

Union Soil and Water Conservation District

Serving Union County's Conservation needs for 78 years

2023 Annual Report

***Our Mission** 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.*

The Union SWCD was formed in 1945, the 47th District in Ohio, for the purpose of planning and carrying out natural resources conservation programs. The District is a political subdivision of the State of Ohio and is governed by a board of five supervisors, elected by the landowners of Union County, who serve staggered three-year terms. The supervisors donate their time to serve Union County landowners.

Monthly board meetings of the Union SWCD Board of Supervisors are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month to conduct business. All meetings are open to the public and held on the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

2023 Board of Supervisors

Rick Weigand, Chair

Andy Clarridge, Vice-Chairman

Matt Staley, Fiscal Agent/Treasurer

Cheryl Trivisonno, Secretary

Randy Trapp, Member

2023 Union SWCD Operating Funds

The Union Soil and Water Conservation District operates on funding provided by the Union County Commissioners, the Union County Township Trustees and matching funds from the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil & Water Resources.

Local Funds:

Union County Commissioners	\$200,000.00
Township Trustees	\$ 1,000.00

Other Sources:

State Matching Funds	\$382,831.00
ODNR Wildlife Specialist Grant	\$ 20,000.00

Annual Meeting & Election

The Union Soil & Water Conservation District held its 78th Annual Meeting on Wednesday, August 2, 2023, with 66 people in attendance. The election of Supervisors was held with candidates Randy Trapp and Rick Weigand elected to 3-year terms to begin January 1, 2024.

Entertainment: Stephen Graham provided the entertainment for the evening. Steve gave a presentation on his farm practices and the CREP program.

Awards: The 2023 Cooperator of the Year award went to Stephen Graham or Graham Farm. He took over his family farm in the early 2000s, implementing several USDA practices to bring the farm back to life. The farm has been in operation for over 120 years in Union County.

Associate Supervisors

Bill Conklin Jay Rausch Jim Mitchell Joe Wiley
Matt Furer Steve Drumm Suzi Clarridge

District Staff

Brent Nickel, District Administrator/Wildlife Specialist

Sherry Maisenbacher, Administrative Assistant

Mark Watkins, District Technician

Ross Carter, District Technician

Matt Williams, District Technician

Joseph Grove, Urban Technician

Joe Eads, Drainage Maintenance Supervisor

Matt Archer, Drainage maintenance Technician

Cody Beery, Drainage maintenance Technician

USDA, NRCS Staff

Ron Neiman, District Conservationist

LaRae Baker, Resource Conservationist

Adam Slappy, Soil Conservationist

Mariah Lashley, Soil Conservationist

Anna "Quinn" Baltisberger, Soil Conservationist



Conservation Products

- Rentals: No-till drill was rented out (13) times for a total of 535.7 acres
Straw blower was rented out (5) times.
Tree Planter was rented out (3) times.
Tree Puller was rented out (0) times.
- Tree Sale: Union SWCD 2023 Tree Sale was held as a drive-thru on April 15, 2023 With 5,625 seedlings available to 101 customers.
- Fish Sale: Union SWCD 2023 Fish Sale was held in October and we sold 5,655 fingerlings to 10 customers.

Education

- School Presentations: Presented the Groundwater Simulator and the Enviroscape modules to Fairbanks Middle School and read The Lorax to the first graders at North Union on Earth Day.

The Groundwater Simulator, the Enviroscape modules, and the AR Sand table were made available to Union County teachers upon request to use in their classrooms.

- National Hunting & Fishing Day:
Assisted with – (50) participants
- Hunting & Fishing Education:
Assisted with - (10) classes for over 400+ participants
- Pheasants Forever Youth & Ladies Shoot and Hunt:
(2) presentations / (75) participants
- Conservation Tillage Club Breakfasts:
(4) Conservation Tillage Club breakfasts were held in 2023 at the Plaza Inn in Mt. Victory with (200+) people attending.
- Farmers' Breakfast Series:
(2) Breakfasts were held in 2023 to discuss The Future of Rural Economies with (111) people attending.

Outreach

- Don Cook Memorial Scholarship Fund: Cook Real Estate, Dean Cook Nationwide Insurance and Union SWCD sponsored Brooklyn Coder, Mackenzie Lynn Keemann, Gabe Bertin, and Preston Davis to attend 4-H Camp at Camp Clifton.
- Provide a subscription of the Ohio Woodland Journal to Fairbanks, Marysville and North Union High Schools.
- Participated in the Richwood Independent Fair by provided educational displays
- Union SWCD Website: Provided announcements, events, quarterly newsletters, conservation and drainage information to the public.

<https://www.unioncountyohio.gov/USWCD>

- District Facebook Page: Provided announcements, events, conservation and drainage information to the public

Drainage Maintenance

- Ditches: (34) Maintained with 62.59 miles of ditches by spraying (southern ditches) and mowing (northern ditches).
- Subdivisions: (35) maintained with 16.58 miles of subsurface drain pipe along agriculture drainage systems, (52) urban subdivision retention basins, and (199) concrete drainage structures which included headwalls, manholes and catch basins and (41) projects are pending awaiting the final punch-outs
- Construction Projects: Morris Beery completed in the fall.
- Petition Projects: Mill Creek Logjam gathered data with UCE staff.
- Subdivision Plat Reviews: (23) subdivision plats reviewed by 2 District staff members.
- Assessment Spreadsheets: (69) spreadsheets are maintained by 3 District staff.

