



Belmont SWCD

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2006 Supervisors

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Robert Rockwell
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Ed Stenger
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Yvonne Ackerman
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Brian Porterfield
Technician

Nathan Taylor
Forestry/Wildlife Specialist

Chad Turner
Urban-GIS Technician

NRCS Employees

Jeff Bettinger
District Conservationist

Harry Kenney
Grassland Conservationist

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The District Cooperator

A Publication of the Belmont SWCD

August 2007

Protecting Belmont County Waterways

Belmont Soil & Water Conservation District launched a Storm Drain Marking Program in July to educate Belmont County residents in the protection of the county's waterways.



“Storm Drain Marking is one way of reducing the amount of pollutants going down the drain. While it won't solve all our water pollution problems alone, the highly visible marker is a practical and easy step toward public education and active involvement in storm water pollution prevention,” said Don Guindon, Belmont SWCD Chairman.

Each time it rains, pollutants such as trash, used automotive oil, yard waste (grass clippings, leaves) excess or improperly applied yard chemicals, sediment, and pet waste are transported by storm water directly to nearby streams, ponds, and eventually into the lakes.

Material flowing into a storm drain does not get treated before emptying into streams, rivers, and lakes. Although individual storm drains may contribute small amounts of pollutants, the combination of many storm drains can cause a negative impact on water quality.

Why Should We Mark Storm Drains?

- Storm drain marking informs others about the street to river connection.
- Many people may not realize that water flowing into storm drains is not cleaned before it empties into a river, stream, or lake.
- Polluted runoff can harm Belmont County waterways where we fish, swim, and obtain our drinking water.
- Nonpoint source pollution is pollution that originates from many difficult to identify sources rather than a single, traceable source such as a pipe.

The District has marked more than 200 storm drains in the St. Clairsville area alone and is looking to expand into the Barnesville, Bethesda, Belmont, Martins Ferry, Bridgeport, Bellaire and Shadyside areas. Communities, organizations, 4-H clubs, and scout troops are encouraged to contact the office to retrieve information on storm drain marking service projects.

For more information or to volunteer your organization contact Chad Turner, Urban-GIS Technician at 740-425-1100 Ext. 112.

Get Your Garden Ready for Winter

Your garden still needs some attention before the snow flies. By completing a few clean-up chores this fall you can head off some disease and insect problems and enhance soil quality.

If you've noticed serious disease problems on any of your plants, fall is the time to remove the diseased foliage and spoiled vegetables or fruit. Many diseases survive well over the winter on plant residue and will infect next year's crops if the residue is left in the garden. Even composting won't kill some diseases, so consider starting a separate "dirty" compost pile to handle diseased plants without contaminating the compost you return to your garden.

Insect pests can also survive over the winter under plant residue, so even if the residue is healthy, it's best to remove it or chop it up and work it into the soil surface. That way the residues can start breaking down over the winter, adding organic matter to the soil. Fall is a good time to add lime, compost, or manure to garden soils, too. Most other fertilizers are best applied in

the spring, but fall is a good time to collect soil samples and send them in for analysis. That gives you time to get results back and make plans for application next spring.

Even though it's a good idea to remove plant residues or work them into the soil surface, leaving the soil surface unprotected can result in wind or water erosion over the winter. One solution is planting a cover crop such as annual ryegrass. As long as it gets a little moisture, annual ryegrass will emerge about a week after it is planted and it quickly forms dense roots that help store soil nutrients over the winter. The roots also help break up surface compaction and provide a habitat for beneficial soil organisms including earthworms.

A cover crop can also help block out perennial and winter annual weeds that become established over the winter or early spring. Even if you choose a cover crop that is killed by winter weather, the plants will continue to protect the soil surface. In the spring, the cover crop can be turned under, adding additional organic matter to the soil. 🌱

Watch for SWCD on Comcast Newsmakers

Look for Belmont Soil & Water Conservation District's Program Administrator, Beverly Riddle on Comcast Newsmakers August 1st – 31st, where she was interviewed about the Belmont County Rubberneck Tour planned for October 14, 2007.

