

# Conservation Quarterly

## SWCD Annual Meeting and Supervisor Election

Four candidates are running for two open seats on the Madison Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors. There will be a kickoff voting event during the District's 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on August 19<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. at the Gwynne Conservation Area, 690 Arbuckle Rd., London. Candidates in this year's election are Jonathan Francis, Robert A. Hunter, Nancy Denes-Sparks and A.J. Schmitt.

During the District's Annual Meeting, two conservation awards will be given. Students Olivia Foreman, Jessica Fling, Tennessee Jennings, Grace Kitchen, Graham Gardner and their advisor, Mike Harkleroad, from West Jefferson High School, will be recognized as Madison County's Top-Ranked Envirothon Team to compete in the Envirothon Competition for Southwest Ohio. The Envirothon is a competitive, academic, outdoor team event for high school students which test their knowledge in Forestry, Aquatics, Current Environmental Issues, Soils, and Wildlife.

The Phillippi Family will be recognized as Madison SWCD Cooperator of the Year. The Cooperator of the Year award is a statewide recognition program that recognizes those who do an outstanding job of conserving our natural resources. Corey Phillippi is a great example of the next generation of farmers. Corey Phillippi farms with his grandfather and father, James Phillippi and James Phillippi II. He recently preserved his 53-acre farm in perpetuity with the Clean Ohio Farmland Preservation Program. He planted a native grass filter strip along Glade Run and, with the family, has made the switch to no-till farming.



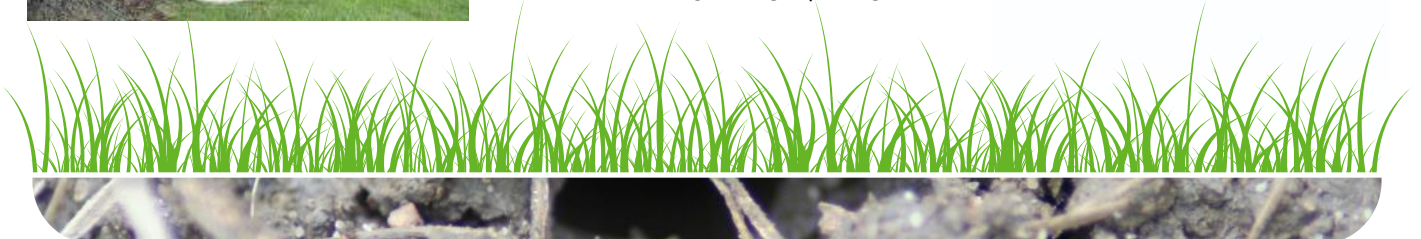
Voting at the annual meeting is free. Stay for a wagon tour, bring a chair and enjoy the food and fellowship! Purchase a ticket for a picnic dinner box for \$10 at the Madison Soil and Water Conservation District Office or [online](#) by August 12. For more information, call 740-852-4003, option 3.

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### Important Dates

08/11	Board Meeting
8/19	Annual Meeting & Election Kick Off
08/28	Grow Natives Workshop
09/06	Labor Day (office closed)
09/15	Board Meeting
9/17	Election period ends
09/21—09/23	Farm Science Review
10/11	Columbus Day observed (office closed)
10/13	Board meeting





### Three ways to vote

Residents or landowners, firms, and corporations that own land or occupy land in Madison and are 18 years of age and older may vote for Supervisor. There are three ways to cast a vote!

- (1) Cast a ballot during the annual meeting from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 19th, at the Gwynne Conservation Area, 690 Arbuckle Road, London
- (2) Call 740-852-4003 or e-mail [gail.wilson@oh.nacdn.net](mailto:gail.wilson@oh.nacdn.net) to request an absentee ballot
- (3) Visit the Madison SWCD office at 831 US Highway 42 NE, London, Ohio after August 19.

Voting by absentee or in person begins August 19 and ends on Friday, September 17th.



## SWCD 74th Annual Meeting and Election Kick-Off

Gwynne Conservation Area  
690 Arbuckle Road  
London

Thursday, August 19<sup>th</sup>  
5 pm -7 pm

### Agenda

- *Cast your vote from 5 pm – 7 pm*
- *Take a wagon tour*
- *Bring a chair and enjoy a boxed picnic dinner*
- *Awards presented at 6:30 pm*

Purchase your picnic dinner box tickets for \$10 at the Madison SWCD Office or [online](#) by August 12.

#### Notice!

The Annual Meeting  
has moved up from  
November.



