

Biographical Narrative *Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life? -Mary Oliver*

Well, hello there! I am your friendly Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator, Carrie Brown, and I serve communities in Fairfield County. I am currently an Educator 2, striving for promotion to Educator 3, and have been blessed to be in this role since August of 2021. I reside in the city of Lancaster, smack dab in the center of my county. Though I am fairly new to Extension, I have an extensive background in both education and natural resources. I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Ohio University and a Master of Arts in Biology from Miami University. I am a licensed Adult Mental Health First Aid instructor, Commercial Pesticide Applicator, and also hold a Professional Teaching License in the state of Ohio. Prior to embarking on my Extension career, I worked in formal & informal education, project management, and as an agricultural technician. I am truly delighted to be able to coalesce these past experiences to serve my county today.

If you aren't familiar with Fairfield County, please allow me to show you around! We are a county of over 161,000 people that has traditionally been rural, however is increasingly experiencing development, largely due to our proximity to Columbus. As a result, we have a unique suburban/rural interface that provides much opportunity for education and outreach. Nevertheless, Fairfield County's roots are in agriculture, and our producers continue to create a bounty that plays a key role in our economy today, generating \$125 million in sales in recent years. You may also be interested to know that according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, our county has over 188,000 acres in farmland. Though most of these acres are dedicated to soybean and grain production, our county also ranks in the top 20% in the state for alternative crops including fruit trees, grapes, and cultivated Christmas trees.

This diversity within the realms of agriculture, horticulture, and natural resources creates an abundance of educational and outreach opportunities for OSU Extension. While I am dedicated to providing research-based information to *all* county residents, I specialize in the areas of natural resources (50%), local food systems (30%), and horticulture (20%).

Major Accomplishments *What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make. -Jane Goodall*

Teaching and Engagement: From my very first day on the job, one of my top priorities has been the development of connections with other local and regional agencies, including SWCD, NRCS, FSA, Central State University, surrounding producers, and local park districts. Together, we've identified emerging needs and have collaborated on programming and outreach to increase our collective impact on our community. For instance, in 2022 I partnered with Fairfield Soil & Water Conservation District's Education Specialist on a virtual program called "The Best Tree for Your Site." This was scheduled to coincide with and complement their Annual SWCD Tree Sale and provided tips on tree site selection, as well as practical information on requirements of individual tree species included in the sale. In fact, after entering this for a NACAA Communication Award in the category of Computer Generated Graphics Presentation With Script, I was pleased to receive the NACAA State 1st Place, Regional Finalist, and National Finalist awards. Because of its success, we are looking forward to repeating this program in 2023.

In 2022, I presented nearly 50 programs to a variety of audiences. Many of these were formed from collaborations such as the one described above, and over 80% were addressed directly to Fairfield County residents. I draw on interactions with participants during outreach to inform and shape the future of my programming by regularly collecting both formal and informal evaluation data.

Over a dozen of these programs centered on Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) awareness. As part of the "SLF Team" I have presented hands-on SLF programming to a diverse audience, including producers, Master Gardener Volunteers, new Extension Educators, groups of elementary students, and even nationally at the 2022 ANREP Conference. I believe that by using this all-hands-on-deck approach and empowering our local citizens to be "community scientists," we will be prepared to tackle this invasive insect when it makes its eventual county debut, minimizing the total impact it has on our region's producers and operations. I have found that by delivering information that meets similar objectives multiple times throughout the year, such as with SLF education, I've been able to use the evaluation feedback to ensure program improvement is ongoing.

Most recently, I have co-led the development of a Scarlet Canvas course entitled, "Ohio Woodland Health Practices for Service Providers." In collaboration with other Woodland Steward team members, we have created an online course with the ultimate goal of helping *green industry professionals*, such as local arborists and landscape architects, to broaden their businesses by including woodland health services for small woodland owners as part of

their services offered. In turn, we hope to develop a network of service providers in Ohio available to assist small landowners with their backyard woodlands.

Furthermore, I am excited to be co-leading the creation of a second online course. This curriculum, as well as the one above, utilizes materials developed by University of Maryland Extension who I partnered with when attending a train-the-trainer event in early 2022. “The Woods in Your Backyard” targets the *landowners* of small woodlands, helping them establish their goals and identify the tasks for which they may need to seek a service provider.

We hope the courses will help these two targeted groups eventually converge and that the stewarding of small woodlands will have a large collective impact, even in more developed areas. For instance, according to the Auditor’s office, over 27% of parcels in Fairfield County have woodlands and over 90% of those parcels are 10 acres or less.

Creative and scholarly efforts: I have always loved to write and have found that Extension offers many opportunities to exercise this passion. In 2022, I enjoyed contributing articles regularly to Buckeye Lawn and Garden onLine (BYGL), as well as collaborating with colleagues around the state to co-author timely information on pests, diseases, and growing conditions. I have also published in the ANREP quarterly newsletter, showcasing the Spotted Lanternfly Study Tour we were able to take this past fall, thanks to an internal ANR grant. Additionally, I am looking forward to authoring an article that will appear in the upcoming Ohio Woodlands, Water, & Wildlife Newsletter.

Though my radio personality is certainly still in development, I give frequent interviews that are aired on our local radio station’s Saturday Morning Farm Page. Beginning this year, I’m excited to add a monthly segment, “Weather Wrap Up,” at the end of each month. This will provide a platform to share precipitation accumulation data collected by our county’s Precipitation Monitors, a community science program I initiated prior to coming to Extension that has continued to grow in popularity.

