

America the Beautiful

Kelly Crout, District Director

Recently I was fortunate enough to do a bit of domestic traveling and got to experience the Blue Ridge Mountains as well as a beach along the Atlantic Ocean. It was my first time for both, and although they were both different, they were each beautiful and a sight to behold in their own right.

Coming back to Butler County had me reminiscing about the sights I saw. Which then led me to think about our own county and what might be considered “beautiful” here. Maybe we don’t have white sandy beaches or forested mountain ranges in our own backyard. But we do have a lot—if you stop and take the time to look.

When the sky is blue with white clouds and the growing soybeans and corn are those two distinct colors of green—I argue that it’s just as beautiful. Or the sunset along the Great Miami River with waterfowl taking flight. It’s a quiet, simple type of beauty that is worthy of our appreciation.

As a “hurry to the next thing” society, I think we need to take the time and appreciate the beauty of everything around us—the small seemingly ordinary that we take for granted each day. As we celebrate America’s 250th, if we truly take the time to stop and look, we see that America the Beautiful is true no matter where you look.

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SAVE THE DATE!

Electrofishing and Fish ID Class

WHEN:
Thursday, August 6
6-8 PM

WHERE:
Sebald MetroPark
5580 Elk Creek Rd,
Middletown, OH 45042

WHAT TO BRING:
Rubber boots or shoes to get wet,
waders if you have them! Ages 12+.

Visit Butler SWCD’s website to register
or scan QR code!





Butler SWCD Board

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Chair

Gary Gerber
Vice - Chair

Nathan Krause
Treasurer

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 4 ways an eligible voter can cast a ballot:

- 1.) At the SWCD office, 1802 Princeton Rd., Suite 300, Hamilton, Ohio 45011 from July 30, 2026 until August 28, 2026 during normal business hours Monday—Friday 8:00 AM—4:30 PM; **or**
- 2.) At the Butler County Fair Livestock Auction, which will take place at 1715 Fairgrove Ave., Hamilton, Ohio 45011 on August 1, 2026 from 9:00 AM—12:00 PM; **or**
- 3.) At the SWCD Annual Meeting, which will take place at Izaak Walton League of America—Hamilton Chapter, 450 Beissinger Rd., Hamilton, Ohio 45013 on August 12, 2026 from 5:00 PM—7:00 PM; **or**
- 4.) Voting absentee from July 30, 2026 until August 28, 2026, 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 emailing butlerswcd@bcohoio.gov. All absentee ballots must be requested by August 17, 2026. Absentee ballots must be received by the SWCD office by August 28, 2026 at 4:30 PM.

Two Supervisors will be elected to a three-year term commencing January 1, 2027 and ending December 31, 2029.

Nominees are:

1. Jeremy Fruth
2. Nathan Krause
3. Dennis W. McCabe
4. Angela Pullano

Board Responsibilities

The term of current Supervisors, Jeremy Fruth & Nathan Krause, will expire December 31, 2026.

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 conducted in Butler County. They are public officials, serving without pay, responsible to the people of the district and state.

Candidates:



Incumbent, **Jeremy Fruth**, a resident of Wayne Township, is seeking re-election as Supervisor of the Butler Soil & Water Conservation District. Jeremy is a production grain and cattle farmer, farming 1,200 acres consisting of corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay. He has long been affiliated with Miami University's biology, geology, and environmental science departments, where he graduated and continues to work in research and lab development. Jeremy has installed over 10,000 feet of CRP waterway projects through the SWCD on his property. He was presented the Joe Dudley Outstanding Conservationist award and has completed two Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans.

In the past Jeremy has helped lead our county's FFA soils judging competition and is currently an adult advisor for the Butler County Junior Fair Board. Jeremy would appreciate the opportunity to again serve as a supervisor on the board. Having worked for Soil and Water from 2007-2010, he understands the conservation issues that the agricultural and urban communities face in Butler County and hopes to continue offering his guidance and assistance with these issues.

Incumbent, **Nathan Krause**, is a construction contractor and small farmer who lives in Oxford Township. He and his wife Stacie have four daughters and are life-long residents of Butler County. Nathan is constantly working to improve and maintain drainage management and soil health on his farms. He also owns a small business that performs invasive brush and tree species removal with a focus on propagating and maintaining native plants and tree species.



