

# Union Soil & Water Conservation District 2023-2027 Strategic Plan



*“Take care of the land, and the land will take care of you”*  
*-Hugh Hammond Bennett*



# Adoption Statement

This plan was adopted by the Union Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors on May 11, 2023.

## **Union Board Supervisors**

Rich Weigand, Chair

Andy Clarridge, Vice-Chair

Matt Staley, Fiscal Agent, Treasurer

Cheryl Trivisonno, Secretary

Randy Trapp, Member

## **Associate Supervisors**

Bill Conklin

Jay Rausch

Jim Mitchell

Joe Wiley

Matt Furer

Steve Drumm

Suzi Clarridge

## **Union SWCD Staff**

Brent Nickel, District Administrator/Wildlife Specialist

Sherry Maisenbacher, Administrative Assistant

Mark Watkins, District Technician

Ross Carter, District Technician

Joseph Grove, Urban Technician

Joe Eads, Drainage Maintenance Supervisor

Matt Archer, Drainage Maintenance Technician

The staff of the Union County Soil & Water Conservation District are equally committed to carrying out the priorities established within this document to further the SWCD mission and its commitment to foster natural resource conservation and environmental stewardship.

# Union County, Ohio

**County Seat:**

Marysville

**Origin of Name:**

Union of portions of Franklin, Delaware, Madison,  
and Logan counties

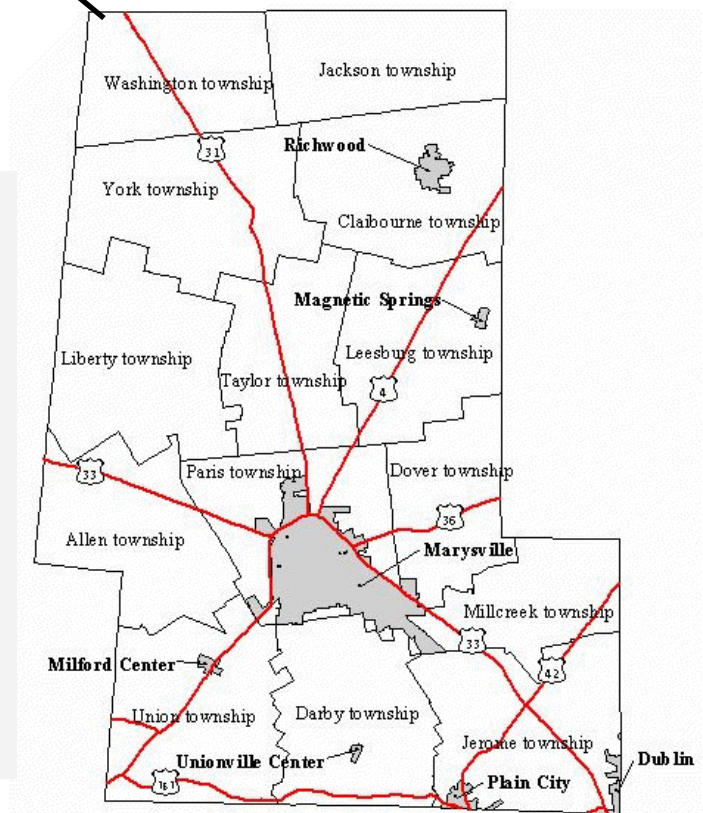
**Origination Date:**

January 10, 1820



## Union County Ohio Townships

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| * Allen      | * Liberty    |
| * Claibourne | * Millcreek  |
| * Darby      | * Paris      |
| * Dover      | * Taylor     |
| * Jackson    | * Union      |
| * Jerome     | * Washington |
| * Leesburg   | * York       |



## **Welcome to our Strategic Plan**

This strategic plan was developed to allow us to direct and intensify our soil and water conservation efforts. It will serve as a guideline for our annual work plans yet has the flexibility to allow for periodic updates due to changes in the public interest and state or federal legislation affecting local programs.

## **History of Union County**

Union County is located in the State of Ohio. The county was named after it, reflecting its origins, the union of portions of Franklin, Delaware, Madison, and Logan counties. The county seat is Marysville, founded on April 1, 1820. It is located in the West central area of the state.

In 1820, the population of the county was 1996. In 1990, the population reached 31,969. After the 2020 census, the population reached 62,784; as of July 2021, it is 62,971. The city of Marysville, with a population of 26,223. The City of Dublin has a population of 49,085.

## **Agriculture**

In 1911, 270,000 acres were owned in Union County, with 85,000 cultivated for farming. The farms had 9,355 horses and 8,110 milk cows, with 14,000 total cattle, 43,727 sheep, 32,000 hogs, and an estimated 312,000 pounds of wool was produced that year.

Because of the fertile soil in Union County, the county's farmers required minimal fertilizer. There were hundreds of farms in the county in its early stages. The crops grown in Union County's early history included wheat, oats, corn, Irish potatoes, clover and alfalfa. The county was a large producer of milk, butter, sugar, syrup, apples, and pears

According to the 2017 Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) statistics, 217,604 acres comprise the county's "Total Land in Farms" with 997 farms. Of the 997 farms, the commodities include cattle and calves; milk; hogs and pigs; sheep and goats, corn; soybeans; wheat; vegetables; fruit and berries; nursery and greenhouses; poultry and eggs.