Comcast Newsmakers provides a free forum for non-profit organizations and community leaders as well as your local, State and Federal officials to present events and issues important to the Ohio Valley.

Comcast Newsmakers can be seen at :25 and :55 minutes past the hour on CNN Headline News, Channel 33 on Comcast Cable. 📺

Local Youth Presents at SWCD Monthly Meeting

Whitney Hagan, of Jerusalem, Ohio appeared at the July 9, 2007, meeting to discuss her Forestry Camp experiences.

Hagan received \$150.00 for Forestry Camp registration and was promised an additional \$100.00 upon the completion of a 10-minute presentation in front of the Belmont SWCD Board of Supervisors.

She attended Forestry Camp at Camp Muskingum in Carroll County with approximately 90 other youth.

Hagan learned about dendrology, silviculture, and arboriculture. Camp also included a Nature Night Hike and presentations and demonstrations related to dominant and co-dominant trees, the Emerald Ash Borer, forest products, as well as soil erosion and wildlife species.

Hagan said she would encourage others to attend the camp and would be interested in being a camp counselor in the future.

Forestry Camp is sponsored by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry. 🌲

Forestry Show to be Held in Guernsey County



Officials for the oldest forestry show in the country are geared up for the 2007 Paul Bunyan Show Oct. 5-7, at the Guernsey County Fairgrounds in Old Washington.

Established in 1957 and organized by the Ohio Forestry Association, Inc. (OFA), the Official Paul Bunyan Show is believed to be the largest forest industry show of its kinds in eastern United States and annually attracts thousands of visitors


from Ohio, surrounding states and abroad.

The event's primary focus is to provide access to the current knowledge and technology of forestry products and industry which enhances the quality of life and market competitiveness of individuals, families, industries and communities.

"By returning back to this location (Guernsey County Fairgrounds) in 2007, the show will continue to be more accessible to the forest products industry in Ohio, which contributes over \$15 billion to the state's economy," said OFA Program Director, Brandy Coulter.

Throughout the weekend chain saw carving, heavy logging equipment demonstrations, Lumberjack entertainment and much more will take place. The show will host a dozen educational seminars for all ages to learn from and enjoy. Showgoers may attend free seminars on topics ranging from helping landowners address Emerald Ash Borer impacts to their woodlots to tree "cookie" demonstrations-determining the age of a tree, and much more.

Admission is \$8.00 for adults, \$5.00 for students and seniors, and children under 6 are free. Show hours, Friday and Saturday, are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Parking is free.

For more information call (888) 38-TREES or visit the Ohio Forestry Association's Web site at www.ohioforest.org. 

Save the Date - Annual Meeting Note Change of Date

Belmont Soil & Water Conservation District will hold its' 62nd Annual Meeting & Banquet Thursday, November 8, 2007 at the James Carnes Center in St. Clairsville, Ohio.


Look for more information in the next *District Cooperator*. 

SWCD Election Nears

County residents attending the November 8, 2007 Annual Meeting will have the opportunity to elect 2 persons to the Belmont SWCD Board of Supervisors.

This year's banquet begins at 7:00 p.m., but registration and voting begin at 6:00 p.m.

County residents and landowners do not have to attend the annual meeting and banquet to vote. Voters have the opportunity to call or stop by the district office to request an absentee ballot or cast their vote at the district office on or before November 8, 2007 between 8 a.m. & 4:30 p.m.

For more information contact Belmont SWCD at 740-425-1100 Ext. 3. 

Get Your Name on the Ballot

If you are interested in being a candidate for the Belmont Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors, there are two ways to get your name on the ballot.

- Candidates can be nominated by the SWCD Nominating Committee.
- Interested individuals may also stop in at the SWCD office and pick up a nomination petition form. Potential candidates must secure at least 10 signatures from residents and/or landowners from the county and submit the petition to the district by the close of business Monday, October 8, 2007.

