

Huff Run Watershed Agriculture Newsletter

National Headline: Aid To Help the Family Farm

Upcoming Events:

*Mineral City Party
in the Park*

Aug. 17th 12-8 PM

Agriculture Expo
Sept. 13th

10 AM-4 PM

*Huff Run's
Community Ice
Cream Social*
Sept. 16th 6-8 PM

*Huff Run Fall
Tour*

Oct. 25th

9 AM-12 PM

Writer/Publisher:

Amber Leasure-Earnhardt
Huff Run VISTA
(330)859-1050

It's comforting to know that the family farmer has places to turn to for support. Here is one group you may want to look into more. The organization is called Farm Aid- you might have heard of it. The mission of Farm Aid is to keep family farmers on their land. Farm Aid works with and provides grants to local, regional, and national non-profit organizations who promote grassroots initiatives defending family agriculture and promoting fair farm policies.

The Farm Aid website states that "by strengthening the voices of family farmers themselves, Farm Aid stands up for the most resourceful, heroic Americans-the family farmers who work the land."

Last year Farm Aid granted \$430, 535 to 51 family farm groups. Their work is accomplished through four main program areas: Growing the Good Food Movement (encouraging new markets for family farmers), Helping Farmers Thrive (assisting farmers to transition to

more sustainable farming practices), Taking Action to Change the System (focusing on promoting fair farming practices), and Promoting Food from Family Farms. Applications for grants from \$1,000 to \$40,000 are due annually on August 31st.

To learn more about the grants or about Farm Aid visit their website: www.farmaid.org, or you can call 1-800-FARM-AID.

Though the IRS prevents Farm Aid from making grants or loans to any for-profit business (including farms). They do fund farm support organizations all over the U.S.

So how can this help you?

They can connect you with many direct services that include: financial and credit counseling, legal advice, technical assistance, sustainable and organic transition support, new farmer support, disaster and emergency services, and more. Farm Aid states that "we will do our flat out best to help you find the assistance you need to support your farm and help it thrive."



"We all see what's happening with agriculture, what's happening to our small towns. They are going out of business. That's a direct result of the farm problem. We're still doing Farm Aid because it is contributing. It's doing a job."

- John Mellencamp

Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Events:

On Saturday, September 13th there will be a one-day field expo from 10 AM to 4 PM. It will be held in Mechanicstown, Ohio. This event will have many programs that cover topics including alternative energy, forestry, wildlife, pasture management, small farms, soil and water conservation, and kid's safety.

In addition, Joel Salatin, one of America's most dynamic and innovative small farmers, will be speaking at this event. This event is free and open to the

public. It is being sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, Jefferson, and Stark counties. Please see attached flyer for more information or contact the Carroll Co. Soil and Water office at (330) 627-9852 or on-line at www.carrollswcd.org.

We hope to see you there! Huff Run will have a display and be helping with this event. Drop by and introduce yourself to our VISTA, Amber Leasure-Earnhardt!

Other Events Coming Up:

Huff Run Community Ice Cream Social with a guest speaker from Tuscarwas Soil and Water Office on 'Landscaping with a Purpose'. This event will be held at the Mineral City Park Pavilion on Tues., Sept. 16th from 6-8 PM. **Taggart's Ice Cream Parlor** will be donating the ice cream for this event! All are welcome to attend!

Huff Run will be hosting their **Fall Tour** of the Watershed on Saturday, Oct. 25th from 9 AM- 12 noon. All are welcome to attend, call the office for more details. (330) 859-1050.



Area of Focus: Grazing Impacts to Streambanks

The Ohio State University Extension has put out several fact sheets about the impact that agriculture, primarily livestock grazing, has on stream banks. Stream bank areas are also referred to as riparian areas. This information on how landowners and livestock producers can protect their water resources comes from the research of OSU Extension.

Historically, the original grazers of the land were bison, moose, and deer instead of cattle, horses, sheep and goats.

For more information on Riparian Buffer Best Management Practices consult the **Natural Resource Conservation Service**: Steve Davis, Watershed Program Coordinator, 419-222-0614 (108) or your local Soil and Water Offices. **Carroll County Soil and Water**: 330-627-9852 or 888-557-5525— www.carrollswcd.org
Tuscarawas Soil and Water Office: (330) 339-7976— www.tuscscoil.com.

