

SPRING 2025 • MAY

CONSERVATION CHRONICLES

SHELBY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT E-NEWSLETTER

2025 Shelby SWCD Tree Sale

Shelby SWCD hosted their annual tree sale again this Spring. Over 2,800 trees were sold or donated. Trees provide so many benefits to the environment - provide oxygen, remove air pollution, clean water, prevent erosion, provide food & shelter to wildlife, sequester carbon, provide shade, and so much more!

Thank you to all who bought and planted trees locally! And thank you Fairlawn FFA students for helping to pack the trees.



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Enrollment in H2Ohio Open in Shelby County

ADAPTED FROM ODA PRESS RELEASE ON 3/24/25

On March 24, Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) Director Brian Baldridge announced today that farmers in 10 counties of the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) are eligible to enroll in H2Ohio's agriculture incentive program. Producers in Shelby County along with other northwest Ohio counties are eligible to enroll or re-enroll acreage into proven, science-based, best management practices (BMPs) that contribute toward improving water quality.

Farmers must have an up-to-date soil test and develop an approved Voluntary Nutrient Management Plan (VNMP) to enroll into other best management practices being offered in 2025 and 2026. Available BMPs include overwintering cover, subsurface phosphorus placement and manure incorporation and utilization. To date, more than 3,200 producers have enrolled 2.2 million acres in H2Ohio across the state. In northwest Ohio, approximately 43% of cropland in the WLEB or nearly 1 in 2 fields, is enrolled in H2Ohio.

"The agricultural community in Ohio has shown us time and time again they are dedicated to doing their part to improve water quality," said ODA Director Brian Baldridge. "We are asking farmers to step up once more and continue their commitment to reducing nutrients and protecting Ohio's waterways for future generations, and we strongly encourage farmers who have not enrolled in H2Ohio before to talk with their county SWCD."

To apply, farmers in Shelby County should contact their Shelby Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and provide up-to-date soil tests. Producers who enroll will receive support to develop and implement VNMPs, which encourage better utilization of nutrients applied.

ODA works closely with county SWCDs to administer participant contracts, provide technical assistance, and support producers with the implementation of best management practices. H2Ohio provides producers cost-saving benefits, such as financial and technical assistance, to implement conservation practices that are proven to improve soil health and water quality.

H2Ohio is Governor Mike DeWine's statewide water quality initiative designed to address complex issues impacting Ohio's waters. Launched in 2019, H2Ohio uses a comprehensive approach guided by science and data to reduce algal blooms, stop pollution, and improve access to clean drinking water. H2Ohio's agricultural program, which initially focused solely on farms located in northwest Ohio near Lake Erie, incentivizes farmers to implement science-based, proven best management practices to prevent nutrient runoff and improve water quality.





Who is eligible?

Enrollment is **currently open** through August 15 for producers in Crawford, Erie, Huron, Marion, Ottawa, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, and Wyandot counties. H2Ohio is a statewide program, and producers in all 88 counties can learn more through their local SWCD.

Requirements:

A voluntary nutrient management plan (VNMP) is **required** for all cropland enrolled in H2Ohio.

Helpful Tips:

- Use spring to your advantage. Any soil test older than 2022 must be updated before enrollment.
- Ensure you have a functional email address and the ability to check and respond to messages.

WLEB Program Snapshot

1

Where do I sign up?

CALL 937-419-2589 TO SCHEDULE AN APPT TO ENROLL OR VISIT 822 FAIR ROAD BETWEEN 8AM AND 4PM

2

What do I need to enroll?

- Soils tests 2022 or newer
- Shapefiles of field boundaries
- Crop Rotations with yield goals
- N, P, K fertility plan follows 2020 Tri-State
- Email address

3

When will I receive payments?

Crop year 2026-27 payments will be made spring/summer 2026.



