

Union SWCD

ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATIONS

2026

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All programs and assistance of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, religion, age, marital status, handicap, or national origin.

INTRODUCTION

The Union Soil and Water Conservation District (USWCD) staff have prepared an Annual Plan of Operations (APO) setting forth the problems and critical areas in Union County requiring conservation planning and treatment. The purpose of this Annual Plan is to set realistic goals that USWCD can accomplish and to specify those objectives that the District will work towards annually.

Our priority is to provide the best service possible to the landowners, operators, and residents of Union County. We will provide assistance to control soil erosion and improve the water quality of Union County's ditches, streams, and wetlands. Educating the community on soil conservation and water quality is our most effective means of delivering conservation on the land.

Mission Statement

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

To promote and locally lead soil and water conservation efforts within Union County.

Supervisors and Marysville Field Staff

Board Supervisors

Rick Weigand, Chair

Andy Clarridge, Vice-Chair

Larry Morris, Secretary

Cheryl Trivisonno, Fiscal Agent/Treasurer

Randy Trapp, Member

District Staff

Brent Nickel, District Administrator/Wildlife Specialist

Sherry Maisenbacher, Administrative Assistant

Mark Watkins, District Technician

Matt Williams, District Technician

Ross Carter, District Technician

Emma Scott, Urban Technician

Joe Eads, Drainage Maintenance Supervisor

Matt Archer, Drainage Maintenance Technician

Cody Beery, Drainage Maintenance Technician

NRCS Staff

Ron Nieman, District Conservationist

Adam Slappy, Soil Conservationist

Mariah Lashley, Soil Conservationist

Sierah Geldbaugh, Soil Conservationist

LaRae Baker, Technical Training Coordinator

Brent Smith, ACES

Pheasants Forever

Riley Porter, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist II

COOPERATING AGENCIES

Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts have formed a close working bond with the NRCS. NRCS staff provide technical assistance to local land managers, SWCDs, and many other entities. NRCS has a staff of technical specialists in many fields to aid in solving a wide range of natural resource problems.

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The FSA County Committee and the District will cooperate on conservation provisions of the current Farm Bill and the impact on Union County producers who participate in USDA programs. The District will provide technical assistance to cooperators with highly erodible land and wetlands to remain in compliance with Farm Bill Conservation provisions.

Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC)

ODA-DSWC provides administrative and technical support for county SWCDs and promotes the Agricultural Pollution Abatement Program and environmental awareness through conservation education programs. The DSWC provides leadership and services that enable Ohioans to conserve, protect, and enhance soil, water, and land resources.

Ohio Division of Wildlife (DOW)

The DOW is our wildlife management partner. We work closely with the wildlife officer and wildlife biologist in Union County. ~~to~~ provide technical assistance to farmers suffering crop damage from wildlife and ~~to~~ educate farmers and landowners on resolving wildlife damage.

Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD)

OFSWCD offers community-based solutions to natural resource issues in the rural and urban areas of the SWCDs through a variety of means. They achieve this by engaging in legislative advocacy, conducting public outreach, providing grant assistance, and facilitating training and development programs to enhance the ability of SWCDs to support their communities.

Union County

The District works closely with the following Union County departments: the Union County Engineer's Office (UCE), the Union County Auditor's Office, and the Union County Commissioners (BCC). The District appreciates the support it receives from the BCC.

