

CONVERSATION

Putnam Soil and Water Conservation District

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- Brian Thomas
- District Conservationist
- Dominic Goshe
- Resource Conservationist

Putnam County Research Farm

By: James Hoorman
OSU Extension Educator

The Putnam County Ohio State University Extension office and the Putnam SWCD are working together to develop a long-term research site on soil health. The 9.1 acre site is located south of the landfill on CR H-11 and is owned by Putnam County.

The Putnam County Commissioners have agreed to allow long-term research at this site, which was bought a number of years ago as a buffer to the landfill. The soils are mainly Roselm, Broughton, and Paulding clay soils that are tough soils to farm. But, these soils also have not been agriculturally researched much in the past.

Three major soil treatments are proposed. The systems that will be studied include conventional tillage (mold board plow first year followed by chisel plow), no-till (zero tillage), and ecological farming or ECO Farming (Long-term no-till plus cover crops every year). The crop rotation would be corn-soybeans-wheat for grain crops with each crop replicated four times.

Research that could be studied and documented include soil erosion and sedimentation, nutrient losses/gains (nitrogen and phosphorus), and changes in soil organic matter. The changes in soil biology such as soil microbial life, earthworms, active carbon, nitrogen mineralization, weeds, diseases, insect levels will be studied. All crops will be planted and

harvested with yields and economic analysis for each system. The site will take about 1 year to get ready and several grants are being submitted to pay for research testing and expenses.

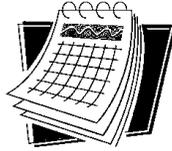
Overall education goals and objectives include teaching and demonstrating how soil health and soil quality best management practices may result in increased crop yields and improve the natural environment without nutrient losses to surface water. The goal is to improve soil ecology and nutrient recycling with increased efficiency on fertilizer management. Another goal of the soil health plots are to reduce soil compaction and improve soil structure, water infiltration and water storage.

An objective is to use no-till and cover crops together in a systems approach to improve the soil and reduce negative environmental impacts. The goal is to plant, manage, and terminate cover crops like legumes, clovers, grasses, and brassicas in a long-term crop rotation on the same plots, year after year to document long-term changes in soil properties. Our research objectives would include comparing long-term chemical, biological, and physical parameters on the three systems (conventional, no-till, and ecological farming).

In This Issue...

- Kid's Day Activity at the Putnam County Fair
- Earth Day, April 22nd
- Farm Bill "Things to Know"
- "Agriculture is COOL" Contest

Upcoming Events



- April 22
Earth Day
Monthly Board Meeting 8:00 p.m.
- April 23
Area 1 Envirothon - Defiance County
- April 25
Arbor Day
- April 27 - May 4
Soil & Water Stewardship Week
- May 26
Office Closed - Memorial Day
- May 27
Monthly Board Meeting 8:00 p.m.
- June 23 - 28
Putnam County Fair
- June 24
Monthly Board Meeting 8:00 p.m.

2014 Farm Bill

" Things to Know "

- **EQIP** - Still the best option to fix soil or water-related problems on the farm. Get technical assistance and guidance on hundreds of practices, conservation planning, or payments to help cover costs to build and install them. Plus, now it includes wildlife.
- **CSP** - The Conservation Stewardship Program is an excellent opportunity for farmers to improve land stewardship on their farm. The program encourages participants to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities and undertaking additional conservation activities.
- **WHIP** - The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is gone, but not forgotten. NRCS has several practices that directly impact habitat for game, songbirds, food plots, wet areas, forestry management, and even pollinators. These are all rolled into EQIP now.
- **Easements** - Just got easier. Easements now are under one roof called Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Both Ag land and wetland easements are covered.
- **Crop Insurance** - Producers who destroy a wetland after enactment of the 2014 Farm Bill (February 7, 2014) risk losing their crop insurance premium subsidy, consistent with the new conservation compliance requirements of the 2014 Farm Bill. This affects eligibility not only for crop insurance premium subsidies but also commodity, conservation, and disaster program benefits. If a producer does not comply with conservation compliance, they can still purchase crop insurance, however, they will no longer be eligible to receive the government paid premium subsidy.

Come See Us at the
Putnam County Fair!!

June 23rd - June 28th

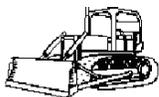
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north of the animal barns. Come
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**KID'S DAY
TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2014**

FREE Activity!!

**Make an EARTH BUDDY
at the Putnam SWCD Fair Tent!**



Join us on Kid's Day
anytime from
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
to make your very own
Earth Buddy!

All supplies will be provided.
Located North of the animal
barns in the Putnam Soil and
Water fair tent

All Ages Welcome!



The soil and water staff is continuing with the Blanchard River maintenance program. Due to the issues with the emerald ash borer killing our ash trees and the wind storm in the summer of 2012, the joint board of commissioners for the Blanchard River Stream Enhancement Project made the decision to conduct a more aggressive project during 2014 – 2015. The project will include cutting more leaning trees, dead trees near the top of the river bank, cutting on the islands in the river and the usual removal of trees in the water.

As in past years, the trees that are removed will be piled on the outside of the tree line or within the tree corridor, if the area is wide enough, in such a way as to try to keep the trees from moving back into the river during future high water events. Landowners may utilize the piled trees as they see fit or burn them on the spot by following local and state regulations. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency open burning regulations can be found at "www.epa.state.oh.us/portals/47/facts/openburn.pdf".

If you have concerns or questions, then please call the office for more information.



Do Something OUTSIDE!

- Take a Walk
- Recycle
- Plant a Tree
- Install a Rain Barrel
- Compost
- Go to the Park

"Treat the earth well; it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our children."

- Ancient Kenyan Proverb

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2014 Stewardship Week



April 27-May 4



Creative Expression Contest

Students of all ages can participate in Ohio's Agriculture is Cool! Creative Expression Contest!

It's simple and fun! Just paint a picture, make a video, take a picture, or submit a creative illustration of why YOU think Ohio agriculture is cool!

You can win some cool stuff and get into the Ohio State Fair for FREE!

For more information, a registration form, and a complete set of rules, go to www.ohioagriculture.gov or call our office at 419-523-5159.