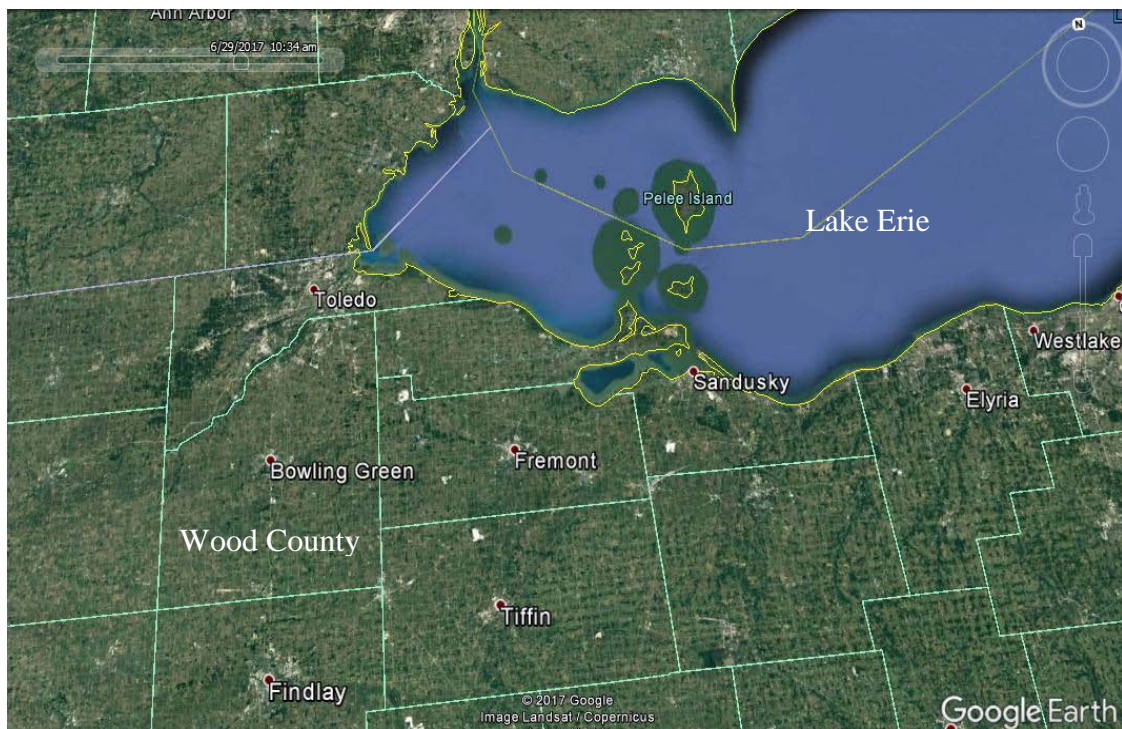


# Wood Soil and Water Conservation District

## Strategic and Annual Plan of Work

2017 - 2021



### **Our Mission**

Dedicated to the wise use of local natural resources to address regional concerns.

### **Our Vision**

Utilize our expertise to facilitate natural resource conservation, improving the quality of life for present and future generations.

# Strategic Plan and Annual Plan of Work

**2017-2021**

## **Wood Soil and Water Conservation District**

Purpose: To implement the goals and objectives of the District's Long Range Strategic Plan, and to provide for the conservation and development of our natural resources on an annual basis.

The following outlines our major objectives, goals, responsibilities, and schedule of events, to be undertaken in 2017 and beyond.

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## **Foreward**

Conservation of our natural resources is an obligation shared by everyone. Effective management of our natural resources is vital in order to provide clean water and maintain healthy, productive soils - ensuring our quality of life for present and future generations.

This Long Range Plan has been developed as a guidance document for the staff, supervisors, and the general public on what is considered to be priority areas for natural resource conservation.

Various local elected officials, agricultural groups, environmental groups, educators, and private citizens provided input in the planning process. As a result, the following areas of concern were identified and are addressed in this document. Those areas include: Loss of Prime Farmland, Water Quality/Ground and Surface Water, Nutrient Management, Soil Health, Drainage Management, and Information/Education.

Meetings of the Board of Supervisors are open to the public, with public participation encouraged. We invite comments and concerns that you feel need to be addressed as changes in direction of natural resources management become evident.

