

April—May—June

2025 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 2024/25 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 9, 2025. 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 9. 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.

Stewardship Week

The Van Wert SWCD wants to remind you that each of us has a connection to natural resources. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is celebrating the 70th year of Stewardship week April 27 – May 4, 2025. The 2025 NACD Stewardship Week theme, *Home is Where the Habitat Is*, highlights the essential role that both natural and managed habitats play in supporting biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance. But this theme is more than just a catchy phrase – it's a reminder that every habitat, from sprawling forests to bustling urban parks, contributes to the health of our planet.

NACD Stewardship Week is one of the largest national programs to promote natural resource conservation. Celebrated annually since 1955 between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, NACD Stewardship Week reminds us of our individual responsibilities to care for natural resources.

During Stewardship Week, Van Wert SWCD will provide a Yellow Buckeye 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.



Inside this issue:

Tips for Spring CRP Seeding	2
Fish Fingerling Sale/Delivery Set	3
Tree Sale	3
Calendar of Events	4

Special points of interest:

- ✧ *Soil & Water Stewardship Week April 27–May 4*
- ✧ *\$1,000 College Scholarship is being offered*
- ✧ *Need fish for your pond—order now!*

Tips For Successful Spring CRP Seedings

It's that time of year again where temperatures are starting to rise and with that comes preparation for planting season, not only for row crops, but CRP as well. As many of you may already know, through the CRP program, we have very specific seeding windows and as conservation planners we try our best to plan these seedings for the first available seeding window. With the dormant seeding window ending on March 14th, we now turn to our spring/summer window, which runs from 3/15-5/1 for introduced "cool season" grass species and 4/1-6/1 for any of our native grass & forb seed mixes. With that being said, we are in full preparation mode, and I just wanted to give some tips and tricks to help make your plantings as successful as possible!

Weed Control: Proper weed control prior to planting is critical, having a clean, weed free seed bed will significantly increase your chance of success. This may mean you have to spray your focus area several times, sometimes before and after tillage to make sure we start with as clean of a seed bed as possible. Do make sure that if you are using herbicides with any sort of residual activity that you make sure to wait the appropriate amount of time before completing the seeding as to avoid any potential for failure in that regard. If you are someone who is organic or someone who simply wants to avoid using herbicides, there are some options available that we can try so long as the weed pressure is not too severe.

Tillage: Depending on your practice and its respective size, you may have been given guidance to broadcast the seed or to use a no-till drill. Either option will work, but typically, we have the majority of landowners complete broadcast seedings since most of the practices we deal with are relatively small and we lack the access to native warm season grass drills. Broadcasting works great and is usually one of the simplest ways to get seed onto the ground. One of the biggest requirements of broadcast seedings is to have adequate amounts of bare ground present. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways using tillage implements, some of the best seedings have been done following the use of a PTO driven rototiller attachment, as it creates a very fine seedbed with little to no plant residue sitting on the surface. But, just about any tillage tool will work, we tell landowners to shoot for 75-100% bare ground, but generally speaking, you want the seed bed to look similar to your garden just before planting your vegetables.

Cultipacking: A step that is often over-looked when it comes to broadcast seedings is the use of a cultipacker. This tool can make a world of difference when it comes to the success of a seeding. Cultipacking the field both before and after tillage is needed when broadcast seeding during this spring/summer window. As it helps to firm up and level the seed bed before broadcasting and also helps to press the seeds into the soil afterwards, achieving that seed to soil contact which is so crucial during this time of year. I should forewarn you, DO NOT press the seeds too deep, we want to see some of the seed left on top of the soil once you are finished cultipacking. Some landowners will use a drag or harrow after broadcasting their seed in place of cultipacking, and this works, but you need to make sure you are not dragging too much dirt on top of those seeds otherwise they likely will not germinate, and the seeding could end up failing. Seeding any deeper than 1/4 inch can be detrimental, we prefer to have the seeds ~1/8th inch into the soil with some seed visible on top of the soil as well.

