
Calendar Overview

| Date | Event | Location |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| - May 5 th | ADP – Policies & Handbooks | Reynoldsburg |
| - May 7 th | TDP – Cool Season Forage Establishment & Maintenance | Wooster. OSU-ATI |
| - May 11 th | Pasture Walk | Washington County |
| - May 19 th | Intro to Grazing Workshop | Pike County |
| - May 20 th | TDP Hydrology | Horace Collins |
| - June 1 st -3 rd | State Envirothon | Franciscan University |
| - June 10 th | TDP Surveying | Horace Collins |
| - June 18 th | TDP Grazing 101 | Malabar Farms |
| - June 24 th | ADP – Outreach/Marketing | Reynoldsburg |
| - June 25 th | TDP I&E | OSU-ATI |
| - July 26 th -28 th | SSS in Newark | Licking County |
| - August 25 th | Area 1 HR Training | Hancock County |
| - September 1 st | Area 4 HR Training | Montgomery County |
| - September 3 rd | Area 2 HR Training | Medina County |
| - October 1 st | Area 5 HR Training | Jackson County |
| - October 29 th | Area 3 HR Training | Guernsey County |

New Updates & Friendly Reminders

OSWCC State Match Verification Worksheet-The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission met on April 28, 2026, to review the history of the state match policy, the calculation process, and the Commission’s role in approving state match. During this session, the Commission approved a new State Match Verification Worksheet. This worksheet replaces Form 11 and is designed to reduce errors and improve consistency in reporting local funds and calculating state match.

The new verification worksheet will be used this year. ODA program specialists will distribute it to all SWCDs by email. An informational webinar was held on May 1 to explain the new worksheet. If you would like a recording of the webinar or need assistance completing the worksheet, please contact your program specialist.

State Match – Local SWCD appropriation estimates show expected increases again for this year! **Remember:** To be considered for state match in SFY 27 funds must be deposited in the special fund by April 30th, 2026. Once funds are transferred and documentation has been completed as per OSWCC policy, reach out to your Program Specialist to schedule a review. Completed and reviewed documentation must be submitted to the OSWCC via your program specialist no later than June 5th to be eligible for match.

SWCD Salary Summary – Data for the 2026 Salary Summary will be pulled from Beehive in June. Please review and update employee salary information in Beehive before **May 31st**.

SWCD Program Internal Review – The Internal Review for 2026 is currently going through the review process. The intent is to send it out with the July Monthly Update to be completed before August 31st. This timing should increase consistency among responses as it will more closely align with the state fiscal year.

2026 Ohio Conservation Farm Family Awards – Entry deadline May 8, 2026. Now featuring a new statewide Small Farm category, expanding recognition of conservation efforts across Ohio. Six finalists will each receive a \$400 check, featured in the September issue of Ohio Farmer magazine, and be honored with their families at a special awards luncheon during the 2026 Farm Science Review, where an engraved brick with their name will be added to the Farm Science landscape. **ODA has received only a few applications this year, please consider submitting candidates by the May 8th deadline.** Please submit applications For more details, contact Darcy Griffin-Kamerer at Darcy.Griffin-Kamerer@agri.ohio.gov.

Credit Card Convenience Fees – On April 23, 2026, the Auditor of State's office issued an advisory memo addressing concerns of public officials regarding the allowability of payments for credit card convenience fees charged. The memorandum provides guidance on when the payment of these fees may be appropriate and recommends the development of formal policies to ensure consistent, transparent, and fiscally responsible payment when these fees are unavoidable. To view the memo click [here](#).

ADA Website Accessibility Deadline Extended – On April 20, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice issued an extension for the compliance dates. The compliance date for State and local government entities with a total population of 50,000 or more is extended from April 24, 2026, to April 26, 2027. The compliance date for public entities with a total population of less than 50,000, or any special district government, is extended from April 26, 2027, to April 26, 2028. For additional information click [here](#).