*Wagon tours depart at 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.*

## Meet the Candidates

### Jonathan Francis

Jonathan Francis, 9990 Lilly Chapel Georgesville Rd, West Jefferson, is a Salesman & Integrated Solutions Specialist at Ag-Pro and is seeking his third term on the board. He grew up on a farm and continues to farm



today. Jonathan feels the most important natural resource issue in Madison County is water. Rain does not always come at the right place at the right time. The challenge is handling drainage and runoff in an economically and environmentally sound way. He is interested in running for the board again because he likes

to be involved and he knows there is a lot to learn. He sees the board as a good opportunity to volunteer his time to benefit others in the community.

### Robert A. Hunter

Robert A. Hunter, 7800 Correll-Maxey Road, London, is a retired farmer and self-employed CPA. He is seeking his fifth term on the board. He currently serves as Secretary/Treasurer. Bob has lived in Madison County his entire life



except for one year he lived in Columbus. He and his wife, Anne, have two sons Sam and Jesse. He belongs to several professional organizations, including Ohio Society of CPAs, Madison County Farm Bureau, Ohio Cattlemen's Association, Ohio Corn Growers' Association and the Ohio Soybean Association. Bob believes managing our water supply and water

quality are our most important concerns in Madison County and there may be a time in the future when our grandchildren or great grandchildren will wonder why we did not do more towards maintaining our water quality. He is running again because he likes being actively involved in the conservation practices being implemented in Madison County and being a part of preserving farmland and family farms.

### Nancy Denes-Sparks

Nancy Denes-Sparks, 7550 Scenic Dr., West Jefferson, has been a Special Education Paraprofessional/Job Coach with Dublin City schools for the past 21 years. She grew up in Jefferson Township on her family tree farm, Denes



Tree Farm. She served on the Village Council in West Jefferson from 1994-1998, until she moved out of the Village. She volunteers with St. Simon and Jude Catholic Church, the West Jefferson Ox Roast and various organizations in the community. As of this year, she is a third generation 4-H family, with her oldest granddaughter taking a Market Goat Project. Nancy believes that Madison

County has always been a strong agricultural county and with current growth, there is a great need to make sure our natural resources are protected. Many areas of the country struggle to maintain and collect quality water, so we need to be good stewards of our water and land for future generations. She knows she would have a lot to learn as a member of the Board and would welcome the challenge to serve Madison County.

### A.J. Schmitt

AJ Schmitt, 310 Riverside Dr., Galloway, has been in the construction business his whole life and has a civil engineer degree. For the last twenty years, he has worked on residential remodeling. Prior to that, he



worked on municipal sewage plants, wastewater treatment plants and all kinds of commercial buildings. He and his wife, Angela, have two grown children. A.J. believes the most important thing we can do is preserve the stream quality we have for future generations. He feels fortunate to live next to Darby Creek, a state and national

scenic river, and sees how keeping our water clean leads to healthier fish and better recreation. He is running for the board because he is passionate for water quality. He has time to give and wants to serve the community.

## What's good for quail is good for cattle

Ohio's northern bobwhite quail populations have been on a steady decline for the past several decades. Numerous factors that have led to this decline include severe winters, habitat loss from development, and increasing intensity of agricultural practices. Also, maturing woodlots and lack of "messy" transitional areas between the woods and cropland reduce the available amount of the successional vegetation to support a healthy quail population.

To help promote and increase quail populations, Ohio NRCS is offering the Northern Bobwhite in Grasslands program. This program provides financial assistance to producers and landowners to install mutually beneficial practices on the land for both quail and livestock production. Madison County is one of 31 counties in Southern Ohio included in this program.



NRCS works side-by-side with producers to develop a conservation plan that includes a whole system of practices. One key practice for both cattle and quail habitat is introducing native warm season grasses, such as eastern gamma grass, switchgrass and little bluestem, into the grazing rotation. Warm season grasses provide vital nutrients to grazing cattle as well as foraging and shelter for quail. Warm season grasses help producers get through the "summer slump," the time of reduced productivity during summer months, in fescue-dominated grazing operations. Consequently, producers can graze more days and feed less hay.

Other possibilities include but not limited to spring development and watering facilities, which provide fresh water for both grazing cattle and wildlife, and hedgerow planting, which increases successional habitat between agricultural practices.

Contact your local NRCS to apply or find out more!

## Madison County's Farmland Preservation Program



The Madison Soil and Water Conservation District partners with landowners, the county commissioners, Ohio Department of Agriculture and sometimes NRCS to permanently preserve Madison County farms with an agricultural easement. An agricultural easement is a voluntary, permanent, legally binding restriction placed on a farm that limits the use of the land to predominantly agricultural activity.

