

Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District



Long Range Plan 2014 - 2019

Our Mission

We are a public organization committed to assisting the citizens of Hamilton County through education, technical assistance and leadership to be stewards of our soil and water resources.

Our Vision

To be a dynamic leader in soil and water conservation, working to achieve the sustainable use of our soil and water resources on a local and regional basis.

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(513) 772-7645 | www.hcswcd.org

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Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District Operations

How the District Was Established

On April 27, 1945, landowners voted 201-10 to establish the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District – the 36th District in Ohio. The District is a legal and voluntary constituted unit of government, organized under the Ohio Soil Conservation Act of 1941. In those days, over 50% of the county was in agriculture production. The major sources of cash income came from dairy, greenhouse and truck farm crops, poultry, hogs and nursery crops. During the District's first 20 years of service over 35,000 acres of land was affected by conservation improvement. During the same period, crop yield improved nearly 100% as a result of sustained soil fertility, pesticides, improved crop variety and fertilizer.

By the late 1960s, the 1944 Federal Highway Act was producing new arteries of roads that expanded suburban sprawl. As the sprawl of Hamilton County accelerated, the demand for assistance on such issues as erosion, hillside stability, storm water and stream bank erosion grew from the suburban and urban sector. In 1992, the District took on the Administration of the Hamilton County Earthwork Regulations that governed earth movement on development sites.

In 2003, the District was asked to also be responsible for the Education, Community Involvement and Pre-Construction components of Phase II of the Clean Water Act that addressed non-point source pollution. Now, all of the programs within the District are considered "mandated". This fact has thus far ensured our County appropriations.

Board of Supervisors

A publicly elected, volunteer Board of Supervisors has always directed the District. Supervisors are elected for three-year terms at our Annual meeting. Absentee ballots are available from the District office as well.

This governing body is instrumental in developing the Annual and Long Range Plans of Work and general oversight of the staff and budget. Their input reflects the needs of the community at large.



Peter Mallow
Chairman
Sycamore Twp.

Sam McKinley
Vice Chairman
Northside
Cincinnati

Denny Benson
Secretary
Colerain Twp.

Scott P. Huber
Treasurer
Colerain Twp.

Steve Johns
Program Chairman
Hyde Park
Cincinnati

The SWCD and NRCS Team

A memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which is a division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Through this agreement, arrays of technical experts work together with the District staff to form a natural resource management team.

General Nature of Hamilton County

Hamilton County is located in the Southwestern corner of Ohio, along the Kentucky and Indiana borders. It occupies 413 square miles or 265,152 acres. Cincinnati, the county seat, is in the south-central part of the county, along the Ohio River. The 2012 Census (Figure 1) estimated the total County population to be 802,038. This is a decline of 42,929 over the past decade, but the demand for individual conservation assistance has grown. Suburban growth has resulted in pressure to develop flood plains and steep hillsides where flooding and landslides are severe hazards.

The County landscape is characterized by wide terraces and flood plains, steep hillsides along

major rivers and tributary stream valleys and gently rolling glacial till plains. Due to the nature of Hamilton County Soils, our County is considered one of the most highly erodible counties in the State of Ohio.

The dominant urban land use is residential development. The dominant industries are in the industries of manufacturing machine tools, jet engines, automobiles and soaps and detergents.

Total Population

Census		Estimated	
1800	15,692	1910	460,732
1810	15,258	1920	493,678
1820	31,764	1930	589,356
1830	52,317	1940	621,987
1840	80,145	1950	723,952
1850	156,844	1960	864,121
1860	216,410	1970	924,018
1870	260,370	1980	873,224
1880	313,374	1990	866,228
1890	374,573	2000	845,303
1900	409,479	2010	802,374
		2012	802,038
		Projected	
		2020	790,600
		2030	785,900
		2040	786,090

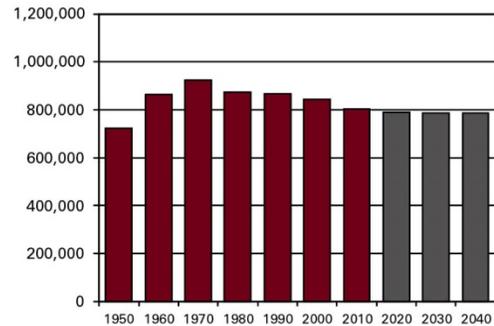


Figure 1 - Hamilton County Census

Financial Assistance

Major financial assistance is received from the Hamilton County commissioners with the State of Ohio – ODNR, Division of Soil and Water resources, matching annually a percentage of this funding. District demonstration projects and education activities also receive support from fund-raising efforts and through grants.