Nathan is involved in projects and ministries at Queen of Peace Parish in Millville, Ohio. He is a veteran of the United States Army. He is a current member of the Izaak Walton League of America. Nathan is also involved with multiple projects for the County Fair. Nathan has always had a passion for all things agriculture, and is an active outdoorsman and conservationist.

Nathan has extensive experience and knowledge through construction and maintenance in the water production and wastewater treatment industry. He hopes to use his experiences and abilities to better serve our community.



Dennis W. McCabe, is a resident of Lindenwald, having resided a total of 33-years in Butler County, 24 of those years were in his youth; growing up in East Hamilton. Dennis graduated from Stephen T. Badin High School and attended the University of Louisville, on a Navy ROTC scholarship. He graduated with a Bachelors of Commerce degree with a marketing major. As an active member of his local church he volunteered with the charity, St. Vincent De Paul Society. Dennis retired from Cincinnati Children’s Hospital in 2017, making the move back to Butler County.

In his retirement, Dennis became an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist, completing the required volunteer hours through programs with MetroParks of Butler County and Butler SWCD. He has volunteered with Butler SWCD in 2024, 2025, and 2026 as a member of the water monitoring group known as Stream Team. He has also assisted with Butler SWCD at summer creeking events and the annual Waterfest event. He is currently working towards achieving his third consecutive certification with the Ohio State University’s Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist program.

Dennis has spent a considerable amount of time in nature throughout Ohio, the U.S.A, and the World; and is seeking a position on the Butler SWCD Board of Supervisors to help ensure that our natural resources will be protected and preserved for future generations. He believes he can provide a fresh vision to the board and is willing to seek out and facilitate new and experimental methods to achieve the goal of saving the natural environment.

Angela Pullano, is a 20-year resident of Liberty Township, and a lifelong Ohioan who grew up in the suburbs of Centerville. She holds a B.S. in Information Technology and a GIS Certificate from Miami University and works in HR Technology for an Ohio-based Fortune 250 company. She previously was a naturalist for Five Rivers MetroParks at Possum Creek Farm, is an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist, and a Cincinnati Master Rain Gardener.



Angie has experience with soil and water conservation, invasive species management, habitat restoration, native plant propagation, forest stewardship, and prescribed burns. She continues to expand her knowledge by attending forestry, native plant, and habitat management conferences. At her home in Liberty Township, she is transforming the property using permaculture and conservation-focused practices, including reducing lawn, installing a native plant garden, creating a backyard food forest, and improving soil health and reducing erosion by using cover crops, composting, rain barrels, and rain gardens.

Angie has been a regular volunteer with the Butler County Stream and Environmental Stewardship Team since 2020. She also volunteers with other conservation organizations in SW Ohio and Kentucky.

She is enrolled in NRCS conservation contracts on her 23-acre woodland property in Madison County, Kentucky including invasive species and brush removal and pollinator habitat plantings. Angie hopes that with her diverse background and business experience she will offer an integrative perspective that will help support Butler SWCD’s objectives.

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 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 17, 2026**.

Plant Native, Reduce Runoff, Support Wildlife!

Ashlee Mulrooney, Water Resource Specialist

After recently purchasing a house, I have spent quite a bit of time out in my yard working to turn it into a native haven for wildlife. With a lot of money spent on plants and a lot of time potting, digging holes, buying soil, and watering, I was proud of the progress I had made this past spring. Until I recently looked out my window to see a baby bunny chomping down on my newly planted Blazing Star. I was pretty annoyed at first, but then it just made me want to plant more native plants for any bit of wildlife I could have in my tiny subdivision yard. I still have yet to see butterflies, but the bees are slowly arriving. I still have a lot of work to do, but I am excited to see what this can turn into.

Native plants not only provide many benefits to native wildlife but can also help protect water quality and reduce runoff. If there are problem areas in your yard where water pools and french drains seem too expensive, native plants could help. If there are water concerns close to your foundation, you may want to regrade to allow water to flow away from the property. Planting trees and shrubs next to a foundation is not recommended as this can cause cracking and potential damage, but smaller flower and sedges may be okay. If there are sections of the yard that naturally pond water, planting native water tolerant plants could help soak up excess water. If you are looking for attractive plants, Blazing Star, Blue Flag Iris, Great Blue Lobelia, and Swamp Milkweed are just a few aesthetically pleasing plants that love water. If trees and shrubs are more your thing, Willows, Buttonbush, Swamp White Oak, and Sycamores also do well in moist areas but need a bit of space. Rain gardens can also be useful in helping soak up water. Rain gardens are depressions in the ground planted with water tolerant plants that are also pleasing to look at and benefit pollinators. Rain gardens can be utilized in areas where water tends to pond or where a downspout drains.

