



Muskingum Soil & Water Conservation District

"Your Soil and Water Conservation Specialist"

225 Underwood Street, Suite 100, Zanesville OH 43701

Phone (740) 454-2027

Newsletter Issue 4

muskingumswcd.org

Fall 2026, Published Quarterly

You're Invited!

to the
82nd Annual Celebration of
Conservation
Meeting and Banquet

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2026

**McDonald's Greenhouse and Corn Maze
3220 Adamsville Road
Zanesville, Ohio 43701**

**SUPERVISOR ELECTION - 5:30PM TO 6:30PM
DINNER - 6:00PM**

CATERED BY KRISTIN MATTOX - FARM TO FORK

TICKET COST IS \$21.00 PER PERSON

**PURCHASE TICKETS ON-LINE AT:
WWW.MUSKINGUMSWCD.ORG/EVENTS/CONSERVATION-BANQUET/**

**PURCHASE TICKETS AT THE OFFICE:
225 UNDERWOOD STREET, ZANESVILLE
OR CALL TO RESERVE YOUR TICKET(S), 740-454-2027.**

**Deadline to Purchase Tickets
October 23, 2026**

ELECTION NOTICE

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission will cause an election of Supervisors of the Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to be held in accordance with Chapter 940 of the Ohio Revised Code. Individuals who own or occupy land within the Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District and are 18 years of age or older may vote for Supervisor.

There are three ways an eligible voter can cast a ballot:

1. At the SWCD office, 225 Underwood Street, St. 100, Zanesville, from 10/07/2026 until 11/05/2026 during normal business hours of 8:00 am. to 4:30 p.m.; or
2. At the SWCD Annual Meeting, which will take place at McDonald's Greenhouse and Corn Maze, on Thursday, November 05, 2026 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.; or
3. Voting absentee from 10/07/2026 until 11/05/2026, by requesting a ballot application and election ballot from the SWCD office at the following address: 225 Underwood Street, Zanesville, Ohio 43701, by calling 740-454-2027, or email doreen.maurer@muskingumswcd.org. Absentee ballots must be received by the SWCD office by 11/05/2026 by 4:00 p.m.

Two Supervisor will be elected to a three-year term commencing January 1, 2027 and ending December 31, 2029. Nominees are: Connor Hill, Doug McConnell, and Elizabeth "Betsy" Rosser.

MEET YOUR 2026 CANDIDATES FOR BOARD SUPERVISOR

YOUR VOTE
MATTERS



Conner Hill has lived in Muskingum County his entire life, growing up on a family-run cattle and grain farm. He works at Scheiderer Enterprises and is currently pursuing an associate degree in Electrician/Electronics Engineering at Zane State College, with an expected graduation in the spring of 2027.

Affiliations and Involvement:

- Member of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF)
- Member of the Ohio Cattlemen's Association
- Actively engaged in agriculture through his family's farm

From his upbringing on the farm, Conner has learned the importance of land stewardship. He believes that caring for the land ensures it can flourish for future generations, and that implementing conservation practices to protect soil and water is vital for the sustainability of agriculture.



Doug McConnell lives in Zanesville, Ohio, with his wife, Beth, and their two daughters, Landyn and Kendyl. He graduated from Maysville High School and the Muskingum/Perry Career Center, where he specialized in welding.

As a full-time farmer, Doug and his family cultivate corn, wheat, soybeans, and a variety of cover crops. They also custom-raise Jersey heifers for a local dairy, maintain a beef cow/calf herd, and feed cattle. Over the years, Doug has collaborated with the District on numerous conservation initiatives, hosted various District events, and has been serving on the Board of Supervisors for six years. In recognition of their efforts, Doug and his family were honored with the District's 2018 Resource Conservation Award (Ag Division) and the 2019 Ohio Conservation Farm Family Award. Doug's conservation philosophy is simple: "If we take care of the soil, it will take care of us."



Elizabeth "Betsy" Rosser, from Zanesville, Ohio, is married to Jason and has two children, Jameson and Stella. She holds a Master's in Education and is the administrative specialist for the Ohio Center for Clinical Practice in Education and the Stevens Center for Literacy and STEM Education. Previously, she was the Urban Agriculture/Resource Specialist at MSWCD, where she led the Urban Greens Program, focused on environmental and sustainable agriculture, and collaborated with community organizations. Betsy has served on the Zanesville Farmers Market Board, strengthening local food partnerships.

Outdoors activities like hiking, kayaking, and skiing are her passions, allowing her to practice mindfulness and appreciate nature. Betsy believes healthy soil and clean water are crucial for vibrant communities. She emphasizes education on these resources and food quality to empower individuals, fostering a healthier and more resilient population for future generations.



PUTTING YOUR GARDEN TO BED

There may still be a few good weeks of gardening left, but as the days begin to get shorter and the temperatures cooler, it is time to start thinking about putting our gardens to rest for the winter. It is important to remember that we don't want to clean up the garden too early. Cooler weather does not necessarily mean the growing season is over. Many plants can continue to flower and produce well into the fall, so take the time to enjoy your garden and allow it to continue growing as long as possible.