Appreciation and recognition is expressed to the Ohio legislative body and the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission for their continued support.

Special recognition goes to the Hamilton county Commissioners:



Greg
Hartmann



Chris
Monzel



Todd
Portune

Agriculture Today:

Agriculture

Land in farms (acres)	20,000
Number of farms	260
Average size (acres)	77
Total cash receipts	\$22,025,000
Per farm	\$84,712
Green Industry Payroll	\$347,000,000
Taxes Paid	\$36,000,000

Purpose of the Long-Range Plan

This Long-Range Plan sets priorities to assist and guide the district's program services over the next five years. It is a roadmap created by gathering input from citizens and landowners within Hamilton County.

The Process

Suggestions were solicited through an on-line survey on our District website which was publicized by direct e-mails and through Facebook and Twitter. A planning breakfast was also held on July 25, 2013. Over 500 invitations went out to all sectors of the community with 55 people in actual attendance. Those who could not attend were encouraged to provide input through the on-line survey.

The goals and objectives set forth in this document were drawn from the online survey and the planning breakfast. They will be accomplished in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the USDA Farm Service Agency, ODNR Department of Soil and Water Resources and working with individuals, groups and organizations who request assistance to put conservation practices on the land. The relationship between the District and any request is a cooperative one.

District Services

A small sample of the services the district provides to local landowners and residents are: soil erosion and hillside stability technical assistance, drainage and stream bank stability consultations, manure and nutrient management, soil fertility testing and cover crop sales, technical assistance in establishing stream buffers, pond issues and siting consultation, wildlife management, and natural resource conservation education programs for youth and adults. Contact the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District - 22 Triangle Park Drive, Sharonville, Ohio 45246 or call 513-772-7645 for more information. Our website can be found at www.hcswcd.org

All programs and services of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of NRCS program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

Long Range Plan of Work (2014 - 2019)

Administrative

Goal: Maintain or enhance existing quality services to landowners and all sectors of the community concerning the quality of our soil and water resources.

Threats – Funding mechanisms are changing and therefore it is imperative to identify additional sources of funding.

Opportunities – Our services are unique with skilled staff to fill niches in popular trends such as urban farming, sustainable development and common core education standards for environmental topics and issues.

Objective I - Review accounting reporting / internal financial controls and improve where possible

Objective II – Standardize operation procedures

Objective III – Update and use new technology to improve external communication

Objective IV – Staff management

Objective V - Encourage continued training for each member of the Board of Supervisors

Objective VI – Represent the Board of Supervisors at meetings and serve on boards and committees that impact conservation in Hamilton County

Objective VII – Ensure integrated Division efforts to leverage expanded efforts

Agriculture Program

Goal: Assist agriculture community and urban gardeners in conserving soil stability and fertility through Best Management Practices (BMPs) and reducing impacts on water quality.

Threats – Budget uncertainty, apathy, resistance of farmers to sign up for USDA Programs due to time commitment, awareness of SWCD/USDA Programs (not all know what we do)

Opportunities - Cover crop, Urban gardening trend, build on the sustainable environmental movement and instill knowledge and awareness of agriculture in younger people

Objective I – Streamline USDA cost-share incentive programs & annually review ranking criteria. Integrate new methods and strategies such as cover crops and the 4Rs Program (a nutrient stewardship program), high tunnels and invasive weed removal.

Objective II - Partner with Farm Bureau and the Cincinnati Civic Garden Center to promote the use of cover crops with urban and communities gardens, which exist to bridge the urban food desert problems in our inner cities. Send a special mailing to CAUV members every June. Offer school age education workshops on agriculture for teachers.

Objective III: Utilize data collected through the Great Miami Water Quality Project to guide decision-making with respect to implementation of agricultural best management practices. Set up demonstration plots with local agriculture and urban landowners. Monitor and report results to the community to solicit more agriculture land participation.

Earthwork Program

Goal: Educate the Development Community to better understand the regulatory requirements on their projects and assist developers, engineers, contractors and builders conserving soil and water resources of Hamilton County.

