

WINTER 2026 • JANUARY

# CONSERVATION CHRONICLES

SHELBY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT E-NEWSLETTER



## SALT SMART

**Shovel First:** Salt should follow snow removal and only in areas needed for safety.

**Less is more:** More salt doesn't mean more melting. A coffee mug's worth should cover 10 sidewalk squares.

**Spread Evenly:** Distribute salt evenly to avoid wasteful clumps.

**Sweep excess:** If salt is left after melting, too much was used. Sweep it up to keep it out of our rivers and streams.



Road salt (sodium chloride) is our winter traction hero, but when it melts off the roads, it infiltrates our water systems, posing risks to aquatic life, ecosystems, and even our drinking water.

There are a number of ways to conserve WATER, and they all start with YOU!

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## 79th Shelby SWCD Annual Banquet and Board Supervisor Election

Shelby Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) held its 79<sup>th</sup> annual banquet on Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at St. Michael Hall in Fort Loramie. The annual banquet is held yearly to review the district's activities throughout the year, thank supporters of the district, fellowship with conservation-minded people, and recognize district award recipients. Approximately ninety attendees were present including Shelby County residents; supporters of Shelby SWCD; representatives from Ohio Department of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, and many community groups; and district staff.

After Board of Supervisor voting and a buffet dinner, the keynote speaker, Mike Ekberg from Miami Conservancy District (MCD) gave a presentation about groundwater resources in Shelby County. Mike is the Manager of Monitoring and Analysis at MCD. MCD is a pioneering organization at the forefront of flood protection, water stewardship, and recreation since 1915. Mike first defined groundwater and aquifers, then reviewed the groundwater resources found in Shelby County and how those formed. He then reviewed the amount of groundwater in the aquifers in Shelby County and reported their levels have been stable. Lastly, he reviewed challenges that may impact groundwater resources in Shelby County in the future.



2025 EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR - SARAH KIPKER AND CALLI OPPERMAN OF JACKSON CENTER LOCAL SCHOOLS



JASON BRUNS GIVES COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD TO VERN AHRNS

Next, Vern Ahrns, was awarded the 2025 Outstanding Cooperator of the Year Award. Vern is a long-time cooperator and champion of soil & water conservation. He has utilized many best management practices on his land and participated in many Shelby SWCD programs over the years.

Next Sarah Kipker and Calli Opperman were recognized as the Outstanding Educators of the Year. Sarah and Calli were pivotal in Shelby SWCD obtaining an augmented reality (AR) sandbox which is a great tool to help students learn about topography, watersheds, water movement, erosion, and protecting natural resources. Since the AR sandbox was obtained, the two teachers have taken the lead in using the sandbox in their classrooms and developing lesson plans that other teachers in the county can use as well. They have both also supported Shelby SWCD by attending educational workshops to further their education and volunteered at outreach events.

Lastly, the work and activities of Shelby SWCD was reviewed with a video.

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Thank you to all who attended the Annual Banquet and to everyone who supported the efforts of Shelby SWCD in 2025! We look forward to a wonderful 2026!



# West Ohio Agronomy Day 2026

## West Ohio Agronomy Day

**January 6th, 2025**

**8:30 am - 4:30 pm**

Clopay Building

Shelby County Fairgrounds

655 South Highland Street,  
Sidney

**January 14th, 2025**

**5:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

Clopay Building

Shelby County Fairgrounds

655 South Highland  
Street, Sidney

The Shelby County Extension Office will be closed from December 24 until January 1 for Winter Recess. We will reopen Friday, January 2nd.

Shelby County Extension is once again hosting Western Ohio Agronomy Day, this January! This is the opportunity for those who hold a Pesticide and/or Fertilizer Applicators License to get recertified and receive their credits for the next three years.

West Ohio Agronomy Day will be held on:

**• Tuesday, January 6th from 8:30 am-1:00 pm**

And an additional recertification class will be held on:

**• Tuesday, January 13th from 5:00 pm-9:00 pm.**

On January 6th, there will be lunch provided to those who preregister, as well as the opportunity to talk to local ag businesses and OSU professionals.

The cost to register for class:

\$45 for Commercial Credits

\$35 for Private Applicator Credits

\$15 for Fertilizer Credits

\$10 for those who do not need credits

**REMINDER:** Payment of \$30 needs to be sent to the Ohio Department of Agriculture in Reynoldsburg and is necessary for your license fee.