Technical Assistance

The following are some of our technical accomplishments of the past year:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP): (4) Inspections completed
- Agricultural Pollution Abatement Program (APAP): (2) Complaints: Investigated
- CRP-MCM Assessment/Review: (19) Field Visits and Landowner Meetings
- Grassed Waterways: (5) Reviewed for Contract Renewal; (17) Installed; (26) others designed
- Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP): (1) UC landowner
- Pond Management: Provided assistance to (16) pond owners.
- Pond Site Evaluations and Planning: Assisted (7) residents
- Drainage Assistance: Assisted (113) UC landowners with Erosion, sediment, storm-water control and management
- Ohio Agriculture Conservation Initiative (OACI): Contacted (80) UC landowners
- Low Water Crossing (LWC): designed (1) for UC landowner
- Agricultural Subsurface Drainage: designed (3) for UC landowners
- Petitioned ditches: Beach Open; Clark Yoder; Fry Open; Marriott Open; Leo Rausch; Morris-Beery; Sugar Run; Tobey Run; Pending: Lincoln, Wenrick, Farrington, and Mill Creek Logjam.
- Petitioned subdivisions: Britonwood; Mitchell Crossing; Waterford Estates; Jerome Village - ERN06, GPN05, GPN08, VN004, VN005
- Solar Projects: Acciona/Union Solar; Invenergy/ Cadence Solar, Engie Solar, Light source BP/Acamar Solar; and Samsung/Richwood Solar.
- Drainage Maintenance: Developed an inventory and project tracking system

Urban Conservation

- Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) Townships: Currently we have agreements to provide technical assistance on soils and drainage for all new home sites. In addition to home site inspections, the following townships require a zoning permit for ponds as well
 - Darby Township Trustees
 - Dover Township Trustees
 - Leesburg Township Trustees
 - Liberty Township Trustees
 - Millcreek Township Trustees
 - Paris Township Trustees
 - York Township Trustees
- Home Site Reviews: (18) Home site visits to determine proper lot drainage for new homes were performed and (2) construction site for sediment and erosion control BMPs.
- Be the Change for Clean Water Partner: The Be the Change initiative exists to keep you informed about programs and services in Central Ohio & how they can benefit you! When it comes to protecting our water resources we all need to be part of the solution. Be The Change for Clean Water is bringing together ten counties and a multitude of partners to provide education, resources, and opportunities to make it easier for all Central Ohio residents to Be the Change for Clean Water.
<http://www.bethechangeformcleanwater.org>
- Drainage Complaints/Investigations/Information: (45) incidents were addressed

Wildlife Assistance

- Wildlife Conflict/Damage Investigations (15):
Bagworms, Bats, Beaver, Bees, Caterpillars, Coyote, Fox, Feral Cats, Geese, Hawks, Muskrats, Raccoons, Groundhogs, Woodpeckers, Blackbirds/ Starlings, Squirrels/ chipmunks, Rabbits, Swans, and Turtles.
- Wildlife Assistance (17):
Provided assistance to variety of individuals concerning pheasant rearing, wildlife rescue information, “orphaned wildlife”, wildlife exclusion methods, habitat, muskrat/dike damage, wildlife conflict/nuisance investigations, Nuisance Trapper Lists, plant ID, etc.
- Wildlife Habitat Assistance (19):
Landowner discussions for field management/contract requirements. Assist landowners with Native Plant ID’s.

***Union SWCD Board of Supervisors would like to thank all
the Partners, Funders, Sponsors and Supporters***

2023 Supporters

Union County Commissioners

Union County Auditor

Union County Engineer

Union County Treasurer

Union County Health Department

City of Marysville

UC Chapter of Pheasants Forever Chapter #535

Union County Farm Bureau

OSU Extension

USDA Farm Service Agency

Union County Ag Association

The Scotts Company

Darby Township Trustees

National Association of Conservation Districts

ODNR Division of Forestry

ODNR Division of Wildlife

ODA Division of Soil & Water Conservation

Ohio Soil & Water Conservation Commission

Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts



2023 Affiliate Members

Cook Real Estate (Gold Member)	59 years
Ohigro Inc. (Silver Member)	50 years
MJS Oil, Inc., dba Smith Distributing (Silver Member)	37 years
Dean Cook Nationwide Insurance (Gold Member)	31 years
Select Sires, Inc (Platinum Member)	29 years
Union County Farm Bureau (Gold Member)	26 years
Smart Oil, LLC (Gold Member)	10 years
Millcreek Gardens LLC (Silver Member)	4 years
Seed Consultants (Silver Member)	4 years
Vititoe Construction, Inc. (Platinum Member)	4 years
Connolly Construction Co. (Silver Member)	3 years
MitchellAgri (Gold Member)	3 years
The Seed Center (Gold Member)	3 years
Benny's Pizza (Gold Member)	2 year
Bluescreek Farm LLC (Gold Member)	2 year
Bokes Creek Hot Shots (Gold Member)	2 year
Bokes Creek Orchard (Gold Member)	2 year
Mitchell's Berries & Blooms (Silver Member)	2 year
Richwood Tire Center (Silver Member)	2 year
Steve Stolte (Gold Member)	2 year
Al's Leather Craft LTD (Silver Member)	1 year
Heart of Ohio Fish & Game Association (Gold Member)	1 year
The Grainery (Gold Member)	1 year