Training and Development

ADP – Policies and Handbooks: May 5th, Bromfield Auditorium Reynoldsburg. To view a list of the trainings planned for 2026 or to register for upcoming trainings, please click [here](#), or visit the DSWC [Resources for SWCDs webpage](#) under the “Administrative Development Program” tab.

2026 Technician Development Program (TDP) –To register please visit the DSWC [Resources for SWCDs webpage](#) under the “Technician Development Program” tab. If you have any questions, please reach out to Steve Johnson by phone at (614) 581-5953 or by email at stephen.johnson@agri.ohio.gov.

2026 Area HR Meetings – Save the Date – As a continuation of the HR Initiative and in cooperation with WorkSpring each area has scheduled a training focused on topics related to human resources management. SWCD board members and administrators are encouraged to attend. Additional details and registration information will be shared as they are further developed. Area 1-August 25th (Hancock County), Area 2-September 3rd (Medina County), Area 3-October 29th (Guernsey County), Area 4-September 1st (Montgomery County) and Area 5-October 1st (Jackson County)

Ohio Educator's Conference – Save the Date - the 2026 Ohio Educator's Conference is scheduled for October 21-22, 2026, at Salt Fork State Park. Come share ideas and join us for two days of informational sessions, hands-on activities, and tours. More details to come this summer.

Programs

H2Ohio

ODA's Conservation Ditch Program – Application due June 1st As we enter May, we want to remind everyone that applications are still being accepted for ODA's Conservation Ditch Program in all 88 counties. The deadline of **June 1st, 2026** is quickly approaching. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received, and funding is limited, so if you have a project idea, don't wait until the last minute. For more information, contact justin.mcbride@agri.ohio.gov. Application forms are available at <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/soil-and-water-conservation/resources/ODA-Announces-Statewide-H2Ohio-Conservation-Ditch-Program>. Secure your chance to participate before it's too late!

WLEB 24 County Project Area: Crop Year 2026-27 Enrollment Highlights. Enrollment across the 24 WLEB Counties was recently completed with an increase of 10% in unique acres enrolled and a 10% increase in the overall number of contracts, while reducing the overall cost per acre encumbered by 25%

Statewide 64 County Project Area: Based on a re-evaluation of available Cost Share funds the enrollment extension for existing agreements was increased to 2 years and we were able to accept an additional 100,000 acres of enrollment for Crop year 2027-28, (550,000 acres total). We currently have 488,000 acres with field enrollment completed. This enrollment will end on May 1st.

Partnerships

OFSWCD

Year-Round Relevancy: Promoting your district's work and maintaining strong relationships is essential to staying visible and effective. Many districts across the state already do excellent work through events, social media, and news outreach. To support and strengthen these efforts, we are developing a new resource to help districts efficiently share ideas, suggestions, and materials.

Attached is a draft "Year-Round Relevancy" monthly calendar that includes suggestions for promoting your district's work and maintaining key relationships. Please review the calendar and submit any additional ideas to Janelle by June 1, 2026. We are seeking items that apply to all 88 SWCDs, as well as op-ed articles and news releases that are already written and have statewide relevance. Our goal is to compile and edit these materials so they can be easily adapted for district use.

OFSWCD plans to collect all contributions by June and later this year provide each district with a flash drive of resources, including op-eds, news releases, and more. We plan to update this resource and release a revised version in the fall to support 2027 planning.

Summer Supervisor School- July 26–28, 2026, at Cherry Valley Lodge in Licking County. Guided by the theme "Land of Legend: From Ancient Earthworks to Future Ecosystems," the event highlights the region's deep cultural history and its forward-looking conservation efforts. Attendees will participate in networking, leadership development, and hands-on learning sessions. Featured tours include The Wilds, the Kokosing River, Buckeye Lake, the State of Ohio Tree Nursery, Dawes Arboretum, and innovative local farms using state-of-the-art agricultural technologies. These experiences showcase how Ohio's landscapes have evolved from ancient earthworks to today's emerging ecosystem strategies.

