

Conservation Close Up



Hancock Soil & Water Conservation District

Winter 2026

Poster Contest

Hancock Soil and Water is having a poster contest this year and will use the entries for their calendar for 2027. Students in Hancock County are invited to create an entry for the 2026 poster contest. The theme is “ Soil. Where it all begins”. Soil is not just the ground we walk on. It is the starting point for healthy food, clean water, thriving habitats and resilient communities. The contest is open to all students in Hancock County and our categories will be Kindergarten-1st grade, 2nd grade-3rd grade, 4th grade-6th grade, 7th grade-9th grade, 10th grade-12th grade.

What: Posters must be hand drawn on 11x17 paper is preferred although 8.5 x 11 will be accepted.

Media: Any traditional media may be used, including **paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers, paper, or other materials**. Mixed media art is welcome.

Judging Criteria:

- Conservation Message (50%) The poster effectively conveys the theme and a clear conservation message.
- Visual effectiveness (30%) The design is engaging, well organized and visually appealing
- Originality (10%) The poster demonstrates creativity and fresh ideas
- Universal Appeal (10%) The design should appeal to a broad audience and be easily understood

Where: Finished posters can be dropped off to the Hancock Soil and Water office at 7868 County Road 140 Suite E, Findlay OH. If there are numerous submissions from the same school we can coordinate a pick up time from the school.

When: Poster contest will end on May 1, 2026. Awards will be announced on May 8, 2026.

Prizes: There will be a winner for each section of grades. The winner of each section will get a \$20 check from the Hancock Soil and Water. Winning posters will be part of the 2027 Hancock Soil and Water Calendar and shared on social media. The winning posters will also be sent to the state competition and may move on from there.

We look forward to seeing everyone’s drawings and wish the best of luck to each competitor.

Planning Meeting Recap

On January 12, 2026 we had our annual planning meeting at the Agriculture Service Center. We had a great attendance and lots of good input. This meeting is to give the community an opportunity to give Soil and Water feedback on what they have seen and would like changed or what they would like to see come from our office. There were lots of comments on a good job being done by drainage maintenance at keeping the county looking nice and staying on top of the brush and weeds before they become a problem.

Tree Planting and Care

The tree sale is coming to an end and the pick up date for trees in April 9, 2026 from 8:00 to 4:30 here at the Soil and Water office. Here are a few tips for planting your new seedlings:

- ◆ Should be planted as soon as possible.
- ◆ Consider planting your bare root trees in a garden or nursery area to make it easier to care for and give them a healthy start. After a few years then plant them in a permanent home.
- ◆ Dig a hole deep enough to cover the roots. Spread the roots out gently so they can grow outward rather than circling.
- ◆ Fill the hole back up with loose soil and carefully push the soil down around the tree and water generously.
- ◆ Remember to water regularly during the first year. Young trees need consistent moisture, especially during hot, dry periods. Keeping grass and vegetation away from the base of the tree with the addition of mulching can help water infiltrate in to the soil down the roots.
- ◆ Do not fertilize your trees for the first year because it can burn roots and possibly kill the tree.

Choosing the Right Planting Location

Proper placement is just as important as proper planting. When selecting a permanent home for your tree:

- ◆ Avoid planting under overhead powerlines, near utility poles, or above underground utilities where future growth or root expansion could cause conflicts.
- ◆ Consider mature size. A seedling may be small now, but its full-grown height and canopy spread should guide where you plant it.
- ◆ Give space for buildings and driveways. Roots and branches need room to grow without interfering with structures, pavement, or drainage systems.

Remember to Call Before You Dig

Before planting your trees, **Ohio law requires** that you contact **Ohio 811** to have underground utilities marked. This free service helps prevent damage to buried lines and keeps you and your property safe. Call 811 or submit an online request at least 48 hours before you dig.

Upcoming Events for 2026

April 1, 2026 @ 2:15 pm—Board Meeting

May 6, 2026 @ 8:30 am—Board Meeting

May 25, 2026—Office Closed for Memorial Day

June 3, 2026 @ 2:15 pm—Board Meeting

June 19, 2026—Office Closed for Juneteenth

July 1, 2026 @ 8:30 am—Board Meeting

July 3, 2026—Office Closed for Independence Day

August 5, 2026 @ 8:30 am—Board Meeting

September 7, 2026—Office Closed for Labor Day

September 9, 2026 @ 2:15 pm—Board Meeting

October 7, 2026 @ 8:30 am—Board Meeting

October 12, 2026—Office Closed for Columbus Day

November 4, 2026 @ 2:15 pm—Board Meeting

November 11, 2026—Office Closed for Veteran's Day

November 26—27, 2026—Office Closed for Thanksgiving

December 2, 2026 @ 2:15 pm—Board Meeting

December 24-25, 2026—Office Closed for Christmas

December 31, 2026—Office Closed for New Year's Eve

January 1, 2027—Office Closed for New Year's Day



Tilapia Sale

This year we are doing a Tilapia sale. The tilapia will be delivered the beginning of June. The Tilapia run between 5" - 10" and come in 4 pound boxes. They are \$20/ a pound so would make one box \$80. Must order by the box.

To determine how much Tilapia to stock:

Amount of pond Covered by aquatic vegetation?

