



# Conservation Connection

Winter 2022

## New Year. New Opportunities.

### Kelly Crout, District Director

Butler Soil & Water Conservation District has many things to celebrate, but we are celebrating pretty big this January. Our Butler County Board of Commissioners increased our funding for 2022. This is a big deal since our funding has been held flat for almost 10-years. A large portion of the funding will go towards offering a part-time temporary position at Butler SWCD, which may ultimately lead to bigger and better things in the future. We are very thankful and appreciative to our County Commissioners, County Administrator, and our County Finance Director.

With that being said, we still plan on having our usual events along with some new workshops planned for this year; please see inside this newsletter for upcoming events. Butler SWCD will also be turning 80, so we are looking forward to celebrating with all of you. We will also continue with our strategic planning, hopefully being able to hold round table discussions on how we can best serve our county and community.

Our team is already busy with waterways, watershed work, lesson plans, and volunteer events. We hope that this year gets a little more back to "normal," but regardless, at the District, we continue to think outside the box and try new things.

Please be sure to check back on our website for the part-time job posting, which will hopefully start in late March or early April.

## 2022 Tree Sale

Order Deadline: Monday, March 14

This year there are over 30 species of native trees, shrubs, and native wildflower seeds to choose from. Purchases are online ONLY, and can be made through the Warren SWCD's website - [warrenswcd.com/tree-sale.html](http://warrenswcd.com/tree-sale.html). We have also provided a link on the Butler SWCD website.

Seedlings sell out very fast so get your orders in as soon as possible. If you have large orders, please contact Warren SWCD directly.

We are required to collect sales tax on all purchases; if you require a sales tax exemption please contact Warren SWCD at (513) 695-1337.

Pick-up dates and times will be posted to the Butler SWCD's website for our residents as we get closer to March.

**Please Note: Beginning in 2022, we will charge a sales tax of 6.5%. We will be accepting tax exemption forms, if applicable. Forms can be found at [tax.ohio.gov](http://tax.ohio.gov).**

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### Butler SWCD Board

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# Watershed Updates

## Ashlee Widener, Water Resource Specialist

Wherever you are standing, you are in a watershed. A watershed is any area of land where all rainfall and snowmelt drains to creeks, streams, rivers, and eventually to a common outflow point, such as a reservoir, bay, or ocean. Watersheds can vary drastically in size, from large regions to a few creeks and tributaries, and are typically based on the drainage area of a particular waterbody or waterway. In Butler County, there are several watersheds that are monitored for water quality and biological health. Typically, causes of impairments in watersheds result from polluted runoff or physical alterations. When precipitation falls onto the watershed, the runoff flows into nearby waters, including wetlands, streams, rivers, and lakes. This runoff can carry harmful pollutants such as sediments, chemicals, bacteria, or nutrients that can impair water quality and harm biological life.

Polluted runoff can be pinpointed from a source, called point source pollution. These sources of pollution typically have a single point of discharge, such as a wastewater treatment plant. Lesser known sources of pollution that cannot be pinpointed from a specific discharge point are known as nonpoint source pollution, such as urban stormwater runoff. Physical alterations, such as hydro-modification (channelization such as stream straightening) can alter stream or river channels and banks, leading to habitat degradation, increased erosion, and poor connection to floodplains.

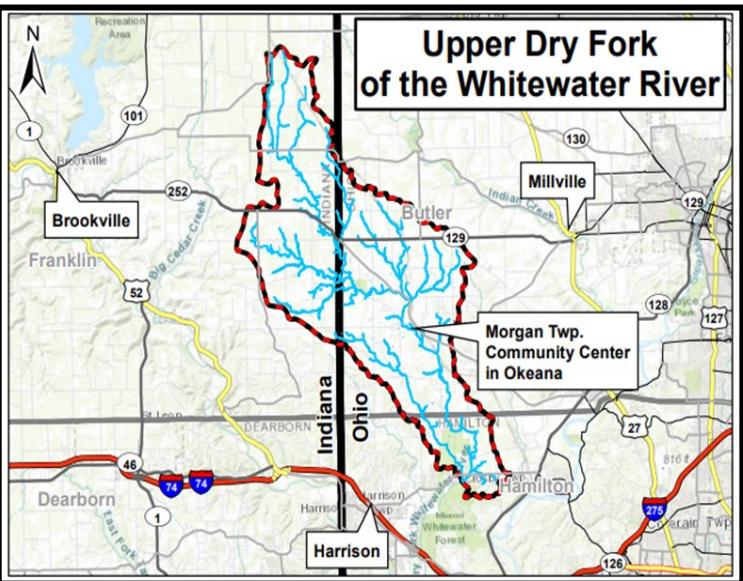
### Acton Lake Dam – Four Mile Creek Watershed