If you were to peek at my bucket list, you’d see “Learn a new thing each day” at the very top. Extension delivers endless opportunities to give and to grow. A highlight in 2022 was attending the Annual ANREP Conference in Kalamazoo MI, with the help of two extension association scholarships I received totaling \$1000 towards travel costs. I gained many new ideas and enjoyed the chance to converse with Extension professionals from all over the U.S. I also co-presented a peer-reviewed presentation for a national audience. Later in the year, I was invited to co-present two presentations at the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation OSU Green Industry Short Course, as well as presenting at Farm Science Review’s Gwynne Conservation Area.

Service: One of the best parts of my job is the many chances to give back. Oftentimes, this comes with the added bonus to further develop as a professional. In our office, my stewardship role responsibilities include leading the Extension Advisory Committee, as well as serving as backup for the Community Engagement, Equity & Inclusion Committee. Locally, I am an active member on the newly established Fairfield County Local Foods Council. Beginning in the summer of 2021, I worked on a steering committee commissioned by the Fairfield County Commissioners to update our agricultural economic development plan, Fairfield Growing. Along with representatives from other county agencies such as SWCD, our regional planning commission, and our visitor bureau, we met on a weekly basis to set recommendations on how we may advance and raise the profile of Fairfield County agriculture over the next ten years. We elicited feedback from a variety of local producers through monthly focus groups, and I authored a local foods survey that was distributed county-wide. The Local Foods Council was borne from this effort, and I look forward to what we will be able to accomplish as a vested group.

Regionally, I am a member of the Southeast Ohio Women Owning Woodlands planning committee and a member of Collaborative Place-Based Woodland Owner Education in Ohio, a product of the Interagency Forestry Team. Networking with these groups and attending public programs have assisted me in growing professionally within my specializations and has helped me serve as a better resource for my clients. Though the majority of our contiguous wooded acres lie in the far southeastern part of our county, nearly 18,000 parcels in Fairfield County have woodlands of less than ten acres. Collectively, that is a lot of land and potential clientele; small lots can make a big difference.

I am an active member of several state-wide teams including the Woodland Stewards team, Fruit & Vegetable team, Beginner & Small Farms team, Agronomy team, and the Buckeye Environmental Horticulture team. I am also

a member of the Farm Science Review Education Committee and will serve as Chair for the Gwynne Conservation Area Speaker Committee beginning this year.

Additionally, I chair the NACAA state Scholarship Committee and serve as vice president of the JCEP Global Relations Committee. I am a member of the ANREP Professional and Leadership Development Committee, and recently I was elected to serve as President-Elect for the Ohio chapter of ANREP.

Plans for the Future *It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.* -Eleanor Roosevelt

Over the next five years I will strive to increase my impact in my county and surrounding region by developing programming and outreach that builds on the successes of 2022 while continuing to strengthen as an Extension professional.

Programming & Engagement: I will work to expand my reach, further developing both local and multicounty learning opportunities based on emerging needs. For instance, in partnership with our Local Foods Council, I will seek out advisory to increase impact on our local foods systems. I will expand my annual local food tour series, cooperating with a greater variety of local producers and providing additional opportunities for consumers to engage with those that grow their food. To ensure coverage of the entire county, I have a goal to expand the locations in which I provide programming. For instance, this year I will partner with local libraries to provide an educational series on backyard gardening. Not only will this allow me to reach a larger audience, but it will also give me a chance to form new partnerships and reach new communities who may not already be familiar with what Extension can offer. I am also excited about a new partnership with Visit Fairfield County, our visitor bureau. We are uniting efforts to create an interactive virtual local foods trail that will benefit local residents but also be a handy tool for Fairfield County visitors. I will seek out external funds to support local efforts, such as these, when appropriate.

In addition, I will prioritize the needs of my county's commodity crop and livestock farmers by using both formal evaluations at programming, along with informal evaluations including focus group input. I will seek out expertise through OSU Extension and community agencies to meet needs that are outside of my specialization.

Teaching & Evaluation: I will continue to apply my specialization expertise by engaging landowners and woodland enthusiasts by utilizing existing program curriculum developed by the Ohio Woodland Stewards, as well as applying consistent evaluation and revising program content as necessary to maximize impact. Additionally, I will contribute to curriculum development through the creation of a second Scarlet Canvas course, providing small woodland owners with the skills and knowledge to be good land stewards. Since these two small woodland curriculums are new, it will be vital to gather evaluation data on an ongoing basis to ensure content and delivery is meeting needs and make improvements as necessary.

Applied Scholarship: Throughout course creation, I identified underrepresented areas on Ohioline and have begun strategizing with others in Extension at both OSU and Central State University to create and publish new peer-reviewed factsheets. Additionally, I will continue to add frequent content to OSU blog sites that reach both local and statewide audiences, including BYGL, The NEWS from OSU Extension in Fairfield County, and Let's Grow Ohio. I will also continue to seek out opportunities to share my specialization expertise for local and regional audiences at conferences such as Ohio Green Industry Association's midwestGREEN and in-field workshops including A Day in the Woods – 2nd Friday Series. I will attract external funds through local grant opportunities to support local efforts.

Service & Professional Development: I will pursue opportunities to further support my county and its residents, including serving on local committees and advisory boards. Additionally, I will continue to develop as a professional, especially in the realm of leadership. As President-Elect of the Ohio Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals (Ohio ANREP), I will work with the President to bring training opportunities that will advance natural resource knowledge and capacity within Extension. I will maintain this mission as Ohio ANREP President in 2024. Additionally, I will be able to further develop this muscle by taking on a leadership role at Farm Science Review, as well as serving on the Master Gardener Volunteer Advisory Committee. As George Eliot once said, "It's never too late to be what you might have been."