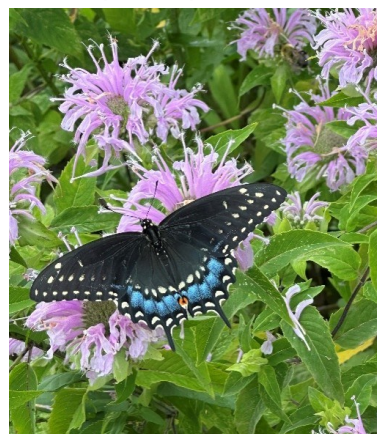


Rain garden. Photo courtesy of Butler SWCD.

If you live next to a stream, keeping a vegetated buffer between your property and the stream can also be extremely beneficial. Large stream buffers with a mixture

of grasses, shrubs, and trees can help treat and filter runoff before it enters the stream. This can reduce pollutants such as nutrients and harmful chemicals on your lawn from flowing into local waterways. Native plants tend to also have deeper, stronger roots than non-native plants and can help hold soils together, stabilizing streambanks from erosion. Arrowwood, Spicebush, and Black Willow are a few shrubs and trees that are great to plant along a streambank.

Native plants are adapted to the climate of Ohio and have evolved along with local pollinators. They are better adapted to providing food and habitat for native bees, butterflies, birds, and moths. When purchasing native plants, it is important to note that natives are cultivars derived from native parents but may provide fewer benefits like reduced pollen. Also, when planning out your plants, it is important to determine the level of sun exposure, soil type, soil moisture, planting season, and bloom time. Planning out your plants so that there will be blooms year-round is also important and beneficial for all pollinators. Bird baths, bat houses, and butterfly puddlers are other additions to your yard that can help pollinators. Even keeping a section of your yard packed with downed tree limbs or other woody material can help provide shelter for wildlife, especially over winter.



Black Swallowtail Butterfly. Photo courtesy of Butler SWCD.

To learn more about the benefits of native plants, where to purchase native plants, and how to plant a pollinator garden visit www.savelocalwaters.org.

Pollinator Fest

Date:

Saturday, August 22

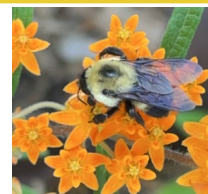
Time:

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Location:

Butler SWCD, 1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton 45011

Celebrate pollinators and native plants with Butler SWCD along with the many wonderful vendors & educational organizations setting up booths at this year's Pollinator Fest!



Biodiversity: Nature's Tick Control

Maddy Miner, Natural Resource Technician

Summertime is a great time for outdoors activities like hiking, camping, or gardening. However, these fun warm weather activities come with their own drawbacks, such as increasing pest populations that thrive in warm, humid weather. In particular, there's a type of small parasitic pest that has been the center of everyone's attention in more recent years—ticks.

While classified as a subgroup of arachnids, ticks generally fall into two main families; hard ticks (*Ixodida*) and soft ticks (*Argasidae*). Ticks are known as an obligate ectoparasite, meaning that in order to live, they need to feed off a host's blood from exterior surfaces like skin, hair, fur, etc. As opportunistic feeders, their hosts include a wide variety of mammals, birds, and reptiles. The most common species of hard ticks found in Ohio are the Blacklegged (Deer) Tick, American Dog Tick, Lone Star Tick, and the Longhorned Tick as of more recently. The size of an adult tick typically ranges from 2-6 mm in size if unfed but can be bigger if engorged from feeding. Ticks have small, wingless, oval-shaped bodies with 8 legs and can vary in color depending on the species.



Photo Courtesy of Greene County Public Health.

Ticks thrive in warm, humid weather where a lot of vegetative cover is present. This includes wooded areas, fields, grasses, bushes, and leaf litter. In what's known as "questing", ticks use vegetative covers as perches to sit and wait for hosts to come by. They do not jump or fly, contrary to popular belief.

Increasingly in Ohio, warm seasons have grown hotter and more humid for a longer period of time than in previous years. This, coupled with milder winters, has provided an optimal environment for tick populations to thrive for extended seasons.

