

Union SWCD Strategic Plan

2018-2022

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 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's reflective of its origins, it being the union of portions of Franklin, Delaware, Madison, and Logan counties. It's county seat is Marysville and was founded 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 2010 census the population reached 52,300, the current population as of July 2017 is 56,741. The city of Marysville, with a population of 23,912. The City of Dublin, has a population of 47,619.

Agriculture

In 1911, 270,000 acres were owned in Union County, with 85,000 cultivated for farming. The farms had a total of 9,355 horses, 8,110 milk cows with 14,000 total cattle, 43,727 sheep, and 32,000 hogs. 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 2012 Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) statistics, 241,935 acres comprises the county's "Total Land in Farms" with 995 farms.

Union SWCD Organization

The Union Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was organized in 1945 by concerned landowners interested in protecting and improving the county's soil and water resources. It consists of all the lands within Union County (437 square miles or 276,314 acres).

As a separate entity of State government, the District receives funding from the Union County Commissioners and the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Partnerships, donations, sales programs, and equipment rentals generate additional funds. Through a Cooperative Working Agreement with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, we are co-located in the Union County Agricultural Center, and NRCS provides technical guidance and assistance to the District.

The Union SWCD is administered by a board of five supervisors who are elected for three-year terms by Union County landowners and/or residents. The Board establishes District policy, guides the work of the District, oversees utilization of District funds and hires personnel to carry out the work of the District.

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Phone: 937/642-5871 x3

Website: www.co.union.oh.us/Union-Soil-Water-Conservation-District/

Mission

"The mission of the 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

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

Soil Conservation

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

- 1) Regulating water - Soil helps control where rain, snowmelt, and irrigation water goes. 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 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.

Drainage Maintenance:

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

Providing Technical Assistance

Agricultural Assistance:

- Survey, design, construct, and inspect conservation practices such as animal waste systems, grassed waterways, livestock watering systems, systematic tile drainage, wetland development
- State mandate to investigate agriculture complaints and work with landowners on any problems
- Reduce soil erosion, pesticide and nutrient runoff from agricultural activities by promoting and implementing community driven and accepted conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Use Federal, State, and Local programs to implement conservation BMP establishment on private lands.
- Help to administer USDA landowner incentive programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program
- Encourage farmers to utilize no-till & conservation tillage whenever appropriate.
- Educate land users on the benefits of cover crops.
- In cooperation with USDA, provide technical support to farmers enrolled in agriculture conservation programs.

Urban Assistance:

- Assist urban landowners and developers with methods to improve water quality.
- Perform Home Site Reviews in cooperation with Union County Health Department in order to determine the best drainage outlets for new homes.
- Provide technical assistance for the design & installation of urban Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Provide educational opportunities for urban constituents to learn of the benefits of utilizing urban conservation BMPs.
- Assist municipalities in meeting MS4 permit requirements

Pollution Abatement:

- Conduct pollution investigation visits and follow procedures to help find solution(s) to existing problem(s).
- Provide farmers with information to help them protect water quality.
- Promote importance of water quality.

Wildlife:

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

Education:

- Provide in-office support to customers seeking information.
- Promote conservation programs, events, and workshops for the general public.
- Apply for grants to support the conservation education program.
- Promote conservation education to students and teachers through classroom presentations and educator workshops.
- Encourage high school teachers and students to participate in the Envirothon program.
- Pursue continuing education opportunities for supervisors and staff.

Partnerships with Other Agencies:

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

Administrative:

- Seek funding to provide for adequate staffing, training and equipment to carry out the District programs.
- Oversee the implementation of various grant programs as needed.
- Develop a comprehensive business plan including a description of the business, a marketing plan, a financial management plan and a management plan.
- Strive to hire and retain qualified personnel to meet needs of expanding SWCD programs and provide continued training to keep up with dynamic trends.

Items for Sale:

- Marker Flags— (year round) \$10 per 100
- Spoil and Survey narratives— (year round) \$15.00 each/ free online
- USDA Soil Survey Aerial Maps—(year round) FREE
- USGS Topographic Quadrangles — (year round) \$6.00 each
- Tree Seedlings—annually in the Spring (April)
- Fish fingerlings—annually in the Fall (October)

Rental Items:

- No-Till Drill - \$12.00/ acre with a \$125.00 minimum charge.
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.
- Tree Puller - \$100/ Day, \$150/ Weekend, \$300 Week
This tree puller can effectively remove tree, trunk, and root ball of small to medium sized trees. The puller mounts on a skid loader with 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.
- Straw Blower - \$75.00/ Day and \$100.00/ Weekend.
The Model 20 Tailgate Mulcher is on a 6'x12' 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 seeding establishment, and for waterway and pond bank grass establishment.
Straw Blower Agreement Information
- Tree Planter - \$40.00/ Day
Out of County use requires \$120 Deposit
and use must be contiguous to Union County