



FALL 2025 • OCTOBER

# CONSERVATION CHRONICLES

SHELBY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT E-NEWSLETTER

## LEAVE THE LEAVES

This fall, consider letting some of your fallen leaves stay put. In Shelby County, leaving the leaves on your lawn or garden beds can boost soil health, protect pollinators, and reduce yard waste headed to the landfill. As the leaves break down, they return valuable nutrients to the soil—helping lawns, trees, and gardens thrive naturally. Plus, leaf litter provides essential winter shelter for butterflies, bees, and other beneficial insects that keep our local ecosystems healthy. So instead of bagging them up, mulch them, rake them into garden beds, or simply let nature do its thing—your yard and Shelby County's environment will thank you!



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## Forestry Field Day

BY AMANDA HURLEY

Shelby Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) held Forestry Field Day, its largest outreach event of the year, on Sunday October 26<sup>th</sup> in Sidney. The weather cooperated and the colors in Tawawa Park were at peak which provided a beautiful Autumn day as the backdrop for the event that over 500 community members attended.

Shelby SWCD worked with the City of Sidney Parks and Recreation to host the event in Tawawa Park, an ideal setting for the field day. Demonstrations and interactive activities were provided by SWCD employees, local volunteers and Ohio Department of Natural Resource (ODNR) employees.

Justin Law, ODNR Division of Forestry State Service Forester gave woodland tours and answered forestry-related questions. Logan Ambrister, ODNR Division of Wildlife officer gave attendees the opportunity to learn about forest wildlife in Ohio and try their hand at archery. Dwight Wells, beekeeper at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and president of the West Central Ohio Beekeepers Association talked to attendees about honeybees, pollinators, and forests. Dane and Jonathon Moniaci of Sidney brought their insect collections, most collected in Shelby County, to display and discuss. Valerie Libbey, of Libbey Farms, shared information about pawpaw trees and fruit.

Also at the event Gary Metz, of Metz Construction, demonstrated how lumber is made with a portable sawmill. Tim Ike also demonstrated his antique buzz saw. Volunteers helped with kids activities and provided refreshments.

Shelby County Antique Power Association members provided hayrides so people could see more of the forests in Tawawa Park. Shelby SWCD displayed signage and posters that portrayed the importance of trees and forests and promote conservation and proper management of forests.

Shelby SWCD holds Forestry Field Day with the hope that after attending people will come away with more knowledge and appreciation for the natural resources that are found in forests – from soil to wildlife, from trees to lumber-related products and beyond while also having a fun day in nature. Forestry Field Day will be extra special next year as Shelby SWCD plans to collaborate with Shelby County Historical Society and make the event part of the America 250 celebration. Mark your calendars and join us on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, location TBA!

**"There is  
always an  
adventure  
waiting in the  
woods"**

KATELYN S. BOLDS



SAVE THE DATE

Shelby Soil & Water Conservation District

# Annual Banquet



Thursday, December 4th

Join for - Board Supervisor Voting,  
Dinner, Special Presentation,  
Awards, & District Update!

St. Michael Hall  
33 Elm Street  
Fort Loramie

More info to follow  
Email or call Amanda Hurley  
[amanda.hurley@usda.gov](mailto:amanda.hurley@usda.gov) or 937-419-2597  
with any questions



# H2Ohio SHELBY COUNTY UPDATE

Harvest is upon us and that means H2Ohio practices are in full swing. Producers who have re-enrolled for H2Ohio will be receiving the updated payment rates for cover crops planted in the fall of 2025. If a producer has a H2Ohio contract from 2022 and they did not re-enroll, they are still eligible to receive payments for the 2025 Small Grains and Overwintering Cover Crop practices.

Enrollment for 2026-2027 H2Ohio ended on September 15, 2025. Shelby County received applications from 109 producers who plan to implement H2Ohio practices in their fields in the upcoming years. Out of the 109 producers, 68 producers have re-enrolled for H2Ohio, and 41 producers are new applicants. The total acres enrolled for 2026 and 2027 is 44,636.4 acres. This equates to a quarter of Shelby County's total crop land acres being enrolled in H2Ohio.

