

Conservation Highlights



Micaela Wright Awarded Darke SWCD Scholarship



Jared Coppess, District Administrator, congratulates Micaela Wright for receiving the Darke SWCD Scholarship at the 1st Annual Arcanum High School Awards night on May 20, 2013.

The board of supervisors for the Darke Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is pleased to announce the 2013 scholarship recipient, Micaela Wright from Arcanum High School. Micaela will be attending Wilmington College in the fall to pursue a degree in Animal Science with an emphasis in nutrition. Micaela is a 10-year 4-H member, National Honor Society member and has participated in community service activities through 4-H, NHS and her youth group. The Darke SWCD is proud to recognize Micaela Wright as their 2013 scholarship recipient.

“It was a tough decision for our board; we received many great applications from students around the county. Micaela’s academic and extra-curricular activities seemed to stand out among the group of applicants,” said Jared Coppess, District Administrator for the Darke SWCD.

One of Micaela’s goals is to study abroad and “see agriculture in other countries”. Her planned minor is sustainable agriculture because she knows how important it is for the environment and

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“Serving conservation needs in Darke County since 1955”

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Darke SWCD Staff Members

- Jared Coppess — Program Administrator
- Linda Calland — Secretary
- Doug Steinbrunner — Technician/Wildlife Specialist
- Tim Rank — Technician
- Greg McGlinch — Urban/MNM Specialist
- Steve Brown — Pheasants Forever Wildlife Biologist

Darke NRCS Staff Members

- Jim Bennett — District Conservationist
- John Bleill — Civil Engineering Technician

DARKE SWCD OFFICE HOURS

Monday — Friday
8:00 AM — 4:30 PM

Darke County Teams Participating in the Area IV Envirothon



Greenville FFA #1

Congratulations to Greenville FFA #1 for achieving the highest team score from Darke County and finishing 5th in the Area IV competition. Team members include (not in order): Kyle Huston, Patrick Garber, Sheiann Mead, Emily Vanhorn and Trevor Mann. The Greenville FFA #1 Team Advisor is John Guttadore.



Greenville #2



Mississinawa Valley FFA #1

2013 Area IV Envirothon Scores

Darke County Teams
(Area IV Ranking)

<u>Team Name & County Rank</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. Greenville FFA #1 (5)	87
2. Greenville #2 (24)	76
3. Mississinawa Valley #1 (38)	68
4. Mississinawa Valley #2 (42)	66
5. Franklin Monroe #2 (52)	63



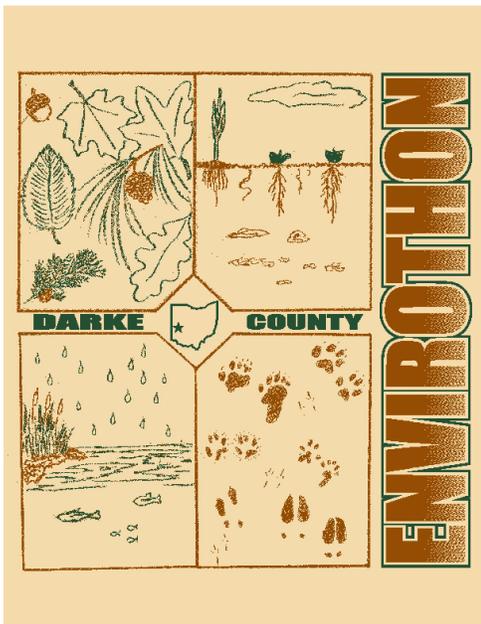
Mississinawa Valley FFA #2



Franklin Monroe #2

This year's competition attracted 69 teams from all over Area IV. Area IV consists of 18 counties: Mercer, Darke, Shelby, Miami, Logan, Union, Champaign, Clark, Madison, Preble, Montgomery, Greene, Fayette, Butler, Warren, Clinton, Hamilton and Clermont.

