

# WATERSHED NEWS

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**CLEAN SWEEP! 2005**

The 2005 Seneca County Clean Sweep was once again a huge success. 218 participants came out to help clean up the river and join in the festivities. Over 7 tons of trash was removed. Crawford County held their event on September 10th, with over 50 people in attendance. Details inside on our Sandusky Co. Cleanup.



## ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER—NOVEMBER 15, 2005

The Annual Meeting of the Sandusky River Watershed Coalition will be held on November 15, 2005.

Topics on the agenda for the business meeting include:

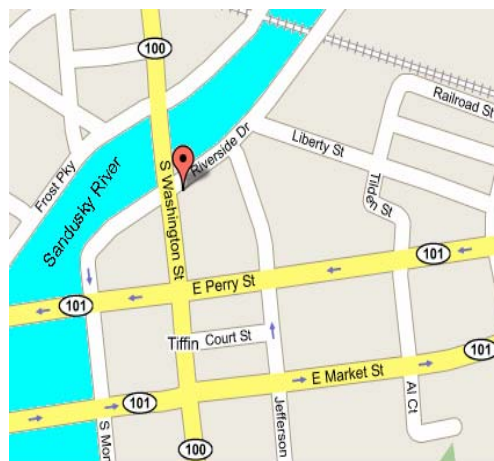
- By-Laws amendment to reduce membership meetings from quarterly to semi-annual.
- By-Laws amendment regarding term limits and appointments to the Steering Committee.
- Election of 2006 Steering Committee Members
- Approval of 2006 SRWC Budget.
- Approval of Summer Meeting Minutes.

The meeting will be held at the Seneca County Commission On Aging. A catered dinner will be served including carved ham, seasoned chicken, and all the fixins'. A donation of \$5 per person is asked to help cover the cost .

Our featured speaker for the night will be Dr. Dave Baker, Director Emeritus, Water Quality Laboratory at Heidelberg College. Dr. Baker has spent a career studying the Sandusky River and will share insight on what he has learned about the river and the challenges ahead. Dr. Baker is a

R.S.V.P. By November 6 to attend!

Seneca Co Commission on Aging  
10 Riverside Drive, Tiffin, OH.  
Downtown Tiffin, on the Sandusky River.



**Doors open at 6:00, dinner will be server at 6:30pm.**

wealth of knowledge and expertise that you won't want to miss. Please join us for this special treat.

**You must RSVP for this event, as we will be planning meals accordingly.**

## 6TH GRADE CONSERVATION TOUR BRINGS OVER 400 STUDENTS TO MILLER FARM

The Seneca County SWCD again hosted the Seneca County Conservation Tour for 6th graders in mid-September. The students learned about water quality, wildlife, soils, and agriculture. SC Members Tia Rice and Bob Vargo led the sessions on soils and water quality monitoring respectively. Coordinator Chris Riddle served as a tour guide for the two day event, discussing how all the various topics impacted

each other and the lives of the students. Everyone had a great time at the we attended event.



## CLEAN SWEEP—SANDUSKY COUNTY—10/29/05

Sandusky County Recycling and Litter Prevention is once again hosting the Sandusky County Clean Sweep. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and the Sandusky River Watershed Coalition are stepping in to lend a hand with the event.

The Clean-Up will occur October 19 from 9am-11am in Fremont.

Volunteers can register ahead of time by calling the Coalition and providing your name, phone number, and t-shirt size. T-shirts will be given to the first 40 volunteers to pre-register or on a first-come, first-serve basis the day of the event.

You can meet at one of three places in Fremont to help. Meeting sites are at the pull-off at Oakwood St. and River St. near the Ballville Dam, in

Roger Young Park along the river opposite the baseball diamonds, and in the public parking lot in the 200 block of South Front Street.

Volunteers are asked to wear long pants, closed toe shoes, gloves, and other appropriate attire. Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!! PLEASE HELP US GROW IN 2006...

Do you have experience running a major fundraising event? Do you have experience getting donations, planning activities, and coordinating a long list of participants?

Then we need your help.

Do you have **no** experience with any of the above, but want to learn?

Then we need your help too.

The Sandusky River Watershed Coalition is at a time in our life when we need to do some aggressive fundraising. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, we are all opening our hearts and our pockets as we work to help so many people in so much need. If you have not made a contribution to the effort yet, I would certainly encourage you to contact the Red Cross or any other organization that you feel comfortable supporting, and provide whatever assistance you can. Yet even as we all dig a little deeper to give to such an important cause, it is also critical to remember that the need here at home doesn't go away.