Objective 1: Training

Goal: Pursue continuing education opportunities to provide optimum service to the local governments, the private sector, and farmers/producers in our service area.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Administrative Development Program (ADP): Attend/participate	Education	10	USWCD Board and Staff / ODA	2026
Technician Development Program (TDP): Attend/participate	Technical	12	Emma Scott, Matt Williams, and Ross Carter	2026
Area IV Winter Meeting: (annually) Attend/participate	Education	1	USWCD Board and Staff, OFSWCD and Area IV Directors	December 2026
NACD Annual Meeting: (annually) Attend/participate	Education	1	USWCD Board and Staff / NACD	February 14 - 19, 2026
Notary Public License: Obtain and renew every 5 years	Education	1	Sherry Maisenbacher and Union County Records Dept	Expires June 24, 2028
ODNR DOW Diversity Conference: (annually)	Education	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	March 2026
OFSWCD Annual Partnership Meeting: (annually)	Education	1	USWCD Board and Staff / OFSWCD / OASWCDE	February 9 - 11, 2026
Programs: Provide displays to promote the SWCD / NRCS	Education	4	Brent Nickel / USWCD Staff	2026
Spray license certification: Obtain and Keep (Renew/test every 3yrs.)	Education	1	Cody Beery / ODA / OSU Extension	2026
Wildlife Specialist Training Webinar: (monthly)	Education	12	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2026

Objective 2: Technical Assistance

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

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Ag Easement Donation Program (AEDP): Farmland Preservation Inspections	Technical	6	Mark Watkins and Emma Scott / ODA	December 2026
Ag Pollution Abatement Program (APAP): Respond to pollution complaints, investigate, provide landowners assistance to comply with standards, maintain complaints and keep documentation.	Technical	2	Ross Carter / Area IV Program Specialist, EPA, and Union County Health Department	2026
CRP Mid-Contract Management (MCM's): Re-Enrollment Inspections, Assessments, and Landowner Meetings	Technical	50	Brent Nickel, NRCS, FSA, and Pheasants Forever	2026
H2Ohio Program: Assist producers with signups, implement practices, track program progress, and completed practices.	Technical	50,000	Matt Williams, Emma Scott, and USWCD Staff	2026
Landowner Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP): Agent for UCC (sponsors) assist landowners in preserving their farmland by completing/submitting applications to ODA. Follow through to closing.	Technical	4	Emma Scott and USWCD Staff	2026
Erosion and Sediment Control: Provide technical assistance (as requested)	Technical	40	Mark Watkins, Matt Williams, Ross Carter / Engineer, Health Dept., Twp. Trustees, and City of Marysville	2026
Ponds: Provide new pond site evaluations/ planning (as requested)	Technical	40	Brent Nickel and USWCD District Technicians	2026
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Support the NRCS programs and provide engineering.	Technical	60	Mark Watkins, Matt Williams, Ross Carter and NRCS staff	2026
District Site Reviews Provide new home site evaluations/planning (as requested).	Technical	20	Brent Nickel and USWCD District Technicians	2026

Objective 3: Education

Goal: Provide and promote conservation education opportunities.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Area IV Envirothon: Promote and encourage participation by Union County Students	Education	1	USWCD Staff / OFSWCD	April 29, 2026
Conservation Tillage Breakfast Mtgs.: Attend the planning meetings	Education	4	Mark Watkins / OSU Extension / NRCS / Local Ag Businesses	Jan. 16 th and 30 th , Feb. 13 th and 27 th 2026
Don Cook Memorial Scholarship: Partner with the Cook family to provide four scholarships for the 4-H members to attend Camp during the summer.	Education	4	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Board / Dave and Dean Cook	April 2026
Pond Clinic: (last one held 9/26/18) Partner w/OSU to provide (indoor)	Education	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR-DOW / OSU Extension	2026
School Presentations: Groundwater Simulator, Enviroscape, In-Stream Studies/Sampling/Water Quality Testing, AR Sandbox, Passport to Fishing, Archery, etc. The Lorax, and "Pave It or Save It" to discuss topics relating to stormwater, groundwater, soil conservation, water quality, and dDevelopment.	Education	8	Brent Nickel and Emma Scott / Union County Local Schools	2026
Soil Stewardship Week: Provide NACD Stewardship Materials to churches/schools (as requested)	Education	4	Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Educators	April 27 – May 4, 2026
Union County FFA Wildlife Judging: provide information and assistance (as requested)	Education	2	Brent Nickel / ODNR and DOW	2026
Union County Science Fair Judging provide information and assistance (as requested)	Education	2	USWCD Staff / Union County Local Schools	2026