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**Registration deadline is January 2nd, 2026 register in the office or  
email Rylee Kay Puthoff at [puthoff.84@osu.edu](mailto:puthoff.84@osu.edu)**

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences  
Shelby County Extension  
[shelby.osu.edu](http://shelby.osu.edu)



**Shelby Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**2026 Tree Seedling/Fruit Plant/Rain Barrel Sale**

SEE TREE INFO HERE

	<u># of Packets Ordered</u>	x	Cost Per Packet	=	<u>Total Cost</u>
<b>Hardwoods (large trees)</b> (Packs of 5 per species)					
Cherry, Black		x	\$8.00	=	
Gum, Sweet		x	\$8.00	=	
Maple, Red		x	\$8.00	=	
Maple, Sugar		x	\$8.00	=	
Oak, Pin		x	\$8.00	=	
Oak, Swamp White		x	\$8.00	=	
Persimmon, Common		x	\$8.00	=	
Poplar, Tulip		x	\$8.00	=	
<b>Small Trees/Shrubs/Wildlife</b> (Packs of 5 per species)					
Dogwood, White Flowering		x	\$8.00	=	
Paw Paw, Common		x	\$10.00	=	
Redbud		x	\$8.00	=	
Cranberry, Highbush		x	\$8.00	=	
Elderberry, Black		x	\$8.00	=	
Ninebark		x	\$8.00	=	
<b>Conifers</b> (Packs of 5 per species)					
Cedar, White (American Arborvitae)		x	\$8.00	=	
Dawn Redwood		x	\$8.00	=	
Pine, Scotch		x	\$8.00	=	
Spruce, Colorado Blue		x	\$12.00	=	
Spruce, Norway		x	\$10.00	=	
<b>Small Fruit Plants</b> (Packs of 5 per species)					
Earlglow Strawberry		x	\$6.00	=	
<b>Marking Flags</b>					
Packs of 10		x	\$1.00	=	
<b>Rain Barrels</b>					
55 Gal. Barrel + DIY Converter Kit		x	\$45.00	=	
DIY Converter Kit		x	\$35.00	=	

Donations used to promote conservation of our  
Natural Resources in Shelby County.

*Donations* \_\_\_\_\_

*Total Due* \_\_\_\_\_

Orders to be received at the Shelby SWCD office by 4:30 PM, Friday, March 27th, 2026.  
Cash or check for the entire amount must be included with all orders. Make checks payable to Shelby SWCD.  
Send or deliver to Shelby SWCD, 822 Fair Rd., Sidney, Oh 45365. Phone (937) 492-6520 ext. 3.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Paid: Cash or Check

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Receipt #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Order Verified

Office Use ONLY

I would like to be added to the Shelby SWCD email list for updates & a quarterly newsletter.

Note: Trees are bare-root seedlings and transplants, one to two years old. They will need to be planted soon after picking up.  
The seedlings shall be picked up, Thursday, April 09, 2026 at the Shelby County fairgrounds, from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.  
The district will not be responsible for condition of seedlings if not picked up promptly.

The Shelby Soil and Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital and family status.