Biodiversity loss in both animal and plant species has removed some of the natural checks on tick populations. Habitat fragmentation and subsequent loss from developing urban areas has reduced the population of many species that prey on ticks. Common tick predators include opossums, wild turkeys, spiders, ants, birds, frogs, and toads. Many species indirectly feed on ticks as well. One of the main hosts for a tick is mice, making them

vulnerable to fox, snake, and large bird populations. Habitat fragmentation is not the only driving factor for loss of wildlife and plant biodiversity, but also the rise of invasive species and monoculture stands. When plant biodiversity is reduced in an area, it does not attract nearly as many natural tick predators, allowing them to grow largely undetected.

A common example of this cycle in SW Ohio is with one of the states most aggressive invasive species known as Amur Honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*). Most woodland areas in Ohio are shifting towards monostands of primarily Honeysuckle. This creates a dense, shaded, humid shrub layer in forests—the perfect conditions which also give ticks many spots to easily latch on to hosts. This species outcompetes other plant species, preventing their growth and establishment. Furthermore, wildlife diversity, including the ones that prey on ticks, is vastly reduced since most animals do not seek out Honeysuckle leaves or berries as a primary food source due to their low caloric content. This allows tick populations to survive with less checks and balances.



Dense Honeysuckle shrub layer common in Ohio wooded areas. Photo courtesy of Butler SWCD.

There are things you can do locally to help support biodiversity to keep tick populations in check.

Volunteer for invasive removals

Butler SWCD and other environmental groups hold many invasive species removal volunteer events. Targeting and removing invasives allows other species a chance to recover in an ecosystem, thereby replenishing the natural diversity of plants and animals needed to keep tick populations down.

Planting native plants

Planting native species attracts local wildlife such as birds, butterflies, bees, other insects, and small mammals that rely on native plants for food and shelter. Keeping animal biodiversity in abundance also increases populations of natural tick predators.

There are many tips to help protect yourself from tick bites, such as wearing light colored clothing for easy detections, minimizing exposed skin, treating clothes with permethrin, applying deet bug repellent, staying on cleared trails as much as possible, and thoroughly checking skin and hair when you leave a natural area.

5 Visit www.butlerswcd.org for upcoming volunteer events.

Getting Kids and Adults Outside

Lynn White, Education & Volunteer Specialist

There has been a myriad of studies conducted over the last few decades all pointing to the same thing—being outdoors is good for our physical and mental health. Some studies say it must be a “green environment” whereas others argue that it can be any outdoor environment. Disagreements aside, most studies agree that children that play outdoors, and adults who spend time outdoors, are happier, more attentive, and less anxious than those that spend more time indoors.

Benefits to being outdoors:

- Unstructured outdoor play allows children to be creative and interact meaningfully with their surroundings. Give a child a plastic boat and it's just a boat; give them a stick and it can be a boat, a sword, or even a pen for writing in the sand or mud.
- It provides different stimulation. Sure, kids can seem less stimulated outdoors than if they are planted in front of the latest video game, but being outdoors activates more senses. You can see, hear, smell and touch the outdoors.
- Unstructured physical activity during the day also helps children sleep better at night. It can increase concentration and improve mood the next day.
- Get moving. Being outdoors and being active does not need to be restricted to sports such as soccer. Going on a hike, clambering over rocks, or running around all help to improve motor development and can lower obesity rates without the added stress of letting your team or coach down.

So, how can you spend more time outdoors as a family?

We have amazing trails in Butler County, including MetroParks, township parks, and city parks for you to go on a hike or take the dog for a walk. Find a quiet spot outdoors and have a picnic, read, or draw. Have fun in your yard creating nature art and sculptures with leaves and mud. Try a nature scavenger hunt. Or join us for one of our summer creeking programs.

For a full list of Butler SWCD events and more, visit our kids page at www.butlerswcd.org/kids.



A Beginner's Steps to Soil Conservation

Brady Smith, Rural Specialist

It seems, for the last decade, we have been in a changing cycle of heavy spring rains followed by late summer and fall drought. The drought makes us wish the rains would continue and help finish out the year's crop. But the scars left on the landscape from the heavy rain leave a lasting impression only remembered when it is time to harvest.

The erosion left by spring rain makes fields rough and causes numerous problems often unseen by the landowner, leaving many to wonder what we can do to protect our resources. The yearly cost of soil erosion in the United States is over \$44 billion. This precious, finite resource is too valuable to waste. Many farmers may choose to park their tillage equipment, saving fuel costs, and also experience greater water infiltration rates. Just as many farmers say, “no-till doesn't mean no erosion,” there are other tools and techniques that help reduce erosion and help keep more soil on the farm. This temporary localized solution is often called Critical Area Planting and is a gateway to whole farm use of cover crops.