Calibration of Equipment: The biggest things to watch out for when using a no-till drill to complete these seedings is that often the amount of seed being used is so small that some of your typical grain drills cannot seed at rates that low. To combat this, we recommend using a filler/carrier that best matches the seed size you are planting and mix it in with your seed mix to achieve the proper seeding rate per acre that you need. We have several guides on how to do this, so if you have any questions do not hesitate to give me a call and I would be more than happy to send you some information to help with this process. Another thing to watch, similar to what I mentioned above, is making sure that the seed is not drilled too deeply, so really pay attention to those depth settings and set them appropriately. Depending on the type of drill you use, tillage may or may not be needed before hand, so make sure to keep us informed on what type of equipment you have available to you. I personally feel that we get better seedings when landowners use no-till drills, but it comes down to making sure the drill is properly calibrated and that even seed distribution is achieved across the field.

Mowing for Establishment: It may seem counter intuitive to mow your CRP multiple times after completing your seeding, but it is actually a tool that we strongly encourage landowners to complete. Studies have been done that show that fields that are mowed during the first 1-2 years after seeding typically have more species present and as a result, more blooms, than those fields that were not mowed at all. The rules of CRP allow for landowners to mow as much as needed within the first 2 years following the initial seeding. I tell landowners to mow their fields whenever the cover reaches knee height or so and to repeat this process as needed up to the middle of August. You will find that there will be a lot of annual weed species creeping in these first couple of years, most of which are not a problem and will dissipate over time with mowing and

Tips For Successful Spring CRP Seedings Continued

overall seedling establishment. Landowners should keep a watchful eye out for any noxious weed or invasive species, such as Canada Thistle or Teasel, as these species can become disastrous if left unmanaged. Do not mow any shorter than 8 inches when native grasses are present, otherwise you may run the risk of scalping those grass clumps and killing them.

Another note pertaining to mowing CRP, would be to make sure you clean off the deck of your mowing equipment prior to mowing your CRP acres, as this can spread the seed of undesirable species into your CRP field. Turf grass species such as Fescue and Kentucky Bluegrass produce a lot of seed and over time, these species can outcompete desirable species and lead to a management nightmare for the landowner in the long run. Mowing is limited to 20% of the acreage per year and landowners **CANNOT** mow from **March 15th-July 15th**, unless they have noxious or invasive weeds present that need to be treated before going to seed, in which case landowners can contact their local Farm Service Agency office to seek that approval.

These details should be included on the implementation requirement sheets in your conservation plan provided to you by NRCS &/or FSA. But, if not, do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like any additional information. You are more than welcome to call or email me anytime using the address and phone number found below.

Written by: Jeff Carlson; Senior Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist with Pheasants Forever

Email: jcarlson@pheasantsforever.org

Phone Number: 440-822-9350

Coverage Counties: Allen, Paulding, Putnam & Van Wert

Fish Fingerling Orders / Delivery Scheduled

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

The fish sale is an opportunity for pond owners to stock or restock their ponds for a reasonable cost.

Orders will be accepted until Thursday, April 24 at 4:00. Payment is expected when the order is placed. The fish will be available for pick up Thursday, May 1 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 or on the website at:

www.vanwertswcd.org



Tree Sale

Thank you to everyone who participated in our tree sale this year. It was a huge success. We sold over 2,000 tree seedlings and were able to hand out a Yellow Buckeye 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 25th 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
Permit #2
Wapakoneta, OH

The Van Wert SWCD and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender, identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department.

Board of Supervisors

Craig Pohlman, Chairman
Elliot Callow, Vice-Chair
Ryan Mohr, Secretary
Dave Kemler, Fiscal Agent
Brett Schumm, Youth & Publicity

SWCD Staff

Becky Dowler, Office Manager
Seth Owens, District Technician
Kady Fuhrmann, Special Program Technician
Tammy Campbell, Educ. Coordinator

NRCS Staff

Ken Kottenbrock, District Conservationist
Ben Kales, Soil Conservationist
Noel Morris, Civil Technician
Jeff Carlson, Ohio Senior Wildlife Biologist

Upcoming Dates and Events

April 9—SWCD Board Meeting 8:00 AM

April 24 – Deadline to purchase Fish Fingerlings

April 25– Tree pick up 2:00-4:00

April 27- May 4 – Soil and Water Stewardship Week

May 1— Fish pick up at 3 PM

May 9 – College Scholarship Application Deadline

May 14- SWCD Board Meeting 8:00 AM

May 26—Memorial Day (office closed)

June 11– SWCD Board Meeting 8:00 AM

June 19– Juneteenth (office Closed)