

Anything could happen

Kelly Crout, District Director

My oldest recently started Kindergarten, which meant a new school, new teachers, new building, new rules, and most importantly a new schedule. It's been an adjustment and not just for him. But we both knew this year would bring change and growth - for both of us.

The truth is that change can be just as hard for a 6-year-old as it is for a 60-year-old. No matter if you initiated it or are on the receiving end. No matter if you saw it coming or if it blindsided you. Sometimes change can be scary, sometimes it can be exciting - change brings fear, uncertainty, but it also brings hope.

Change is the only thing that is constant. Humans are creatures of habit, but we also can get a little bored, so change can be a good thing. Often times we know we need to change and to try something different.

As our county's population dynamics have changed, we have also had to adapt and offer new creative opportunities regarding what conservation means as a whole and to each person in Butler County. Conservation Kids Camp, LandownHER Women in Ag Series, HOA Workshop, Pasture Walks, ArBEER Day, Volunteer Events, to name a few, all targeting different groups with the same purpose - conservation of our natural resources.



LandownHER Women in Ag Series learning about small engines and maintenance from our friends at Zimmer Tractor.

There has also been changes with practices in conservation. I hate to admit that we use to sell multiflora rose and other plants that are now considered invasive, but we learned and altered our practices. For a long time, tillage was the answer; now, no-till and cover crops are a better option for soil health. If it wasn't for change, we would still be using horses and oxen to plant crops and the telegraph to communicate. The Cuyahoga River would still be on fire and DDT would still be widely used.

Change is hard. But more importantly, you can't keep looking back, or else you'll miss what is front of you. You can remember your past and reminisce from time to time. But trying to stay in the past is not good for anyone. Sometimes you have to take that leap of faith and meet it head on.

While the future is uncertain and there will be a lot of changes in the next few years - new local government leaders, new state administration, possible future ballot issue items and funding constraints - there will always be a need for conservation.

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Award Winner Spotlight: Highland View Farm Est. 1827

Brady Smith, Rural Specialist

If you travel the eastern section of Stillwell Beckett Road you may have noticed the white buildings and red roofs of Highland View Farm. The large dairy barn still on the property reads "Highland View Farm, James Brosius." An homage to one of the former owners and the farm's era as an operational dairy, the farm is now home to rolling hills of corn and soybeans. Owners Leslie and John Krehbiel have worked tirelessly with their contractors, Butler SWCD, and NRCS to establish many conservation practices to help reduce drainage, remove honeysuckle, and restore woodlands on the property.



Aerial photograph of Highland View Farm Est. 1827 LLC. Photo courtesy of Butler SWCD.

In 2026 Butler SWCD recognized Highland View Farm Est. 1827 LLC as our Cooperator of the Year highlighting their dedication to conserve the natural resources and preserve the history of the nearly 200-year old family property. We congratulate them on their ongoing efforts to help improve the land. Leslie Krehbiel was kind enough to provide the following information and photographs regarding the storied family property.



Photo showing where the original homesite sat. Photo courtesy of Butler SWCD.

"Highland View Farm was established in 1827 by James Pocock when he and his wife Harriet, and their three children came to settle in Hanover Township from Liberty Township. At this time, they purchased 117 acres and nine years later added 80 adjacent acres. Upon this acquisition, they received the original 1813 land grant signed by President James Madison for the 80 acres.

Starting in 1836 and completed in 1838, James and his oldest son, Salem, who was 12 years old, built the present "Homestead" to house James, Harriet, and their 11 children. They used timber from the farm to build the nine room farmhouse that has five fireplaces and three staircases.



Historic photograph of the present "Homestead." Photo courtesy of the Krehbiel family.

James passed away in 1855, and Salem bought out his siblings and continued to purchase more acreage adjacent to the previous 197 acres. Salem married Dezhiah Clawson and had three daughters, leaving each one a farm upon his death in 1909. Mary, the oldest daughter, married John Brosius from Millville, and upon her father's death, she inherited Highland View. It consisted of 240 acres.