**Impaired Watersheds**—The Acton Lake Dam – Four Mile Creek watershed and the Upper Dry Fork watershed have been listed as impaired by the Ohio EPA. Currently, Acton Lake Dam-Four Mile Creek (ALD-FMC) watershed fails the designated aquatic life use for biology. There are several dams along Four Mile Creek that disrupt fish passage and degrade habitat. The ALD-FMC is also failing its recreational use for safe human contact due to *E. Coli*. Metal contamination in stormwater runoff from urbanized areas, like the City of Oxford, also threaten biological communities in this watershed. The Upper Dry Fork (UDF) watershed has also been listed as impaired. Upper Dry Fork fails the designated aquatic life use for warm water habitat due to degraded habitat, and fails recreational use as well due to *E. Coli*. A fish passage barrier along Buck Run, a tributary to Dry Fork, is blocking fish migration and degrading habitat. There are also several sites of stream erosion throughout the watershed. Currently, there are no plans in place to address the issues in either watershed.

**Current Planning Efforts**—Butler SWCD has been initiating efforts to develop Non-Point Source Implementation Strategies (NPS-IS) plan for the ALD-FMC watershed and is assisting with the UDF watershed plan.

The 9-element NPS-IS plan is the Ohio EPA framework for watershed planning. The NPS-IS plan will outline characteristics and background of the watershed, existing water quality and biological data, establish a list of critical areas, address sources and causes of impairment, and list projects that will be implemented to address the objectives listed for each critical area. Integration between the stakeholders such as farmers, landowners, watershed groups, government agencies, and others plays a key role in the development of these watershed plans. If you happen to live within either of these watersheds and have any information that would pertain to the plan, please feel free to let us know. There will be a stakeholder meeting for the Upper Dry Fork watershed on February 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5-7 PM at the Morgan Township Community Center located at 6463 Okeana Drewersburg Road, Okeana, OH 45053.



# Road Salts: Limiting Use During Winter Weather

Ashlee Widener, Water Resource Specialist



When dangerous winter weather approaches, we find peace in knowing that the roads are being prepared for ice and snow so we can travel safely. Salt has been an effective deicer that aids in melting icy patches on roads to allow safe transportation. However, over the years, road salts have been discovered to be detrimental to the environment. While managing snowfall and ice accumulation, it is still important to remain cautious about the impacts of road salts on the environment.

As snow and ice melts, the salt dissolves, and runoff containing the salt flows across pavements and landscapes into nearby waterways and infiltrates into groundwater. As the salt flows into waterways including streams, rivers, and lakes, the salinity increases and becomes a threat to aquatic ecosystems. Dissolved salt in water can be toxic to many aquatic plants, invertebrates, and fish. As a result, increasing salinity threatens aquatic ecosystems. Once salts get into freshwater ecosystems, it can permanently remain. 1 teaspoon of salt can pollute 5 gallons of water for good. Road salts can also alter soil pH and cause plants to die off. Salts are also highly corrosive to metals and can negatively impact pets, vehicles, and more.

More than 118 million Americans depend on local streams for drinking water. Water treatment plants are not equipped to filter out the extra salt, so it can end up in tap water and can even corrode pipes.



A recent article published by the Miami Conservancy District alerted to the rising salinity levels in the Miami Valley buried aquifer. This aquifer supplies water to nearly 2.3 million people, but many studies have shown recently that the groundwater in the aquifer system is becoming more salty. Increased salinity in groundwater can pose a risk to human health.