Many local organizations, including the Coalition, rely on the financial support of the local community to pay the bills on a regular basis. With rising energy costs, this year will be even more difficult for many local groups. Our operating costs will continue to rise as the cost of energy rises, and as spending cash becomes gas money for many people, their ability to contribute

is cut short. That is why we feel we need to offer something more to those who support us in 2006, and thus an exciting night of games, prizes, and more fun than you would ever imagine is being planned. We have recruited the help of several experienced volunteers already, but many more will be needed.

Organizing donations, locations, food, drinks, games, and all the other details for such an event will be quite a task. However, there is a light at the tunnel. With your help we will be able to put on an extremely successful event that will provide operating funds for the Coalition in 2006 and will be a great time over everyone involved!

Not sure what you can do to help? Don't work, we will help you find something that fits your skills and your desire to learn. If you have always wanted to get more active in the community, or just add a new skill to your resume, this is the perfect way to do it. Even if you just want to volunteer for the evening of the event, we would be glad to have you.

To get involved, contact Chris Riddle at 419-334-5016 or [cmriddle@wsos.org](mailto:cmriddle@wsos.org). We will begin planning for the event in late fall or early winter, and hope to host the event in March. We really do need a lot of help for this event. Our fundraising is becoming more and more important, especially as our watershed coordinator grant closes out at the end of 2006. Your support will make the difference in the future of the Coalition.

# 2005 COORDINATOR'S CANOE CHALLENGE

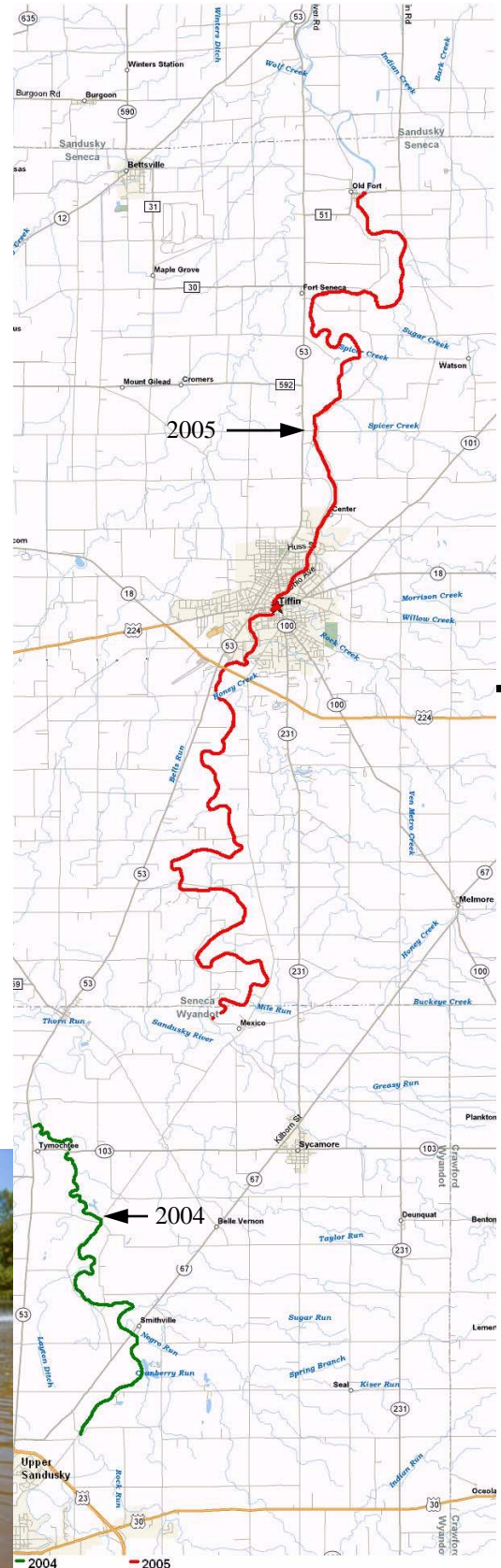
After a year of being reminded about the shortcomings of the 2004 effort for the Canoe Challenge, the jokes can finally come to an end.

On September 6, we held the 2nd Annual Coordinator's Canoe Challenge, a little event that helps raise funds for the Coalition and brings some awareness to the river. I was joined by Craig Wittig, an instructor at BGSU's Center for Environmental Programs for this year's trip. Craig brought years of experience and a little bit of brute force to the table for this year's event.