Candidates meeting the eligibility requirements and deadline will be listed on the ballot for election. The election will take place Thursday, November 8, 2007, from 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. at the James Carnes Center in St. Clairsville, Ohio.



Search for Big Tree Continues in Belmont County

Residents of Belmont County are invited to search for the biggest tree in the county.

Big trees can be found in yards, arboretums and cemeteries and can be found in parks and backyards. The winning tree's landowner(s) and/or nominator(s) will be recognized at the Belmont SWCD's 62nd Annual Meeting & Banquet held Thursday, November 8, 2007, at the James Carnes Center in St. Clairsville, Ohio.


Nominations can be dropped off or mailed to the Belmont SWCD office or enter the Big Tree Contest online by visiting the Forestry page at www.belmontswcd.org.

Entries must be received by October 1, 2007. Entries received after October 1, will be evaluated as part of the 2008 contest.

It is the responsibility of the person nominating the tree to take preliminary

measurements. Measurement information is available on the website or by calling the District office.

Once all contest entries have been received, Belmont SWCD staff will measure entries and announce a winner.

For more information contact Nathan Taylor, Forestry/Wildlife Specialist at 740-425-1100 Ext. 110. 

Big Tree Nomination Form

Tree Information

Tree Common Name _____
Tree Latin Name _____
Tree Location (Please provide directions) _____
Describe Tree Condition (Healthy, broken top, dead top, etc.) _____
Type of land (Park, private, cemetery, etc.) _____

Tree Measurements

Date of Measurement _____
Circumference (inches at 4 1/2 ft) _____
Height (in feet) _____
Crown Spread (in feet) _____
 widest point _____
 narrowest point _____
Photographs (if available) _____

To be completed by Belmont SWCD

Date Verified _____
Circumference _____
Height _____
Crownsread widest _____
Crownsread narrowest _____
Total Points _____
Verified by _____

Landowner's Information

Landowner's Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Nominator's Information (if different than landowner)

Nominator's Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Date Nominated _____

Mail to: Belmont Soil & Water Conservation District • Belmont County Big Tree Contest
1119 E. Main Street • Barnesville, Ohio 43713

Forage Focus: Summer Grazing Management

contributed by: *Rory Lewandowski, Extension Educator, Ag/MR Athens County*

Grazing management during the summer months generally calls for slowing down the paddock rotation, finish clipping any remaining seed heads from paddocks, and working paddocks back into the rotation that may have been set-aside during the spring flush. Grazing management during a summer drought involves all of this...and more. Let's examine in a bit more detail each of these steps.



Rotation Speed: Slowing down the paddock rotation is just another way of saying provide adequate rest periods for the forage plant. A basic grazing principle is to insure that a grass or legume plant has time to recover from defoliation due to grazing or clipping before it is once again subjected to the stress of defoliation. The length of time required for that rest or recovery period is dependent upon growing that plant back to a height where root reserves have been replenished.

In a drought situation such as we are currently experiencing, re-growth rates of plants can range from very slow to nil as some plants may have gone into dormancy. Rotation speeds need to reflect plant re-growth rates. In order to protect plants and not overgraze paddocks, rotations are currently at 45 days plus, for those fortunate enough to have pasture left. In some cases, the best thing to do is to stop the rotation completely, and hold the livestock in a sacrifice area and feed hay. The temptation is that as long as there is any green pasture growth to disregard the beginning grazing height guideline and let livestock graze. However, because there is less forage available, the rotation through paddocks with this practice is speeded up and soon, if rains don't arrive, all of the pasture paddocks are over grazed.

Once a plant is over grazed root growth stops and roots begin to die back. In

addition, because there is no longer leaf area providing a shaded soil surface, soil temperatures begin to climb. Cool-season grass roots prefer a soil temperature of between 50-65 degrees for optimum root growth. Once soil temps get above 70 degrees, around 50% of the roots are lost on established plants. With the sunny 90-degree days we have experienced, exposed soil can easily exceed 70 degrees F. When rains do return, an overgrazed paddock is likely to capture less of the rainfall as compared to a paddock that has maintained some leaf canopy and is less likely to be able to resume growth due to root dieback and high soil temperatures. Many of these paddocks will not have significant growth again until fall, or in extreme cases, next spring. In contrast, paddocks that have not been overgrazed are more likely to resume growth with a summer rainfall and get back into a rotation.