Fortunately, there are alternative decisions people can make when winter weather is approaching. A recent report from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies provides ways to reduce the amount of salt use to minimize environmental impact:

- Pre-wetting salt before application can reduce infiltration into aquifers.
- Pre-treat roads to reduce the total amount of salt applied.
- Use agro-based products alone or with salt, such as cheese or pickle brine or de-sugared molasses, which can increase the time the salt stays on the roads and reduces the corrosivity.
- Protect sensitive water resource areas, such as public water supply wellfields, by reducing and phasing out salt application near these sites.

The best method to reduce environmental damage would be to manually remove snow and ice when possible. Added traction can be accomplished by using sand, cat litter, or bird feed. Keep in mind that these materials can still pollute, so use only what is needed. If salt is required, try to use only the necessary amount, and pay attention to the weather, as road salt is most effective at temperatures above 15°F. While winter weather can become a problem for travel, there are still ways for us to clear roads and get to where we need to go safely while remaining

it takes only  
**1 teaspoon**  
of road salt  
to permanently pollute  
5 gallons of water.





## Farm Service Agency News

The Butler/Hamilton Farm Service Agency (FSA) is encouraging producers to schedule an appointment to make or change elections and to enroll for the 2022 Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Program. The ARC and PLC program provides future protections against market fluctuations. The election and enrollment period opened on October 18, 2021 and runs through March 15, 2022.

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-CO or PLC, which are both crop-by-crop, or ARC-IC, which is for the entire farm. Although election changes for 2022 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year unless a multi-year contract is on file. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2022, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2022, the election remains the same as the 2021 election for crops on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm. Contact the Butler/Hamilton FSA office at (513) 642-3715 to schedule your appointment.

### Dates to Remember:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| January 31 | Deadline to file 2021 LDP application for wool and unshorn lamb pelts.   |
| January 31 | Deadline to file 2021 Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Application for Payment for timely filed 2021 ELAP notices of losses. |
| February 4 | Deadline to file an application for Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program (OTECP).  |
| March 1    | Deadline for the 2021 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Applications for Payment and all supporting documentation for timely filed 2021 LIP notices of livestock losses.       |
| March 15   | Deadline to file Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) election and enrollment applications for 2022 crop season.                                      |
| March 15   | Deadline to obtain 2022 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.  |

## Butler County Fertilizer & Pesticide Certification

### Date:

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

### Location:

OSU Extension - Butler County  
1802 Princeton Rd, Hamilton 45011

### Times:

Fertilizer Recertification (15) 12:30 - 1:30 PM  
Pesticide Recertification (Core, 1, 2, 6) 12:30 - 4:30 PM  
Pesticide Recertification (3, 4, 5) 4:30 - 6:00 PM

### Cost:

Fertilizer Only \$15  
Fertilizer & Pesticide \$35

### Contact / RSVP:

J.T. Benitez - benitez.6@osu.edu - (513) 887-3722

Various OSU Extension Educators are offering live, online webinars for private pesticide and fertilizer recertification in 2022. Please visit [pested.osu.edu/2022PrivateWebinar](http://pested.osu.edu/2022PrivateWebinar) and use the contact information or registration links provided to register for the meetings. Cost varies by meeting.



### Ohio River Basin H2Ohio Wetland Grant Program

\$5 Million Awarded to Projects in 11 counties\*

Butler, Greene, Franklin, Hamilton, Holmes, Mahoning, Medina, Miami, Montgomery, Wayne, and Warren

[h2.ohio.gov](http://h2.ohio.gov)

## Alert: Herbicide Ban

Attention to all Butler and Hamilton County farmers: Based on recent endangered species information, Enlist One and Enlist Duo cannot be used in 12 different Ohio counties, Butler and Hamilton included. This change comes at a time when farmers are facing more herbicide resistant weeds with less options for control, but could be considered a saving grace for many endangered insects and clover. Check with Farm Bureau or OSU for more updates. Note: this will be a topic at our Ag Day Breakfast on March 22. See back page for more info.