Mary and her husband John, farmed with their only son, Corwin. Cows and hogs were raised and crops grown were corn, wheat, and hay. In 1920, the existing dairy barn was built for their Holstein dairy business. John was also known as a breeder of Poland-China hogs. Corwin married Caroline Hammel and had two sons and one daughter. He continued to farm with his two sons, James (Jim) and John, continuing to raise Holsteins, hogs, corn, rye, wheat, and hay.

Upon Corwin's death, Jim bought the farm from his mother, and he and his wife Midge (Marian Fackey), continued to farm the farm with their three children, Dan, Kay, and Leslie. Jim and Midge switched from a dairy herd to raising beef cattle in 1985. After Jim passed away, Midge and family continued the farming operation with the addition of pumpkins and had a few corn mazes."

Continued on page 6...

Fall Spotted Lantern Fly Management

Maddy Miner, Natural Resource Technician

The fall season is a time of change. Many birds migrate south, many plants lose their leaves, and many animals begin their hibernation. But the time for change can also mean a time for opportunity. An opportunity to fight back against the threat of one invasive pest to Ohio in particular - the Spotted Lantern Fly.

This flying insect native to Asia has caught the attention of the public eye due to the widespread damage it has caused throughout the state, primarily to grapevines, fruit orchards, native black walnut trees, and the invasive tree-of-heaven. It was first found in Ohio in 2020, escalating to an 18-county wide quarantine in 2021, and is now effective as a statewide quarantine prohibiting the movement of infested material from a regulated area to a non-regulated area.

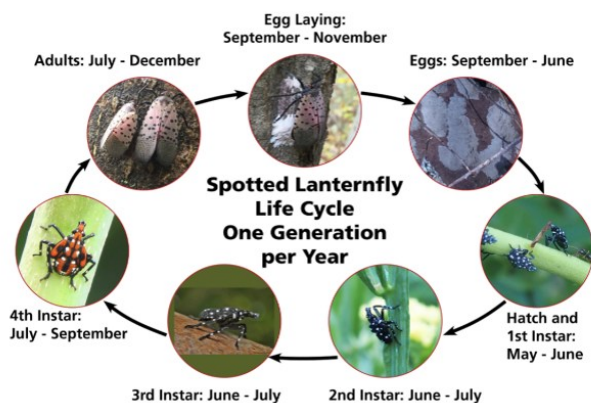


Spotted Lantern Fly. Photo courtesy of USDA.

With an estimated \$6.6 billion in annual contribution, Ohio is the 7th largest state for wine production, and the Spotted Lantern Fly's (SLF) presence poses a threat to the state's grape, wine, and nursery industries. Additionally, the insect is an opportunistic feeder and will feed on whatever available plants it can, so combatting its spread is crucial for preserving crop fields and natural areas as well. So how do we fight back?

Currently, the statewide quarantine¹ prohibits the transport of any plant material from a regulated area into a non-regulated area. As far as limiting the spread throughout the state, there are a variety of actions the public can take to eradicate the pest, many of which are best when done in the fall and winter.

Now you may be wondering why fall is an ideal time for SLF management.



Spotted Lantern Fly Lifecycle. Photo courtesy of Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

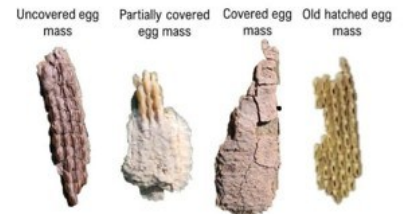
That can be answered by a brief overview of their life cycle, which they begin by laying their eggs in the late summer/early fall. This phase lasts all the way until late spring/summer, when they hatch as a 1st instar, and mature as a 4th instar by the end of summer. Although the adults die at the start of winter, the eggs stick around until the next season. This makes fall the perfect time to target SLF egg sites for removal to reduce the population the following year, and to effectively do so, knowing what to look for and proper methods of removal is important.

Egg Sites

SLF egg sites can be found on almost any flat surface outdoors, but the more common locations include trees, outdoor furniture, houses, vehicles, and patios. They prefer spots that offer some protection from weather. The masses appear in a hive-like structure and are overlaid in a gray, mud-like covering, almost like gum stuck onto something.