Clipping Seed heads: I have seen pasture paddocks that still have seed heads on them. Should these be clipped off? This is a tough call in a drought year. Normally the return for clipping seed heads is to restore the plant to vegetative growth, but in a drought plants aren't growing. There might even be an argument made that the seed heads are providing a shady cover. My opinion on this is to manage the plant for vegetative growth and future rainfall. Clip the plants to the target ending grazing height.

Adding paddocks: What can be done to add paddocks or forage into the rotation? By this point in a drought, most graziers have included any paddocks that had been dropped out during the spring growth flush. What about hay-fields? Even though re-growth after first cutting may not be enough for a second cutting, it may be enough for a grazing pass. Remember that grazing is always the most economical method of harvesting forage.

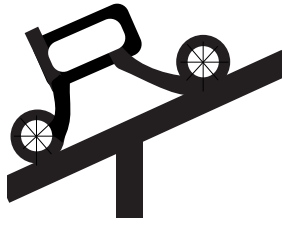
In a drought year, the producer may have to take some steps that would not be done ordinarily. If everything possible has been done to add paddocks or hay-fields into the rotation and forage is still short then stopping the rotation and feeding hay may be necessary. However, are there things that can be done to get some late summer or fall forage from paddocks that are currently non-productive? This would help to insure that hay stocks would be available for later winter use.

For those graziers with some fairly level land, some alternative forages should be considered. Sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids are warm season annuals that like high temperatures and can produce some good tonnage under limited moisture once the seed is germinated. Graziers should give serious consideration as to how they might incorporate some oats into their forage plan in this drought year. Oats not tilled into an overgrazed paddock in mid to late July could provide some good grazing by late August. In this situation, the perennial pasture grasses would recover as the oats are grazed down.

Pasture management in a drought year is difficult. Those graziers that can develop a plan to locate additional pasture resources or utilize alternative forages, while maintaining the discipline to prevent paddocks from being overgrazed will reap both short term and long-term benefits. 🌾

Rubberneck Tour Travels to Belmont

Committee members of the Belmont County Rubberneck Tour are pleased to announce the tour route for the 2007 Rubberneck Tour. Tour goers will travel to Belmont/Morristown, Ohio, Sunday, October 14, 2007 from 12:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Valley Cattlemen's Association, Belmont-Monroe OSU Master Gardeners, Belmont Soil & Water Conservation District and many more.

There will be food, fun, and entertainment for the whole family.

The tour is **FREE**. However, the tour committee recommends bringing a little cash for homemade goods, including pies, cheese and crafts provided by local organizations.

Concessions and restroom facilities will be available throughout the tour.

The Belmont County Rubberneck Tour is a cooperative effort between OSU Extension, Belmont County Tourism Council and Belmont SWCD.

Pick up a Tour Map at the Belmont County Fair or at the Belmont SWCD office.

For more information contact the Belmont SWCD office at 740-425-1100 Ext. 3 or the Belmont County Tourism Council at 740-695-4359. 🌱

Stops along the tour will include:

- Honey Ridge Beef Farm, owned by Rick & Jayne Young, who were honored with the Ohio Cattlemen's Association 2006 Commercial Cattle Producer Award;
- Feisley Tree Farm, owned by Geoff & Theresa Feisley. Feisley Tree Farm is the largest Christmas Tree Farm in the state of Ohio; and
- Birchlawn Farm's registered Morgan Horses, owned by Terry & Barbara Holstein.

Many organizations have already committed to participating in the event. Some of these include the RC Fliers, Belmont County Rabbit Committee, the Belmont County Dairy Service Unit, Udder Kids 4-H Club, South Central Power, The Ohio

SWCD to Display at Local Fair

Visit Belmont SWCD at the Commercial Building at the Belmont County Fair September 5 – 9, 2007. Employees will be on-hand to talk about the services and products available through the local Soil & Water Conservation District office.