If you have any questions, please contact Cassie Lefeld, H2Ohio Coordinator, (Cassandra.Lefeld@usda.gov or 937-419-2589)

**SHELBY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT &  
SHELBY COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

## Conservation Creations

Free, open to the public. Learn about a nature or conservation topic then make a fun craft or art project!

**Soil Isn't Scary**  
Oct. 14 | 3:00pm Ag Service Center  
822 Fair Road Sidney  
Learn about the soil ecosystem (and how it's NOT spooky) and then create a fun watercolor with soil-based paints



**Talkin' Turkey**  
Nov. 18 | 3:00pm Ag Service Center  
822 Fair Road Sidney  
Learn about the TERRIFIC wild turkey and then make a fun decoupage turkey lantern



**Snow Much Fun**  
Dec. 9 | 3:00pm Ag Service Center  
822 Fair Road Sidney  
Learn about winter water - snow and ice! Then make a fun 3D snowflake



QUESTIONS? CONTACT AMANDA HURLEY 937-492-6520, [AMANDA.HURLEY@OH.NACDNET.NET](mailto:AMANDA.HURLEY@OH.NACDNET.NET)



**JOIN US FOR CONSERVATION CREATIONS!**





# Multi-County Educator Workshop

AMANDA HURLEY

The Multi-County Educator Workshop was a great success again this year. This workshop is held in conjunction with Miami SWCD, Montgomery SWCD and Darke SWCD and is offered to educators K-12 who would like to incorporate more environmental science and conservation content in their teaching.

This year the theme was Cultivating Connections: From Soil to Sustainability and was held in Miami County. Lessons about land management, alternative crops, farm to table, wildlife habitat at school were a sampling of what was covered.

Again this year we were able to offer graduate credits from Ashland University to participants for an additional charge. All participants who completed the post-workshop survey said they would recommend this workshop to a colleague - which is a ringing endorsement! We appreciate everyone who attended or presented at this workshop and look forward to having it again next year!

If you would like more information about the Multi-County Educator Workshop please contact Amanda Hurley - [amanda.hurley@usda.gov](mailto:amanda.hurley@usda.gov).



**Educators learn about regenerative grazing**



**Attendees learn about production**

 **Shelby Soil & Water Conservation District**

## Milkweed Collection

OCTOBER 1ST-31ST

Collect established & mature seed pods from **Common Milkweed** when the **pods are brown-gray in color** and seams pop easily with pressure



Collection container is in  
THE SHELBY SWCD OFFICE  
822 Fair Rd. Sidney



The Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative is calling on all Ohioans for another year of milkweed pod collections! Volunteers collected 3,425 gallons of milkweed seed pods! These seeds are then redistributed to be planted in Ohio to ensure plenty of milkweed is present.

Milkweed is the only host plant for the Monarch butterfly for egg laying and caterpillar rearing. It also serves as a food source for Monarchs as well as many other pollinator species.

Milkweed pod collection tips:

- Only collect pods that are ready (see below)
- Only take 1/4 of the plant's pods
- Place pods in brown bag, plastic holds moisture
- Do not place rubber bands around pod
- Do not collect milkweed pods without landowner's permission





## Think ahead about grassed waterways this harvest

This is a great time of the year for farmers to consider if a grassed waterway is needed in their fields. Grassed waterways play a critical role in preventing soil loss and improving water quality. While harvesting fields this fall, small gullies and erosion issues can be found. If noted, Shelby Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) can help with the evaluation, planning and implementation of a grassed waterway.

