



# Richland Soil and Water Conservation District News October 2020

## College Intern Positions Available

We're seeking current college students to apply for two (2) paid internship positions. The internships are being funded with assistance from the Richland County Foundation. One is an environmental intern position who will assist with the Clean Water Act's Municipal Stormwater MS4 program, and the second intern will assist with Communications. The application deadline for both internships is **November 6, 2020**. Details and how to apply for each position may be found on the Richland SWCD [website](#) or by calling 419.747.8686.

## Halloween Vote and Treat

If you want to cast your ballot for board supervisors in person, join us **Friday, October 30** from 11 am to 1 p.m. in our office hallway. We'll have treats available when you stop in to cast your [vote](#) for Board Supervisors. Wear your favorite mask and don a costume. The deadline to vote is **Tuesday, November 3 at 4:00 p.m.**



The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission will cause an election of Board Supervisors of the Richland Soil and Water Conservationist District Commission (Richland SWCD) to be held in accordance with Chapter 940 of the Ohio Revised Code. Individuals who own or occupy land within the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District and are 18 years of age or older may vote for the supervisor.

Two supervisors will be elected to a three-year term commencing January 1, 2021. Click on this [link](#) to find out how you can vote via absentee ballot and meet the candidates: Brian Alt, Jodie Dees, Daniel Fletcher, Michael Graham, and Robert McConkie, Jr.

## Annual Celebration on November 3



Please join us for the Annual Celebration **Thursday, November 5** from 6 to 7 p.m. in person or watch via Facebook Live on the Richland SWCD [Facebook page](#). If you plan to attend the Celebration in-person, please **register by**

**October 29**. Watching on Facebook Live does not require registration.

A Soil and Water update, Election results, and the Cooperator and Volunteer of the Year and Farmland Preservation recipients will be announced. There will

be light refreshments and there is no cost to attend. Latest COVID protocol will be followed.

Thanks to Rob and Amy Workman for sponsoring the Annual Celebration and for their ongoing support of District programs. For questions concerning the Celebration, please contact [Theresa](#).

## Milkweed Seed Pod Collection - Help the Monarch Butterflies -



The Richland County-wide Common milkweed seed pod collection continues until **November 5**. We are grateful for the many pods we have collected. Keep them coming!

Milkweed seed pods should appear slightly gray and dry. Seeds inside should be brown before harvesting. Please remember, if you want to pick on private property, you need to

ask for permission first.

Last year's collection effort in Richland County resulted in 184 milkweed seed packets with planting instructions. If you want free milkweed seeds and planting instructions, from last year's collection, please contact [Theresa](#). Fall is a good time to plant milkweed seeds because the cold ground in winter will stratify the seeds. To learn how to make a milkweed seed bomb, watch this [video](#).

Collect the pods in a brown paper bag and drop them off at our office in the green and yellow container. Please don't put them in plastic bags, because they will mold. Here is more [information](#) on how to collect. After the collection, the seeds will be removed from the pods and we will distribute them for planting. Thank you for supporting the Monarch Butterfly and the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative.

## Why Use a Rain Barrel?

Rain barrels are used to capture storm water runoff from an elevated impervious surface such as a home, garage or barn roof as rain comes through your downspouts. Here at the Soil and Water Conservation District we have two different styles



of [rain barrel kits for sale](#); one is a 55 gallon blue plastic poly drum for \$70.00 and the other one is a tan or charcoal color 50 gallon barrel for \$100.00. You can also connect rain barrels to increase your storage capacity. I hope you were able to see our "[How to Build a Rain Barrel](#)" video on Facebook on Oct. 20, If not the video is still available on Facebook to be viewed. Please let us know if you have any questions.

The advantages to rain barrels are:

- Your plants, flowers and garden prefer the soft water from the clouds as opposed to tap water or hard water.
- The barrels will help to reduce lawn ponding as they will be collecting some of the water that comes off your roof instead of all of the stormwater

being discharged from your downspout on to your yard.

- The barrels will help to decrease the amount of contaminants such as fertilizer, oils, pet waste and sediment that are going into your storm drain that eventually will end up untreated in the tributaries, rivers, lakes and oceans. The reason for this is because that amount of water that is now in your rain barrel did not have to flow across any lawns or impervious surfaces to get to the storm drain. You stopped it, and are now using it for a better purpose.
- The rain barrels will also help you save money. If you have city water and you must pay for water and even if you have well water, because you will eventually have to replace your well pump when it stops working from being used.

## Don't Let the Field Go Naked

Cover crops are plants seeded into the soil in agricultural fields and gardens, either within or outside of the regular growing season, with the primary purpose of improving soil health. Cover crops can provide several important benefits by:

- Reducing wind and water erosion
- Adding soil organic matter
- Improving soil water holding capacity
- Nourishing beneficial soil microbes along with micro-and macro-invertebrates
- Reducing soil compaction
- Suppressing weeds
- Adding nitrogen (leguminous cover crops)
- Breaking disease cycles
- Attracting honey bees and other beneficial insects
- Trapping excess nutrients
- Cut fertilizer costs
- Reduce the need for herbicides and other pesticides.