The benefit of an agricultural easement is that the landowner owns the land and may sell, gift or otherwise convey it to others. In addition, the farm will remain in one piece because the landowner and future generations will not be able to subdivide the farm into smaller farms or houses once the agricultural easement is placed on it.

See Farmland, page 5

*(Left) Pat and Jerry Downing signed up for the farmland preservation program to maintain the farm that has been in the family for over 100 years.*

## Farmland

*Continued from page 4*

Funding for the farmland preservation program comes from the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program. A payment cap has been set at \$2,000 per acre, with a maximum of \$500,000 per farm. The application period is typically mid-January to mid-March.

Although only one to two farms can be funded each year, it does add up over time! Since 2002, Madison County has purchased agricultural easements on 22 farms, totaling 5,651 acres, with 7.5 million of state and federal dollars, for an average cost of \$1,330 per acre. For more information about this program, contact the Madison SWCD.

## Welcome Broc, new district technician!



Broc Sehen is the District Technician- Wildlife Specialist. He recently came to Madison SWCD from Columbus Public Health where he completed lead inspections and educated the public and clients on issues with lead in the environment. Broc is a graduate of The Ohio State University School of Environment and Natural Resources, where he became familiar with environmental programs and policy as well as research and data collection techniques. Broc is from South Vienna, Ohio where he developed his passion for the environment and conservation through hunting, fishing, 4-H, and FFA. He is excited to help the residents of Madison

County improve and maintain wildlife habitat and conservation efforts while also meeting landowner production goals and expectations.



*Despite the rain, Broc Sehen and Julia Cumming led an educational ride celebrating the prairie history of Madison County. Use the [booklet](#) from the FMCPT website and watch for the white stakes for your personal ride when you have time!*

## Thank you, Affiliate Members!

Gerald T. Baynes, Attorney

David & Rebecca Call

Julia Cumming

David & Jo Ann Dhume

Gene & Sue Dougherty

Dwyer Bros. Inc.

Marian Fisher

Paul Gross

Bob & Sue Hackett

Karick Farms

Madison County Fish & Game

Madison Messenger

John & Joanna Mitchell

James & Valerie Peart

Ramona Porter

Harold & Ruth Spegal

Pleasant View Stock Farm

Gary & Diane Shannon

James & Sherry Stewart

Stewart Farm Inc.

Juanita Thomas

Joe Vick Farms

Xenikis Double A Farm

**CFAES**

## Grow Natives

**Saturday, August 28, 2021, 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

Location: London High School Auditorium, 336 Elm St, London, OH 43140  
Cost: \$35 for Master Gardener Volunteers, \$40 for all others (lunch included)

### Grow natives—Michele Bouquet

The Madison County Master Gardeners are sponsoring a workshop "Grow Natives" about growing Ohio native plants on Sat., August 28, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at London High School auditorium.

Plants and trees that are native to Ohio are essential for the native birds, butterflies, and insects that depend on them for survival. Experts from the Ohio State University extension will speak about Ohio's native trees and promoting beneficial bugs in the home landscape.

You will hear from Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources about "GO Native" Ohio's new native plant initiative and from

horticulturist Nancy Linz who spearheaded the effort here in Ohio and at the national level to name April as Native Plant Month. Debra Knapke, author, garden designer, horticulture expert known as The Garden Sage will end the day with a talk entitled, "The Native and Nativar Toolbox".

The workshop price of \$40 (\$35 for master gardeners) includes a boxed lunch and native plant plug from Natives in Harmony Nursery. Gale Martin, the owner, will present information about pollinator-friendly native plants and be an all day vendor at the workshop. To register, please contact the Madison County extension office at 740-852-0975 or email Griffith.483@osu.edu.

### Contact us

Please contact Gail Wilson at [gail.wilson@oh.nacdn.net](mailto:gail.wilson@oh.nacdn.net) if you wish to be put on or removed from our email list. Your board members are David Junk, Chairman; Howard Yoder, Vice Chairman; Bob Hunter, Treasurer; Steve Davis and Jonathan Francis. Your SWCD staff members are Julia Cumming, Program Administrator; Gail Wilson, Operations Coordinator; Brad Hughes, District Technician; and Broc Sehen, District Technician. Your NRCS staff members are: James Tillman, District Conservationist; Bre Matthies, Resource Conservationist; Ashley Dawson, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist; and Jeremiah McDowell, Civil Engineering Technician. All NRCS/MSWCD programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

Madison Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
831 US HWY 42 NE  
London, Ohio 43140

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Mondays through Fridays  
Phone: 740-852-4003 opt. 3

<http://madisonsoilandwater.com>  
<https://www.facebook.com/madisonswcdohio>