We set out from Mexico Bridge in northern Wyandot County at 7:30am, with a soft fog rising from the river. We made our way north into Tiffin where we skirted around two dams before having lunch at the Pioneer Mill. After lunch we did more walking than canoeing, as we

made our way down the shallow, rocky stretches north of Tiffin. At 6:30pm we finally called it a day, in Old Fort. We had made it 30.5 miles.

Along the way we saw a minimum of 15 different bald eagles, and passed at least 3 eagle nests. We scared up several hundred starlings in southern Seneca County, and several dozen Canada Geese in Tiffin. Craig got hit by a jumping fish somewhere north of Tiffin, and we even met an 86 year old man who was out enjoying a little fishing at the Huss St Bridge. The full details of the event will be on the website, and press releases are being sent out across the watershed. All in all, it was a great day, and we were able to raise over \$350 for the Coalition.



## TIME TO TAKE THE LEAP

I seem to be doing a lot of leaping right now. Let me explain. In my “spare” time I volunteer for the board of directors for a small nonprofit. The role is very overwhelming to me, especially considering the state of the organization. Their founders are to retire this spring, at which time they will be leaving us on our own. So, we have spent the past few months working to raise the \$100K we need to survive. Its been a long road, but we are getting there. The next 3 months will make or break it for us—15 years of history suddenly comes down to this. No pressure, honest.

What is perhaps most interesting to me is that the Coalition is about to make a slightly smaller, but equally important leap. 2006 is our last year with ODNR funding. What does this mean? Well, it breaks down like this...

In 2006 we will receive about \$20,000 from ODNR to help support our day-to-day operations. This money, is earmarked for salary only, and it covers the time spent on maintaining the organization—website, memberships, public relations, and so forth. Nothing too exciting, but things that are essential for maintaining an organization.

We will also receive about \$40,000 from a variety of grants. These are dollars that will pay for staff time and help pay the bills related to specific projects. They are highly restricted funds though, and they cant help support newsletters, clean ups, and membership meetings.

The remaining \$30,000 that we spend will come from a combination of additional grants, the support of WSOS, and our membership drive. Each of the last two years we have raised about \$10,000 through fundraising. This leaves us about a \$20,000 gap. While I would rather have a \$200 gap, it is something we can work through.

2007 is our leap year. On January 1st, we will have our first day without ODNR funding—that \$20,000 will disappear. The question is, what does this mean for us?

For now, it means a \$40,000 gap in funding. If you thought \$20,000 sounded like a lot, then I’m sure that doubling it really caught your attention.

So that is what we are facing in 2007, a \$40,000 hole.

So now what?

Well, that isn’t something that I can answer. As your staff, it is my role to help keep the organization alive, but I can only take it so far. The SRWC is a community based organization—we rely on the support and participation of the community for our survival. I will continue to write grants and do all the fundraising that I can. I am committed to keeping this organization alive—and when I leave, be it 30 days or 30 years from now—I want it to be better than I found it.

I can’t do this alone. And this is why we need your help. As our supporters, it is you who must decide how important the Coalition is, and if we will survive. In 1997 we got started because there was a need to help protect and improve the Sandusky River. In 2007, that need will still be there. If we are here to answer to that need is in your hands.

- Christopher M. Riddle

## SRWC & SENECA SWCD PARTNER ON OEEF GRANT

The Coalition submitted an application to the Ohio Environmental Education Fund this summer to develop an agricultural assessment and education program. There were 35 applications submitted to the Fund, requesting over \$1.5 million. I am happy to report that we were ranked number one among all applications! We will be receiving \$46,000 to implement this project, and will be hosting 5 day workshops for local producers, using a program developed by the Ohio Farm Bureau. The Coalition partnered with Seneca SWCD and NRCS to develop the application. The program will also be opened up to farmers from across the watershed. Details will be posted on the website and will be included in future newsletters regarding the project.

## STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

There are several openings on the steering committee this fall. Elections are held at the annual meeting each year. The Steering Committee currently meets the 1st Monday of each month at 1:30 pm. If you have an interest in participating, please contact us, or you may ask to be added to the ballot during the meeting.

Seats Up For Election

-Hardin/Marion Co. Rep.

-Crawford Co. Rep.

-Wyandot Co. Rep

-Erie Co. Rep.

-At-Large #3

-At-Large #4

Members are asked to attend 8 meetings a year over a 2 year term. Most meetings are held in Tiffin, due to its central location within the watershed.