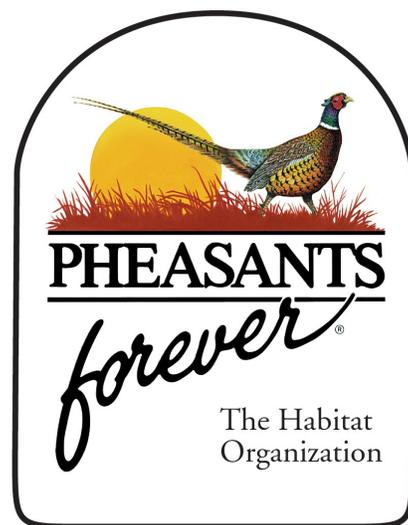
More From the Envirothon!



The Darke SWCD would like to thank Kathy Lecklider for creating the design on this year's Darke County team t-shirts. The image to the left is based upon a drawing from Kathy. Thank you for making the 2013 shirts stand out!

We would also like to thank the Darke County Chapter of Pheasants Forever for sponsoring this year's shirts. Thank you to the Darke PF for being a great partner in conservation and a strong supporter of the District's educational events.

Thank You



Area IV Envirothon Held in Mercer County

Five teams from Darke County schools – Greenville, Franklin Monroe and Mississinawa Valley – competed in the Area IV Envirothon held at the Spiritual Center of Maria Stein in Mercer County on May 7, 2013. The competition brought approximately 350 high school students from all over Southwest Ohio. “Students were tested on their environmental knowledge in five areas including Aquatics, Current Environmental Issues (CEI), Forestry, Soils and Wildlife. The CEI this year focused on Rangelands/Grasslands. The testing is rigorous and students must be able to apply their knowledge to real-world situations,” said Nikki Hawk of Mercer SWCD, one of this year's co-hosts.

The top four teams from the event advance to the Ohio Envirothon held in June at Deer Creek State Park. This year's top four teams were from Centerville, Franklin and Sycamore High Schools. The winning team from the Ohio Envirothon will advance to the North American Envirothon held this year in Montana. Each team consists of five students and an adult advisor, who must accompany the team, but is not permitted to assist during the competition.

Narrowly finishing out of the top four was the Greenville FFA team consisting of Kyle Huston, Patrick

Garber, Sheiann Mead, Emily Vanhorn, Trevor Mann and advisor John Guttadore. “We are extremely proud of the Darke County schools participating this year. I don't think we have ever had a team finish in the top five, congratulations Greenville FFA,” said Jared Coppess, District Administrator at the Darke Soil and Water Conservation District.

Major sponsorship for the Area IV Envirothon comes from Cargill, Inc., Honda of America and the 18 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Southwest Ohio. The Spiritual Center of Maria Stein was an excellent location for this year's event, offering ideal locations for all five areas of the competition. The weather cooperated for the event and allowed all 69 teams the opportunity to enjoy an educational day in the outdoors.

In Ohio, the Envirothon is sponsored by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Division of Soil and Water Resources (ODNR-DSWR). Professionals from the Division of Wildlife, Division of Forestry, ODNR, USDA and

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Dig A Little, Learn A Lot!



As temperatures finally go UP this spring, take a minute to look DOWN at the ground and investigate the SOIL. What does the soil look like? How does the soil feel? Does rain sink into the ground quickly? Answering these questions during planting can pay off later during harvest.

“It doesn’t matter what kind of landowner you are - a small farmer, large farmer, organic grower or even homeowners and gardeners - you can easily examine your soils. Take a quick look and you can learn a lot,” says State Agronomist Mark Scarpitti.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the conservation arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, launched “Unlock the Secrets of the Soil” in an effort to focus attention on soil health. According to State Conservationist Terry Cosby, “Prime farmland makes up 73 percent of Ohio’s 11 million acres of cropland. That’s a heck of a lot of good agricultural land and a huge responsibility. The well-being of future Ohioans hinges on how well we protect and improve the foundation of agriculture, healthy soil.”