The Board of Supervisors  
Wood Soil and Water Conservation District

Bernard Scott  
Dennis Ferrell  
Kris Swartz  
Ron Snyder  
Lee Sundermeier

## **District Organization**

The Wood Soil and Water Conservation District includes all the lands within Wood County. The district is a sub-division of the State Of Ohio. Formed by a referendum petition, it was chartered on July 8, 1949. As a unit of state government, the district was organized and operates under the provision of Chapter 940 of the Ohio Revised Code.

A board of Supervisors sets the policies of the district. The residents of the district elect five supervisors, for a three-year term. It is the duty of the board to guide the work of the district, utilize funds for equipment and supplies, and hire personnel to carry out the work of the district. Their dedication to conservation work is reflected in the time they spend in carrying out these duties and attending many meetings throughout the year, receiving no compensation for their endeavors.

The major function of the district is to determine the natural resources needs and implement programs that protect and develop these resources. Programs of the district are developed cooperatively with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Ohio State University Extension Service, and Ohio Department of Agriculture. Additional programming assistance is received from the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

The district assists landowners in the Agricultural and Urban Sediment and Pollution Abatement Standards that have been adopted by local, state, and federal governments. The application of conservation practices is a cooperative effort between the district and the land users' voluntary implementation of the recommendations of the district.

The district operates on funds provided by the Wood County Commissioners which is matched by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Sales programs and equipment rentals generate additional funds. The Natural Resource Conservation Service provides equipment, supplies, and personnel to give technical assistance to the district.

## **Policy**

The district provides services to individuals, groups of individuals, units of government and others who request assistance.

The relationship between the district and any request for assistance is a cooperative one. It is our hope that we can give those that we work with the desire to use our natural resources wisely and manage them for future generations.

Services of the district prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

## **Services**

- Conservation planning on crop, pasture, wildlife, forest and urban lands.
- Survey and plan designs of water management systems and erosion control practices such as: erosion control structures, grass waterways, water and sediment control basins, surface drainage, filter strips, open ditches, animal waste storage facilities, and windbreaks. Consulting assistance is also provided for subsurface drainage and pond design.
- The annual tree sale provides landowners quality, low-priced seedlings for windbreak and wildlife habitat establishment. Assistance with design and layout of windbreaks is available. Tree planting bars and a tree planter are also available.
- The annual fish sale provides local pond owners a low cost opportunity for pond stocking.
- School programs, field days, tours, pond clinics, and conservation presentations to farm and civic organizations.
- Technical assistance and rental of conservation tillage equipment.
- Grant Stewardship

The following resource concerns encourage care of the environment through responsible land and water use policies, conservation practices, development, oversight and environmental education.

- I. Loss of Prime Farmland**
- II. Water Quality/Ground and Surface Water**
- III. Nutrient Management, Soil Health**
- IV. Drainage Management**
- V. Outreach**

## Resource Concern I. Loss of Prime Farmland

Development of prime farmland continues to threaten Wood County's number one industry. Wood County ranks in the top 10 in the state for each - corn, soybean, and wheat production. The SWCD must work with units of government, and landowners to improve the quality of land use decisions. A proactive approach must be used in farmland development decisions.

### INITIATIVE

1. Achieve a more active role in Regional Planning.
  - Work with the Wood County Commissioners, offering input and advice, to secure greater involvement in development issues.
2. Increase public information concerning the importance of farmland preservation.
  - Promote awareness of/and land preservation tools such as: Black Swamp Conservancy District, "Ohio Historic Family Farm" designation, "Conservation Farm Family" award.



### QUANTIFIABLE GOALS

Investigate appointment of a Soil & Water Conservation District board member to Planning Commission board.

Meet with Commissioners on a regular basis. 2x/year. End of 1<sup>st</sup> qtr and beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> qtr., and other times as necessary.

Add "Farmland Preservation" tab to the SWCD website, which will include links to BSC, etc.

Annual reminder of option on website.

Annual press release prior to tax due date.

Promote Black Swamp Conservancy services. Include BSC District Coordinator in a minimum of one district event each year, with display and short promo opportunity.

Promote the Ohio Department of Agriculture "Ohio Historic Family Farm" program on a continual basis.

Nominate at least one family annually for the Conservation Farm Family award.

Utilize brochures already in print, and create 2 articles for newsletter and newspaper.



- Inform and educate our elected officials and engaged citizens, on the diverse values of farmland – more than just economics.
- Revisit the “Guide to Rural Life” and reach out to Realtor Group once complete.