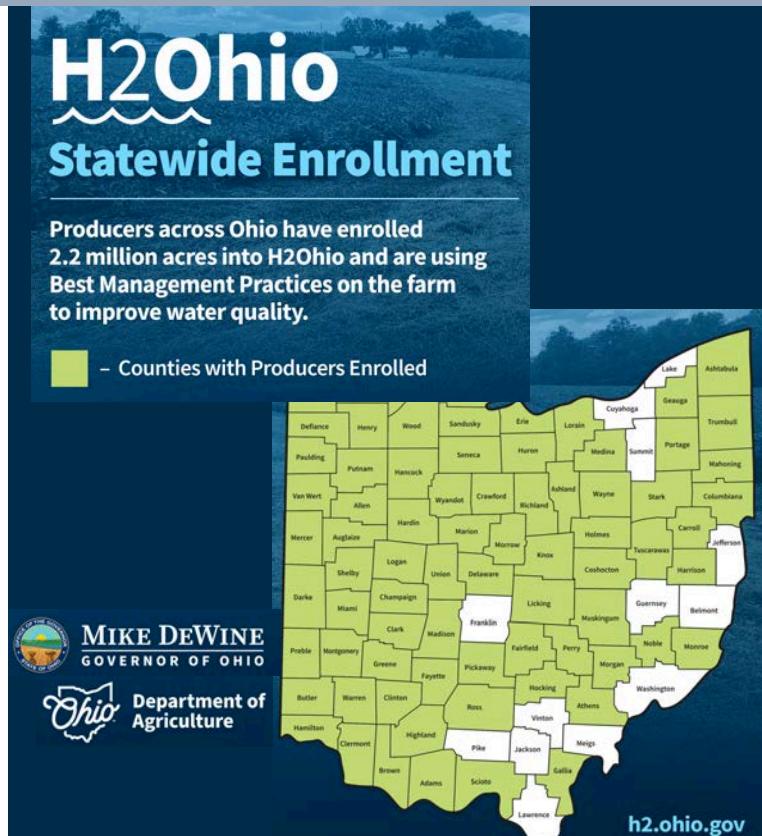


H2Ohio producers have turned in their completed acres for 2025 fall practices. The total number of acres that have been reported are as follows:

Voluntary Nutrient Management Imp.: 22,869 acres  
Variable Rate Phosphorus (P) App: 2,210 acres  
Subsurface P Placement: 258 acres  
Manure Incorporation (Other): 976 acres  
Manure Incorporation (Poultry): 420 acres  
Conservation Crop Rotation – Small Grains: 1,996 acres  
Conservation Crop Rotation – Forages: 249 acres

Thank you to everyone who participated in 2025. Also, thank you to everyone who signed up for 2026-2027! We are glad to continue to incentivize conservation practices in Shelby County!

Questions? Contact Cassie Lefeld, H2Ohio Coordinator, (Cassandra.Lefeld@oh.nacdnet.net or 937-419-2589)



## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICES UPDATES



### USDA Announces January 15 National Batching Deadline for Major NRCS Conservation Programs

Publish Date: December 15, 2025, USDA-NRCS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today announced the establishment of a national January 15, 2026 batching deadline for the first funding round of key conservation programs. This national batching date ensures producers have a clear, consistent timeline for participating in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA). This includes NRCS' new Regenerative Pilot Program, which provides targeted Farmer First assistance through EQIP and CSP.

"The NRCS team continues its commitment to America's producers — advancing conservation, strengthening service delivery, and keeping our promise to the men and women who feed and fuel our nation," said NRCS Chief Aubrey J.D. Bettencourt. "Our mission is clear: empower farmers, protect our natural resources, and deliver on President Trump's 'Farmers First' vision."

NRCS programs are continuous sign-up programs, but due to the government shutdown, the agency is implementing an initial national batching period to ensure producers have access to funding and support.

Assistance is only a phone call away. NRCS staff are ready to answer your questions, address conservation concerns on your land, and work to ensure your success with eligible USDA Farm Bill programs. Call Justin Wagner, NRCS District Conservationist, 937-419-2590 or visit 822 Fair Road office for more information.

Original article adapted from: [this press release](#).



## Educational Opportunity:

### CONSERVATION TILLAGE & TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE (CTTC)

CTTC, hosted by our friends at Allen SWCD, will be March 10-11, 2026, (Tuesday-Wednesday) at Ohio Northern University, Ada, Ohio. Connect with other great farmers and CCAs, experience new ideas, and increase your net income.

See: [OSU Extension CTTC Website](#) for more information



# CONSERVATION TILLAGE & TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE



BOARD SUPERVISORS (L-R) LENNY ALBERS, TONY PLEIMAN, MICHAEL WATERCUTTER, BRENT CLINEHENNS, STEVE BERNING

## Board Supervisors ELECTION RESULTS

Two Supervisor were elected to a three-year term commencing Jan. 1, 2026 and ending Dec. 31, 2028.

1. Tony Pleiman
2. Michael Watercutter

Both are incumbent supervisors. We thank them for their continued commitment to Shelby SWCD along with the other elected Board Supervisors.



TONY PLEIMAN

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

[See www.shelbyswcd.org](http://www.shelbyswcd.org)  
[for full staff directory.](#)

## Supervisor Spotlight TONY PLEIMAN

Supervisor Since: July, 2025

What made you want to be a Supervisor? I have worked with the district on several practices and projects on the farm for decades and always enjoyed the process. When I was approached about becoming a supervisor I thought it would be something I would like to do.