Egg Site Removal

Luckily, egg mass removal is easy. It typically just involves scraping it off the surface and into a solution that will kill it, such as soapy water, rubbing alcohol, or horticultural oils. Many egg sites may be in higher up locations on trees or other structures; only remove egg sites from locations you can safely reach.



Variations of SLF egg masses. Photo courtesy of Heather Leach, Penn State Extension.

Adult Insect and Host Removal

Because adults remain active from July to December, another good measure is to simply squish any that you see. Using contact insecticide spot treatment is another option to target adults, but it is most important to follow the directions on the label to avoid any unintended consequences of chemical treatment. **Remember, the label is the law!** Only use chemical treatments as a last resort and try physical removals and/or trapping first.

SLF host removal/trapping are also good ways to limit SLF spread, particularly with tree-of-heaven since this species is their main host. Trapping can be done by setting up a physical trap in the tree for the adults, such as mesh or sticky band traps. Tree-of-heaven itself should be removed by a systemic chemical treatment rather than a targeted chemical treatment. Systemic treatment often involves either foliar applications, basal bark spray, or hack-and-squirt methods. Basal bark and hack-and-squirt methods are best done in fall when trees pulling their nutrients down towards their root systems.

These methods ensure it will not resprout next season by killing the entire plant. The tree-of-heaven is officially classified as an aggressive invasive plant species in Ohio, so do not feel bad about cutting a tree down - in this case it's better for the environment.

1. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-901:5-56-01>

Why Lowhead Dam Removal?

Ashlee Mulrooney, Water Resource Specialist

Ohio is one of the leading states in the country removing lowhead dams. According to American Rivers, Ohio has removed approximately 107 dams - and counting - since 1912. But why is there such a strong push for lowhead dam removal in the first place?

Across Ohio, hundreds of miles of streams and rivers are impaired and threatened from channelization, hydromodification, habitat loss, pollution, water withdrawals, and more. Here in Butler County, most of our streams and watersheds are impaired, leading to poor habitat and poor fish and bug populations. Lowhead dams heavily impair stream and river ecosystems - they significantly block the flow of water which results in low oxygen levels behind the dam, impacting fish populations. Sediment also deposits behind the dam and can smother important habitat. Lowhead dams block the upstream movement of fish, which can lead to a decrease in the number of fish species around the dam. And yes, it is true that fish do like to hang out below the dam due to the deep pool and well oxygenated water, but lowhead dams tend to be more detrimental than beneficial to fish populations.



Lowhead dam located along the Great Miami River, City of Hamilton.

Many people question lowhead dam removal and whether it will result in flooding nearby. Lowhead dams were originally constructed for industrial use, water supply, or recreational use before many of us knew the impacts of these dams on aquatic ecosystems. Lowhead dams differ from dams utilized in flood control, like the Miami Conservancy District's system of dry dams along the Great Miami River that temporally store flood waters during heavy, long rain events. Many lowhead dams today no longer serve any functional purpose, though some are still needed for industrial water supply usage. Dams that are used for industrial purposes are likely to stay and not get removed.

Lowhead dams do not just negatively impact aquatic

ecosystems, but they are especially dangerous to anybody who recreates near these dams. At times, these lowhead dams can go undetected up until it's too late to portage around, putting many recreational boaters, swimmers, and fisherman at risk. And you may think that it is common knowledge to not go near a dam, but some people aren't familiar with the dangers that lowhead dams pose, especially following high rain events. During high water levels, the flow of the water over the dam causes a reverse current, where many people get caught. It is extremely difficult to get out of and usually takes a trained professional to rescue those caught in the dam, and even then, it is still dangerous. American Rivers provides some fantastic information on lowhead dam safety and a map of lowhead dam locations on their website.

