Conservation In Action

Fall 2026

Your Soil & Water Conservation Specialists!

Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District

SWCD Supervisors
Beth Mullen - Chairperson
Kristy Leindecker - Vice Chair
David Lapp - Secretary
Jordan Thompson - Fiscal Agent
Jordan Olinger - Treasurer

SWCD Staff
Ryan Medley - District Administrator
Kelsey Saylor - Admin. Assistant
Zach Wallace - District Technician
Michaela Savage - District Technician
Carah Mladek - Stormwater Technician

NRCS Staff
Josh Britton - District Conservationist
Mathew Hursey - Resource Conservationist
Derrick Hill - Natural Resources Specialist

Mission: Providing leadership to educate and assist landowners in the wise management of our natural resources.

Conservation Takes Center Stage at 84th Annual Meeting & Banquet



Guest Speaker, Jeremy Scherf, captures attention of 170 attendees

More than 170 guests gathered at Lake Park Pavilion on Thursday evening, October 15th, for the Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District's 84th Annual Meeting and Banquet. The evening brought together landowners, community members, conservation partners, and special guests to celebrate another year of conservation efforts throughout Coshocton County. Guests enjoyed a buffet dinner provided by Theo's Restaurant of Cambridge before the evening's program began.

The annual supervisor election was held for two seats on the Coshocton SWCD Board of Supervisors. David Lapp and Jordan Olinger were both re-elected to serve three-year terms beginning January 1, 2027.

This year's guest speaker was Jeremy Scherf, State Service Forester with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry. With his presentation, "Money Does Grow on Trees," Jeremy highlighted the often-overlooked value of trees and woodlots. He shared how understanding the resources on your property and making good forest management decisions can increase their value over time, encouraging landowners to recognize the investment growing right in their own backyards.



JMThomas Farms as the 2026 Conservation Farmer Award

One of the evening's highlights was recognizing JMThomas Farms, owned and operated by Josh and Mary Thomas, as the 2026 Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year. Located in White Eyes Township, the Thomas family operates a diversified farm raising Angus cattle and Dorset sheep while managing pasture, hay, and row-crop acreage. Their commitment to conservation is demonstrated through numerous installed practices, including watering facilities, waste storage structures, roof and covers, heavy-use pads, access roads, fencing, and a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan.

The Thomas family has also shared their operation with the community, hosting a pasture walk in 2023 and serving as a stop on the 2025 Fall Foliage & Farm Tour. They have welcomed groups from Leadership Coshocton County, SWCD supervisors, and Soil and Water technicians for farm tours. Josh and Mary are active in their community, supporting several agricultural organizations and serving as 4-H advisors for the Chili Challengers 4-H Club. Their daughters, Sarah and Abigail, are also actively involved in the family farm operation. Congratulations to Josh and Mary Thomas on this well-deserved recognition!

Coshocton SWCD was also proud to sponsor the Coshocton County Junior Fair Hay Show, with Cassie Putt of TMK Bakersville serving as the official judge. This year's winners included Shiloh Kinzel of River View FFA in the Alfalfa and Light Mixed Hay Class, Wade Thompson of Ridgewood FFA in the Clover and Grass Hay Class, and Coleston Hunter of This-N-That 4-H in the Light Mixed Hay Class. Each winner received a rosette and a $25 cash award. Congratulations to these young agricultural leaders!





The evening also recognized some impressive trees growing throughout Coshocton County. Garber Family Farms won Coshocton SWCD's Big Tree Contest with a White Elm measuring 257 inches in circumference. Connie Miller of the Coshocton Tree Commission presented the City Big Tree Award to Rhonda Emerson and Chuck Davis for their Red Oak, which measured 141 inches in circumference and stood 93 feet tall.

The Mystery Photo Contest, featured as part of Coshocton SWCD's display at the Coshocton County Fair, also had a winner announced. Cory Sampsel was selected from six correct entries as the lucky winner. The mystery photo featured the Troy Darr Farm in Linton Township.

The evening concluded with door prizes and an opportunity to celebrate the people who make conservation possible throughout Coshocton County. Coshocton SWCD extends its appreciation to everyone who attended and continues to support the District's efforts. From local farmers and landowners to community partners and volunteers, conservation is truly a team effort!



County Big Tree Winner, Garber Family Farms



City Big Tree Winner, Rhonda and Chuck

Get Ready for the 2027 Tree Seedling Sale!



The 2027 Tree Seedling Sale will kick off in January, offering a variety of native trees and shrubs, along with wildflower seed packets, marking flags, tree tubes, and Plantskydd rodent repellent.

Our 2026 sale was a success, with more than 5,500 trees sold! Each year, our supplier works to introduce several unique varieties while continuing to offer customer favorites like White Oak and White Pine.

Order forms will be included in our early January newsletter. We encourage everyone to order early, as popular varieties tend to sell out before the sale ends. We are also extremely grateful for our continued partnership with Holmes SWCD, which helps make this sale possible.

Please note that payment is accepted by cash or check only. Online ordering is not available at this time.

Know someone interested in purchasing trees who doesn't receive our newsletter? Have them contact our office at (740) 622-8087 ext. 4 or email Kelsey Saylor at kelseysaylor@coshoctoncounty.net to be added to our mailing list.

