



Annual Celebration Draws Large Crowd

The 76th year of celebrating conservation in Richland County drew a large [Annual Celebration](#) crowd the evening of November 7, 2019. Was it the good weather? Guest Speaker? Conservationist and Volunteer of the Year recipients? Board Supervisor election? All of the above? We're going with all of the above based on feedback we've received!

Guests enjoyed a wonderful evening visiting each other, Board Supervisors and staff, celebrated the contributions of this year's Conservationist and Volunteer of the Year recipients, our volunteer team and learning about Richland SWCD accomplishments.

A public election to select [Board Supervisors](#) for one open position resulted in Fred Cooke being re-elected to a three-year term beginning January 1, 2020. He will join other current Board Supervisors Brian Alt, Aaron Dearth, Lanny Hopkins and David Krichbaum.

[Win Meek](#), who also volunteers with Richland SWCD, was recognized as the Conservationist of the Year. Win's dedication has ensured Richland County's natural resources are protected and preserved. In addition to Richland SWCD, he volunteers with many organizations on multiple projects.. Win and his wife, Jayne, reside in Troy Township where they continue to follow the conservation lessons Win learned as a child. Win has installed waterways, stabilized stream banks and re-constructed the pond dam. He manages his woodlands through the Natural Resources Conservation Service EQIP program. Grapevine, Multi flora Rose and Honeysuckle has been removed. Through the Conservation Reserve Program, he worked with a certified forester to develop and implement a forestry management plan. Win has selectively removed ash and beech trees and when he logged three years ago, the treetops were left for wildlife. He has also implemented wildlife and pollinator habitats on his farm through the Conservation Stewardship Program and Conservation Reserve program. When the Meek's renovated their 1840s barn, they added downspouts and gutters to divert the water away from the barn.

Win makes and uses wood duck boxes and bluebird boxes not only for himself, but for friends, as well, so they can enjoy wildlife.

Win has been re-purposing things since before it became popular to do so. A few items that have been re-purposed and are used are a Leland Hotel chandelier and Win's mother's swing. He and Jayne are in the process of installing solar power and his next project is to install a prairie.

Their land has been designated a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation, Certified Tree Farm from the American Tree Farm System and Plant for Pollinator Garden by the Cincinnati Zoo. He and his wife, Jayne, are also past recipients of the Mansfield Men's Garden Club residential beautification award.

Click on the link to the video to learn more about Win:

Volunteer of the year, [Mark Meinzer](#), was also recognized. Mark has volunteered with Richland SWCD since 2015. He is a Precipitation and Stream Monitor Volunteer and helps with special events like the Richland County Fair. Mark is active in his church, St. Peter's, and has been a member of the Johnny Appleseed Square Dance Club for 13 years. A Redbud tree was planted in his honor at Gorman Nature Center on November 15. Thank you to Gorman Nature Center and the Village of Lexington for their assistance with the tree planting.

Rhonda Berry, a Richland SWCD Volunteer, and her husband, Denny, made and shared a board and photos showing the landscape design, plants and instructions on how they created an [urban prairie](#) at their home. We hope you don't allow location or property size to deter you from planting a prairie. Thank you, Rhonda and Denny!

We shared that we have a 70-member [volunteer team](#). Together this year, they have contributed in excess of 2,350 hours, which has saved the General Fund approximately \$ 56,000. Volunteers contribute high quality data that is used to track soil and water health in Richland County's 8 watersheds, which can be viewed on our website. Volunteers were also applauded for receiving the 2018 Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) National and Northeast Regional Earth Team Chief's Office Awards. Through our partnership with NRCS, Richland SWCD volunteers also serve as Earth team volunteers. Both organizations collaborate on local projects while utilizing a passionate group of volunteers to stretch valuable resources. Each volunteer task helps paint a picture of how land use affects Richland County's eight watersheds.

A video highlighting Richland SWCD's last year was shared. Click on the link to view: <https://animoto.com/play/jdfgfYhXx5t3100OjSt4dw>

Guest Speaker, [Guy Denny](#), of Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves, shared an interesting and educational program on Tallgrass Prairies of Ohio. Richland SWCD gave away a copy of the book, The Prairie Peninsula, that he co-authored with Gary Meszaros, for a door prize.

Thank you to the evening's donors: [Alta Florist and Greenhouse](#), [DRM Productions, Inc](#), [Farm Credit Mid-America](#), [Shady Lane Alpaca Farm](#), [The Vault](#), Richard and Janet Shellhouse and Rob and Amy Crutchfield.

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Board Supervisors

Brian Alt, Chairperson
Fred Cooke, Treasurer
Aaron Dearth, At Large
Lanny Hopkins, Secretary
Dave Krichbaum, Vice Chair

NEW!!!! Board meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at the Longview Center, 1495 W. Longview Avenue, Mansfield, OH 44906. The meetings are open to the public. Call to confirm meeting date, time and attendance.

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If you plan to attend a board meeting, please contact Erica Thomas, District Administrator, in advance so that enough meeting packets will be prepared.

To be more efficient in answering and managing phone calls, we are using an automated answering system. If you call our main number at 419-747-8686 you will be given the opportunity to connect with a staff member or partnering office.

Individual phone numbers and email addresses are provided on the left. If you have any questions, please [let us know](#).

RICHLAND SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
1495 W. Longview Avenue, Suite 205B, Mansfield, OH 44906
419.747.8686 | www.RichlandSWCD.net

See what's happening on our social sites:



For information on varied volunteer opportunities within our office, including scanning and archiving historical photos and documents, engaging young people in the District, becoming a Precipitation Monitor, Lake Monitor, Stream Quality Monitor, Office Assistant, Photographer, help with Special Events or be an Earth Team volunteer with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, please [click here](#). **Congratulations to volunteers for being awarded the 2018 NRCS National and Northeast Regional Earth Team Chief's Field Office awards!**

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