

April—May—June

2026 Newsletter



VAN WERT

Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

1185 Professional Drive, Van Wert, OH 45891

Telephone (419) 238-9591 Web site: www.vanwertswcd.org

College Scholarship Being Offered

The Van Wert SWCD is offering one, \$1,000 scholarship to college students studying agriculture, natural resources, or closely related fields at an Ohio college or university during the 2025/26 academic year. Recipients of the scholarship must have completed their freshman year, and must be a Van Wert County resident.

Scholarship applications are due by May 22, 2026. The Scholarship Committee of the SWCD will review all applications and the recipient will be announced in July. Scholarship money will be sent directly to the recipient's college or university at the beginning of the academic year.

Criteria for determining the recipient will be area of study, grades, activities, leadership, and commitment to conservation practices. The SWCD reserves the right to refuse any applications not meeting requirements.

Applications and two reference forms need to be completed and sent to the office by the deadline of May 22. The forms are available at the office or on the Van Wert SWCD website. You may email your completed form to Becky at becky@vanwertswcd.com, or send it in the mail to 1185 Professional Drive, Van Wert, Ohio 45891.

H2Ohio Update by: Kady Mohr

Van Wert County had a successful enrollment for 2026-2027 crop year. We had 124 producers with a total of 123,418 acres enrolled! The enrollment is now closed, and we will not be accepting any new producers or acres. The H2Ohio mission to ensure all Ohioans have access to clean, safe, water for generations to come, began back in 2020. I am impressed and grateful that the Van Wert County participation has only increased since then. Producers that are currently in the program have just completed writing their nutrient management plans which will help them successfully complete best management practices in our county. Farmers were able to learn through creating plans about what nutrients their fields are calling for. By evaluating their soil tests, H2Ohio follows Tri-State 590 recommendations on what nutrients that a field needs. Phosphorus reduction is our main focus in this program. Studies have shown that phosphorus is responsible for the harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie. H2Ohio was created to incentivize best management practices to help eliminate the agricultural runoff that is going into our water systems that flow to Lake Erie. If you are wanting to know more about the program please visit our H2Ohio tab on our soil and water website or through the ODA website.

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Special points of interest:

- ◇ *Soil & Water Stewardship Week April 26—May 3*
- ◇ *\$1,000 College Scholarship is being offered*
- ◇ *Need fish for your pond—order now!*

Stewardship Week

The 2026 NACD Stewardship Week theme, **Soil. Where It All Begins**, celebrates the incredible power of soil to support life in all its forms. Soil is not just the ground we walk on. It is the starting point for healthy food, clean water, thriving habitats, and resilient communities. From backyard gardens to forests and city parks, everything begins with what is beneath our feet.

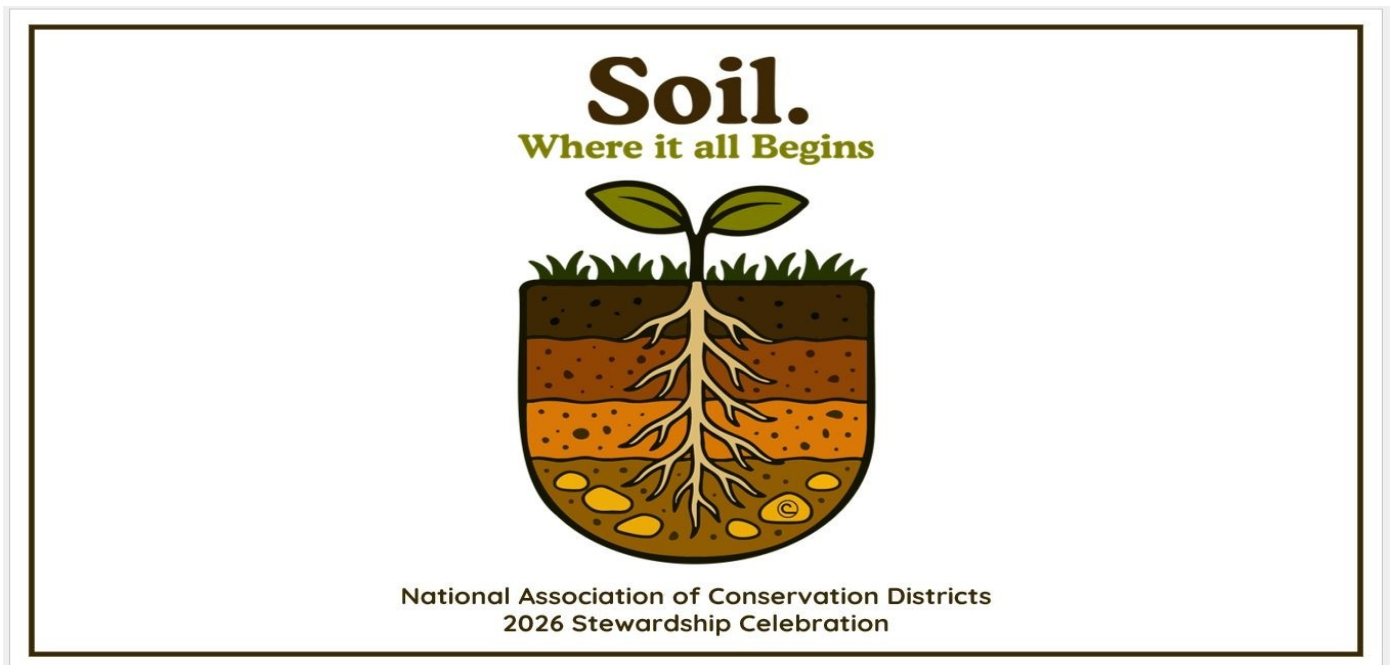
Soil does a lot more than grow plants. It holds water, cycles nutrients, and provides homes for billions of living organisms that help keep nature in balance. It keeps roots in place, helps prevent flooding, and supports wildlife and people alike. The trees in our neighborhoods, the food on our tables, and the natural places we love all depend on healthy soils.