Cover Crops Continue to Grow in Coshocton County



Coshocton County producers signed up an impressive 4,133 acres for cover crops, with more than 2,865 acres receiving cost-share assistance through the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District. Coshocton SWCD staff once again coordinated aerial seeding with Fisher Crop Care by Air in early September, covering more than 1,415 acres. Seed was purchased from TMK Bakersville and was delivered to the airport on the day of fly-on application. The remainder of signed up acreage will be drilled or broadcasted later this fall. Cover crops play an important role in protecting and improving our soil by reducing erosion, holding nutrients in place, improving soil structure, and building organic matter. We appreciate our cooperators in participating in the cover crop program!

2026 Poster Contest Winners – "Have you Eaten Any Soil Lately"

Big thank you to all our awesome 5th grade teachers and students who jumped into this year's Annual Poster Contest, sponsored by the Coshocton SWCD! The theme - "Have You Eaten Any Soil Lately?" - got everyone thinking about how all our favorite foods can be traced right back to the soil. After learning about it in class, students put their creativity to work and came up with some amazing posters that were equal parts artistic and educational! Fourteen "Best of Class" posters were displayed at the Coshocton County Fair, and the public helped pick the winners with an impressive 1,315 votes cast! 1st Place: Emilia Lonsinger, RVIS - $25 cash prize and a ice cream party for her class. 2nd Place: Saoirse Nunley, CES - $15 cash prize and an ice cream party for her class. 3rd Place: Raevanna Galloway, CES - $10 cash prize and an ice cream party for her class. Huge congratulations to our winners and a big thank-you to everyone who stopped at our booth and took the time to vote in the contest!



1st Place: Emilia

2nd Place: Saoirse





3rd Place: Raevanna

Seeking 2027 Affiliate Members and Renewals are Due!

2026 Affiliate Members

Diamond

Buckeye Brine LLC
Coshocton County Beacon
Centerra CO-OP
Judge Tim & Daphne France
McWane Ductile - Ohio

Platinum

Buckeye Forestry Service, LLC
Hidden Spring Farms, Tim Rogers
Home Loan Savings Bank
Pony Field Farm LLC

Gold

Bakersville Garage, INC
Baltic Bank
C & R Helmick Farms
Cosh. Co. Chamber of Commerce
Coshocton County Farm Bureau
Coshocton Foundation
Dr. Rob & Sheri Stout and Family
Endsley Insurance Agency
Frontier Power Company
Gottlieb, Johnston, Beam & Dal Ponte
Harold's Equipment, Inc.
Gail Piper, In Memory of Jim Piper
Jacobs Vanaman Agency, Inc.
Larry A. Frye Farms
Lynn Wells - In Memory of Ray Griffith
McCoy Homestead, Keith & Denise McCoy
Steven Oster
Owens & Manning, Attorneys
Rock Hill Farms, Stevens Family
Scheetz Mark
Sturtz Farm, Larry & Maureen Sturtz
The Garden Patch Greenhouse
Larry & Teresa Bradford
Thousand Oaks Farms
TMK Bakersville
Tumblin Farms, David Tumblin Family
WenMar Farms, Inc.
William Albert, Inc.
Wills Transport & Excavating

Silver

Baird Concrete
Cosh. Co. Sportsman Association
Dane & Amy Shryock
Daugherty Farms
Dave & Darla Markley
Deb Bigelow
Garber Brothers Farms LLC
Gary & Michelle Fischer
Knotty Nuff Acres
R Family Farm LLC
Schumaker Farms

Bronze

Alan Donaker Surveying
Bob & Kathy Bigrigg
Cosh. Co. Treasurer Janette Donaker
Gerber & Sons, Inc.
Saylor Wealth Strategies
Vic Allen Construction & Excavating

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Tree sale information will be in the next issue!



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The Coshocton SWCD Newsletter is a publication to keep county residents informed on our SWCD program. Please phone the office at (740)622-8087, ext. 4 if your address needs corrected or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

Did you know?? You can receive your newsletter via e-mail. Contact kelseysaylor@coshoctoncounty.net

Coshocton SWCD and USDA-NRCS are equal opportunity employers and providers.

Picture-Perfect Weather for the 55th Annual Fall Foliage Tour



Beautiful fall weather and colorful foliage provided the perfect backdrop for the 55th Annual Coshocton County Fall Foliage & Farm Tour. More than 1,300 visitors from 26 Ohio counties, 9 states, and 3 countries enjoyed the scenic tour, which showcased Tuscarawas, Lafayette, Oxford, and Linton Townships.

The tour is sponsored by OSU Extension, Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District, and the USDA Farm Service Agency. These agencies would like to extend a sincere thank-you to all of the hosts, volunteers, and participating locations that helped make this year's tour a success. Special thanks to the Coshocton County Fairgrounds, Schumaker Farms, West Lafayette Museum, West Lafayette Baptist Church, Old Stone Fort (drive-by), Darr Farms (drive-by), James Mullet, Bluck's One Room Schoolhouse (drive-by), Larry Frye Farms, Daugherty Farms South, and Roahrig Farms for their hospitality and support.



The 56th Annual Fall Foliage & Farm Tour is tentatively scheduled for October 16–17, 2027, and will explore the southern portion of Coshocton County. As part of the fun and tradition, tour maps and stop locations will remain a surprise until the morning of!

Calendar of Events

November 26-27
Thanksgiving Holiday, Office Closed

December 9
SWCD Board Mtg, 12:00 p.m.

December 24-25
Christmas Holiday, Office Closed

January 1
New Year's Day, Office Closed

January 13
SWCD Board Mtg, 12:00 p.m.

January 18
Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Office Closed

January-March
SWCD Tree Seedling Sale