

July - September 2008

Leading Creek News



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Volunteer Honored & Coyote Education At Banquet

The Meigs SWCD Annual Meeting and Banquet took place on September 23rd at the Meigs High School near Pomeroy. Over 150 people attended the banquet which was a new record for the event.

The keynote speaker was Stan Gerht, associate professor of environmental and natural resources at Ohio State University. Gerht's presentation focused on the ecology of coyotes. Since March, 2000, he has conducted an extensive, ongoing study of coyotes in

the metropolitan Chicago area. Gerht stressed he was neither supporting coyotes nor persecuting them, adding that his purpose was to share some of what he had learned about the animals over his years of study.

The coyote, Gerht explained, was originally found in the prairies and plains of the western and southwestern United States. However, deforestation and the elimination of competing carnivores have allowed coyotes to spread throughout almost the entire country. Coyotes were first observed in Ohio in 1919, and started becoming

more visible starting in the 1970s. Coyotes are unique in that no other species of carnivore has doubled its range. Most of this expansion took place in the mid 1900's during a time of great predator control.

While largely considered a rural species, coyotes are living in Chicago along with 9 million people, Gerht said, adding that since 2000 he has captured, tagged and studied more than 300 coyotes in Chicago.

During the annual meeting Danny Roush of Portland was named as the 2008 Leading Creek Volunteer of the Year. The Meigs SWCD and the Leading Creek

Continued on page 2

Stan Gerht, pictured left, showed a fascinating presentation about the habits and traits of coyotes.



Meigs SWCD Staff

Steve Jenkins, *Program Administrator*
 Vicki Morrow, *Assistant Administrator*
 Jenny Ridcnour, *Education Coordinator /
 District Technician*
 Jim Freeman, *Wildlife Specialist /
 Watershed Coordinator*
 Raina Fuiks, *Leading Creek Watershed
 Coordinator*
 Mary Ann Hawk, *NRCS - District
 Conservationist*
 Jason Crislip, *NRCS - Soil Conservationist*

Our Partners

Meigs Soil and Water Conservation
 District
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 Eastern Local School District
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 Leading Creek Conservancy District
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 Divisions of Forestry, Soil & Water
 Conservation, Mineral
 Resources Management, and Wildlife
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 Division of Surface Water
 Ohio State University Extension
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 Rutland Village Council
 Southern Local School District
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 Rutland, and Salisbury Townships in Meigs
 County
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 U.S. Office of Surface Mining
 4-H

**Volunteer Honored
 continued from pg 1**

Watershed Group have had several hard working volunteers throughout the past year. They have included concerned residents, members of youth groups, college students, and people of all ages. But one particular volunteer stood out this year in many ways. Danny Roush has been an active volunteer in the watershed for numerous years, participating in field days with schools, Leading Creek Watershed Camp, and various other activities.

Roush has demonstrated his flint knapping skills and taught Leading Creek Watershed residents about Native American life during multiple events. He has shown a great stewardship for the Leading Creek Watershed and a dedication to soil and water conservation.

David Hanselmann, chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Soil and Water Conservation, spoke briefly during the meeting and commended the



A record number of people attended the Annual Meeting and Banquet with over 150 participants.

Meigs SWCD for maintaining a strong conservation district. He remarked that the district is now in its 65th year, making it one of the oldest districts in the state, and commended members of the board of supervisors for their volunteer service.