If you want more information on the committee and the responsibilities of members, please contact Chris Riddle at 419-334-5016 or [cmriddle@wsos.org](mailto:cmriddle@wsos.org).

## OUR MEMBERS—2005

**Bald Eagle**—WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc.

**Great Blue Heron**-

**Mink**—American Electric Power

City of Bucyrus

City of Fremont

City of Tiffin

City of Upper Sandusky

**Walleye**-Ken Baker, Seneca

The Boardwalk

Cedar Point

Clouse Construction Corp.

Richard & Lisa Dunn, Wyandot

Mary Fran Kuebler, Seneca

Don and Caroline Miller, Sandusky

National Machinery Foundation

Steve Mohr, Seneca

James W Pry II, Crawford

Village of New Washington

Chris Reed, Sandusky

Village of Republic

Sandusky County Park District

Dr. & Mrs. DP Smith (Arrowhead Farms), Seneca

Smith-Comeskey Ground Water Science, LLC

Brad & Susan Tanner, Seneca

Water Quality Laboratory

Frederick Widman, Crawford

Winous Point Marsh Conservancy

**Damselfly**-Dave & Peg Baker, Seneca

Crawford Co. Park District

John Crumrine, Seneca

Gordon Downard, Stout, OH

Kurt Erichson, Lucas

George Fruth, Seneca

Izaak Walton League, Tiffin-Seneca

Tim & Amy Loftus, Seneca

Norwalk Concrete Industries

Sandra & Robert Laipply Jr, Crawford

Justine Magsig, Ottawa

Scott & Joanne Riddle, Seneca

Sandusky Co. Soil & Water Conservation Dist.

Seneca Caverns

Seneca County Farm Bureau

Shane & Kate Siefert, Crawford

Steve Smith, Seneca

Jeff & Carla Wagner, Seneca

Julie Ward

Margaret Widman, Crawford

Brian & Kristin Woodall, Seneca

Terry Wright, Seneca

Wyandot County Visitors & Convention Bureau

**Sycamore**-Robert & Berniece Bear, Wyandot

James L. Cooper, Seneca

Luther & Arline Hirt, Seneca

Mary Anne & Carl Koebel, Sandusky

James & Dorothy Leslie, Wyandot

Terry & Katie McKibben, Wood

Joe & Karen Perry Family, Sandusky

Robert & Mary Robertson, Wyandot

Josie Setzler, Sandusky

Thank you for your financial support in 2005! We were able to raise nearly \$9,000 this year.

**Sandusky River Watershed Coalition**

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Email: [cmiddle@wsos.org](mailto:cmiddle@wsos.org)

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.sanduskyriver.org](http://www.sanduskyriver.org)

*Working together for healthier streams.*



## Building bridges and protecting rivers go hand-in-hand, believe it or not.

By: Robert Vargo, ODNR, Ohio Scenic Rivers Program

The Ohio Scenic Rivers Program has authority over publicly funded projects within 1000 feet of a scenic river outside of municipal corporation limits. The Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 gives us this authority. We do not have authority over private property. As the Sandusky State Scenic River manager, one of my favorite aspects of my career is conducting environmental reviews and seeking mitigation for new bridge construction projects. I have been involved with four completed bridge projects in my little over six year tenure. Two upcoming bridge projects will be in the near future.

The following is compilation of the mitigation we received for the four completed bridges. Floodplains were restored-older bridges did not have the technology to have long spans over the rivers, so the bridge abutments were built right at the edge of the rivers, hence choking off the floodplains. New bridges have the technology for longer spans, hence the floodplains remain open. Also, new bridges are built above the 100 year flood elevation and are less likely to be damaged in severe flooding. A man-made dike, three bridge abutments and one abandoned bridge pier were removed to restore the floodplains. Tree

removal always occurs during new bridge construction, so 117 balled and burlapped trees and 204 tree seedlings have been planted as replacements. These are native hardwood species.

For the two future bridge projects, we have the following mitigation. Additional acreage will be deeded to us for scenic river buffer, a total of 3.76 acres. Tree planting-180 balled and burlapped native hardwood trees. Removal of another man-made dike and two bridge abutments to restore the floodplain. A new scenic river access area will be built which includes a parking lot and a trail to the river. These bridge projects will be starting later this year or early 2006. The construction may impact people's ability to access the river. You can always call my office at 419-981-6319 for accessibility information prior to venturing out on your scenic river.

As you can see, we strive to offset any impacts to the twelve state scenic rivers in Ohio. Our protection efforts ensure that these rivers remain as high quality rivers for now and in the future.