We look forward to seeing you! Follow this link to register for SSS: <https://cvent.me/xxYAq3>

The Partnership Meeting will be held January 26-28, 2027 at the Columbus Hilton Downtown. Mark your Calendars!

Ohio Envirothon will be held June 1-3 at Franciscan University. Please reach out to Wendee Dodds - wzadanski@jeffersoncountyoh.com or Janelle Mead if you would like to volunteer.

Our second annual Envirothon Teacher Workshop will be held June 4-5 at the Gwynne Conservation area (Near FSR). Registration is open on the events page of the Federation website.

Cooperator of the Year Signs if your district would like to receive a sign, please reach out to Janelle by June 25.

Poster Contest if you have submissions for the poster contest, please send them to nicole@ofswcd.org by July 1.

OASWCDE

WorkSpring Training – Difficult Conversations June 17th @ 1 pm and Maximizing Employee Engagement and Team Building October 7th & December 16th @ 1 pm The Employees Association is partnering with WorkSpring to offer two virtual leadership series: Difficult Conversations and Maximizing Employee Engagement and Team Building. Each series will consist of two one-hour-long sessions that will be hosted via Zoom. Use the registration link to register <https://www.oaswcde.org/2026-leadership-webinars.html> Note that registration is limited to the first 50 attendees. You must be an Employee Association member to attend. Not an OASWCDE Member? There is still time to join.

Tips and Resources

OSU Story Maps - The OSU Water Quality Team has developed four virtual Story Maps of conservation practices. Take a tour of conservation practices including soil health, cover crops, wetlands, phosphorous filters, and two-stage ditches. The story maps create an interactive tour by combining videos, interviews, pictures, and data. You can check them out at <https://go.osu.edu/wqstory>.

Grazing Management - Monthly forage tips from NRCS and OSUE

- Start hay harvests for quality forage. Consider making baleage to facilitate timely cutting.
- Clip, graze, or make hay to prevent seedhead formation.
- Rotate pastures as based in height rather than time.
- Consider temporary electric fencing to subdivide larger pastures and exclude areas for mechanical harvesting.
- Scout pastures for summer annual weeds and control when small.
- Be prepared to seed warm season grasses for supplemental forage once soil temperature is at 60 F.

Midwest Cover Crops Council Factsheets - The Midwest Cover Crops Council and OSU Extension have created a series of 23 fact sheets focused on different cover crop species. These fact sheets describe planting date and seeding rate information, termination information, and important tips and tricks for management. They can be accessed at www.midwestcovercrops.org/ohio-cover-crop-factsheets/.

Board Member Tip of the Month-

Evaluations: As a board member, it's your responsibility to ensure staff evaluations are conducted fairly, consistently, and in alignment with district goals. Evaluations are not just a formality, they are a key tool for accountability, staff development, and maintaining alignment with the district's mission.

Best Practices:

- **Follow Your Policy:** If your district has an established evaluation policy, review it regularly and make sure the board is following it. Consistency with your own policy is critical for accountability and legal protection.
- **Be Consistent:** Use a standardized evaluation form and process each year to ensure fairness and continuity.
- **Tie to the Plan of Work:** Evaluate performance based on how well staff are meeting goals outlined in the district's Annual Plan of Work.
- **Document the Process:** Record in meeting minutes that the evaluation was completed and note any official actions (e.g., compensation adjustments), while keeping specific discussion details confidential.
- **Provide Clear Feedback:** Offer specific, constructive input: highlight strengths, identify areas for improvement, and set measurable goals for the coming year.

Key Considerations for Evaluations:

- **Timing Matters:** Complete evaluations annually (at minimum) and avoid delays that can impact morale or compliance.
- **Board Role vs. Staff Role:** The evaluation process should be set by the board. Generally, the board evaluates the district administrator; the administrator typically evaluates other staff, with board oversight.
- **Goal Setting:** Establish clear expectations for the next review period to support accountability and performance tracking.
- **Follow-Up:** Revisit goals periodically throughout the year, not just at evaluation time.