Objective 4: Drainage Maintenance (DM)

Goal: Promote the importance of and perform continued maintenance for the Union County Drainage Maintenance Program.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Ditch Petition Projects (940 / 6131) Organize and implement projects for Union County residents	Technical	5	Joe Eads / USWCD staff, Union County Commissioners (UCC) and Union County Engineer (UCE)	2026
New Petition Projects: Manage the construction and inspections	Technical	4	Joe Eads, Matt Archer, Cody Beery / USWCD Engineering staff / (UCE)	2026
Maintenance Program: Manage and maintain ditches and subdivisions.	Technical	106	Joe Eads / USWCD staff and UCE	2026
Maintenance: Perform maintenance, inspections, mowing <ins>inspections, mowing</ins> , etc. and on all ditches and subdivisions.	Technical	80	Drainage Maintenance Technicians / Joe Eads	2026
Design/Plan: Provide engineering designs for proposed petition ditch projects.	Technical	8	USWCD Engineering staff / UCE	2026
Punch List Walkthroughs: Perform final inspections of subdivisions before being turned over to maintenance.	Technical	30	Joe Eads / UCE	2026
Drainage Maintenance Inventory: Improve, maintain, and update inventory and project tracking infrastructure.	Technical	1	Ross Carter, Joe Eads	2026
Mill Creek Log Jam Project: Mapping, inventory, and coordination of log jam removal (33 miles)	Technical	1	Joe Eads / USWCD staff, UCC, UCE, and UC Township Trustees	2026

Objective 4: Drainage Maintenance (DM) continued

Goal: Promote the importance of and perform continued maintenance for the Union County Drainage Maintenance Program.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Bookkeeping: Maintain and track drainage maintenance funds (monthly)	Admin	114	Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Auditor	2026
Drainage Maintenance Budget: Prepare on an annual basis.	Admin	1	Joe Eads, Brent Nickel and Sherry and Sherry Maisenbacher	September 2026
DM Time Entries: Maintain and track staff time to calculate expenses for each project, direct and indirect. (monthly)	Admin	12	Sherry Maisenbacher / Joe Eads	2026
Historical Records Maintain county ditch and subdivision project records.	Admin	1	Sherry Maisenbacher / Joe Eads	2026
Special Assessments: Maintain spreadsheets; update splits, combos, and transfers.	Admin	105	Joe Eads, Emma Scott, Scott , and Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Auditor	2026

Objective 5: Wildlife Education/Assistance

Goal: Promote and implement wildlife conservation and wildlife management in Union County.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Wildlife Specialist Report: (annually) Prepare and submit to ODNR DOW	Admin	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	July 1, 2026
National <u>Hunting and</u> Fishing Day (NHFD): Organize/promote held at the Heart of Ohio Fishing Club	Education	1	Brent Nickel / John Carl, ODNR DOW	September 27, 2026
Pheasants Forever (PF) Meetings: Attend to answer questions, promote proper conservation/ habitat practice establishment and maintenance. (monthly)	Education	12	Brent Nickel / Union County PF Chapter #535	2026
ODNR DOW District 1 Meetings: Attend, Trainings and Events (quarterly)	Education	4	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2026
Wildlife Conservation Education, Fishing, Hunting, and Outdoor programs: Develop/promote future generations of hunters, fishermen/women, and outdoor enthusiasts. (annually)	Education	12	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2026
Pond Management: (as requested) Perform onsite visits and investigate Pond Fish Kill, <u>and</u> provide assistance. <u>(as needed)</u>	Education/ Technical	14	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2026