Update and revise the guide. Once complete distribute to Building Inspection, Planning Commission, and Engineer’s Offices.

Determine if a lot is buildable at time of lot split.

Meet with active Realtor group once the guide is complete. Investigate facilitating a continuing education workshop for the group.

3. Economic development – agricultural land should be used for purposes that support local needs.

- Work more closely with Economic Development and share awareness of issues.
- Encourage use of existing sites. “Re” development needs to occur before “new” development.

Investigate participation in Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Identify cost/benefits of developing Brownfields before farmland.

Identify funding sources for reclamation, reuse, remediation, etc.



## Resource Concern II. Water Quality: Ground and Surface Water

Non-point sources of pollution; primarily from poor land management decisions continue to degrade water quality. Education is needed in order to make better management decisions and encourage regional thinking. County-wide development pressures cause severe sedimentation problems along with increased flooding, primarily from people moving into rural areas and lacking knowledge on land use and management.

### INITIATIVE

1. Reduce negative impacts of Wood County land on Lake Erie.
  - Promote 4Rs and be informed. Inform the public on the connection between soil health and water quality.
  - Promote local, state, and federal programs to improve water quality and/or soil health.
  - Establish and maintain a rainfall monitoring program in the county.
  - Educate Wood County residents on the impact to water quality from land management decisions, including soil erosion from wind and water.
  - Provide education on the impacts of urbanization as it relates to water quality.
  - Increase the district's offerings on storm water education for the public as well as in the schools.
2. Address community groups – OSU Master Gardeners, church and civic groups. Promote NACD Stewardship materials and activities.

### QUANTIFIABLE GOALS

Maintain up to date information in the office and Atrium display.

Seek and search grants and or other incentives.

Identify a minimum of 1 “rain tracker” per township to track and report rainfall amounts.

Disseminate information provided by Engineer's Office (TMACOG info)

Realize a minimum increase in school and public program offerings by 1% each year.

Address a minimum of six groups annually



## Resource Concern III. Nutrient Management, Soil Health

Understanding the correlation between nutrient management and soil health is key for both the economic and environmental benefit of Wood County and surrounding region. This understanding may lead to a reduction in the negative effects of excessive nutrient use.

### INITIATIVE

1. Provide information and education, emphasizing the interconnectedness of soil health and water quality. Provide education and promotion of soil health along with proper nutrient management throughout the county, thereby reducing the negative effects of excessive nutrient use. Educate to make better management decisions and encourage long range thinking. Provide soil test education/explanation to home owners and gardeners. Seek to dispel common misconceptions concerning phosphorus. Distinguish between NPK and manure – define “nutrients”.
  - Facilitate a public official’s tour, providing opportunities for one-on-one experiences between public officials and local farmers.
  - Continue established methods and also develop new methods of educating on soil health and nutrient management (i.e. “soil your undies”, Solvita, etc.)



### QUANTIFIABLE GOALS

Offer 1 – 2 hour tractor rides, or “a day in the life” of a farmer, enabling the officials to experience firsthand what goes on in agriculture. Especially target “urban issues” population. Local farmers to assist. Minimum of two such events in the next 5 years.

Organize a series of 5, 5-10 minute visual media spots - “P” ing in the Dark, etc. Investigate those already online and promote. Possibly produce 5 locally. Develop 10 radio spots.

“Soil Health Challenge” demonstration on 10 heavy tilled fields vs. healthier soils to encourage the recognition of soil health.

Create opportunity for citizens to bring in soil samples to be sent out for analysis. Invite an agronomist to come in and explain the results and how to read the test.

Encourage more crop diversity as in practices of years ago, in an effort to improve soil health. Utilize grant funding and/ or market opportunities.

- Use CAP and other partnerships/organizations to encourage farmers to attend larger conferences.
- Zero “P” study – secure funding for and implement.

2. Seek and provide program incentives (State/Federal) to landowners for conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs), resulting in improved water quality and/or soil health.

3. Increase and promote awareness/use of Nutrient Management.



Establish free conference registration for a minimum of 1 new attendee per year.

Promote, educate and demo a minimum of 10 sites. Track the reaction of zero phosphorus application for 5 years. Compare standard soil test results vs. soil health test results.

Secure a minimum of one source per year.

Utilize staff to prioritize time in completing 5 nutrient management plans/year.



