

# Road Trip!

**The Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District is going on a trip...a bus trip!** Join us for a three-day, two-night trip to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed in Pennsylvania and Maryland. We are heading east on July 12, 2022 and will return on July 14, 2022. This trip will be an educational experience focusing on water quality.

Ohio has water quality issues just like most other states. Most of the focus on water quality in Ohio has been toward Lake Erie or Grand Lake St. Mary's. The rest of the State of Ohio hasn't seen the same scrutiny as those two watersheds. But mark my words, our day is coming! The watersheds in our part of the state do not flow to Lake Erie; they flow to the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of Mexico has its own set of problems. For instance, there is a dead zone in the gulf the size of the State of Delaware. Talk about a HUGE problem. We can't see the Gulf of Mexico from our front porch, but nutrients from our fields might be adding to the problem if we do not manage those nutrients correctly. Based on 2017 ag census data and 2018 information from the Ohio EPA, if you divide the estimated Nitrogen loss from the Muskingum River Watershed by the number of acres of corn planted in the watershed it equals over 90 pounds. Nitrogen is used on more than just corn acres, but this gives us a picture of the amount of nutrients that might be lost from our fields.

Water quality issues are normally followed by regulations. When you want to know how to deal with a situation or how to fix something, you go to someone who has been there and done that. Agriculture in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed has dealt with regulation for close to 50 years. We are going to visit and talk with producers and organizations in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to see what their experiences have been dealing with regulation and the changes they have made to their operations.

We will start out on Tuesday visiting with the Hoover family in Perry County, PA. They have a 750-sow farrow to finish operation that utilizes cover crops, no-till, forages to reduce high P soil levels and some unique equipment. We will then travel to the Harvest View Barn <https://harvestviewbarn.com/> for a meal and meeting with Jim Hershey and the PA No-till Alliance <https://panotill.org/> to hear what they are doing to help the water quality in the bay.

Wednesday we will go further east across the Bay Bridge to Harborview Farms <https://www.harborviewfarms.net/> near Rock Hall, Maryland. They farm 13,000 acres on and near the bay. They utilize cover crops, no-till, solar and nutrient management to address water quality. We are hoping to get a boat trip out on the bay also on Wednesday.

On Thursday morning we will visit the Stroud Water Research Center <https://stroudcenter.org/>. They are an organization doing research and education on freshwater since 1967. Our final stop will be the Rodale Institute <https://rodaleinstitute.org/>. The Rodale Institute does work in organic production. We will be viewing a 30-year organic versus traditional production plot, an outdoor swine operation and some of their water quality work.

This will be a great opportunity to learn from other producers and organizations. We are still working out some of the details for the trip. We received a grant from the Straker Foundation to reduce the cost of the trip for Muskingum County Residents. If you are interested in going with us on this trip contact the office at 740-454-2027 and keep checking our website <http://muskingumswcd.org> for costs when it becomes available and updates on the trip.

