

Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Ohio SWCD

Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are in every county throughout the state. These government organizations focus on supporting soil and water health throughout the counties, aiding landowners in doing what is best for the environment.

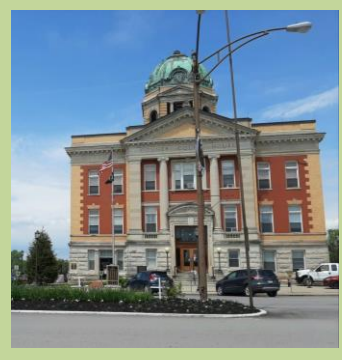
Monroe County SWCD

The Monroe County SWCD is located in Woodsfield, Ohio, the county seat. Organized in 1942 as the 9th district of Ohio, their goal is to develop and implement programs for the conservation of soil, water, and related resources.

They can be found on Facebook or online, at monroeswcd.org. They are administrated by a board of elected supervisors and currently employ 3 full time technicians.



Monroe County, Ohio



Finding a Position

This internship position was recommended to me by a previous intern pursuing a degree in agriculture. She had filled the position the year before but would not be returning, suggesting I ask about the job. There was no application process, but I talked to the supervisor many times over the phone and then had to be approved by the board. While no prior experience was necessary, they were looking for an intern who was focused on an environmental field of study/career.

Agriculture

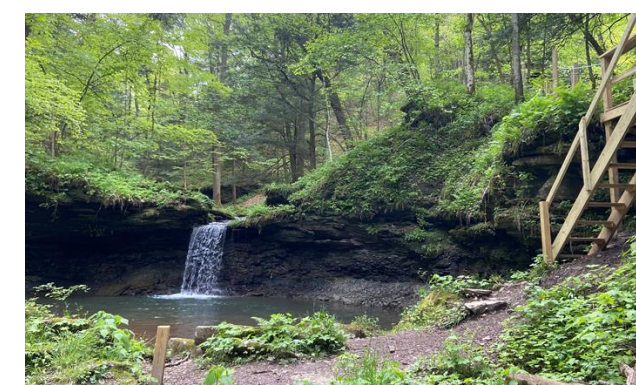
Monroe County is one of the largest in Ohio in terms of land, while being one of the least populated. Located in Appalachia, most residents work in blue colored jobs, including farming. The SWCD caters to these farmers, renting equipment, helping to build barns, and offering crop, forest, and irrigation advice.



The sprayer (left) and two-row corn planter (right) are examples of the equipment available for rent in the county. Monroe County Agricultural Technician, Wyatt Felder, moved these pieces from one farm to another, as well as fixing any broken parts. Riding along on these trips, I was able to visit parts of the county I had never been to, as well as meet farmers and discuss their planting and harvesting methods.

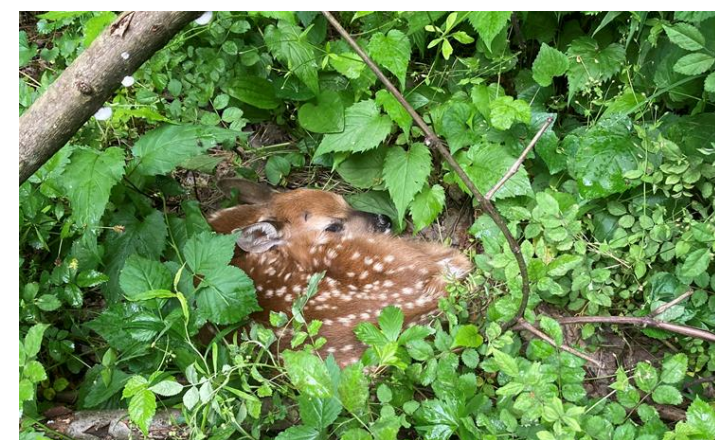
Wildlife

I spent much of my internship shadowing the Wildlife and Forestry Technician, Christina Slover, as she visited properties to assess pests, boundary lines, and logging concerns. An avid birder, Christina offered an abundance of knowledge on animals and plants alike, leading bird walks and hikes for the local community.



Pictured is a waterfall in Monroe County's Platt Park. I followed Christina as she mapped out a route for a community bird walk, only getting lost one time.

During a property inspection, we stumbled upon this fawn. He was one of many forms of wildlife we encountered on our visits.



Surveying

Throughout the course of the summer, I was able to learn a little about land surveying using the county's laser level survey.



I learned to use the laser level in order to survey land for building and water line systems. Elevation is a crucial factor when performing these projects and surveying the land can help to avoid any future errors.

Education

Educational programs and workshops were offered throughout the summer, both to the youth in the community and the SWCD employees.

I volunteered at neighboring Nobel County SWCD's youth field day. The kids learned how to shoot bow and arrows, made bird houses, and got a surprise visit from the wildlife K-9.