Conservation districts across the country work every day to protect this vital resource. Through education, technical support, and local partnerships, they help landowners and communities keep soil healthy, productive, and resilient. Districts also provide free educational resources to schools, families, and community groups to inspire the next generation of soil stewards and help people of all ages connect with conservation in meaningful ways. Whether it is helping farmers manage erosion or supporting school gardens in town, conservation districts lead the way in caring for the land.

When we take care of soil, we are taking care of everything it supports. That is why soil is where it all begins.

During Stewardship week, the Van Wert SWCD will provide a Red Maple tree seedling and a presentation on the importance of trees to 4th grade students in the county. There will also be other information and materials passed out to students at schools in the county.

Stewardship week runs from April 26– May 3.



Fish Fingerling Orders / Delivery Scheduled

The SWCD is currently taking orders for fish fingerlings. The types of fish available are: large-mouth bass, blue gill, channel catfish, black fathead minnow, redear shellcracker, and white amur.

We will also be offering Tilapia this year. The pick up date for the Tilapia will be sometime in June. We will send out an email notification with that information once we know the date.

The fish sale is an opportunity for pond owners to stock or restock their ponds for a reasonable cost. Orders will be accepted until Wednesday, April 22 at 4:00. Payment is expected when the order is placed.

The fish will be available for pick up Thursday, April 30 at 3:00 p.m.

Stocking recommendations for a one acre pond are:

100 largemouth bass	500 blue gill
100 channel catfish	500-1000 minnow

The orders will be boxed and ready at the time of delivery. Order forms are available in the office, on the website at: www.vanwertswcd.org or by emailing Becky at: becky@vanwertswcd.com.



Tree Sale

Thank you to everyone who participated in our tree sale this year. It was a huge success. We sold over 2,600 tree seedlings and were able to hand out a Red Maple tree seedling to all of the area 4th graders. Along with giving the students a tree they also had a class presentation and were given information on their new tree that they can plant at home.

Trees contribute to their environment by providing oxygen, improving air quality, climate amelioration, conserving water, preserving soil, and supporting wildlife. During the process of photosynthesis, trees take in carbon dioxide and produce the oxygen we breathe.

As trees grow, they help stop climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon in the trees and soil, and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. Trees provide many benefits to us, every day.

The annual tree sale runs every year from January-March with different varieties each year. Be sure to check our website for more info.

***Tree order pick up will be April 23rd from 2:00-4:00. If this changes an email will be sent out.



Van Wert S.W.C.D.
1185 Professional Drive
Van Wert, OH 45891

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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Ken Kottenbrock, District Conservationist
Ben Kales, Soil Conservationist
Noel Morris, Civil Technician
Jeff Carlson, Ohio Senior Wildlife Biologist

Upcoming Dates and Events

- April 8—SWCD Board Meeting 8:00 AM
- April 22 – Deadline to purchase Fish Fingerlings
- April 23– Tree pick up 2:00-4:00
- April 26- May 3 – Soil and Water Stewardship Week
- April 30— Fish pick up at 3 PM
- May 13- SWCD Board Meeting 8:00 AM
- May 22 – College Scholarship Application Deadline
- May 25—Memorial Day (office closed)
- June 10– SWCD Board Meeting 8:00 AM
- June 19– Juneteenth (office Closed)