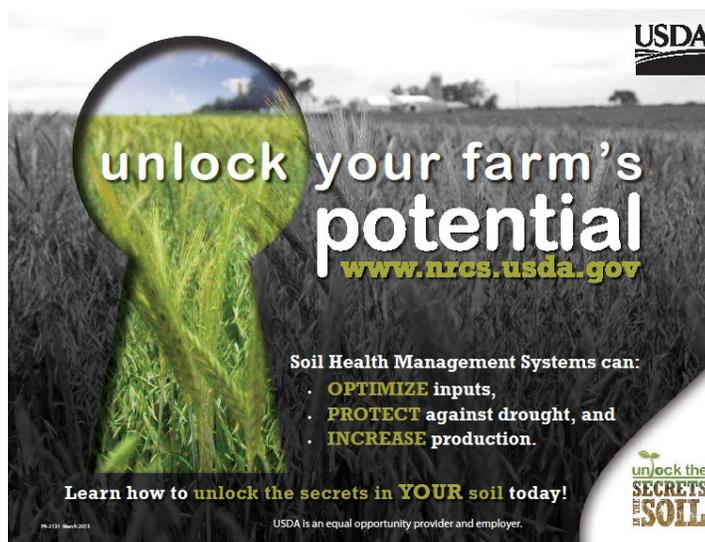
To start a soil health assessment, you’ll need your eyes, your nose, your hands, and a garden spade or shovel.

LOOK—Look for plant residue or a living plant canopy or cover. Dig a hole and look at the soil structure. Healthy soil looks like chocolate cake with lots of air holes and organic matter. And of course you should see earthworms—our wonderful soil engineers!

SMELL—Healthy soil has the distinct sweet, earthy aroma of geosmin, a by-product of soil microbes called actinomycetes.

TOUCH--Soil should crumble easily exposing long straight plant roots. Long roots reach nutrients and water they need to grow to produce the food we love to eat.

Why should we care about soil health? Cosby explains that healthy soil actually has a direct impact on many larger issues that affect life as we know it.



Healthy soil can improve and regulate water, sustain plant and animal life, filter pollutants, cycle nutrients and support buildings. Healthy soils hold more water, which can make the difference between crop survival and failure during a drought. Healthy soils also resist runoff and erosion, naturally suppress weeds and pests, and sustain other natural resources.

“If your soil looks like it needs attention, give us a call. Conservation experts in every Ohio county can help you develop a soil health improvement plan and introduce you to conservation programs designed to off-set a portion of the cost of carrying out the plan,” explains Cosby. “Improving soil health takes time, so the sooner you start the process, the sooner you’ll reap the rewards provided by healthy soils.”

Remember, healthy soils produce healthy crops and a healthy environment. So grab a spade and dig a little. You can learn a lot! Visit

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/soils/health/> for more information.



The roots of crops grown in healthy soil reach deeper in the soil. Deep roots help plants survive drought conditions like 2012.

Grassland Habitat Workshop Offered

The West Central Wildlife Habitat Workshop Series will be hosting a Grassland Habitat Workshop on Saturday, July 13, 2013 from 9:00am to 3:00pm on the Rammel Farm located at 6879 Arcanum-Bears Mill Road, Greenville, Ohio. A continental breakfast and lunch will be served to those in attendance.

This workshop will cover CRP mid-contract management, grass and wildflower identification, grassland site prep and seeding, management practices, weed control and much more. A portion of this workshop will be outdoors, so be prepared for the weather.

WHEN:	Saturday, July 13, 2013 9:00am—3:00pm
WHERE:	Rammel Farm 6879 Arcanum-Bears Mill Rd Greenville, OH 45331
CONTACT:	Darke SWCD, 937-548-1715, Ext. 3

West Central Wildlife Habitat Workshop Series is brought to you by:



Pre-registration is required for the Grassland Habitat Workshop. Register now by contacting the Darke SWCD office at 937-548-1715, extension 3. A registration fee of \$10 needs to be made payable to Darke SWCD and received by July 5th at 1117 South Towne Court, Greenville, Ohio 45331. Space is limited for this workshop, call now and reserve a spot today!

The West Central Wildlife Habitat Workshop Series is brought to you by Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and Division of Forestry; Pheasants Forever; Natural Resources Conservation Service; OSU Extension; US Fish and Wildlife Service; and the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. These partners are committed to “making wildlife habitat simple!”

A.C.E. Reorganizes and Updates By-Laws



On Wednesday, March 27, 2013, A.C.E. (Agriculture for a Clean Environment) reorganized for the 2013 fiscal year. The membership present at the meeting, held at the OSU Extension office, elected new officers naming Matt Aultman, President; Greg McGlinch, Vice-President; Mandy Havenar, Secretary/Treasurer; and Jared Coppess, Executive Director. After the election, members discussed the goals for A.C.E. in the coming years. It was determined that the officer team would meet to revise and update the by-laws for review from the membership at a later date.

On April 16th, the membership was invited to Buffalo Jacks in Covington, Ohio. Those members present reviewed the recommendations for changes to the by-laws from the officer team, discussed and ultimately adopted the by-laws by a unanimous vote. Changes to the by-laws include: the focus area will now be Darke and Miami Counties, with an emphasis on the Stillwater River Watershed; member dues will now be due on your anniversary date; the Board of Directors will consist of six members that will serve a two-year term, with a maximum of three terms; and the Executive Director shall be from either the Darke or Miami Soil and Water Conservation District.

Look for more activity and communications from A.C.E. in the coming months, planning is underway for a summer tour. If you are interested in learning more about A.C.E. and it's mission, contact Mandy Havenar at 937-335-1471 or mhavenar@ofbf.org.

Envirothon *(continued from page 3)*

private industry wrote the Envirothon tests and staffed the various stations. The Envirothon began in Ohio in 1989 and was modeled on a similar program from Pennsylvania. Students who prepare for and participate in the Envirothon gain a greater awareness of natural resources and environmental issues. From the experience, they meet a wide range of professionals and are exposed to various points of view on environmental responsibilities while learning

about potential career opportunities.

“On behalf of the board, I would like to thank those teams participating in this year’s competition and encourage other schools and teachers to contact us about how they can participate in 2014. It would be great to have a Darke County team move on to the Ohio Envirothon next year,” said Coppess.



Above Left: Greenville FFA #1 working on the Current Environmental Issue (CEI) portion of the Area IV Envirothon competition at the Spiritual Center of Maria Stein.

Above Right: John Kaiser, ODNR-Division of Wildlife, takes a break from the Wildlife station to visit with OFSWCD President, Joe Glassmeyer.

Below Left: Mississinawa Valley FFA #2 examines the site during the Wildlife section of the Envirothon.

Below Middle: Greenville #2 discusses their answers on the Forestry test.

Below Right: MV FFA #2 awaits the signal to move to the next station after completing the CEI test.



Rain Barrels Kits Available For Summer

You may have heard about them on Community Ties, maybe you've seen something in the paper, or have even overheard someone at the coffee shop talking about rain barrels. Well, they're here! After a brief period of them being out-of-stock, we are back in business.....for now.

Take advantage of what Mother Nature gives in rain fall and utilize it throughout the summer months by installing a rain barrel to collect rain water for flower

beds and gardens. We have received a new shipment of barrels along with kits to turn them into rain barrels. The barrels are blue, but can be painted to match any color scheme to add beauty to your landscape by following our painting tip sheet.

Supply is limited, call 937-548-1715, extension 3 or stop by the office at 1117 South Towne Court to purchase your rain barrel.

Rain Barrel Workshop — July 17, 2013



The Darke SWCD, City of Greenville and the Stillwater Watershed Project are holding a Rain Barrel Workshop on July 17th. The workshop will take place at the Darke County Parks on State Route 502 at 6:00pm. This workshop will entail building a rain barrel, instructions on proper installation and maintenance, and painting tips. Light snacks will be available to those in attendance.

The cost of the workshop is only \$30.00, which includes the barrel and all the supplies to construct your rain barrel. We are limiting this workshop to 10 prepaid registrants. Rain barrels are becoming an effective tool to capture valuable rain water and reduce consumption of ground or municipal water. Rain water is soft and rich in nutrients that garden and house plants can use.

Please contact or drop off your registration at the Darke SWCD office located at 1117 South Towne Court. Feel free to call with any questions regarding rain barrels or the workshop at 937-548-1715, extension 3.

Scholarship *(continued from page 1)*

the future of farming. According to her application, Micaela has chosen an Animal Science major so she can “contribute to agriculture and have a career where I can use my passions”.

The scholarship award is for \$500 and will be processed through the Wilmington College scholarship office and will be available to Micaela in January 2014 after proof of enrollment has been obtained.

“On behalf of the board, I would like to thank all applicants for taking the time to apply; we wish them the best of luck in their pursuit of higher education. We would also like to thank the schools and staff for helping promote this scholarship opportunity to their students,” said Coppess. “Our hope is to be in a po-

sition to offer this again in 2014, it is our way of helping a top student pursue a degree in an agriculture or natural resources related field.”

In order to have been eligible for this scholarship, the applicant must be a Darke County resident and be graduating from one of the county's public or private high schools; have a minimum 2.5 grade point average; be entering their freshman year as a full-time student in the Fall 2013 at a 2- or 4-year accredited college, technical school or university; and be pursuing a degree in either an agriculture or natural resources related field.

NACD Responds to Recent Farm Bill Activity

NACD Applauds House Ag Committee's Passage of 2013 Farm Bill

Washington, D.C.—May 16, 2013—The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) applauds Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson for their hard work in passing a strong framework for the 2013 Farm Bill. The Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013 (FARRM Act) demonstrates bipartisan recognition and appreciation for the significant value of locally-led conservation in supporting America's long-term environmental and economic stability.

"The FARRM Act is a balanced plan that recognizes the critical value of locally-led conservation at the landscape scale," said NACD President Earl Garber. "NACD looks forward to continuing to work closely with members of the House and Senate throughout the Farm Bill process to ensure a strong final version of the Bill that protects critical conservation program funding and increases conservation program efficiency and ease of use for producers."

Producers deserve to have a long-term framework in place to effectively and efficiently manage their land, resources and business for the years ahead. Not only do Farm Bill conservation programs play a key role in supporting clean air, clean water and productive soils, they also help producers avoid unnecessary regulation, and support our nation's long-term economic and food security. The FAARM Act includes important reform measures to provide cost-savings while increasing efficiencies and best management tools to care for our natural resources.

"The value of the Farm Bill stretches far beyond rural America — from our national food security, to the health of our economy, and to the conservation of the land, air and water we rely on every day," said Garber.

NACD Statement on Approval of Farm Bill by Senate Agriculture Committee

Washington, D.C. – May 14, 2013 – "NACD applauds Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran for their leadership on a strong Farm Bill, including provisions within the Manager's Amendment relating to an historic conservation compliance agreement and Technical Assistance reforms. The bipartisan conservation compliance agreement, supported by NACD and other agriculture, environment and crop insurance groups, strengthens our ability to conserve natural resources for the future by tying conservation compliance to crop insurance for highly erodible land and wetlands, while at the same time opposing means testing, payment limitations or premium subsidy reductions for the crop insurance program. The 'Improve USDA-NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance (TA)' amendment, led by Senator Heitkamp (D-ND), along with Senators Boozman (R-AR), Brown (D-OH), Donnelly (D-IN) and Thune (R-SD), increases efficiency within the delivery of TA funds, putting TA decision-making authority in the hands of those who are the most familiar with resource needs on the ground. On behalf of the nation's 3,000 conservation districts, we urge the full Senate to take swift action to pass this bill."

- NACD President Earl Garber

Conservation Compliance Coalition Praises Agreement in Senate Farm Bill

Washington, D.C.—May 14, 2013—A coalition of agriculture, conservation, environment and crop insurance groups are applauding the passage of an historic conservation compliance agreement as part of the bipartisan Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013 passed by the Senate Agriculture Committee today. The non-partisan conservation compliance agreement represents a compromise position that supports the linking of conservation compliance with crop insurance premium assistance, and opposes means testing, payment limitations or premium subsidy reductions for the crop insurance program.

In opening remarks at today's markup, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow praised the agreement, saying the Farm Bill "includes an even stronger commitment to conservation, one borne out of the efforts by environmental and agricultural groups who sat down together to find a way to protect our soil and water resources necessary to keep agriculture strong in America for generations to come."

"We have been a strong advocate for an effective crop and natural resource safety net in the 2013 Farm Bill. The conservation compliance agreement, made possible by the leadership of Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran, ensures at a policy level the thoughtful implementation of compliance that balances the need for natural resource conservation with a robust agriculture economy."

- National Association of Conservation Districts President Earl Garber

Soil Fertility & Nutrient Management Workshop Series Offered

The Darke Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Ohio State University Extension, Darke County will be jointly hosting a Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management workshop series beginning in June and wrapping up in November. This series will consist of four workshops – June, July, August and November – that will cover basic agronomy, how to obtain a proper soil sample, a tour of a soil lab, understanding and interpreting the results, recommendations and how to properly maintain and enhance your soils, and development of a field plan for 2014. The cost to participate in this workshop series will be \$10.00. This registration fee will cover all of your meals, resource materials and soil samples for up to 50 acres. Space is limited, so call or email to reserve your spot today!