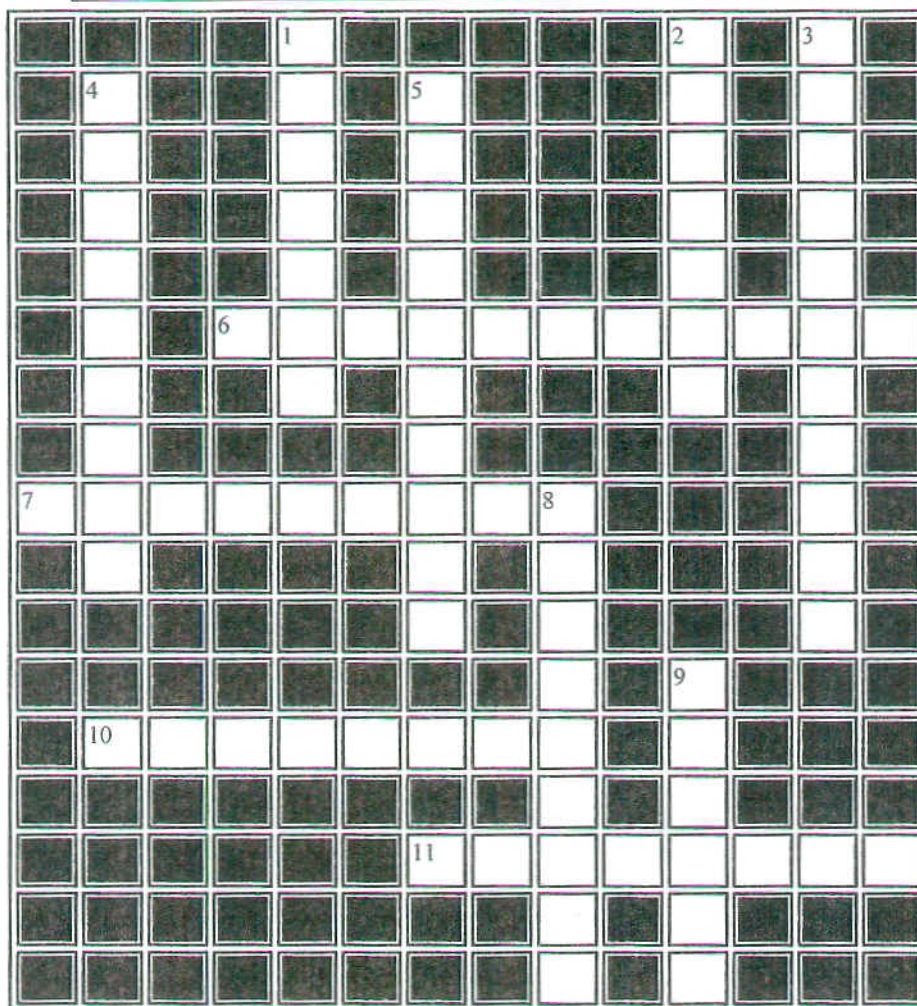
A brief update was given on activities at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area during the past year. Awards were presented to farm cooperators and contest winners. In addition Tonja Hunter and Ed Gibbs, both of Racine, were reelected to the Meigs SWCD Board of Supervisors to serve terms through 2011.



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Science of Fall Crossword



Find the answers on page 6!

ACROSS

- 6. During the fall, many animals eat more than usual to prepare for this.
- 7. Trees that lose their leaves during part of the year.
- 10. These trees are known for turning a brilliant red color during autumn.
- 11. The gray variety of this animal is active year round but does store large amounts of food during the harvest season.

DOWN

- 1. This has been called a fruit and a vegetable and is commonly baked into pies.
- 2. When the days begin to grow shorter, many birds will do this to find warmer climates.
- 3. This chemical makes leaves green but dissipates from leaves in the fall.
- 4. These plants keep their leaves all year long.
- 5. Sometimes used to protect crops from birds, these are now used as fall decorations.
- 8. This plant is known to turn bright yellow in the fall.
- 9. These plants are typically used as decoration during fall and can be used to make music.

Fish Facts: Brindled Madtoms



The Brindled Madtom, or *Noturus miurus*, is a small member of the catfish family. An inhabitant of sluggish pools and low gradient streams, this fish is widely distributed throughout Ohio. It is named for the pattern of mottling and saddles on its back.

Catfish possess a special fleshy fin in the middle of the back, close to the tail, called an adipose fin. Due to their small size, Madtoms are typically not one of the catfish sought by fishermen. Madtoms generally are less than four inches in length. Madtoms form a special group within the catfish family known as *Lctaluridae*. These fishes are easily identified by examination of the adipose fin. In Madtoms, the adipose fin is long and continuous with the tail fin, but it is separate from the tail fin in other catfishes.



The Brindled Madtom was present in Leading Creek before historic coal mining operations expanded. After the 1993 Meigs Mine disaster and acidic water release the population was eliminated.

Preferred habitats of the Brindled Madtom include substrates composed of sands and clean organic debris free from silts and clays. They spend their daylight hours hiding under rocks or organic debris such as sunken logs, twigs, or root wads.

In the fall of the year Madtoms can often be found hiding in beds of submerged leaves. They are most active at night where they can be found hunting for aquatic insects and small fish in pools and riffles.

Many populations, particularly in northwestern

Ohio have been extirpated as a consequence of siltation and other forms of habitat degradation.

As with other members of the genus *Noturus*, the Brindled Madtom is equipped with a pair of sharp, serrated pectoral spines for defensive purposes. A poison gland situated at the base of each spine helps ensure a painful sting for anyone who handles one of these fish too carelessly.

The Meigs SWCD is currently working with the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium/Ohio State University and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to look into the possibility of reintroducing Brindled Madtoms into Leading Creek.



The markings across the back serve as camouflage that helps them blend with the shaded rocks and debris such as leaves and sticks in which they live.

Tour Along Little Leading Creek



Jason Crislip, NRCS Soil Conservationist, is shown here describing the plantings of native grasses and wildflowers at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area.

The August meeting of the Buckeye Hills Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council took place on August 21st and included a tour of the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area.