Grassed waterways are a conservation practice that stabilizes areas of concentrated waterflow (where a lot of water is flowing through a field, possibly where a natural waterway would be). They are typically 30 to 50 feet wide, are designed to be crossed by farm equipment, and typically include installation of a tile which helps keep the waterway dry. If the grassed waterway is installed properly and have adequate grass (or other vegetation) coverage they can reduce sediment and nutrients in water runoff and help prevent erosion during heavy rain events. When soil remains in place, sediment and nutrients are not transported to nearby streams, rivers, and lakes. This helps to keep water cleaner and aquatic ecosystems healthier.

If you have an eroded area or small gully, contact the Shelby SWCD office to set up a site visit. The SWCD personnel will determine if the site is eligible for a grassed waterway and explain any potential cost-share programs. One extremely crucial factor is that waterways take several months from start to finish, so contacting the Shelby SWCD office 6 to 12 months in advance is best. Ideal conditions allow for installation of the tile in the fall and construct the waterway the following spring or summer. Once your grassed waterway is installed it is important to maintain it for it to do its job.

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.

If you are interested in learning more about grassed waterways or any other conservation program, please contact the Shelby SWCD office at 937-492-6520 or visit 822 Fair Road, Sidney.



GULLY



GRASSED WATERWAY



GRASSED WATERWAY AFTER HEAVY RAIN

# Events & Announcements

10/13/2025	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed
10/14/2025 @ 3:00pm	<u>Conservation Creations "Soil Isn't Scary"</u> <u>Ag Service Center Large Conference Room</u>
10/17/2025 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting
10/17/2025 @ 11:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Soil Isn't Scary"</u> <u>Jackson Center Community Library</u>
10/26/2025 1:00pm-4:00pm	<u>Forestry Field Day</u> <u>Tawawa Park near Ross Bridge</u>
10/29/2025 @ 10:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Soil Isn't Scary"</u> <u>Amos Memorial Public Library</u>
11/7/2025 @ 11:15am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Terrific Turkeys"</u> <u>Anna Community Library</u>
11/7/2025 @ 12:30pm	<u>Conservation Storytime "Terrific Turkeys"</u> <u>Fort Loramie Community Library</u>
11/11/2025	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed
11/14/2025 @ 10:30am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Terrific Turkeys"</u> <u>Russia Community Library</u>
11/18/2025 @ 3:00pm	<u>Conservation Creations "Talkin' Turkey"</u> <u>Ag Service Center Large Conference Room</u>
11/19/2025 @ 10:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Terrific Turkeys"</u> <u>Amos Memorial Public Library</u>
11/21/2025 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting
11/21/2025 @ 11:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Terrific Turkeys"</u> <u>Jackson Center Community Library</u>
11/27/2025	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed

If you have questions about events or announcements, please contact Amanda Hurley (937-419-2597 or amanda.hurley@usda.gov)

12/4/2025 @ 6:15pm	<u>Shelby SWCD Annual Banquet &amp; Supervisor Election</u> <u>St. Michaels Hall Fort Loramie</u>
12/5/2025 @ 11:15am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Snow Much Fun"</u> <u>Anna Community Library</u>
12/5/2025 @ 12:30pm	<u>Conservation Storytime "Snow Much Fun"</u> <u>Fort Loramie Community Library</u>
12/8/2025	<u>OFSWCD Area IV Winter Meeting</u> <u>Der Dutchman</u>
12/9/2025 @ 3:00pm	<u>Conservation Creations "Snow Much Fun"</u> <u>Ag Service Center Large Conference Room</u>
12/12/2025 @ 10:30am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Snow Much Fun"</u> <u>Russia Community Library</u>
12/17/2025 @ 10:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Snow Much Fun"</u> <u>Amos Memorial Public Library</u>
12/19/2025 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting
12/19/2025 @ 11:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Snow Much Fun"</u> <u>Jackson Center Community Library</u>
12/25/2025	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed

JOIN US FOR SHELBY SWCD ANNUAL MEETING  
AND SUPERVISOR ELECTION  
THURSDAY 12/4/25  
AT ST. MICHAELS HALL FORT LORAMIE

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW