

THE CONSERVATIONIST



Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District *Conservation • Development • Self-government*

March 2008

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TREE PLANTING & MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

The Delaware SWCD will be hosting a Tree Planting and Management Workshop the first Saturday of April. Conveniently scheduled right before Tree Seedling pickup begins, this workshop will focus on the proper pre-planting care of trees, as well as site and species selection, site issues, planting techniques. Management issues such as weed control, disease, and wildlife damage will also be discussed.

The workshop will be held **Saturday, April 5, 2008 from 8:30 AM to Noon** at the **Gallant Woods Preserve, 2151 Buttermilk Hill Road, Delaware**. Speakers will include Cotton Randall, Service Forester with the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, Div. of Forestry, and Scott Stephens, Resource Conservation Program

Coordinator with the Delaware SWCD.

This program is a free workshop. RSVP is requested so that we can be sure to have enough materials for all attendees. Please call Bret Bacon, (740) 368-1921, ext. 4, or e-mail, bret-bacon@delawareswcd.org, for more information or to RSVP.

DON'T FORGET TO PICK UP YOUR TREES!

Tree Seedling & Wildlife Products Pickup Times:

Tuesday, April 8 - Friday April 11
8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Delaware SWCD Office
557-A Sunbury Road, Delaware

SWCD CALENDAR

For more info on these events, please call the District Office, (740) 368-1921.

March

3/18	SWCD Board Mtg. - 8:00 PM
3/20	Upper Scioto River Watershed Project Mtg.
3/29	Green Thumb Gardners' Fair - Olentangy Liberty High School

April

4/2	Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed mtg.
4/5	Tree Planting & Management Workshop - Gallant Woods Preserve
4/7	Braemar at Wedgewood - Commissioners 1st Hearing
4/8-11	Tree Seedling & Wildlife Product Pickup @ SWCD Office - 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM
4/15	SWCD Board Mtg.
4/19	Earth Day at Columbus Zoo
4/24-26	EECO Conference at Mohican Resort and Conference Center
4/29	Area 5 Envirothon Competition

May

5/5	Sheets #318 Final Hearing
5/20	SWCD Board Mtg.
5/26	Memorial Day - OFFICE CLOSED

Delaware SWCD Mission

To provide progressive leadership, support, and assistance to the public through grassroots programs that promote natural resources conservation and stewardship.

Delaware SWCD is now holding Conservation Easements within Subdivision Developments

Protecting Sensitive Natural Areas within Development

The Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District is a local political subdivision directed by a group of five dedicated, publicly-elected officials who know how important it is to protect sensitive natural features from development in Delaware County.

Conservation easement holding entities like the Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District have protected millions of acres of land all across the country. The Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District began its program in 2007 making it one of the first Conservation Districts in Ohio to hold conservation easements within subdivision development areas.

Today's pressures from encroaching development and urban sprawl have sparked a growing concern over the loss of farmland, green space and natural resources. The conservation easement is but one tool conscientious developers, landowners, government and other conservation organizations can use to protect and preserve sensitive natural areas.

To qualify for a conservation easement, the land must have some conservation or preservation value. Obvious examples would include land that harbors rare species of plant or animal life, or land bordering an existing park or preserve. Less obvious examples might include a wooded ravine, land that provides wildlife access to a natural waterway, or a small wetland area that helps filter the water flowing into a lake or river.



What is a Conservation Easement?

Ownership of a piece of property may best be described as a "bundle of rights." These rights include the right to occupy, use, lease, sell, and develop the land. An easement involves the exchange of one or more of these rights from the landowner to someone who does not own the land, in this case, the developer to the Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District. Easements have been used for years to provide governments, utilities, and extractive industries with certain property rights. An easement permits the holder certain rights regarding the land for specified purposes while the ownership of the land remains with the private property owner.

What can be done on a Conservation Easement?

- Land covered by a conservation easement is still privately owned land, with the only restrictions on the land use being those agreed upon by the owner and easement holder.
- Private property owners maintain all responsibilities of a landowner unless otherwise stipulated in the conservation easement deed agreement.
- Private property owners retain rights to privacy giving access only to the easement holder for inspection and enforcement purposes.
- Easements do not require the private property owner to provide public access.
- Camping, fishing, hiking, and hunting are allowed with landowner permission where local ordinances allow.

Benefits to the Environment and You

- Conservation easements provide vegetated buffer zones that filter pollutants from runoff.
- Conservation easements protect natural wetlands that store runoff and filter pollutants.
- Conservation easements keep wildlife habitat in and along ravines and stream channels.
- Conservation easements provide passive recreational opportunities for property owners.
- Conservation easements add to the community's GREENSPACE.



What are the Responsibilities of the Easement Holder?

- Establishing baseline easement documentation, including enforceable deed language, maps, property descriptions and baseline documentation of the property's characteristics.
- Monitoring the use of the land on a regular basis via onsite visits to the property to ensure that the easement restrictions are being upheld.
- Providing information and background data regarding the easement to property owners. (For more information about the Delaware SWCD Conservation Easement program, visit www.delawareswcd.org/con_easements.htm)
- Enforcing the restrictions of the easement through the legal system if necessary.
- Maintaining property/easement related records.

2008 Grassed Waterway Construction

If you have applied for or are planning to have a grassed waterway project constructed during 2008, winter is the time to begin your preparations. If you have already applied to the USDA office for a grassed waterway, you should be getting estimates and lining up a contractor to do the work in the Spring or Summer. The number of contractors who build waterways is limited, and their schedules often fill up fast once the weather breaks. Taking care of this step now will help to ensure that your project is constructed when you want it to be. The seeding dates for grassed waterways are March 15 - May 31 and August 1 to September 15. A waterway seeded outside of these dates can have payments withheld until the next seeding season to ensure that a good grass stand gets established.

If you are thinking about constructing a grassed waterway project in 2008 and have not yet contacted the USDA office, please do so as soon as possible. This will allow the NRCS/SWCD staff enough time to do the prep work, field survey, and engineering design for you in time for construction season. Generally speaking, a request for a waterway needs to be made by mid-April to provide enough time to have an engineering plan completed in time for construction to begin in late July.

In all cases, be sure to sign your contract with FSA prior to beginning construction. Beginning construction without a signed contract could jeopardize your cost-share. Call the NRCS/SWCD office at least 3 days prior to the anticipated construction starting date so that we can do the necessary layout work (flagging the centerline, cut hubs, etc.) for the contractor.



SPRING LAWN CARE - "DON'T BAG IT!"

As the record-breaking snow melts away and grass again becomes visible, thoughts start to turn towards lawn care and mowing. While Spring may seem like the opportunity time to fertilize the rapidly growing grass, most homeowners place too much of an emphasis on Spring and Summer fertilization. Some nutrients are needed at this time, however, too much application at this time can lead to runoff of excess fertilizer and burning as well as disease and weed problems. Fall is the best time for the bulk of fertilization, but there are still things that can be done in the Spring to benefit your lawn. Take a soil test of your lawn this summer to determine the proper fertilization rates.

Mowing strategy can go a long way to making the most out of nutrients that are already present in your lawn. Allowing grass clippings to lay instead of bagging them returns a lot of essential nutrients back to the soil. A common myth about grass clippings left on the lawn is that it will contribute to thatch development which can have detrimental effects on a lawn. Grass clippings, however, are over 75% water and decompose rapidly while supplying valuable nutrients to the lawn. In fact, 100 pounds of grass clippings can contribute as many nutrients as 3-4 pounds of synthetic fertilizer. In order to maximize the benefits of grass clippings, plan to set your mower higher and mow more often. Mowing higher promotes deeper root development so the grass stand is healthier as a whole. The typical recommendation would be to mow no more than one-third of the leaf at a time. This obviously leads to more mowing in the spring, but studies actually show that less-frequent mowing is needed later in the summer. Making the best use of this organic source of nutrients can reduce the amount of fall fertilization needed which can save money and benefit the environment.

CRANBERRY SALAD

Ingredients:

2 Cups Cranberries, crushed
3 Cups, Miniature Marshmallows
3/4 Cup Sugar
2 Cups Diced Apple
1 Cup Whipped Cream

Directions:

Mix together cranberries, sugar, and marshmallows. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning, add apples and whipping cream. Mix. Chill well before serving.



-Submitted by Sue Cunningham, SWCD Board Member



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