Simple solutions can make a big impact when it comes to keeping soil and nutrients on farms. The United States Department of Agriculture is currently conducting their annual Highly Erodible Land (HEL) compliance checks; the damage done by heavy spring rains is noteworthy. If you are experiencing issues with erosion, nutrient leaching, and other natural resource concerns, your friends at Butler SWCD and NRCS are just a phone call away. We offer free technical advice on top of other potential funding opportunities that you may qualify for.

If you are interested in learning more about agriculture conservation practices on both cropland and pastures, consider attending our upcoming workshop this summer.



Photos courtesy of Butler SWCD.

The photographs shown above are aerial views of a field with extensive erosion (left image) versus a field that has installed grassed waterways to reduce erosion (right image).

Gail Lierer Crop Ins. Agency Gail Lierer Crop Insurance Agent 1487 Chapel Road Okeana, Ohio 45053  513-615-9257 cell lierer.1@gmail.com	THEODORE JUNG, EA Tax Advisor, Certifying Acceptance Agent  110 Boggs Lane, St 101 Cincinnati, OH 45246 Office: 513.771.5611 Fax: 513.771.5514 theodore.jung@blockadvisors.com www.blockadvisors.com	 Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. Your Touchstone Energy Partner 3888 Stillwell Beckett Road Oxford, Ohio 45056 Business Hours Monday through Friday • 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 513-867-4400 @butlerrural butlerrural.coop
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Butler SWCD

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

 COOMBS EXCAVATING & DRAINAGE, INC. FOR YOUR DRAINAGE, WATERWAY AND EXCAVATING NEEDS Richard L. Coombs 5037 Hamilton Eaton Road Collinsville, OH 45004 Ph: 513-726-6124 Fax: 513-726-4816 Cell: 513-623-7072 Email: RC3156@aol.com	 Frontier Wellness OLD TIME APPROACH TO YOUR HEALTHCARE NEEDS Janae Arno MSN, APRN-CNP (513) 717-4333 (office) info@myfrontierwellness.com 3763 Hamilton Cleves Road Hamilton, OH 45013 www.myfrontierwellness.com	Combs Group Realty One Donna Avenue Hamilton, Ohio 45013 Business (513) 829-8222 Residence (513) 894-5258 Cell (513) 470-1995 CombsGroupRealty@gmail.com  Courtney E. Combs Broker
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Save-the-date Cover Crop Field Day Wednesday, September 16 Updates will be added to website	BATH STATE BANK Farm Real Estate Mortgage FSA Guaranteed Loans Beginning Farmer/ Young Farmer Mobile Banking & Remote Deposit Personalized Service & More! Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender 765-732-3022 www.BathStateBank.com	513.892.1116 mona.lisa@monasmakeup.com www.monasmakeup.com 24 S. Second St, Hamilton \$100 permanent makeup procedures (during any class) with Mona Lisa

Want to Sponsor our Newsletter?
Contact our office today (513) 887-3720

The Butler SWCD and the NRCS prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.
USDA: An Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, and Lender.

Upcoming Events

- **Creeking in the Park:** July 30
- **Butler SWCD Election:** July 30—August 28
- **Annual Meeting:** August 12
- **Pollinator Fest:** August 22
- **Office Closed, Labor Day:** September 7
- **Board Meeting:** September 8
- **Garden Series, Session #3:** September 9
- **Cover Crop Field Day:** September 16
- **Clean Sweep of the GMR:** September 19
- **Board Meeting:** October 13

To find out more information on any upcoming events, please visit www.butlerswcd.org or call our office at (513) 887-3720.

Save the dates



Conservation Adventure

Date:

Wednesday, August 12

Time:

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Location:

Izaak Walton League of America—Hamilton Chapter,
450 Beissinger Road, Hamilton, OH 45013

RSVP:

Please call (513)887-3720 or email
butlerswcd@bcoho.gov

Join Butler SWCD as we celebrate another year of conservation with outdoor activities starting at 5 PM, dinner served at 6:30 PM, and awards ceremony at 7 PM. You will also have the chance to vote in the Butler SWCD Board of Supervisors election from 5 to 7 PM.

The event is FREE, however, we ask that you please RSVP by Monday, August 3 to assist with the purchasing of food.