When you are ready to begin your fall cleanup, consider leaving some of the natural plant debris in place. Leaves, stems, seed heads, and other plant material can provide valuable habitat throughout the winter. This material offers shelter and protection for pollinators and beneficial insects, which can overwinter in hollow stems, leaf litter, and the soil. By leaving some of these areas undisturbed, we can help ensure that these important garden helpers have a place to survive and emerge in the spring. If the leaves and plant debris in your garden are free of disease and pests, there is often no need to remove them. In fact, leaving them in the garden can help return organic matter and nutrients to the soil as they break down naturally. You can also consider adding a layer of healthy fallen leaves around perennial plants as a natural mulch to help protect roots during the winter.

Rather than aiming for a perfectly tidy garden, think of fall cleanup as an opportunity to prepare your garden for the seasons ahead. A little less tidying now can mean a healthier, more active garden when spring arrives. So, enjoy these final weeks of the growing season, let nature do some of the cleanup for you, and give our pollinators and beneficial insects a place to call home through the winter.

Resources:

<https://extension.unh.edu/blog/2018/10/putting-garden-bed>

<https://extension.purdue.edu/news/2025/09/5-things-to-avoid-this-fall-when-putting-your-garden-to-bed.html>

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/putting-the-garden-to-bed/>



Let's Talk

BEEES

Here is what the buzz is about with the Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District bee yard. As with most beekeepers throughout Ohio with the harsh winter conditions and unpredictable spring weather, there were hardships to start the year out in the hives. Through the help of Greg and Susan Burns at Nature's Image Farm, we were able to get our bees turned around and on the right track to thrive during the months to follow. For the second year, the bees gave us a sweet surprise in the form of honey and beeswax. We were able to harvest honey twice this year with the first honey extraction being late spring and the next harvest being in the summer. Through these harvests, we extracted over 5-gallons of honey, which is more honey than we have ever harvested from the hives.

Muskingum SWCD staff educated the public on experiences with beekeeping through the collaboration with Nature's Image Farm. Also, we were able to provide small group education through the honey harvesting process and provided education to youth that were just starting into beekeeping. Through the Muskingum SWCD social media, we were able to showcase the beehives and give updates on what was happening in the bee yard. To stay up to date with what is happening with our beehives, follow our social media at Muskingum Soil & Water Conservation District on Facebook and Instagram. We look forward to another great year in the hives!



2026 Big Tree Contest



The winner of this year's biggest tree in Muskingum County is an American Sycamore. The tree was measured by Muskingum SWCD staff over the summer. The tree is owned by Wanda Herron and scored 352 points. This points total was calculated by adding the circumference in inches (220 inches or 18.33 feet in diameter), the height (110 feet), and the crown spread average times .25 (88 ft x .25).

Congratulations to Wanda Herron on having this year's biggest tree entered in the contest.

This year's winner is the fourth biggest tree since 2020 to break the 300-point barrier, but still just over half of the state record of 561 points.

All the non-winners this year will be entered into next year's contest. If you are interested in submitting a tree for next year, you can log on to the state's website to see how your tree might measure up: <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/forestry/bigtrees/nativechamps/tabid/4810/Default.aspx>

Name	Species	Height	Crown Average	Circumference	Points	Rank
Wanda Herron	American Sycamore	110	88	220	352	1st
Wanda Herron	American Sycamore	110	88	220	352	1st
Robert and Theresa Stonerock	Pin Oak	90	82	170	280.5	3rd
Wilbur and Betty Rambo	White Oak	80	78	158	257.5	4th
Kay Wilson	Sugar Maple	60	53	116	189.25	5th



PROJECT EVERGREEN



This holiday season, families who are unable to purchase a Christmas tree will receive one for free, delivered right to their homes! After the holidays, each tree will be replanted in the city, continuing to give back to the community all year long. Accepting applications November 1st - November 24th.



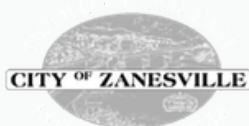
Scan to apply!



How it works:

- Apply online or in person at MSWCD
- Applications also available at the ZMHA Rental Office and Singer Activity Center
- Families with children under 18 who could use a little extra support are eligible
- 5-10 recipients will be randomly chosen
- Trees will be delivered before the holidays and replanted in city parks afterwards

Brought to you by:



Call 740-454-2027 with any questions!

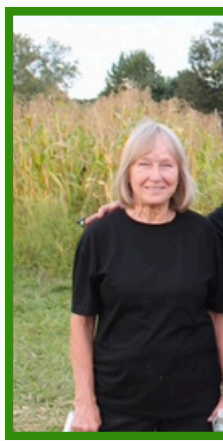


Community Events & Engagement

This summer was filled with opportunities to learn, grow, and connect with our community! We completed Fast Track to Farming, hosted by Denise Natoli-Brooks with Central State University Extension, where participants gained valuable hands-on farming knowledge and skills.

We also hosted our Growing & Preserving Educational Series, giving community members the opportunity to learn through hands-on activities focused on growing, harvesting, and preserving food.