Best Management Practice	Incentives
Voluntary Nutrient Management Plan Implementation	\$10/Ac. - Basic \$15/Ac. - Precision
Subsurface Phosphorus Placement	\$20/Ac.
Manure Incorporation and Utilization	\$35/Ac. - Poultry litter & solid manure \$60/Ac. - Liquid manure
Overwintering Cover	\$40/Ac.

H2Ohio is Governor Mike DeWine's comprehensive, data-driven water quality plan to reduce harmful algal blooms, improve wastewater infrastructure, and prevent lead contamination. ODA is leading the efforts to minimize agricultural loss of nutrients from farm fields.



**Department of
Agriculture**



Spring rains lead to erosion

SHELBY SWCD

Harsh Spring rains caused soil erosion in Shelby County. The examples on this page occurred despite conservation practices, no-till and grassed waterways, in place. Imagine the erosion that would have occurred if conventional till was in use.

If you have an eroded area or are interested in adding conservation practices on your land, call or visit the Shelby SWCD office (937-492-6520; 822 Fair Road Sidney).

Thank you to all who have thought about and implemented conservation measures on your land. Conservation efforts would not be where they are at the present day without the people right here in Shelby County willingly signing up for programs that support conservation. This shows devotion and a desire for continued preservation of soil and improved water quality for a cleaner tomorrow.



Gully after Spring storm

Silt accumulated on land adjacent to a no-till field



Introducing BROOKE WATERMAN

Role: Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist

As a Farm Bill Biologist serving Shelby, Darke, Mercer, and Auglaize Counties, I provide technical assistance to landowners who wish to establish, enhance, or maintain wildlife habitat on their land, often through Farm Bill conservation programs like CRP and EQIP. This involves collaborating with partner agencies like NRCS; communicating with landowners by phone, email, or in-person; visiting sites to determine conservation program/practice suitability, feasibility, and eligibility, and appropriate management activities; and writing conservation plans. I am always deepening my expertise in wildlife ecology, conservation program requirements, plant identification, and habitat management in grassland and agricultural contexts. Additionally, I engage with local Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever chapters by attending and contributing to meetings, assisting with wildlife education and outreach, and providing technical assistance for habitat projects.

Employee Since: December 2024

Previous Work Experience: Prior to becoming a PF FBB, I worked seasonally on various field crews throughout the U.S. I collected data on greater sage-grouse in Nevada and California, northern bobwhite on Indiana's Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area, scaled quail on Kansas's Cimarron National Grassland, and Mexican spotted owls throughout New Mexico and Arizona. I also implemented conservation projects on ecological restoration crews in New Mexico and Wisconsin, and harvested all kinds of vegetables on an organic farm in Wisconsin.

May you be proud of the work you do, the person you are, and the difference you make.

What conservation practice resonates most with you? Ever since two of my field seasons were impacted by wildfires, I have been intrigued by and enthusiastic about prescribed fire. It is an excellent tool for enhancing wildlife habitat!

About Brooke: When not working, I love playing outside with my dog, eating local foods, and watching Milwaukee Brewers baseball.



**Wildlife habitat questions?
Email Brooke
bwaterman@pheasantsforever.org**

Events & Announcements

5/7/2025	<u>Pollinator Flat Sale Pick-Up</u> <u>Shelby Co Fairgrounds</u>
5/15/2025	<u>Fish Fingerling Sale Pick-up</u> <u>Shelby SWCD Office</u>
5/16/2025 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting 822 Fair Rd. Sidney
5/26/2025	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed

6/10/2025, 6/11/2025	Conservation Day Camp 2.0 Lake Loramie State Park
6/17/2025 @ 2:30pm	<u>Conservation Storytime</u> <u>“Colors of Nature”</u> <u>Redskin Memorial Park Fort Loramie</u>
6/19/2025	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed
6/20/2025 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting 822 Fair Rd. Sidney
6/24/2025-6/26/2025	Conservation Day Camp Shelby Co Fish and Game



Questions? Please contact Amanda Hurley (937-419-2597 or amanda.hurley@usda.gov)