What conservation practice resonates most with you? Cover Crops. I have been using cover crops for at least 25 years. Along with no-till I can see the positive impacts on the soil.

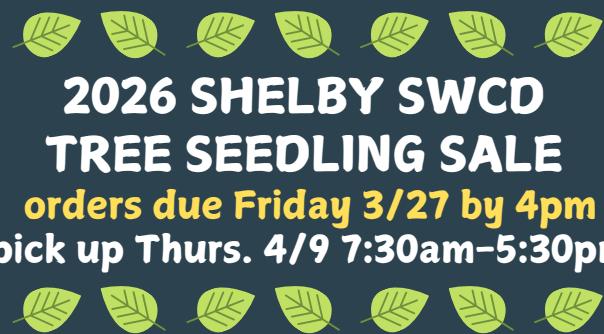
Best place you visited for a conservation related conference or training? I have enjoyed attending Dave Brandt Field Days about Soil Health in the past.

Favorite part of being a Supervisor: I have enjoyed learning more about conservation. I also enjoy becoming up-to-date about what is going on in the conservation community.

About Tony: Tony grew up on a dairy farm and has farmed his whole life. He likes to spend time outdoors and deer hunt in his free time.

# Events & Announcements

1/1/2026	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed
1/6/2026 8:30am-4:30pm	<u>West Ohio Agronomy Day</u> <u>Shelby County Fairgrounds</u>
1/9/2026 @ 11:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Ice Fishing"</u> <u>Jackson Center Community Library</u>
1/9/2026 @ 12:30pm	<u>Conservation Storytime "Ice Fishing"</u> <u>Fort Loramie Community Library</u>
1/13/2026 @ 3:00pm	<u>Conservation Creations "Birds in Winter"</u> <u>Ag Service Center 822 Fair Rd Sidney</u>
1/14/2026 @ 10:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Ice Fishing"</u> <u>Amos Memorial Public Library</u>
1/16/2026 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting 822 Fair Rd. Sidney
1/16/2026 @ 11:15am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Ice Fishing"</u> <u>Anna Community Library</u>
1/16/2026 5:00pm-9:00pm	<u>West Ohio Agronomy Day</u> <u>Shelby County Fairgrounds</u>
1/19/2026	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed



Questions about events?

Please contact Amanda Hurley

937-419-2597 or amanda.hurley@oh.nacdnet.net

2/6/2026 @ 11:15am	<u>Conservation Storytime "We Love Soil"</u> <u>Anna Community Library</u>
2/6/2026 @ 12:30pm	<u>Conservation Storytime "We Love Soil"</u> <u>Fort Loramie Community Library</u>
2/10/2026-2/11/2026	<u>OFSWCD Annual Meeting</u> <u>Columbus, Ohio</u>
2/13/2026 @ 11:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "We Love Soil"</u> <u>Jackson Center Community Library</u>
2/16/2026	Federal Holiday - Shelby SWCD Office Closed
2/17/2026 @ 3:00pm	<u>Conservation Creations "Love Soil"</u> <u>Ag Service Center 822 Fair Rd Sidney</u>
2/18/2026 @ 10:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "We Love Soil"</u> <u>Amos Memorial Public Library</u>
2/20/2026 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting 822 Fair Rd. Sidney
3/6/2026 @ 11:15am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Farm to Lunchbox"</u> <u>Anna Community Library</u>
3/6/2026 @ 12:30pm	<u>Conservation Storytime "Farm to Lunchbox"</u> <u>Fort Loramie Community Library</u>
3/10/2026 @ 11:00am	<u>Conservation Creations "Farm to Table"</u> <u>Ag Service Center 822 Fair Rd Sidney</u>
3/13/2026 @ 11:00am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Farm to Lunchbox"</u> <u>Jackson Center Community Library</u>
3/18/2026 @ 10:00 am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Farm to Lunchbox"</u> <u>Amos Memorial Public Library</u>
3/20/2026 @ 6:30am	Board Supervisor Meeting 822 Fair Rd. Sidney
3/20/2026 @ 10:30am	<u>Conservation Storytime "Farm to Lunchbox"</u> <u>Russia Community Library</u>
3/24/2026 @ 6:00pm	<u>Women in Ag Empowerment Event</u> <u>Canal House Port Jefferson</u>
3/27/2026	<u>Tree Seedling Orders Due</u>