Threats – Funding Uncertainty, Weather, Convincing developers to keep up with maintenance, Regulations always changing

Opportunities - Working with elected officials, Collaboration with Industry, Matching right sized solution to problem

Objective I - Improve compliance level across all projects with a focus on smaller projects and individual lots for single family home construction.

Objective III – Work with the municipal member jurisdictions of the Hamilton County Storm Water District on education and implementing the changes to the Hamilton County Earthwork Regulations and Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permit.

Objective II – Further cultivate contact with the Ohio Valley Development Council (OVDC) and the Greater Cincinnati Home Builders Association (HBA) to increase awareness on the changes to the Ohio EPA’s NPDES Construction Permit, Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permit and the Earthwork Regulations. Provide trainings for each organizations membership when the need arises.

Objective IV – Increase awareness of District’s Earthwork related services to Developers, Contractor and Landowners by creating training videos, a dedicated webpage and webinars. Erect signs identifying BMP’s in visible high traffic areas. Provide list of rotating sites to the Education Specialists to point out when at nearby schools.

Objective V - Promote and financially assist demonstration projects to evaluate and/or monitor new or innovative sediment and erosion controls. This could mean new products, natural or manufactured, or new methods.

Education Program

Goal: Broaden and expand conservation education.

Threats - Changing educational standards, Limited staffing, Money – funding cuts, Teacher performance requirements

Opportunities - Pre K - Partner with other education groups (Head Start, Step Up to Quality), Align programs with new standards/assessment, Work with pre-service teachers, Use Webinars as teacher training approach and social media for to secure more awareness of all education services.

Objective I – Improve our Public Outreach efforts through expanded social media outreach, YouTube videos and apps.

Objective II - Collaborate with other departments and agencies, such as MSD, Green Umbrella and watershed groups, within the means and support of our joint missions, to promote our soil and water message through field days and workshops.

Objective III - Continue to make website more interactive, including upcoming events, workshops and activities.

Objective IV – Improve offerings to local teachers, students and groups

Objective V - Develop/change all activities to correlate to Next Gen and Common Core Standards. Include subjects other than science (i.e. math and social studies)

Streams and Storm Water

Goal: Utilize water quality monitoring and provide technical support to engage citizens and facilitate/enhance initiatives that protect water quality.

Threats – Funding cuts, More rules from Feds and Regulators

Opportunities - Provide input/water quality data for decision making, Work with zoning (municipalities/communities) to allow more water quality BMPs. Siloization (county structure) - Bring together county agencies

Objective I – Provide technical support to land owners, businesses and schools to promote more ownership of local streams and implementation of storm water best management practices (BMPs) through educational materials, field water quality demonstrations and data presentations.

Objective II – Develop a volunteer corp. to assist in advocating District services at public events. All departments will contribute training to provide a holistic view of our soil and water resources.

Objective III –Promote the use of new practices to reduce storm water runoff and pollution by offering assistance to commercial and residential landowners. Provide financial and technical assistance to install demonstration projects.

Objective IV – Provide technical support to the Hamilton County Storm Water District and the Earth Work Program in the updating and implementation of riparian corridor, erosion and sediment control and storm water ordinances.

Objective V - Work with groups such as Rivers Unlimited, Friends of the Great Miami, University of Cincinnati, Hamilton County General Health District, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments, MSD and others to enhance the data collection and reporting associated with the Great Miami River Citizen’s Volunteer Monitoring Laboratory.

Public Relations

Goal: Increase media awareness on conservation issues and services provided by the District.

Threats – Continually changing technology, software and level of expertise required to maintain necessary media contacts and develop a professional looking product. Cost.

Opportunities – Recently hired PR Specialist will provide in-house expertise and produce professional looking materials, which used to have to be outsource. This will lower our costs. Working with the Regional Storm Water Collaborative will unify our message and enable the entire group to gain more public exposure by pooling our dollars.

Objective I - Educating the “non-choir”/unexposed residents with the conservation message

Objective II - Continue existing work on District branding to unify message and appearance.

Objective III - Develop public presence of District through local and regional displays and programs

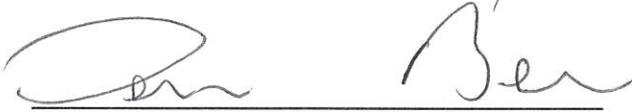
Objective IV - Collaborate with and support the new District Storm Water Coordinator

ADOPTION

The Board of Supervisors Adopted this 2014 – 2019 Long Range Plan Tuesday, November 12, 2013



Chairman



Secretary