheds, any upstream impact on an ephemeral stream will impact the downstream waterways. Removing regulations from ephemeral streams may help move developments forward more quickly and cut costs in the short term; however, stripping ephemeral streams of protections will cause larger issues down the line. Degrading these ephemeral streams will impact water quality, flood control, and habitat for organisms that rely on these ecosystems.



Deregulating ephemeral streams also has the potential to degrade water quality downstream, impacting recreation, as well as impact drinking water recharge and quality. When developments come in and fill an ephemeral stream, this has the potential to cause flooding issues on site, as well as transport water and pollutants faster downstream. As rain events in the county and throughout Ohio are becoming more extreme, we are seeing an increase in flooding events. As lands are developed, the amount of impervious surfaces increase and leave behind less room for water to infiltrate into the soils.

It is important to understand that these streams play a larger role in interconnected stream health than we may think. If you have a small ephemeral stream on your property, you can make sure that you don't dump pollutants near it, maintain a riparian area next to the stream, and plant water-loving plants along the stream banks to prevent erosion. While we can't do much to prevent developmental degradation of these streams, we can educate on the importance of maintenance and protection.

Get Hooked on Stream Health

Date: Wednesday, August 3, 2022

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Location: Elk Creek MetroPark at Sebald Park, 5580 Elk Creek Road, Middletown, 45042 - Shelter #1

Join Butler SWCD at Elk Creek to learn all about good fish habitat. Also, get a chance to catch and release fish. Make sure you bring clothes and closed toe shoes to use in the water! **Recommended for ages 12 and up.**

For more information or to RSVP please call (513)887-3720.

Cover Crop Spotlight

Brady Smith, Rural Specialist

This cover crop spotlight features inter-seeded cover crops. Inter-seeded or companion crops, provide benefits to the cash crop while not causing a yield drag. Common types of companion crops could be rye flown or broadcast into soybeans or legume mixes into corn. Legumes help provide the corn nitrogen, shield the soil from evaporation and some studies have shown they provide habitat for beneficial insects.

Companion cropping works differently for many operations, there isn't a one size fits all method for seeding. Herbicide programs can create issues getting some seeds to germinate and timing can be hard to get cover crops established. In the past Butler SWCD has offered an aerial cover crop program, with some of the biggest issues being adequate moisture and seed to soil contact.

Producers have learned from their mistakes in the past and modified sprayers, side dress bars, and other cultivating equipment to get seeds down between the rows and the soil to get them growing.

Learn more about interseeding and companion crops at our Summer Cover Crop Field day on August 20th, held at the Butler SWCD office. There will be plot tours as well as an interseeding demonstration.



Plane used for aerial seeding of cover crops.

Cover Crop Field Day

Date: Saturday, August 20, 2022

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Butler SWCD Office, 1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton, 45011

Join Butler SWCD, along with the Ohio No-Till Council, for the third annual Cover Crop Field Day. A tentative agenda includes: 8 cover crop plots, root growth and patterns, interseeded legume in corn, soil health improvements, soil cores and potential soil pit, pollinator plots with perennial wildflowers, and much more.

Direct all questions and registration to Brady Smith:
Email - smithbe@butlercountyohio.org
Phone - (513)785-6663



Farm Service Agency News County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the Butler/Hamilton County Committee election nomination process. FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

The Butler/Hamilton County Committee is composed of four elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. The current LAA open for election this term are LAA #2 and LAA #4.

- LAA #2 consists of the following Butler County Townships: Lemon, Liberty, Madison, Union, Wayne
- LAA #4 consists of Hamilton County

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women, and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2022 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by August 1, 2022. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC member* available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections or contact the Butler/Hamilton FSA office at (513)642-3715.

Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River

Date: September 17, 2022

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Multiple locations

Find a location near you and sign-up at:

www.cleansweepofthegreatmiamiriver.org

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Butler SWCD

Mission: To promote the conservation, restoration, and responsible use of our natural resources through technical assistance and education.


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Macro Spotlight Dragonflies

**Lynn White, Education &
Volunteer Specialist**

Ohio is home to a wide variety of dragonflies. Some, such as the green darner, are found across most of the state and in a variety of habitats, whereas others are more elusive only found in tiny pockets of habitat.

Dragonflies are beneficial insects, as they are true carnivores eating huge amounts of insects, especially mosquitoes and gnats. They catch their food while flying, scooping the prey out of the air in a "basket" that they form with their legs and thorax.

Dragonflies can almost always be found around very clean and fresh bodies of water because that is the only kind of water they can live in and around. If the body of water receives runoff containing animal waste, chemicals such as fertilizers, or other pollutants, the dragonflies will not survive. Therefore, if water bodies are polluted, we lose our beneficial dragonflies and the mosquito population soars.



Adult dragonflies will lay their eggs in water and immature dragonflies/larva will hatch from the eggs. They will have external gills that will allow them to breath and live underwater until metamorphosis. They will climb onto a plant and up out of the water. Their larval shell will burst open, and the dragonfly will climb out and unfurl its wings. New adults are called teneral, they need a week to fully mature and their bodies will need to harden so that they are strong enough to fly.

If you get to see a dragonfly up close make sure to check out their eyes. Dragonfly eyes provide a nearly 360 degree view, making it hard for their prey to escape. Research has shown they are the most effective predators in the animal world, with a 95% success rate!

If you would like to find out more about dragonflies, ODNR Division of Wildlife has a great free field guide online and copies can be picked up from State Parks as well as other ODNR locations. You can also create a dragonfly pond to encourage more dragonflies to visit your property. Watch a recording of our Backyard Wildlife Series #2 on the Butler SWCD YouTube channel (start at the 55 minute mark) to learn how to create your own dragonfly pond.

Check out the www.butlerswcd.org/blog for the complete Dragonfly article containing direct site links.