Our Brighton Grows Event Series brought community members together for gardening, education, and connection. We also visited the Zanesville Civic Center to provide hands-on gardening education for local youth. Throughout the year, we also worked with our Youth Garden Club. Youth planted peppers, herbs, and potatoes, turning what they grew into hands-on learning experiences. The herbs were used to make tea at a Brighton Grows event, and the potatoes will soon be turned into French fries by the Youth Garden Club! It was a busy and rewarding summer of growing food, growing community, and growing with purpose!



Thank you to our 2026 Garden Coordinators Carrie Turner, Diane Altman, Michelle Illing and Cody Bubela for your dedication and hard work!

950 lbs
of produce
donated to the
community

Upcoming Events

- 9/14 Fall Container Gardening 10am at The Center for Seniors
- 9/28 Grow your own Herbs 10am at The Center for Seniors
- 10/25 Plan your Spring Garden 10am at The Center for Seniors
- 11/3 Garden Detectives at 4:30pm Philo / Duncan Falls Library



MUSKINGUM SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

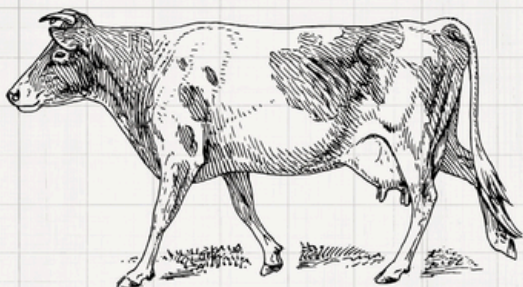
GRAZING MANAGEMENT PLAN COST-SHARE

Livestock producers in
Muskingum County are
eligible to participate in a
new cost-share opportunity.

Enroll into a Grazing
Management Plan for your
operation at \$10 per acre up
to 100 acres.

Contact

Agricultural Specialist Grace
grace.rolfe@muskingumswcd.org
740-454-2027



1

ENROLL

Schedule an appointment with
Agricultural Specialist to see if the
livestock operation qualifies.

2

FARM EVALUATION

Meet on site to evaluate pastures,
livestock operation, water access,
fencing and current management
practices.

3

DEVELOP PLAN

Receive a customized grazing
management plan with paddock
layouts, stocking recommendations,
grazing rotation and conservation
practices tailored to your operation.

4

REVIEW & IMPLEMENT

Review the plan together and begin
putting recommended practices into
action to improve pasture productivity
and livestock performance.

5

GROW YOUR OPERATION

Use your grazing plan to build
healthier pastures, better livestock
performance and strong
conservation outcomes with cost-
share.



HEARD IT THROUGH *the herd*



CONTACT
Agriculture Resource Specialist Grace
grace.rolfe@muskingumswed.org
JOIN THE HERD
<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/44fCQdrcjb>



AmeriCorps



Pictured: left Abriana Newsom,
right Megan Taylor

We want to take a moment to recognize and sincerely thank Abriana for her hard work, dedication, and service throughout her AmeriCorps term with the Urban Greens program.

During her time with us, Abriana became an important part of the Urban Greens team. She brought a positive attitude, willingness to learn, and genuine care to the work she did each day. Whether she was helping with program activities, connecting with participants, supporting day-to-day operations, or simply being someone, the team could count on, her contributions helped make Urban Greens a stronger program. While her AmeriCorps term has come to an end, the impact of her work will continue to be a part of Urban Greens. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors!

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Keep it growing.

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY IN MUSKINGUM COUNTY

The Muskingum County Community Foundation

The Straker Building
534 Putnam Ave, Zanesville, OH 43701
(740) 453-5192
www.mccf.org





Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District
225 Underwood Street, Suite 100
Zanesville, OH 43701



Return Service Requested

District Personnel:

Lacey Harrier
Doreen Maurer
Dylan McNabb
Van Slack
Megan Taylor
Grace Rolfe

Board of Supervisors:

Lance Deal, Secretary
Wayne Kilpatrick, Member
Doug McConnell, Chairperson
Mark Sterling, V. Chairperson
Mark Weiser, Treasurer/Fiscal Agent



Date	Event	Date	Event
October 7th	Supervisor Election Begins	November 30th	Mid-Day News
October 12th	Office Closed - Columbus Day	December 8th	Board Meeting
October 13th	Board Meeting	December 15th	WHIZ Radio
October 13th	Mid-Day News	December 22nd	Mid-Day News
October 20th	WHIZ Radio	December 24th	Office Closed - Christmas Eve
October 27th	Mid-Day News	December 25th	Office Closed - Christmas Day
November 5th	Annual Meeting and Banquet	December 31st	Office Closed - New Year's Eve
November 10th	Mid-Day News	January 1, 2027	Office Closed - New Year's Day
November 10 th	Board Meeting		
November 11th	Office Closed - Veterans Day		
November 17th	WHIZ Radio		
November 24th	Mid-Day News		
November 26th	Office Closed - Thanksgiving		
November 27th	Office Closed - Thanksgiving		