The first workshop will be June 25th at the Darke OSU Extension office on Wagner Avenue in Greenville beginning with a meal at 6:00pm. This first workshop will give an introduction to the series, cover how to properly collect a soil sample and discuss nutrient sources and concentrations. It is important to note that the Darke SWCD, through a series of grants and sponsorships, will cover two (2) samples to be tested from your farm. This workshop series will utilize your samples to walk you through understanding your soil fertility and nutrient management needs. You will need to turn in your soil samples at the office before the second meeting date.

The second workshop will take place on July 22nd. The group will meet at the Darke SWCD office at 9:00am before traveling to Brookside Labs in New Bremen. While there, we will tour the facility and visit with available technicians to understand the process of soil testing. This is when and where the samples you pull will be delivered for analysis. After the tour, the group will grab lunch before returning to Greenville.

The third workshop will be held on August 28th at

the Darke County Parks' Assembly Room, just off 502. This meeting will cover your soil sample test results and begin the process of interpreting and understanding the results for an analysis of your farm. We will also go over recommendations for the area and cover any environmental limits or concerns that may exist. Like the first meeting, this one will begin at 6:00pm with a meal.

Finally, the group will gather for a fourth and final workshop on November 12th. This will cover ways you can build upon or maintain your soil health by identifying practices you can utilize on your farm. The workshop series will end with an overview of the 4R Tomorrow program and a certificate of completion for all participants.

All workshops in the series will include a meal. The goal is to help you better understand how to identify and address the needs of your soil. Upon completion of the series, you will have a wider knowledge base and many reference materials to help you get the most out of your soil in a healthy manner.

The benefits of proper nutrient management are two-fold: the farmer lowers inputs and environmental impairments are reduced. These are two goals any farmer should have because it relates to money

and protecting their land," said Greg McGlinch of the Darke SWCD.

This workshop wouldn't be possible without the cooperation of the Darke SWCD; OSU Extension, Darke County; Menke Consulting; Brookside Laboratories and the support of our sponsors: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Top of Ohio RC&D Council and the Ohio Livestock Coalition.

If you are interested in learning how to best manage your soil's needs, sign up now for this workshop by calling the Darke SWCD at 937.548.1515, extension 3 or email greg.mcglinch@oh.nacdnet.net.

Soil Fertility & Nutrient Management Workshop	
Meeting Dates, Times and Locations	
June 25, 2013	6:00-8:30PM
<i>OSU Extension, Darke County</i>	
July 22, 2013	9:00AM-2:00PM
<i>Brookside Labs, New Bremen</i>	
August 28, 2013	6:00-8:30PM
<i>Darke County Parks, Assembly Room</i>	
November 12, 2013	6:00-8:30PM
<i>Location TBD</i>	

SPACE IS LIMITED, REGISTER NOW BY CALLING 937-548-1715, EXT. 3

Darke SWCD

1117 South Towne Court
Greenville, OH 45331

Phone: 937.548.1715, Ext. 3
Fax: 937.548.2925

**Serving conservation needs
in Darke County since 1955**



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Conservation Highlights

Spring 2013

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 10	OHIO ENVIROTHON
JUNE 25	SOIL FERTILITY & NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP (MTG #1)**
JULY 13	GRASSLAND HABITAT WORKSHOP
JULY 17	RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP
JULY 22	SOIL FERTILITY & NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP (MTG #2)**
AUGUST 28	SOIL FERTILITY & NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP (MTG #3)**
NOVEMBER 12	SOIL FERTILITY & NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP (MTG #4)**

***This workshop is a series*

Want to receive an electronic copy of
this newsletter?
Email jared.coppess@oh.nacdnet.net

The Darke SWCD Board Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month at 8:00am. Meetings are subject to rescheduling; therefore, please call 937-548-1715, Ext. 3 to verify meeting date and time. If you are interested in receiving meeting notices, please contact the office to be placed on a phone or email notification list.