The Buckeye Hills RC&D is a nonprofit organization that works in southeast Ohio and includes Athens, Belmont, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties. Their mission is to enhance the quality of the environment and to improve the economy of the area through the conservation development of the total resources of the area. The RC&D goals are directed towards utilizing local citizens and resources to accomplish identified problems and

concerns.

Participants met at the Wild Horse Café in Pomeroy where the meeting and dinner was held. After dinner a tour took place at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area near Rutland. There a guest from Wayne National Forest spoke about current projects in the Forest. Then Meigs SWCD staff led the tour featuring Little Leading Creek, the 2.2 acre wetland, and future plans at the Conservation Area.

A portion of the tour showed off the project that was funded by the Buckeye Hills RC&D Endowment Fund. This grant provided enhancement and signage to the parking area and the existing 1.5-mile Pauline H. Atkins Memorial Nature Trail.

Along the trail Bob First, Buckeye Hills RC&D Coordinator, showed off areas planted with experimental native and blight-resistant American chestnut trees. These trees are monitored for any signs of the chestnut blight, a fungus from Asia, that once decimated the American Chestnut tree population.



Near the wetland a demonstration area has been planted with native prairie grasses and wildflowers donated by Pheasants Forever. This area is managed to mimic the cycles of a natural prairie. This includes occasional mowing and controlled burnings that will help establish the prairie vegetation. A prescribed prairie burning removes growth-retarding detritus, warms the soil, and allows new sprouts to grow strongly without shading.



Tour participants stopped along the Atkins Trail to view the Chestnut trees that were planted there.

Watershed History Tidbits

Did you know...

- In 1796 Hamilton Kerr and his family from Virginia bought land near the mouth of Leading Creek and started a settlement. The next year James Smith and family from Massachusetts joined them. John Smith was then born in the settlement to Benjamin and Alma Smith, the first recorded caucasian child born in what would become Meigs County.
- This town was originally called the Leading Creek Settlement. Its first business was a tavern that opened in 1816. The first brick house in Meigs County was built in the settlement in the same year. In 1825 the town got a post office and changed its name to Sheffield. In 1857 the town was incorporated as the town of Middleport.
- In 1801 the first school in Meigs County was built on the third branch of Leading Creek by Samuel Denny, a Massachusetts school teacher. The first court was held in a log school at the mouth of Leading Creek.
- In 1820 salt was discovered on Leading Creek. Two years later the first salt well and furnace in Meigs County was opened on Leading Creek.



Eight other wells and furnaces soon opened. The Leading Creek wells held a virtual monopoly on the salt business in the county until salt was discovered along the Ohio River in 1848.

Thank you to the Meigs County Historical Society and Meigs County Museum for the information!



Crossword Puzzle Answers

ACROSS

6. Hibernation

7. Deciduous

10. Red Maple

11. Squirrel

DOWN

1. Pumpkin

2. Migrate

3. Chlorophyll

4. Evergreen

5. Scarecrows

8. Spicebush

9. Gourds

Leading Creek Watershed Group Membership Form

Join us today! Leading Creek wants *you* to become a member!

To become a member of the Leading Creek Watershed Group simply fill in your information below and drop this form off at our office or mail it to us c/o Meigs SWCD

33101 Hiland Road
Pomeroy, OH 45769

Yes, I want to join today!

And I want to donate! (see options below)

Name (Please print)

Organization (if applicable)

Mailing Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone

Email

Signature

Date

Benefits of Membership

All members receive personal invitations throughout the year to participate in activities such as watershed tours, group contests, litter clean up days, and water sampling demonstrations.

Option to Donate

Here is your chance to help us restore and protect the watershed. All donations are used to directly benefit the efforts of the Leading Creek Watershed Group. Those who donate \$25 or more receive one of our newly designed t-shirts. Also keep in mind that your contributions are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to Leading Creek c/o Meigs SWCD.

- \$10 *Donor* Preferred Shirt Size (If applicable) _____
- \$25 *Supporter*
- \$50 *Patron*
- \$100 *Sponsor*
- \$500 *Benefactor*
- Other \$ _____

THE LEADING CREEK WATERSHED GROUP IS A PARTNERSHIP OF RESIDENTS, OFFICIALS, AND AGENCIES UNITED BY COMMON INTEREST IN RESTORING THE LEADING CREEK WATERSHED TO ADD TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE WATERSHED AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

Thank you for your membership and for your support!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 16th: Leading Creek Improvement Committee Meeting at 9:45 a.m. at Logan office of OEPA

November 12th: Leading Creek Improvement Committee Meeting at Columbus Zoo & Aquarium

Office Closed for Holidays:

October 13th

November 11th

November 27th

December 25th

January 1st

January 19th

Limited Office Staff:

November 24th - 28th

December 26th - January 2nd



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