A New Carbon Program for Hardwood Landowners

Hosted by National Woodland Owners Association, Walnut Council, and Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association



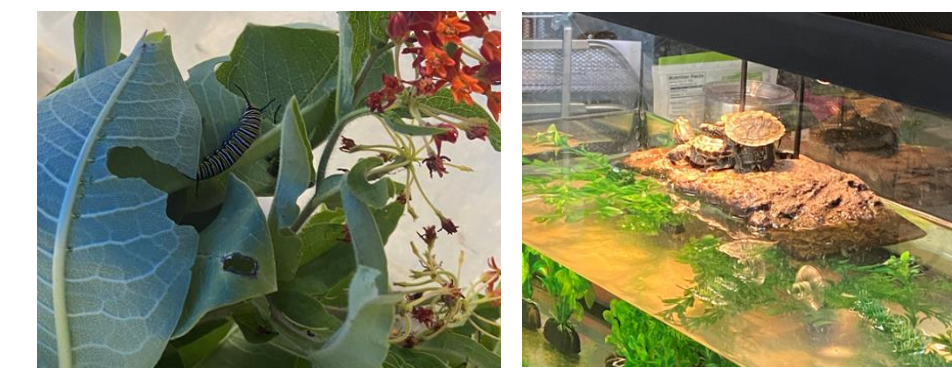
A highlight of my internship was attending a Carbon Credit webinar hosted by Purdue. The program was informing, and I am even interested in a future position with one of these companies.

CAUV and FMP Policies

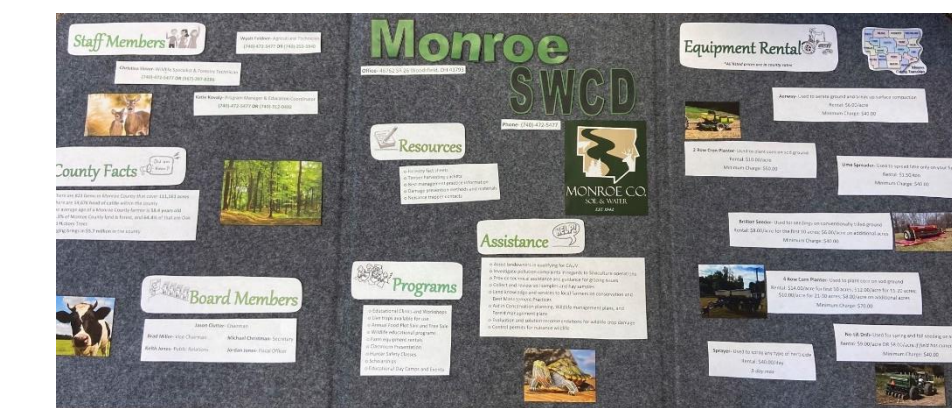
I became well acquainted with Ohio tax policies such as CAUV (Current Agricultural Use Value) and FMP (Forest Management Plan). I shadowed Program Manager Katy Kovaly on property inspections to ensure proper land use and maintenance.

Responsibilities

I worked on a few projects throughout the summer, such as planning workshops and field days. I also cared for a handful of fostered animals in the SWCD office.



The SWCD office fostered two turtles who were being illegally sold in another Ohio county. At the end of the summer, they were moved to a local elementary classroom for educational purposes. The office also worked with teachers to bring Monarch caterpillars into schools to teach children about the life cycle.



I took on the project of remaking the informational display for the Monroe County fair. I updated equipment prices, summarized SWCD programs, and added eye-catching illustrations.

Forming Connections

I had the opportunity to meet ODNR representatives for a local school Wildlife Site, as well as county Wildlife Officers and SWCD Board Members. This allowed me to network, as well as learn about potential career fields within my area of study.



Pictured here is Holmes County's only robotic dairy farm, with 4 robots and almost 300 head of cattle.

I was given the opportunity to attend Ohio's SWCD Summer Supervisor's School. Here, I met SWCD employees from almost every county, as well as taking informational tours around the area.

How Did it Go?

Pros:

- This position was educational and rewarding, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in the environmental field. I learned more about the county I grew up in than I have ever known.
- The staff was welcoming and allowed me to shadow and ask questions on any visit or job.
- The hours were flexible, giving me the opportunity to work on busy office days and have time off for slower ones.
- I met amazing people and loved the Summer School experience, as well as the webinars.

Cons

- There were periods of downtime where my day would only be spent in the office with little to do.
- The commute to work was about 45 minutes in both directions



For the Future

In my future career, I will most likely not find a similar position. This is only because Soil and Water Conservation Districts in rural areas focus on farming and agriculture, which is not exactly what I plan to pursue. However, I gained experience in Carbon Credit programs and sustainable land use. This is much closer to my future goals, and the internship only strengthened those interests.

Always take advantage of an opportunity such as this one, even if you have reservations. While there were some aspects that did not interest me as much, others reassured me that I am headed in the right direction with my career goals.