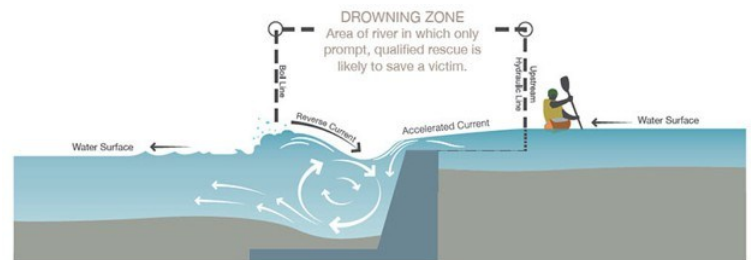


Photo courtesy of Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Because of the impacts on recreational safety and stream and river ecosystems, lowhead dam removal is a top priority for many agencies that work on environmental restoration projects. Lowhead dam removal takes partnership, community outreach, and education to accomplish. Lowhead dam removal funders require agencies to take extreme caution prior to removal, including conducting feasibility studies, hydraulic analyses, endangered species reviews, acquiring permits with Ohio EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and mussel surveys. One of the most important steps in a dam removal project also involves community input, especially from local community members who frequent the stream or river, like fishermen. For the Four Mile Creek dam removal and stream restoration project, Butler SWCD held a community meeting to get insight from the local community on what they wanted to see with the project, and another community meeting is going to be held prior to construction on October 7th. If you have any additional questions on lowhead dams, don't hesitate in reaching out to our office.



4 Four Mile Creek restoration project community meeting, held in April of 2026.

Native Seed Collection Project

Lynn White, Education & Volunteer Specialist

Each year, we package native seeds to hand out to the community for free. These seeds are provided to us by community members, such as yourself. Do you have a nice plot of beebalm and don't mind collecting seeds? Will your neighbor let you collect milkweed seed pods from them?

What seeds are we interested in?

This started with us collecting milkweed seed pods as a part of a statewide project, but a few years ago it expanded to any native plant seed that you think someone in the community may want to grow in their yard. Past species have included: baptisia, coneflower varieties, monarda, aster varieties, rough blazing star, beardtongue, wild quinine, and more.

All we ask is:

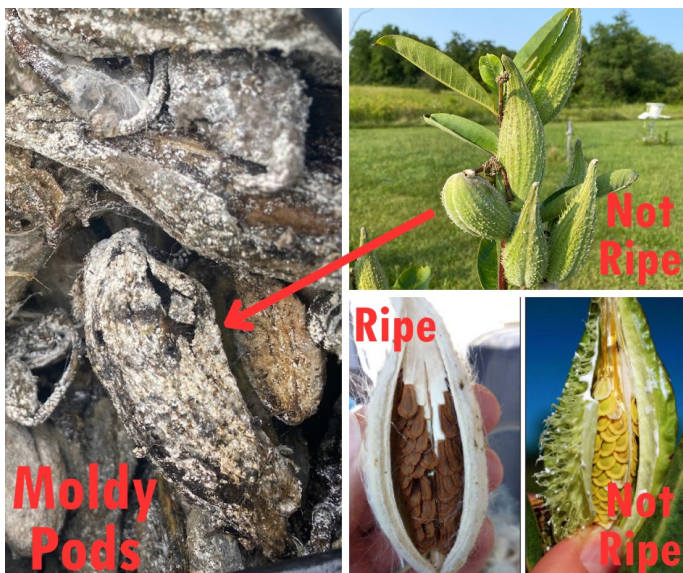
- Seeds are provided to us in a paper bag (seeds in plastic bags tend to rot).
- The bag indicates the species and where they were collected (city/township).
- That you have permission to collect the seeds from the property owner.

Where to bring your seeds?

We have a giant green and yellow trash bin in the hallway for milkweed seed pods. All other seeds can be placed in the box on top of the trash can. We are located at 1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton, OH 45011. Our building is open Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM.

Are the seeds ready?

In general, seeds of annual and perennial wildflowers are ready for collection two to five weeks after peak bloom. Mature seeds should be dry and firm. If they are moist, pliable, green, yellow, or white in color, they are likely to be immature and not ready for collection. Ripe seeds and pods should easily break off the plant with a gentle tug.



If you collect wild seeds please bear in mind:

You should get permission from the landowner first. Collecting seeds from plants growing along the roadside is usually okay. In an other location, you need to find out who owns the property and get permission. As a rule of thumb, harvest no more than 20% of available seed for any species per year. This is to avoid impacting a native plant colony or compromising the seeds as a food source for wildlife. If there are signs that someone else has already collected (trampled grass, stripped or removed seed heads) you should not take any more. Learn which plants are common and which are rare in your area. Never collect seed from a rare species.