# Nutrient Management

## Reminders

### Brady Smith, Rural Specialist

Over the last three years the cost of nearly everything, including fertilizer, have increased in price. This doesn't mean to stop spreading fertilizer or switch to a different crop for 2022. As an operator and a steward of the land, you need to be considering how you can use resources in the most efficient way possible while minimizing your overall effect on the environment.

Hiring a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) to take soil tests and provide recommendations on fertilizer application is a great start toward nutrients stewardship. If you have a nutrient management plan for your livestock operation, follow the guidelines in the booklet you received from your technical service provider. Manure has many essential nutrients, so it is important to not over apply on one field while under applying on another. Oftentimes, livestock producers spread manure in the same spot year after year. This can sometimes be damaging to crops and often leaches nutrients into streams, and possibly even contaminate groundwater. Understand that manure carries both a nutrient and a monetary value. Other soil health benefits from increased organic matter and biological activity are also important factors when considering manure application.

Agricultural pollution is something the state of Ohio takes very seriously. If your farm is responsible for discharges of sediment or manure runoff, you could be subject to fines and other civil penalties.

Soil and Water Districts are in charge of investigating and reporting pollution complaints. If a farm is found to be in violation of agricultural pollution laws the complaint will then be turned over to the Ohio Departments of Agriculture Enforcement Division. As a rule of thumb, producers are encouraged to follow the NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Standard. Butler Soil & Water Conservation District has copies of this on our website and hard copies are available in our office, 1802 Princeton Road, Suite 300, Hamilton 45011.

Some key points of the 590 standard are as follows:

- Soil Tests should be no older than 3-years old.
- Application rates should not exceed the Tri-State Fertilizer Guide recommendations.
- DO NOT spread nutrients if there is a greater than 50% chance of rainfall of more than 1/2" within a 24-hour period.
- Manure application on frozen or snow covered ground is not permissible.
- Follow the setback guidelines provided in the table below.

The 590 standards are in place to provide straightforward guidance while also helping to ensure water quality. Butler SWCD and NRCS have the tools to help you with a nutrient management plan, whether it be for dry fertilizer or manure. Some producers may even be eligible for cost share funding. Contact our office for more information.

Type of Sensitive - Setback Area	Manure Surface Application	Manure Incorporation or Direct Injection
Residences / Private Wells down slope from the application area	100 ft	100 ft
Sinkholes	300 ft	100 ft
Pond or Lake	100 ft. at a minimum 35 ft of the 100 must be Vegetative Barrier <sup>2</sup> Or 300 ft	35ft. Vegetative Barrier
Streams <sup>1</sup> Ditches <sup>1</sup> Surface Inlets	35 ft Vegetative Barrier Or 35 ft with 50% residue cover at time of application Or 100 ft	None
Grassed Waterway	35 ft	None
Field Surface Drains	35 ft	None
Public Wells	300 ft	100 ft
Developed Springs down slope from the application area.	300 ft	300 ft
Public Surface Drinking Water Intake	300 ft	300 ft

NRCS 590 Standard Setback Table

# BEST Volunteers

## 2021 Wrap-up

We would like to extend a warm thank you to all who volunteered in 2021. For a fairly new volunteer program, we saw some amazing people helping to conserve Butler County's natural resources. In total we had 17 events that were attended by 227 volunteers, providing 625 hours working to conserve our local natural resources!

In addition to these events, volunteers spent many hours labeling over 1000 storm drains across the county with "Do Not Pollute" decals. Nearly 350 volunteers participated in the Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River across 17 different locations. And finally, about 40 hours were spent by volunteers collecting stream habitat data from Four Mile and Gregory Creeks. We couldn't ask for a better bunch of volunteers, you truly are the BEST!

## What to expect in 2022

We have a full calendar of events in 2022. From packaging wildflower seeds and removing invasive plants, to cleanups along important bird areas. If you would like to get out and make a difference locally, check out our volunteer page at [butlerswcd.org/volunteer](http://butlerswcd.org/volunteer). You will find dates, locations, and the sign-up.

We look forward to working with so many of you this year on conservation service projects.

