

# CLARK Conservationist

CLARK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## Clark SWCD Annual Meeting

The Clark SWCD Board and Staff would like to invite you to attend the 83rd Annual Meeting of the Clark SWCD on Tuesday, September 9th, 2025.

This event will be held at the Hollenbeck Bayley Creative Arts and Conference Center located in downtown, 275 South Limestone St., Springfield, Ohio.

We will be serving a buffet style dinner at a cost of **\$10.00 per ticket** served by Carmae Catering. The menu will include grilled chicken and pork chops, along with several side dishes and dessert.

We will also be hosting the *Feds Feed Families* food drive in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. Please bring a non-perishable food item to the meeting and you will receive a door prize. All donations will go to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Springfield. Last year you helped raise fifty-two pounds of food. **THANK YOU!**

We are honored to welcome Elizabeth Hawkins, Ph.D. as the Keynote Speaker for the evening. Dr. Elizabeth Hawkins is an Assistant Professor and Extension Field Specialist in Agronomic Systems at The Ohio State University, where she focuses on precision agriculture and agricultural data management to support farmer-driven innovation across Ohio.

Dr. Hawkins is deeply involved in outreach and education, supporting farming communities in adopting prescriptive agriculture strategies that are both practical and impactful.

We will wrap up the meeting with another exciting round of **Clark County Trivia!** Please contact the SWCD if you have a Clark County trivia question you would like to submit.

Registration to attend this year's meeting can be made in advance by calling Clark SWCD or by e-mailing [cperkins@clarkcountyohio.gov](mailto:cperkins@clarkcountyohio.gov) by **Monday, August 25, 2025**. For more information regarding the annual meeting, please call the Clark SWCD Office at 937-521-3880.

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## 2025 Annual Meeting Agenda

5:30-6:30pm	6:30pm	7:00pm	7:20pm	7:45pm	8:30pm
Doors Open	Dinner catered by Carmae Catering	Clark SWCD Updates & Awards	Keynote Speaker: Elizabeth Hawkins	Clark County Trivia	Election Results
Voting for Supervisor					Adjournment



# Board of Supervisors Election

An election for Board Supervisor will be conducted at the Clark SWCD's Annual Meeting. This year's election has **Brenna Cross** and **Brian Funderburgh** vying for two positions on the elected five-member board. The elected candidates will serve a three-year term starting in 2026.

**The election will be held on September 9, 2025 at the Annual Meeting or you may vote via absentee ballot prior to that date.** Information concerning the nominees along with voting procedures are featured below.

## Voting Procedures

County residents attending our annual meeting will find the voting process for SWCD board members will be similar to voting in previous elections. You must be at least 18 years of age and reside within Clark County to be eligible to vote.

However, those who are non-resident voters, LLCs, corporations, & partnerships, must complete the voter verification form (EL-7) before voting, absentee or in-person. Voters that are required to complete the voter verification form should also have their first and last name listed on the election registry.

## There are three ways an eligible voter can cast a ballot

### 1. In Person

At the SWCD office from **August 11, 2025 until September 9, 2025 during normal business hours.**

### 2. At the Annual Meeting:

At the SWCD Annual Meeting, which will take place at The Hollenbeck Bayley Creative Arts and Conference Center, 275 South Limestone St., Springfield, Ohio on September 9 from 5:30 pm until 6:30 pm.

### 3. Voting Absentee:

Vote absentee from August 11 until September 9, by requesting the ballot application and election ballot from the SWCD office at the following address:

**Springview Government Center, 3130 East Main St. Springfield, Ohio 45505**

By calling **937-521-3880**, or emailing **cperkins@clarkcountyohio.gov**. Absentee ballots must be received by the SWCD office by noon on September 9, 2025 at 12:00pm.

**For more information about the election or if you have questions about these proceedings, please contact our office at 937- 521-3880.**

## Thanks to the Clark County Commissioners

The Clark SWCD Board & Staff would like to thank the Clark County Commissioners for their continued support of local conservation. Funding for the Clark SWCD begins at the County level where appropriations are matched by the State through the Ohio Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil & Water Conservation.



# 2025 Board of Supervisors Candidates

## **Brian Funderburgh – Farmer, Conservationist, and Community Advocate**

Brian Funderburgh lives near South Charleston with his wife, Christine. Together they raise freezer beef and pork for customers who value fresh, farm-raised meat products. Brian also farms alongside his father, Harold, on the family's 800+ acre operation, raising corn and soybeans. A dedicated steward of the land, Brian continues his family's 35-year legacy of no-till farming and precision agriculture, including the use of variable-rate fertilizer programs and reduced-rate chemical applications. In addition to farming, Brian is the Lead Electric Technician at PipeAg, where he custom builds precision electrical components to support modern agricultural technology.



Brian is passionate about conservation and sustainability. His experience working with Denver Thompson Farms & Excavating (DTFE) has included the installation of waterways, rock structures, tile systems, ponds, heavy use pads, and culvert replacements. He is committed to ensuring Clark County continues to be managed in a responsible, conservative manner, and believes the best way to learn is to jump right in. His goal is to contribute meaningfully to the conservation of the county's natural resources through active service.