## **Organization**

The Union Soil and Water Conservation District (Union SWCD) was established in 1945 by concerned landowners interested in protecting and improving the county's soil and water resources. It is an independent subdivision of the state and is located in Union County, Ohio.

Union SWCD receives funding from the Union County commissioners, local municipalities and the state as matched funding. These funds support Union SWCD operations, conservation programs, and resource-management initiatives. Union SWCD works with the citizens of Union County, state and local agencies, and private organizations to promote responsible land-use decisions. We provide information, technical guidance, and cost-share assistance to homeowners, farmers, and educators.

Additionally, we work closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission. We aim to coordinate assistance from all available sources: public, private, local, state and federal, to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resource concerns.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of a Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide information about soil, water and related natural resource conservation; to identify and prioritize local soil and water resource concerns; to implement conservation practices and technologies; and connect land users to educational, technical and financial assistance from local organizations and state and federal agencies.

Because each Conservation District develops its programs to suit the needs of the people in its county, local citizens play an important role. Each district serves as a means for all interested people in a county to collaborate for natural resource conservation and development.

## Soil Conservation

Stable, healthy soils give us clean air and water, bountiful crops and forests, productive grazing lands, diverse wildlife, and beautiful landscapes. The soil does all of this by performing five essential functions:

- 1) Regulating water: Soil helps control where rain, snowmelt, and irrigation water go. Water and dissolved solutes flow over the land or into and through the soil.
- 2) Sustaining plant and animal life: The diversity and productivity of living things depends on soil.
- 3) Filtering and buffering potential pollutants: The minerals and microbes in the soil are responsible for filtering, buffering, degrading, immobilizing, and detoxifying organic and inorganic materials, including industrial and municipal by-products and atmospheric deposits.
- 4) Cycling nutrients: Carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and many other nutrients are stored, transformed, and cycled in the soil.
- 5) Physical stability and support: Soil structure provides a medium for plant roots. Soils also provide support for human structures and protection for archeological treasures.

### **Mission Statement**

*The mission of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District (Union SWCD) is to promote, preserve, and enhance the wise use of our natural resources for the people of Union County by providing technical, financial and educational assistance.*

### **Vision Statement**

*The vision of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District (Union SWCD) is to promote and locally lead soil and water conservation efforts within Union County.*

## Items for Sale:

- Marker Flags— (year round) \$10 per 100
- Soil and Survey narratives— (year round) \$15.00 each or free online
- USDA Soil Survey Aerial Maps—(year round) FREE
- Fish fingerlings—annually in the Fall (October)
- Tree Seedlings—annually in the Spring (April)

## Rental Items:

- ♦ **No-Till Drill** - \$15 per acre with a \$150 minimum and \$50 clean-out fee for excessive seed left in the drill.  
This is a John Deere 1590 15' drill, with 7.5" row spacing, equipped with markers and a grass seed box. A 100 horse-power tractor with 2 hydraulic outlets is needed to pull the drill.
- ♦ **Straw Blower** - \$100.00/ Day and \$150.00/ Weekend. A \$150.00 security deposit is required upon pickup.  
The Model 20 Tailgate Mulcher is on a 6 'x 12' trailer, is an electric start, will blow straw about 40', and can spread up to 100 bales per hour. This type of blower is typically used for new seedling establishments, and for waterway and pond bank grass establishments.
- ♦ **Tree Planter** - \$40.00/ Day  
Out-of-County use requires \$120 Deposit and use must be contiguous to Union County
- ♦ **Tree Puller** - \$100/ Day, \$150/ Weekend, \$300 Week  
This tree puller can effectively remove the tree, trunk, and root ball of small to medium-sized trees. The puller mounts on a skid loader with a quick attach plate or we have adapters to use a global loader mount or a tractor three-point hitch. Hydraulic outlets are needed to operate this puller

## **Goal 1: Training**

**Objective: Pursue continuing education opportunities for supervisors and staff.**

1. Upon appointment, the elected supervisor will complete the New Supervisor training modules online and attend training.
2. All Fiscal Agents/Treasurer will complete the Ohio Treasurer's CPIM training.
3. Technical staff will attend the TDP training courses offered through ODA.
4. Administrative staff will attend the ADP training courses offered through ODA.
5. District Administrator will conduct weekly staff meetings.
6. District staff will receive required Records Retention training.

## **Goal 2: Technical Assistance**

**Objective: Work with Union County landowners and partners to provide technical assistance for natural resource concerns.**

1. Survey, design, construct, and inspect conservation practices such as animal waste systems, grassed waterways, livestock watering systems, systematic tile drainage, and wetland development.
2. Reduce soil erosion, pesticide, and nutrient runoff from agricultural activities by promoting and implementing community-driven and accepted conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs)
3. Use Federal, State, and Local programs to implement conservation BMP establishment on private lands.
4. Help to administer USDA landowner incentive programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program.
5. In cooperation with USDA, provide technical support to farmers enrolled in agriculture conservation programs.
6. Respond to pollution abatement complaints; work with appropriate parties to resolve the issue; maintain up-to-date complaints; promote the importance of water quality.
7. Provide guidance on drainage issues on Union County Solar Projects and work with union county residents to protect established subsurface drainage around these projects.
8. Establish an inspection process for solar farm installation.