Stop by to visit with staff members and get information on conservation related issues, educational seminars, and even a free gift.

See you at the fair. 🌱

Oats, Planted Late, Aren't your Grandpa's Oats!

With five years of experience under our belts planting oats after the first of July with the intent of creating as much high quality forage as possible, it's apparent there is not a better alternative. When oats are planted in July or early August, we have consistently experience production of 4 to 7 tons of dry matter with 18+/-% proteins.

To put this into perspective, the average production of hay harvested from perennial forages in Ohio is **LESS THAN HALF** of that! Without including land or harvest costs, those 5+/- tons of oat forage come at a **TOTAL COST** of less than \$25 per ton even at today's fertilizer prices.

Suffice to say, oats planted after July 1 when the days are growing shorter are not the same oats you used to help your Grandpa plant in March! Even though we are using the same varieties of oats one would plant in early spring for the purpose of harvesting grain, when planted in the summer, oats consistently become a nutrient dense, highly vegetative forage. These late planted oats will remain in the vegetative state until a significant freeze stops them in late November or December, while seldom making a seed head. If they do, the seed hulls are empty with no grain.

As you consider your options to replace the forage production we've already lost this year, consider what we've learned over the past five years about growing oats to forage.

- When planted this late, oat variety appears to have little impact on forage yields. In fact, we've used bin run seed, certified seed, treated seed, U.S. grown feed oats

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Supervisors Schooled in West Chester

Belmont SWCD Supervisors and staff attended the Annual Summer Supervisors School held in West Chester, Ohio, July 29 – July 31, 2007.

Summer Supervisors School included educational tours and sessions pertaining to the adaptation of traditional crop/livestock farming to successful urban agriculture businesses, the utilization of agricultural Farm Bill programs in urban areas and how creativity can keep the family farm for future generations. Other topics included forestry, NRCS Conservation Program – 33, harmful row crop insects, basin retention and water quality, and alternative agriculture.

Keynote Speaker, Frank Clearfield, Ph.D. leader of the Social Science Team for NRCS, discussed the changing demographics of landowners and how to tailor the SWCD message of wise land use and conservation practices to landowners,

including absentee landowners that make up 51% of farm ground owners in Ohio.

Attendees were given the opportunity to visit with Miami University's Ecologic Research Center, where spider predation projects are being conducted to find out how herbicide and tillage affect spiders. Other topics of interest were prairie and warm season grass research, pond and lake studies, and bee hive behavior.

The school also challenged attendees with information pertaining to the use of concrete without sand, challenges of public and industrial water supplies, and Best Management Practices.

Attendees visited Otterbein Retirement Community to observe an underlying ground water supply and agriculture operation, as well as the Lebanon Correctional Institute's milk and meat supply program.



Attending Summer Supervisor School were (from left to right) Nancy & Ed Stenger, Stanley Borovich, Don Guindon and Beverly Riddle. Bruce Riddle is not pictured.

Supervisors were also able to participate in a canoe trip down the Little Miami River where they learned about the natural geology of the river and valley how it has evolved over the years. Others learned about niche markets, water therapy programs for horses, alternative energy endeavors, and an experimental program known as the Trading Credit Program that allows farmers to earn monetary incentives from waste water treatment plants for installing best management practices to reduce runoff pollutants. 🌱

No Hunting Season Permits

The Hunting Season Control Permits (in-season control permits) for deer damage will no longer be an option in controlling deer damage.

Why did Division of Wildlife decide not to issue Hunting Season Control Permits?

The Hunting Season Control Permits issued to landowners did not address deer damage as it was occurring, which in turn, did not result in reducing the damage initiating the complaint. In most cases, these permits were not being fully utilized and landowners or agents did not take action when the damage was occur-

ring but deferred to wait until hunting season at which time it is too late to alleviate damage.