The drop-off bins will be available in our hallway until the end of October. If for some reason your seed pods are still ripening, you can set up a time during business hours to drop off at our office. And if you're interested in assisting Butler SWCD with prepping native seeds and packing them as a volunteer activity, reach out to our office.



BioBlitz

Date:

Entire month of October

Location:

Helen S. Ruder Preserve, Oxford

What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time. No experience necessary, anyone can join the project.

How Can You Take Part?

Use the free iNaturalist app and take photos of each type of plant and animal you see within the preserve. If location services are turned on, your submissions will automatically be added to the project. Find out more by visiting www.butlerswcd.org/Bioblitz.

Visit our Project

Search iNaturalist projects for Ruder Preserve BioBlitz, Fall 2026.



Award Winner Spotlight: Highland View Farm Est. 1827 continued...

"Farm acreage was sold to family members to build homes, and a 10 acre plot was sold to keep the farm going. Midge passed away in 2016, passing on the 210 acres to her family.

In 2018, Leslie and her husband, John Krehbiel, purchased the farm from the heirs. Today they continue to raise corn and soybeans as well as harvest honey. Leslie and John and their family enjoy weekends sleeping in the farmhouse, running through the barns and riding in the fields that their ancestors started farming almost 200 years ago."

Thank you to the Krehbiel family and we look forward to congratulating you on your bicentennial farm status in 2027.



The Krehbiel family at the Butler SWCD 2026 Annual Meeting. Photo courtesy of Butler SWCD.

2026 Butler SWCD Award Winners

Conservation Educator of the Year: Lara Askill

Volunteer of the Year - Stephen T. Badin High School

Friend of Conservation - John & Celeste Baumgartner

Friend of Water Quality - Clermont County Soil & Water Conservation District

Outstanding Conservationist - Randy Evans

Outstanding Cooperator - Highland View Farm Est. 1827 LLC

Fall Spotted Lantern Fly Management continued...

Preventative Measures

You can help stop SLF spread by checking your vehicles, equipment, firewood, etc. for egg sites or adults before leaving a quarantined county.



Tree-of-heaven. Courtesy of Chuck Bargeron, University of Georgia.

The more native wildlife your backyard supports, the harder it will be for SLF to proliferate in an area. Natural ecosystem biodiversity is the best method for keeping any invasive plant or animal at bay.



Four Mile Creek Stream Restoration Public Meeting #2

Date:

Wednesday, October 7

Time:

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Location:

Lane Public Library, 441 S. Locust Street, Oxford 45056

Are you interested in learning about the restoration projects along Four Mile Creek? Do you live in the surrounding Oxford area? As a follow up from the April Meeting, this meeting will provide information on the construction schedule and final design for the Four Mile Creek Stream Restoration project.

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The USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has its next sign-up deadline of **December 18, 2026**, for the **2027** sign-up period.

For those who are interested in the program, please call John Williams, Michaela Werling, or Sarah Moore at 513-887-3720.

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Upcoming Events

- **BioBlitz:** All of October
- **Four Mile Creek Public Meeting #2:** October 7
- **Board Meeting:** October 13
- **Board Meeting:** November 10
- **Office Closed, Veterans Day:** November 11
- **Garden Series, Session #4:** November 18
- **Office Closed, Thanksgiving Break:** November 26 & 27
- **Best Volunteer Event:** December 3
- **Board Meeting:** December 8
- **Office Closed, Christmas:** December 25

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



BEST Volunteer Event, Winter Wildlife Feeders

Date: Thursday, December 3

Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

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



Join Butler SWCD for a fun holiday conservation volunteer event. We will be creating wildlife friendly decorations to feed the birds in our natural area next to the Conservation District's building.

There will be snacks and refreshments to share. Photographs from the 2026 BEST events will be on display. Bring a plastic bag or a plate so you can take some of the decorations we create home to the wildlife in your yard.

Space is limited, please register by visiting our webpage at www.butlerswcd.org.