## Resource Concern IV. Drainage Management – streams, ditches and water control structures

3,000 miles of ditches traverse Wood County, emphasizing the importance of drainage to the county. Crop production, along with functionality of septic systems, are just two of the various reasons drainage is so vital. Property owners need to be advised and educated on best solutions to various drainage issues, and realize the lowest cost is not always the best solution.

### INITIATIVE

2. Provide education to property owners and Home Builders Association, addressing rural drainage. Showcase the need to keep drainage as the foundation to all land use activity. Non-ag landowners need to be aware of drainage.
  - Drainage structure promotion.
  - Promote education and awareness of log jam maintenance. Provide educational outreach to non-ag landowners on importance of drainage as it relates to their property.

### QUANTIFIABLE GOALS

Promote and install minimum of 10 drainage structures/year.  
Facilitate a joint meeting, county-wide to show log jam issues, or a movie night showing the history of the Dust Bowl, the Great Black Swamp, etc. 1 such event each year.



## Item V. Outreach

The District will continue to conduct a strong outreach program to inform the public of the many programs and services the District provides and to address present, as well as future, concerns of promoting conservation and the wise use of our natural resources.

INITIATIVE	QUANTIFIABLE GOALS
1. Continue to publish newsletter 4 times a year for distribution to all cooperators, related agencies and organizations.	Quarterly plus 1 “special”
2. Offer Wood County students opportunities for scholarships including the following: Kids’ Outdoor Science Camp Envirothon	Provide scholarships to 20 WC campers Sponsor 10 WC teams to Area 1 Envirothon
3. Make available to pond owners equipment for use in and around pond sites.	Provide 100 pond filters as well as deep water signs, floats, ring buoys and rope
4. Continue fish stocking program through Fender’s Fish Hatchery.	Promote 2 pond stocking opportunities
5. Assist local schools (H2o quality testing) with water quality testing and classroom presentations.	Minimum of one classroom per year
6. Provide pipeline construction and other pipeline information to landowners	Offer assistance as requested
7. Continue to provide updated contact info for conservation issues (contractors, nurseries, etc)	Update information 2 times throughout the year or as needed
8. Maintain social media presence	Update and post information from all district events
9. Offer soil testing	25 tests completed
10. Write newspaper articles that publicize the District’s conservation programs	Provide 6 articles to local media
11. District Web Page, FB, Pinterest, Blog, Instagram and Farm4Clean Water	Maintain and update to share district events and news

12. District staff assists on various committees and advisory boards: TMACOG, State Envirothon, OASWCDE, OARDC, FFA, Women In Ag, NW Ohio Watershed Coordinators, Storm Water, Planning Commission, Solid Waste Management	Attend and actively participate in functions of committees
13. “Soil Health” campaign to educate the public on soil health	Engage 10 participants
14. Other activities...	
Northern Ohio Crops Day	Provide educational display 200 attendees
Meteorologist, Ryan Wichman – climate change	15 people
Tree workshop	20 participants
Nutrient Management bus tour wrap up mtg	30 attendees
Woodland and Wildlife Family Fest	1,000 attendees
“Soil Health Symposium” in Tiffin	100 attendees
Women In Ag	200 attendees
Township Trustees Association vendor fair	127 attendees
Arbor/Earth Day Activities	Provide 1,000 seedlings to WC 4 <sup>th</sup> graders
360 Soil Scan C.L.E.A.N. II follow up	50 people
Area 1 Envirothon	5 teams from Wood County participate
Pond Clinic	15 participants
NWWSD Open House display	Display of district info and DWWWT model 700 participants
“Peek Inside the Farm”	50 attendees
Ohio Envirothon	150 attendees
S.T.E.M. <sup>2</sup> @ BGSU	300 attendees
Black Swamp Educators Extravaganza	25 participants
EARTH Camp	400 participants
“Peek Inside the Farm”	50 visitors
Cover Crop field days at Riker Farm Seed	2 events with 20 people each time

Wood County Fair

Staff the fair display with conservation information - 500 visitors

Wood County Fair “The Grove” planning

Provide activities and information on district activities and programs

Water testing for home owners w/Heidleberg

20 participants

Annual Banquet, mtg & ATV tour

ATV tour, awards banquet and supervisor election – 50 attendees

County Soil Judging competition

Assist with site selection and preparation for contest. All Wood County chapters participate

S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in the Park at BGSU

Provide an education activity for 3,000 attendees