What am I required to do to apply for a Deer Damage Control Permit?

Contact your SWCD Wildlife Specialist who will meet with you to investigate and verify the damage before a permit can be issued. If you request a permit to kill deer, you will be required to fill out a crop damage investigation form and the DDCP application. You will be asked to find competent shooters to be listed on the permit pending a background check of each shooter. Harass the

deer in your fields when they are the most active (sunrise or early evening). The DDCP is to be utilized during the growing season when deer do the most damage and expire on the day prior to the beginning of the archery season.

Deer damage control permits may only be used on the property for which they were issued. They cannot be used to kill deer on nearby farms.

For more information on Out of Season Control permits and other options for controlling deer in agricultural settings contact Wildlife/Forestry Specialist Nathan Taylor at 740-425-1100 Ext.110. 🌱

and Canadian feed oats and found essentially no difference in the resulting forage production.

• Oats are a “scavenger” for nutrients and require little additional fertilizer. We’ve applied 18 to 50 units of supplemental nitrogen to July and early August planted oats and experienced similar yields with each rate. While each ton of oats that are removed from the field will take ~ 14 pounds of phosphorus and ~ 50 pounds of K with it, we have not seen a yield boost when these nutrients were applied at planting.

• No-tilled seeding rates of from 80 pounds to 100 pounds of oats have resulted in optimum forage yields.

• Oats planted into dust, or into significant moisture have both yielded comparably. Oats planted in July/August seem to tolerate dry weather very well. Some of our best yields have been experience when July, August, and September precipitation has been below normal.

• Depending on precipitation and planting date, 60 to 90 days of growth are sufficient to optimize yields.

• While strip grazing is the most efficient method of harvest, baling dry hay and creating ensilage have also been successful.

• When strip grazing or mechanical harvest is delayed, the quality of oat forage is maintained well into winter. On March 11, 2003, we found that

August of 2002 planted oats which were still being strip grazed that 11.12% protein. A nearby fescue field that was also being grazed had 8.19% protein on the same day.

With many small grain fields soon to be harvested and likely sitting idle, cattlemen still have excellent opportunities to create high quality forages that may be mechanically harvested or grazed well into winter and even next spring. If you’ve yet to attend any of our field days to see for yourself the results of summer seeded oats, this web link has photos and data of several of the past year’s attempts at the alternatives described above:

<http://fairfield.osu.edu/ag/graze/wntr-graz.htm>.

<p>FARM BUREAU Take advantage of CAUV that Farm Bureau secured for all land owners! Call Farm Bureau for details! (740) 425-3681</p>	<p>Pre-order the NEW Belmont County Plat Book Available this Fall • Price TBD Belmont SWCD 740-425-1100 Ext. 3</p>	<p> JOHN DEERE Kuester Implement Company Inc. 47690 Reservoir Road St. Clairsville, OH 43950 Business Phone: 740-695-8920 Toll Free: 866-367-2408 www.KuesterImplement.com</p>	<p>M. THEAKER & SON  EXCAVATING, INC. Backhoe • Trackhoe • Trucking • Dozer Trenching • Sewage Systems • Waterlines 53620 Farmington Road • Bridgeport, OH 43912 (740) 635-3134 • Fax (740) 635-4101</p>
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<p>www.BelmontSWCD.org</p>	<p> Buckeye Tree Co. Forestry Management Services OH, WV, PA • Timber Sales • Custom Sawmilling • Green and Kiln Dried Lumber Office & Fax: (740) 633-9590 Cell: (740) 359-7197 Buckeyetree@comcast.net www.buckeyetreeco.com Hocking College of Forestry Registered WV State Board Member OFA / WVFA</p>	<p> <i>Custom Spraying, Lime and Fertilizer application.</i> BELMONT MILLS INC. 400 S. Jefferson St. Belmont, Ohio 43718 740-484-4633</p>	<p>STONE \$ 5.00 Ton Ideal for Driveways-Farmlanes-Etc. Gunite Construction 740 - 676 - 2172</p>