CONSERVATION COMMENTARY

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Celebrating Jim Freeman's Retirement











Jim Freeman began his career with the Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District in 2000 as Wildlife Specialist and Watershed Coordinator. After serving on active military duty from October 2004 through January 2006, he returned to the district and continued his dedication to conservation and the Meigs County community.

Throughout his career, Jim played an important role in watershed restoration, including work with the Leading Creek Improvement Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since 2012, he has helped operate the Thomas Fork acid mine drainage treatment system, restoring life to a stream once considered dead. His work also included water quality monitoring, habitat protection, equipment maintenance, and countless hours caring for the 172-acre Meigs SWCD Conservation Area.

In August 2020, Jim became the district's Technician and Watershed Coordinator, taking on additional responsibilities that included maintaining district equipment and vehicles, delivering rental equipment, and responding to wildlife and agricultural concerns. Beyond his district duties, he taught more than 40 hunter education classes since 1995 and was named the SWCD Area 5 Employee of the Year in 2023. Jim and his wife, Mary, have also been involved with the Raccoon Creek Partnership.

Jim has been an invaluable member of the Meigs SWCD team, always willing to lend a hand with any project or "crazy idea" the office came up with. Whether helping renovate the office or tackling outdoor projects, he was always ready to jump in. His occasional mishaps, from falling in the creek to bumping his head, gave everyone plenty of reasons to joke that he needed a hard hat whenever he left the building!

Jim's years of hard work and dedication have made a lasting difference in Meigs County. The Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District thanks him for his many years of service and wishes him and Mary all the best in retirement!

America 250 Tree Planting

A Lasting Legacy in Meigs County!

Back in September, we planted and dedicated Meigs County's official America 250-Ohio Heritage Tree at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area!

This native white oak was gifted to our county as part of Ohio's America 250 initiative, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The tree represents Ohio's natural heritage and our commitment to conservation for generations to come. If you haven't seen it yet, be sure to stop out at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area and take a look at our Heritage Tree! We're proud to have this special piece of Ohio's history growing right here in Meigs County.

A big thank-you to everyone who joined us for the dedication and helped make this a memorable addition to the Conservation Area!









Saturdays at the Market

Meigs SWCD enjoyed spending several Saturdays at the Meigs County Farmers Market this year, bringing hands-on conservation education to local children and families. On June 6th, we brought bear tracks and bear skins to teach visitors about black bears and the recent sightings throughout Meigs County. On July 18th, children explored different types of rocks and had the opportunity to create their own pet rocks. October 3rd was Wildlife Conservation Day, a joint effort with ODNR. ODNR brought an archery activity and served fish tacos, while Meigs SWCD provided a BB gun range and a collection of animal pelts for visitors to explore. To wrap up the season on October 31st, we celebrated Halloween by teaching children about spiders and helping them create a spider-themed craft.







District Land Judging Awards

Each year, the Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors a county-wide soil judging contest for Vocational Agriculture students in conjunction with the Athens and Vinton Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This year's contest was held in Meigs County at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area.
Students from Southern's Vocational Agriculture Department participated in the contest, with 10 Southern students competing out of 64 total student participants.







Urban Judging Individual Awards

1st Place: Marcy Evans, Southern
2nd Place: John Turley, Southern
3rd Place: Jaydyn Harmon, Southern

The top-scoring Urban Judging team was from Southern and included Marcy Evans, John Turley, Jaydyn Harmon, Breelyn Sayre, and Hristian Stobart. The team was presented with a plaque during the Meigs SWCD Annual Banquet.





Agricultural Judging Individual Awards

1st Place: Caleb Delong, Southern
2nd Place: Garrett Beasley, Southern
3rd Place: Tyson Hupp, Southern

The top-scoring Agricultural Judging team was from Southern and included Caleb Delong, Garrett Beasley, Tyson Hupp, Nina Blackhurst, and Tanner Harmon. The team was presented with a plaque during the Meigs SWCD Annual Banquet.



Annual Banquet

The Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District held its 82nd Annual Meeting and Banquet on October 6, 2026, at the Blakeslee Center. Guests enjoyed an evening of dinner, fellowship, and recognition of those who support conservation throughout Meigs County.

This year's guest speaker was Garth Ruff, OSU Assistant Professor, Field Specialist in Beef Cattle and Livestock Marketing. Ruff shared his knowledge and experience in the beef cattle industry with those in attendance.