Objective 5: Wildlife Education/Assistance continued

Goal: Promote and implement wildlife conservation and wildlife management in Union County.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Wildlife Damage Complaints: Respond : Respond to and offer human-wildlife conflict resolutions (as requested)	Education/ Technical	16	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2026
Funding: Step Outside Grant (1) Secure to promote and hold Outdoor Education/ Fishing Days throughout Union County (as requested)	Education	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW , City of Marysville, and the Village of Richwood	2026
Wildlife Management Ordinance: Execution – City of Marysville (as requested)	Education/ Technical	4	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW and the City of Marysville	2026
Wildlife Management, Monitoring & Recommendations (as requested)	Education/ Technical	20	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2026
Wildlife Habitat In itiative(WHI): Promote, implement, and monitor	Education/ Technical	24	Emma Scott, Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2029

Objective 6: Urban

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

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Drainage Complaints: Address and assist Union County residents with complaints. (as requested)	Technical	24	Mark Watkins, Matt Williams, and Ross Carter / USWCD Staff	2026
Drainage Concerns: Provide assistance to Union County residents.	Technical	24	USWCD Staff	2026
Drainage Outlets: Perform checks and provide assistance to Union County residents. (as requested)	Technical	20	USWCD Staff / Union County Health Department	2026
Home Site Reviews: Provide drainage recommendations for new home construction (as requested)	Technical	12	Mark Watkins, Matt Williams, and Ross Carter / USWCD Staff	2026
Plat Reviews Review and address drainage/water quality concerns. (as needed)	Technical	30	Joe Eads, Emma Scott, and LUC Regional Planning Commission	2026
Subdivision Regulations: Provide input on proposed changes (as needed)	Technical	12	Joe Eads, Emma Scott, and LUC Regional Planning Commission	2026
Zoning Permits: Encourage Township Trustees to consider drainage before issuing permits for development.	Technical	10	Joe Eads and USWCD Staff	2026
Urban Sites: Promote BMPs		20	USWCD Staff / NRCS	2026



Objective 7: Resource/Watershed Planning

Goal: Promote the importance of water quality in Union County.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Stormwater Education Materials: Develop promotional brochures, maps, etc. (as requested)	Education	2	USWCD Staff	2026
Local Work Group Meeting (LWG) Include union county landowners, -conservation partners, and USDA-NRCS officials to discuss natural resource concerns and recommendations. (annually)	Education	1	Ron Neiman, Mariah Lashley, Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Board	April 2026
Education: Implement and facilitate educational presentations on water quality protection, water studies with Bunsold students, watershed tours, canoe floats, storm drain marking, stream monitoring, etc.	Education	8	Emma Scott	2026

Objective 8: Outreach/Public Relations

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

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Ditch Maintenance: Provide Information (as requested)	Education	20	Joe Eads / UCE and USWCD Staff	2026
Dry Hydrants: Provide Information (as requested)	Education	2	Mark Watkins / Local Fire Departments	2026
District Facebook and Web Pages: maintain announcements, events, and individual pages	Education	2	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff / Union County IT	2026
Newspaper Articles Submit to Marysville Journal Tribune (MJT) (when necessary)	Education	2	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff	2026
Ohio Woodland Journal: Cover cost to provide to Fairbanks, Marysville, and North Union High School libraries. (annually)	Education	3	USWCD Board, Brent Nickel and ODNR DOW	2026
USWCD Annual Report: Prepare and publish in the district newsletter and on the District website. (annually)	Admin	1	Sherry Maisenbacher, USWCD Board and Staff	Annually
Awards: Recognize partners and present at the USWCD Annual Meeting (Cooperator of the Year Award, Distinctive Service, and Wildlife Habitat Stewardship Awards)	Admin	1	USWCD Board and Staff	Annually
USWCD Newsletters Prepare and publish <u>quarterly</u> (Articles include <u>include</u> - "Wild About Wildlife" and "Up the Crick") (quarterly)	Education	4	Brent Nickel, Emma Scott, Joe Eads, Ross Carter and USWCD Staff	Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall
Fair Booths/Displays: (unmanned) Provide Wildlife and Conservation materials	Education	7	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2026
81st Annual Meeting and Election: Hold an annual election and a banquet	Admin	1	USWCD Board and Staff	August 12, 2026