### **Goal 3: Education**

**Objective: Provide and promote conservation education opportunities.**

1. Identify and communicate with new schools and youth organizations to participate in conservation education, including the Envirothon.
2. Promote conservation programs, events, and workshops for the general public.
3. Apply for grants to support the conservation education program.
4. Promote conservation education to students and teachers through classroom presentations and educator workshops.
5. Pursue continuing education opportunities for supervisors and staff.
6. Sponsor an Envirothon team.

### **Goal 4: Drainage Maintenance**

**Objective: Promote the importance of the Union County Drainage Maintenance Program.**

1. Maintain a comprehensive drainage maintenance program that addresses current and future infrastructure enrolled in the county maintenance program.
2. Work with County Engineer to develop policies and procedures for inspection and maintenance to determine the amount of annual assessment and future capital improvement needs.
3. Work with County Auditor and Engineer on Assessment Corrections to keep all accounts up to date with shared websites and spreadsheets to maintain a real-time worksheet process.
4. Work with the County Engineer and Commissioner to develop a procedure to implement six-year hearings for all projects.
5. Work with County Engineer to develop a policy for collecting surety bonds for basins accepted on county maintenance before lots are built out when the basin is used for sediment control.
6. Conduct yearly inspections on all drainage maintenance projects.
7. Assist rural and urban residents and municipalities in finding acceptable solutions to drainage issues.

## **Goal 5: Wildlife Education**

**Objective: Promote and implement wildlife conservation and wildlife management in Union County.**

1. Assist county residents in creating or improving wildlife habitats on their land.
2. Promote assistance with pond management issues and provide information on building ponds.
3. Hold bi-annual Pond Clinics to educate residents.
4. Promote and implement wildlife conservation and wildlife management.
5. Perform re-enroll, post-planting and mid-contract inspections on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts for NRCS.

## **Goal 6: Urban**

**Objective: Promote and assist with implementation of urban conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs).**

1. Assist urban landowners and developers with methods to improve water quality.
2. Perform Home Site Reviews in cooperation with Union County Health Department to determine the best drainage outlets for new homes.
3. Provide technical assistance for the design & installation of urban Best Management Practices (BMPs).
4. Provide educational opportunities for urban constituents to learn of the benefits of utilizing urban conservation BMPs.
5. Assist to landowners with drainage concerns.

## **Goal 7: Resource/Watershed Planning**

**Objective:** Promote the importance of water quality in Union County.

1. Develop promotional stormwater education materials.
2. Hold Local Work Group meetings in conjunction with the annual planning meeting.
3. Implement and facilitate education dealing with water quality studies with Bunsold students, watershed tours, canoe floats, storm drain marking, stream monitoring, etc.

## **Goal 8: Outreach/Public Relations**

**Objective:** Market the importance of Union SWCD and NRCS to Union County residents.

1. Collaborate with other natural resource agencies and partners to provide conservation education opportunities and market our conservation message.
2. Continue to strengthen conservation partnerships by developing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Union County Townships.
3. Strengthen relationships with local townships through direct conservation assistance, and provide educational opportunities for their residents.
4. Revisit and revise, if necessary, existing MOUs.
5. Provide conservation interest articles to the local newspaper, Chamber of Commerce, Townships and homeowners association newsletters.
6. Expand the District's webpage and establish links with our conservation and government partners.

## **Goal 9: Conservation Products**

**Objective: Provide a variety of conservation products to the County residents.**

1. Encourage farmers to utilize no-till & conservation tillage whenever appropriate.
2. Educate land users on the benefits of cover crops.
3. Provide rental equipment which promotes erosion control. Current rental equipment: No-Till Drill, Straw Blower, Tree Planter and Tree Puller.

## **Goal 10: District Policies/Administration**

**Objective: To set forth policy in conjunction with cooperating agencies to fulfill the purposes of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District.**

1. Develop and implement administrative processes and personnel policies.
2. Seek funding for adequate staffing, training and equipment for the District programs.
3. Oversee the implementation of various grant programs as needed.
4. Develop a comprehensive business plan, including a description of the business, a marketing plan, a financial management plan and a management plan.
5. Strive to hire and retain qualified personnel to meet the needs of expanding SWCD programs and provide continued training to keep up with dynamic trends.

## Connect With Us

*The Union Soil and Water Conservation District's regular monthly meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, at 6:00 p.m., at the Union County Ag Center's Buckeye Meeting Room located at 18000 State Route 4, Marysville, Ohio 43040. Meetings are open to the public and members of the community are encouraged to attend.*

*On occasion, a conflict may arise with a meeting date, time, or location. We recommend calling the office to confirm before attending a meeting.*



### Contact Us:

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The Union Soil and Water Conservation District and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibit discrimination in their programs based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.