## Wildlife Gardening Series

After the success of the pollinator and the backyard bird series, Butler SWCD, OSU Extension, and Riverside Natural Area are joining forces for a new series. These quarterly sessions will discuss all things wildlife; how to attract them, how to get rid of problem critters, and much more.

### Dates:

Monday, February 7

Monday, May 2

Monday, August 1

Monday, November 7

A full list of session topics are available on the Butler SWCD website.

**Time:** Sessions will run from 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

**Location:** The first session will be virtual, please see [www.butlerswcd.org](http://www.butlerswcd.org) for the Zoom information. We are hoping the remaining three dates will be in-person, but may need to adjust due to infection rates. Please register on the Butler SWCD website to ensure you receive notification of any schedule changes.

In-person sessions will take place at the Butler SWCD/OSU building located at 1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton 45011.



# Grant Writing Workshop

## Ohio Environmental Education Fund



Date: Wednesday, March 16th

Time: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: 1802 Princeton Rd, Hamilton, OH 45011

### Workshop Description:

Grant Writing 101: Finding the Right Funder (1/2 day interactive workshop). Prospecting tips to help you identify foundations, corporations, and government grant programs; and how to approach different kinds of grant-makers.

Grant Writing 102: Writing a Winning Proposal (1/2 day interactive workshop). How to avoid common mistakes applicants make and develop realistic objectives, activities, and budgets. The Ohio Environmental Education Fund grant will be discussed during this session.

**Registration:** Registration is required for this FREE workshop, please email [dennis.clement@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:dennis.clement@epa.ohio.gov). For additional information use email provided or call (614) 644-2048. Lunch will be on your own.

Deadline to register is March 11, 2022 or until the workshop is full at 30 participants. When registering please include your name and contact information.

Brought to you by: Environmental Education Council of Ohio, Region 5, and Ohio EPA, Office of Environmental Education.

## If You See Something, Say Something

Unlike littering, which is still a crime, illegal dumping can carry a serious penalty. Not only is trash an issue itself when not disposed of properly, but the trash, debris, and any liquids, solvents, or other chemicals thrown out can impact our local streams and rivers along with wildlife.

On occasion our office receives calls about illegal dumping. Those calls are turned in to the Butler County Storm Water District, who manages all illegal dumping violations.

**If You See Something, Say Something!  
Water Pollution Is A Crime!**

SaveLocalWaters.org  
Report Pollution  
**513-946-3999**



## Gail Lierer Crop Ins. Agency

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

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Promotes Butler SWCD

www.butlercountyohfair.org  
2022 Fair Week: July 24 - July 30

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**Butler SWCD Scholarship  
Entry Deadline: February 28**

**Eligibility, requirements,  
& guidelines:**

[www.butlerswcd.org/grants](http://www.butlerswcd.org/grants)

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## Ag Day Breakfast

**Date:** Tuesday, March 22

**Time:** 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Location:** Collinsville-Community Center, 5113 Huston Road, Collinsville, Ohio 45004

**Cost:** Free

### What is National Ag Day?

Ag Day is about recognizing and celebrating the contribution of agriculture in our everyday lives. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies, and countless others across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

Join Butler SWCD and partners as we celebrate National Ag Day with a breakfast. Guest Speakers will present on a variety of topics, including: crop input costs and margins, land values, rents, tax issues, and nutrient management efforts in the state of Ohio. We will also speak on the recent US EPA ruling on Enlist and what that means for our county landowners and farmers.

This event is a partnership between Butler SWCD, OSU Extension Butler County, and the Butler County Farm Bureau.

## Upper Dry Fork Watershed Public Meeting



**Who:** Anyone living in the watershed interested in clean water, stable soils, and healthy streams.

**What:** Upper Dry Fork Watershed Public Meeting

**Where:** Morgan Township Community Building  
6463 Okeana Drewersburg Road, Okeana, OH 45053

**When:** Thursday, February 3, 2022; 5:00 - 7:00 P.M.

**Why:** Learn about the collaborative planning process for the Dry Fork watershed, hear information on existing programs and funding, and get answers to your questions about ongoing efforts to maintain the watershed.

This is an open house so no registration is necessary, everyone is welcome!