Objective 9: Conservation Products

Goal: Provide a variety of conservation products for sale and rent to Union County residents.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Tree Sale: (-annually) Organize the annual tree sale for Union County residents	Education	5,000	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff	April 18, 2026
Fish Sales (Spring): Organize an annual Tilapia sale for Union County residents	Education	100	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff	May/June 2026
Fish Sales (Fall): Organize the annual fingerling sale for Union County residents	Education	10,000	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff	October 8, 2026
Miscellaneous Sales: Marking Flags and Soil Survey Narratives are available year-round	Education	30	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff	2026
No-till Drill Rental: Available to rent year-round to Union County Residents	Technical	20	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2026
Straw Blower Rental: Available to rent year-round to Union County Residents	Technical	4	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2026
Tree Planter Rental: Available to rent year-round to Union County Residents	Technical	2	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2026
Tree Puller Rental: Available to rent year-round to Union County Residents	Technical	2	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2026

Objective 10: District Policies/Administration

Goal: To set forth policy in conjunction with cooperating agencies in an effort to fulfill the objectives of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
Beehive: Track projects, initiatives, and timesheet entries. Utilize information as needed.	Admin	1	USWCD Staff / ODA	2026
Bookkeeping: Maintains the Special Fund and District Fund accounts.	Admin	2	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Board	2026
Cash Basis report (Hinkle): Prepare and submit to the Auditor of State Annually	Admin	1	Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Auditor	February 25, 2026
District Budget: Prepare on an annual basis.	Admin	1	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Board	September 2026
Form 11 (State Match): Complete the fiduciary review	Admin	1	Sherry Maisenbacher and Brent Nickel / Area IV Program Specialist	May 1, 2026
Grants: Research, apply, and obtain when necessary.	Admin	3	USWCD Staff and Board	2026
Customer Service: Maintain a high level of professionalism.	Admin	20	USWCD Board and Staff	2026
Memorandum of Understanding: (MOU) Maintain between the District and partnering agencies	Admin	12	Brent Nickel, USWCD Board and Staff, NRCS, OSU Extension, Townships, ODNR, etc.	2026
Update MOA/MOU and Policy Statement/Operational Agreement with NRCS.	Admin	1	USWCD Board, Brent Nickel, Sherry Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and NRCS DC Ron Nieman	2026
Staff Evaluations: Preform annually	Admin	9	Brent Nickel and USWCD Board Supervisors	2026

Objective 10: District Policies/Administration (continued)

Goal: To set forth policy in conjunction with cooperating agencies in an effort to fulfill the objectives of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District.

Action Items	Project Type	Units	Responsibility/Partners	Completion Date
USWCD Policies: Review current policies and create new policies as needed	Admin	20	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff and Board	Annually
Personnel Management: Maintain Personnel Policy and Procedure manuals, insurance, benefits, and safety.	Admin	1	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Board Supervisors Board	2026
Reporting: Prepare and submit annual reports as directed by the Area 4 ODA Program Specialist.	Admin	6	Brent Nickel and Sherry Maisenbacher	2026
Strategic Plan: Review annually, and revise and update- every 5 years	Admin	1	Brent Nickel, USWCD Staff, and Board	2027
Union County Staff Meetings: Attend (1st Tuesday of each month)	Admin	12	Brent Nickel / Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County BCC	2026
USWCD Board Meetings: Hold monthly (2nd Thursday of each month)	Admin	12	USWCD Board, Brent Nickel, and Sherry Maisenbacher / USWCD Staff	2026
USWCD Staff Meetings- (Mondays) Hold to work on team building, morale, project planning, project implementation review, information transfer, etc.	Admin	52	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff	2026
Public Records Request: Maintain request, fulfill, and record (as requested)	Admin	6	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff Union Staff	2026
Records Retention: Manage and maintain District records according to retention schedules	Admin	1	Sherry Maisenbacher and Union County Records Dept	2026
Records Management: Organize, maintain, and gain approval (RC-3) for disposal according to the Records Retention Schedules (RC-2)			Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff Need stuff here?	