Little = 1-inch layer of green, fuzzy algae shadowing the rocks **Spotty** = small clumps of algae scattered about pond

1 Ft Around Pond = layer of algae, extending one foot from its edge around entire pond

3 ft Around Pond = layer of algae, extending three feet from its edge around entire pond

Covered = The pond lies ensnared beneath a relentless blanket of algae, its surface entirely obscured by the over-growth.

Example if you had a 3/4 acer pond with 1 ft of algae around the entire pond it would take 5 order / boxes (20 lbs. of Tilapia) at a cost of \$420.00 (assume you are charging \$84 per box) These are the grey colored boxes in the chart so you can see how the charts work.

Acres of Water	1/4	1/2	3/4	1	1 1/4	1 1/2	1 3/4	2	2 1/4
Little	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	6	7
Spotty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Ft	2	3	5	6	8	9	11	12	14
3 Ft	3	5	8	10	13	15	18	20	23
Covered	5	10	15	19	24	29	34	38	43

Why Stock Tilapia?

Pond management made easy with the use of Tilapia

- Tilapia eat many of the common types of filamentous algae, blue green algae, chara, duckweed, water-meal, nuisance rooted aquatic vegetation. Work good with the amur which does not prefer these types of algae
- Prolific breeders, Spawn every 18 to 21 days
- Fish spawn when they reach 4" \ water temperature is above 68 F
- Lay up to 1500 eggs per female
- The babies are the ones that put the biggest strain on the algae \by converting vegetation into a bait fish for your predator fish.
- Reduce demand on minnows and Amurs
- Increase the size and population of other fish in your pond.
- Fall temp cause fish to slow down allowing predator fish of all sizes to gorge itself just in time for winter
- Control Muck
- Reduce unpleasant gases
- Finally a chemical free solution for vegetation for pond owners who use their pond as a water supply.
- A perfect substitution for the bluegills since they can not take over your pond.

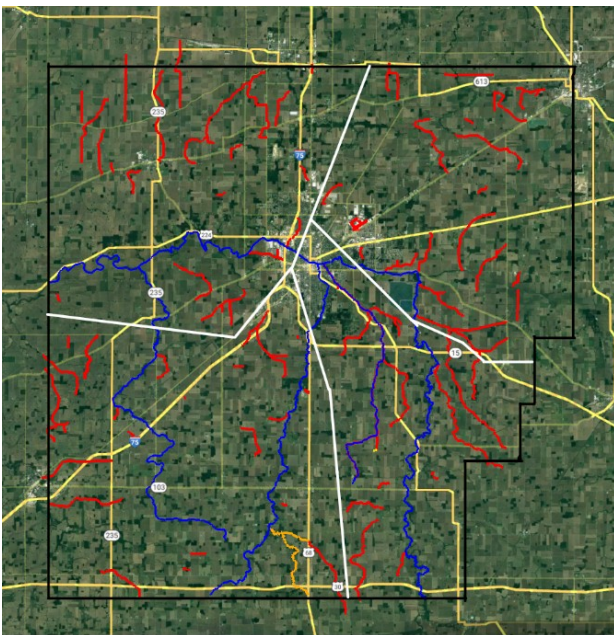
Perfect complement to the tilapia is Pond Maid bacteria



Drainage Maintenance Spring 2026

With temperatures getting into the 60's and 70's, things are starting to green up outside. This year we plan on spraying 86.6 miles of ditches on the east side of the county. The following ditches are planned to be sprayed.

A.O. Minks	H.J. Greer	Nimrod-Bright
Beck Jt.	Harold Shafer	Renshaw-Bricker
Bright	J.E. Fox	Richard Livingston
Brookman	Jerry Stahl Jt.	Ropp
Buck Run Jt.	John E. Fox 109	Rothlisberger
Charles Good	Keiper Jt.	Sand Run
Corbin Jt.	Lye Creek	Silver Creek
D.L. Sears	M.H. Elliot	W.B. Kring
Elias Fox	Margaretha Roth	W.S. Corbin
Folger	Measle	Zimmerman Jt.
Glauner	Morehart	



Anyone along a ditch that will be sprayed this year will be sent a postcard closer to when the contractor will begin work. We are anticipating around the same time frame as usual for spraying (mid May to June).

You might be wondering what we are spraying for. We will be spraying for any broadleaf and wood vegetation. If your ditch was chopped/mulched last fall that same ditch will be sprayed this year. The good news as a partial result of the progress we have made chopping/mulching we are starting to see a decline in our spraying costs. If anyone has any questions please reach out to District Technician-Jason Althaus at any of the following: Phone-419-422-6569 ext. 104, Email-Jalthaus@hancockswcd.com, or by stopping by the office at 7868 CR 140, Suite E, Findlay, Ohio 45840

**Hancock Soil and Water
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Tracy Waxler—Administrative Assistant
Connor Schnipke—District Technician

NRCS Staff

Christian Carrasquillo—District Conservationist
Jonathan Irizarry-Soto—Soil Conservationist
Celeste LaFleur— Pheasant's Forever Farm Bill
Biologist

Board of Supervisors

Chairman— Evan Jackson
Vice Chairman— Jeff Reese
Fiscal Agent— Matthew Heitkamp
Member— Carla Treadway
Member— Beth James

Hancock Soil and Water Conservation District holds their board meetings in the Agriculture Service Center meeting room. The days and time are available on the website or check on the up coming events in this newsletter.