Do your stream banks resemble this one? Take action to plant trees along your banks! Contact the Huff Run Office if you would like support in this endeavor.

These original grazers allowed for the native stream bank plants a period of re-growth following grazing time. So when farmers came and replaced seasonal grazers with continuous grazing livestock, the stream banks began to suffer a great deal. Continuous grazers not only trample the streambanks but they also overgraze the lush vegetation in these fertile areas and congregate for long periods of time in the cool areas that streambanks create.

The Bad News....

Heavy grazing in these streambank areas have many negative effects including: compacting the soil that reduces the infiltration of water into the soil and causes more runoff that adds sediment and nutrients into the waterways. The manure and urine that the livestock deposit around these areas also ends up in the waterways creating higher levels of nutrients/ pathogens in the water. When you remove vegetation from the streambanks it leads to higher water temperatures resulting from the lack of shade. It also creates bare areas which promotes the growth of weeds.

The Good News...

Research studies have shown that managed grazing can enhance farm productivity, decrease input expenses, and protect the environmental conditions on the farm. The majority of the research shows that totally excluding livestock from streams is the best management practice to follow, but we also know that in reality this is not put into practice by some farmers because of the higher costs of fencing the stream. These negative impacts can be prevented or improved by controlling when, where, how long, and with what intensity the livestock is allowed to graze in a certain riparian area.

Livestock should not be allowed in the stream where the streambanks are steep and eroding, when livestock damages the native plants, damage wildlife habitat, or cause damage to the forests that are in or along the riparian area. Streambanks should not be grazed when they are wet leading to soil compaction. This means not allowing animals to graze during winter snowmelts and spring rains and not allowing the animals to resume grazing until the soil dries out. Farmers should also understand the natural preferences of their animals when it comes to grazing to help protect the streambank. For instance, sheep usually cause less damage because they do not like to flock in low-lying areas where they feel exposed to predators. However, cattle tend to cause a lot of damage to riparian areas because they like to congregate in these areas for extended periods of time for the water, shade, and cool breezes.

Learn More About Huff Run, Get Involved!

The Huff Run Watershed Restoration Partnership (HRWRP) was formed by concerned citizens in 1996. For over 12 years we have worked toward our mission of restoring the Huff Run Watershed by improving water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat through community involvement and support.

Although the main pollutant that we work to clean up is acid mine drainage, the problem

that makes our water orange, we strive to improve other areas to make our watershed healthier. This includes agricultural impacts.

Please let us know how we may help the farmers of this area. Building stronger relationships with landowners will allow for increased knowledge in the community about sustainable farming practices.

Here is a list of positive streambank grazing practices you can incorporate on your land:

- 1) Allow livestock to graze for short periods of time when soil conditions are dry.
- 2) Stubble height in grassy riparian areas should be at least be 4 in. and in woody areas stubble height should be 6-8 in.
- 3) Install alternative watering systems and controlled grazing to reduce the deposition of manure near the streams.
- 4) Allow long-term rest from grazing streambank areas that are highly degraded.
- 5) Allow short-term or seasonal rest to protect wet streambanks and vegetation that is emerging, regenerating, or setting seed.
- 6) Streambank stability and more vegetation can be improved by providing alternative shade and water away from the stream, also by placing feed supplements (hay, grain, salt, and mineral) in upland areas away from riparian areas.
- 7) If livestock needs to cross the stream, provide them with stream controlled crossings- cover the stream bottom with coarse gravel to allow for animals to have firm footing, but not letting them linger in the stream.
- 8) In stream areas where livestock is prohibited-brush, boulders, rocks, high tensile fence, solar-powered electric fences, or woven fences can be used at a reasonable price to exclude livestock from the stream.

Are you integrating any land conservation practices on your land and would like to share with others in the community? Let us know and you can be featured in the newsletter!

In the past we have provided trees to stream side landowners to improve the life of their stream bank. Feel free to contact our office with concerns or ideas about a program that might interest you or check out our website to see how you can get involved. (330) 859-1050

www.huffrun.org