[Cover crops](#) are typically planted in late summer/fall around harvest or before spring planting of the following year's crops. Ideally cover crops need 30 to 40 days of good growth before the first hard frost. Planting several cover crop species together in a mixture can increase their positive impact on soil health. Many cover crops offer harvest possibilities as forage, grazing, or seed that work well in systems with multiple crop enterprises and livestock. Source: Hardin SWCD

## Store Manure During Winter Months

Many livestock farmers collect and store manure over a period of time before applying it to a field. A Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) recommends the size of manure storage structure be based on the number of livestock, the desired frequency of field application, and environmental conditions, such as frozen ground. The producer should be able to store manure during the times of the year that have an increased risk of nutrient loss,

such as the winter months when the ground is frozen.

If you are a producer or nutrient applicator located in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB), we want to remind you about Ohio Senate Bill 1 (SB1).

Application restrictions in the WLEB include:

- On snow-covered or frozen soil;
- When the top 2 inches of the soil are saturated from precipitation;
- When the local weather forecast for the application area contains greater than fifty percent chance of precipitation exceeding one-half inch in a 24-hour period.

Applicators are responsible for checking and keeping forecast information before application. Any source of weather prediction is acceptable.

Restrictions do not apply if:

- The manure is injected into the ground;
- Manure is incorporated with 24 hours of surface application, using a tillage tool operated at a minimum of 3-4 inches deep;
- The manure is applied onto a growing crop.

Producers and nutrient applicators outside of the WLEB are reminded to use best management practices when applying manure and follow [USDA NRCS Field Office Technical Guide Standard 590](#). (Updated version forthcoming.)

For questions about applying manure and other nutrients to agriculture fields, please contact [Matt](#) or [Jason](#).

## There is Still Time to Plant Grasses

Are you looking to plant some cool season grasses, forbs/legumes or native (warm) season grasses? Here are some dates for seeding based on the USDA-NRCS field office technical guide appendixes.



For cool season grasses such as Kentucky Bluegrass, Orchardgrass, and Timothy, a dormant (frost) seeding window is December 1 to March 14.

For seeding legumes/forbs such as Alfalfa, and Clovers, a dormant (frost) seeding window is December 1 to March 14.

For seeding warm season grasses such as big bluestem, Indiangrass, switchgrass AND seeding forb/legumes such as Black-eyed Susan, Gray-headed Coneflower, and Partridge Pea the dormant (frost) seeding window is November 1 to March 14.

Click [here](#) for additional information. Select Ohio, select Section IV, Ecological Sciences Tools, then select Appendix A for your purpose. If have questions or concerns, please call USDA-NRCS in Richland County at 419-747-8691 x 3.

## Fall for a Soil Test

Now, is a great time of year to have your soil tested. If the soil test recommends

amendments be made to the soil, your plants will have all winter to uptake the nutrients.

Why is soil testing important? Time and money may be saved if the soil composition is known prior to planting. Knowing your soil's composition is the first step toward attaining healthy plants. If you over-apply nutrients, you run the risk of causing soil imbalance, adversely affecting the environment, contaminating water and harming aquatic life. It is estimated each year around 24 billion tons of soil is lost due to erosion, which could be caused by unbalanced soil management.

We soil test for gardens, lawns, hobby farms and farms at an inexpensive cost. For instructions on how to pull a soil sample and pricing information, please visit our [website](#).

## Volunteer Update

Stream and Lake Monitors will be ending their monitor season soon. As the weather gets cold, it's not always safe for them to monitor. They will resume again next spring. Precipitation Monitors are getting ready to transition their gauge from warmer months to colder months. They will bring in the gauge funnel and measuring cylinder as temperatures dip into the freezing mark because they are prone to cracking in cold weather. We hope we'll have a few months before they start reporting the liquid equivalent of snow! Thank you to all volunteers! [Learn more](#) about volunteering with Richland SWCD.



## Important Dates

**October 29:** Register deadline for in-person attendance at Annual Celebration

**October 30:** Halloween Board Supervisor Voting and Treat, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Richland SWCD office hallway

**November 5:** Richland County-wide [Common Milkweed Seed Pod Collection](#) ends

**November 5:** Annual Celebration! See details above.

**November 6:** Intern applications due

**November 11:** Office closed in observance of Veteran's Day

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### SWCD Staff

Erica Thomas, District Administrator

### Board Supervisors

Brian Alt, Chairperson  
Fred Cooke, Treasurer

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**NRCS Staff**

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Aaron Dearth, At Large  
Lanny Hopkins, Secretary  
Dave Krichbaum, Vice Chair

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. 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](#).

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RICHLAND SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
1495 W. Longview Avenue, Suite 205B, Mansfield, OH 44906  
419.747.8686 | [www.RichlandSWCD.net](http://www.RichlandSWCD.net)

See what's happening on our social sites:



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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!**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Programs and assistance of the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, age, national origin, ancestry, disability or veteran status.