Outside of work, Brian enjoys hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling. He is also a competitive wheelchair softball player with the Columbus Pioneers in the National Wheelchair Softball Association (NWSA). This year, his team will compete in the NWSA World Series in Minneapolis, facing teams from Japan, Canada, and Africa. Brian takes pride in promoting humility and positivity, leading by example both on and off the field.

Brian seeks to continue serving on the Clark Soil and Water Conservation District Board, bringing a strong commitment to conservation and common-sense oversight to the county and its local communities. He is dedicated to helping shape the future of agriculture and land stewardship in Clark County, ensuring that natural resources are protected and responsibly managed for generations to come.

## **Brenna Cross – Dedicated to Clark County's Agriculture and Water Quality Future**

Brenna Cross is a lifelong resident of Clark County and a proud graduate of Clark-Shawnee Local High School. She holds a degree in Environmental Science with a focus on Water Quality from The Ohio State University. Brenna is the Vice President of Marketing at Blue Stone Solutions Ltd.

Brenna began working in her family's agricultural business at the age of 15. Since 2010 Brenna served as the Assistant Manager and now holds the position of Vice President of Marketing. Through her leadership at Blue Stone Solutions Ltd., she actively promotes the use of cover crops and responsible nutrient management, helping to strengthen sustainable farming practices across the region. Outside of her professional life, Brenna enjoys spending time outdoors, curling, and being with her friends and family.

A passionate advocate for clean water and agricultural stewardship, Brenna has played a key role in educating the community about Ohio's water quality challenges. She has contributed to statewide efforts as a member of the Directors' Agricultural Nutrients & Water Quality Working Group for the State of Ohio, helping identify practical solutions for both farmers and the environment.



For the past twelve years, Brenna has proudly served on the Clark Soil and Water Conservation District Board, holding various leadership positions. With her unique blend of agricultural experience and environmental expertise, she is committed to continuing her service to Clark County. If reelected, she will work tirelessly to protect natural resources and support local farmers through science-based, community-focused solutions

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**The regular meetings of the Clark Soil and Water Conservation District shall be held at 7:30 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month for the remainder of 2024. Unless otherwise advertised, all meetings will be held at the Springview Government Center, 3130 East Main St., Springfield, Ohio. Please go to [www.clarkswcd.com](http://www.clarkswcd.com) to verify changes to meeting time and date.**

# Annual Meeting Keynote Speaker: Elizabeth Hawkins

**Dr. Elizabeth Hawkins** is an Assistant Professor and Extension Field Specialist in Agronomic Systems at The Ohio State University, where she focuses on precision agriculture, agricultural data management, and on-farm research to support farmer-driven innovation across Ohio.

Raised on a family farm near Xenia, Ohio, Dr. Hawkins grew up helping produce corn, soybeans, wheat, and beef cattle. Her early agricultural experiences were shaped by active involvement in 4-H and FFA.

She earned a B.S. in Agricultural Systems Management with a minor in Agribusiness Management and an Associate's degree in Agronomy from Purdue University. She later completed her Ph.D. in Agricultural Systems Management at Purdue University, her research aimed at improving agricultural yield data quality for better farm-level decision-making.

With a strong focus on precision and data-driven agriculture, Dr. Hawkins is recognized for her expertise in agronomic crop production and on-farm research. Her work centers on empowering farmers to enhance profitability through the strategic use of precision technologies and site-specific management. By leading on-farm trials, she helps producers optimize yields, resource efficiency, and economic outcomes. Through her Extension role at Ohio State, Dr. Hawkins works closely with farmers to apply data-driven, site-specific strategies that enhance agronomic performance, resource use, and profitability.



Clark Soil and Water Conservation District are a proud sponsor for the Clark County Park District and National Trail Parks and Recreation District. This year the District sponsored their Summer.

# CLARK SWCD TO HOST MILKWEED SEED POD COLLECTION STATION



To help foster the creation of habitat for the monarch butterfly, OPHI in cooperation with Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Districts is organizing a Statewide **Milkweed Pod Collection this year starting September 1st and ending October 30th.** Milkweed is essential to the survival of Monarch Butterflies in Ohio and Ohio is a priority area for Monarchs. The monarch butterflies that hatch here in the summer migrate to Mexico for the winter and are responsible for starting the life cycle all over again in the spring.

During September and October everyone is encouraged to collect milkweed pods from established plants and drop them off at the nearest pod collection station. The majority of Ohio Counties have a Milkweed Pod Collection Station most of them being located at the local Soil and Water Conservation District office. You can find the location of your local SWCD office: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/soil-and-water-conservation/find-a-local-swcd>



## Collecting Seed Pods

- To collect the seed pods from a milkweed plant it is best to pick them when the seed inside is brown. Do not collect pods when seeds are white or cream colored. If the center seam of the pod pops with gentle pressure, they can be picked.
- It is best to collect pods into paper bags or paper grocery sacks.
- Greenish-yellow or yellowish-brown pods can have mature seeds in them so the best advice is to wait until they turn yellowish brown and then start checking the inside of the pods. If the seeds are dark brown (not milky brown) then the pod is ready for harvesting.
- Avoid using plastic bags because they attract moisture. Store seeds in a cool, dry area until you can deliver to the closest pod collection area.
- Harvesting pods from milkweed plants does not have any effect on the population of milkweed in established areas.
- All milkweed pods collected during this time will be processed by OPHI partners and all of the seed collected will be used to establish new plantings and create additional habitat for the Monarch Butterfly throughout Ohio.

When collecting milkweed pods wear appropriate clothing for the outdoors. It is recommended that you wear disposable gloves when picking and handling pods.

Questions or for more information on pollinators contact your local SWCD office or OPHI at (614) 620-9830 or go visit <https://www.ohiopollinator.org/>

# Riley Porter - Pheasants Forever

**Riley Porter** is originally from Athens, GA, but as a military brat he has lived all over the States. Riley started his career with Pheasants Forever in Plymouth, IN before transferring to Marysville to be closer to family. Before starting with PF, Riley was in Starkville, MS where he finished his master's degree at Mississippi State University studying nest box selection by Common Goldeneye in Interior Alaska. Riley has worked several internships in various wildlife concentrations including small mammals, reptiles, and birds.

Riley and his fiance, Michaela, enjoy waterfowl hunting, and hunting behind their two year old German Shorthair Pointer, Eider. He looks forward to getting to help the landowners across the counties he covers, which are Champaign, Clark, Logan, Madison, and Union. If you need any technical assistance with your wildlife habitat, you can contact Riley by phone, 843-271-9527, or email, [rporter@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:rporter@pheasantsforever.org).



## FEDS FEED FAMILIES FOOD DRIVE



2025 marks the 16th annual government-wide Feds Feed Families (FFF) food drive, which encourages employees from all federal departments and agencies to give in-kind contributions -- food, services, and time -- to food banks and pantries.

In recent years, the focus has been on a summer of giving to help food banks meet the increased demand for food during summer break, when donations are typically lower and families with children do not have access to school meal programs. Federal employees can go to the website, the FFF Hub, to find out how and where to donate online or in-person at food banks and food pantries, how to organize virtual food-drives, how to find field or warehouse gleaning opportunities, and how to share donation success stories.

Feds Feed Families launched in 2009, this campaign has collected more than 47 million pounds of food for donation. In 2024 alone, federal employees donated more than 12 million pounds. USDA is the designated lead agency for the National Feds Feeds Families campaign for the U.S. government nationwide. Together we gathered fifty-two pounds of non-perishable food items at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

For the most up to date information on the campaign, visit the FFF website The Hub.

Questions?

Please email the National campaign leadership at [fedsfeedfamilies@usda.gov](mailto:fedsfeedfamilies@usda.gov).



# 2025 Conservation Scholarship Winners

The Clark SWCD Board of Supervisors and Staff are proud to announce Hayden Coppess and Josie Jennings as recipients of the 14th Annual Clark SWCD Conservation Scholarship for 2025.



**Hayden Coppess**, a graduate of Springfield-Clark CTC where he specialized in welding and fabrication, is headed to The Ohio State University to study Agricultural Systems Management. A varsity athlete in both football and track at Clark Shawnee High School, Hayden also excelled academically as a member of the National Honor Society.

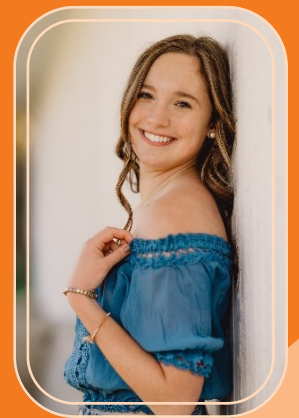
His time in athletics and academics taught him resilience, dedication, and the value of hard work—traits he plans to carry into his future. Through NHS, Hayden actively gave back to his community and developed a leadership style rooted in kindness and service.

With agriculture rapidly evolving through advanced technologies, Hayden's chosen degree will equip him with the mechanical and electronic skills needed to support the changing landscape of modern farming. He aspires to one day own his own welding and repair business, combining his technical training and agricultural knowledge to support farming communities.

***Congratulations, Hayden!***

**Josie Jennings**, a recent graduate of Global Impact STEM Academy and a College Credit Plus student, is preparing to attend college this fall at Oklahoma State University, where she will double major in Agribusiness Management and Agricultural Communications. Deeply inspired by her family's farming legacy, Josie is passionate about advocating for farmers and hopes to become a source of legal, business, and family guidance for families like hers.

Josie has demonstrated strong leadership and service throughout high school. She served as Vice President of the Ohio FFA, where she championed agricultural education and youth leadership, and donated her time to Oakwood Village Assisted Living and the Springfield Rotary. Her commitment to both her roots and her future has shaped her vision to be a voice for farming families and a force for positive change in the agricultural industry. ***Congratulations, Josie!***



**CONGRATULATIONS HAYDEN & JOSIE!**



**Clark Soil & Water  
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**Clark Soil and Water Conservation District**

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