The district recognized Hossler Family Acres, LLC, Ken and Jill Hossler, as the 2026 Cooperators of the Year for their commitment to conservation. The evening also included recognition of the 2026 Land Judging Contest winners and the Photo Contest winners. This year's photo contest, themed "Stars, Stripes and Tree-Lined Nights," received 57 entries showcasing the beauty of Meigs County.

A special part of the evening was honoring Jim Freeman on his retirement. We thank everyone who came to surprise Jim and celebrate his 26 dedicated years spent at Meigs SWCD!

Meigs SWCD would like to thank everyone who attended, our guest speaker, award recipients, affiliate members, and community partners for their continued support. We appreciate everyone who helps make conservation efforts throughout Meigs County possible!







Clean Up Day

A huge THANK YOU to all 50 volunteers who came out and helped make Clean Up Day a success! Throughout the event, 303 vehicles came through to dispose of unwanted items. In total, 896 tires and 39.73 tons of solid waste were collected! We truly appreciate everyone who gave their time to help clean up and make a difference in our community.

The Meigs County Health Department is leading this cleanup effort, with Meigs SWCD and the Meigs County Commissioners working together to help make it happen. This project was made possible through funding from an Ohio EPA grant.

Thank you to everyone involved for working together to help keep Meigs County clean and beautiful!







SWCD equipment for sale, rent

The following items are available for sale (not including applicable sales tax):
Marking Flags — $.20 each
Topographical Maps — $8 each
Ohio Pond Management Handbooks — Free
'Leading from the Past — Stories of Leading Creek' Book — $15

A $100 delivery/pickup fee will be assessed for equipment rentals outside of the county. No out-of-state rentals.

The following equipment is available for rent (subject to scheduling and availability):
John Deere Drill - (10-foot) $110 min. plus $11/acre over 10 acres 85 HP < 6,900 lbs min
Haybuster Drill - (7 foot) $110 min. plus $11/acre over 10 acres 45 HP < 3,600 lbs min



Brillion Seeder - (8-foot) $100 min. plus $10/acre over 10 acres 40 HP tractor min.
Lime Spreader - $80 min. plus $2/ton over 40 tons 60 HP tractor min.
Forester Tree Planter - $50 per day 25 HP tractor min.
Planter Bars - Free with $50 returnable deposit
Box Trap - Free with $40 returnable deposit $5/day after 2 weeks



All equipment rentals must be scheduled for delivery through the Meigs SWCD office at **(740)992-4282** Monday - Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.
A rental equipment agreement and tax-exempt form (if applicable) must be on file.
Prices listed do not include sales tax. Prices subject to change.
The minimum fee will be assessed if equipment is delivered and not used. A $10 charge per month will be added to all unpaid bills after 60 days.

Grazing Night



Meigs SWCD partnered with OSU Extension and Athens-Meigs Farm Bureau to host a Grazing Night on October 20th at the Rutland Bottle Gas Building at the Meigs County Fairgrounds. The event welcomed 25 attendees for an evening of educational presentations. Jason Jones of Pheasants Forever discussed incorporating native grasses into grazing systems, while Garth Ruff of OSU Extension shared information on winter feeding, hay quality, and meeting cattle's nutritional needs during cold weather. The event provided local producers with practical information and management strategies to help improve their grazing operations year-round.



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Contact the office for a free floodplain evaluation.
Floodplain permits are required even if you are paying cash or not getting flood insurance.

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Conservation Commentary is a publication of the Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District.
To subscribe or unsubscribe from Conservation Commentary, contact the Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District at 740-992-4282.

Meigs SWCD Calendar of Events

Regular meetings of the Meigs SWCD Board of Supervisors are generally held at 11:30 a.m. the fourth Thursday of each month at the SWCD office, 113 E Memorial Drive, Suite D, Pomeroy. Dates and times are subject to change.

Dates

Nov 19th - Board Meeting
Nov 26th - 27th - Closed Thanksgiving
Dec 10th - Board Meeting
Dec 24th - Closed PM for Christmas Eve
Dec 25th - Closed Christmas Day
Jan 1st - Closed New Year's Day

Keep up with what's new at the Meigs SWCD! Like us on Facebook at "Meigs SCWD Conservation Area" and "Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District" or visit us at www.MeigsSWCD.com



Merry Christmas

from

Meigs Soil and Water

Conservation District

Staff, Board of Supervisors, NRCS Staff