

***Union Soil and Water  
Conservation District***

***2025***

***ANNUAL PLAN OF  
OPERATIONS***

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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 can be accomplished by USWCD and to specify those objectives that the District will work towards annually

Our overall priority is to provide the best service possible to the landowners, operators, and people of Union County. Our services will be provided on controlling soil erosion and improving 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

Joseph Grove, 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

Leisha Billenstein, State Office Programs Staff, QAR Team

Isabel Nazarian, Midwest Partner Biologist for Pollinator Partnership

Brent Smith, ACES

# COOPERATING AGENCIES

## **Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)**

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts have formed a close working bond with the NRCS. NRCS staff provides technical assistance to local land managers, SWCDs, and many other entities. NRCS has a staff of technical specialists in many different 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 provides locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns in both the rural and urban settings of the SWCDs in various capacities. They do this through legislative advocacy, public outreach, grant support, training, and development programs to better enable SWCDs to serve their communities.

## **Union County**

The District works closely with the following Union County Department; the Union County Engineer's Office (UCE), the Union County Auditor's Office, and the Union County Commissioners (BCC). The District appreciates the support they receive from the BCC.

## Objective 1: Training

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
ADP - Administrative Development Program	8	USWCD Board and Staff / ODA	2025
TDP - Technician Development Program	20	Joseph Grove, Matt Williams, and USWCD Staff / ODA and NRCS	2025
Area IV Winter Supervisor & Employee Meeting	1	USWCD Board and Staff / OFSWCD and Area IV Directors	December 2025
NACD Annual Meeting	1	USWCD Board and Staff / NACD	February 8 - 12, 2025
Obtain Notary Public License (renew every 5-yrs)	1	Sherry Maisenbacher and Union County Records Dept	Expires June 24, 2028
ODNR DOW Diversity Conference	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	March 2025
OFSWCD Annual Partnership Meeting	1	USWCD Board and Staff / OFSWCD / OASWCDE	January 21 - 23, 2025
Provide displays to promote the SWCD / NRCS programs	4	Brent Nickel / USWCD Staff	2025
Spray license certification – Obtain and Keep (Renew/test every 3 years)	1	Cody Beery / ODA / OSU Extension	2025
Wildlife Specialist Training Webinar – held monthly	12	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2025

## Objective 2: Technical Assistance

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Agricultural Easement Donation Program (AEDP) Farmland Preservation Inspections	6	Mark Watkins and Joseph Grove / ODA	December 2025
Support the NRCS with conservation programs and engineering	60	Mark Watkins and Matt Williams/ NRCS	2025
Provide technical assistance in the areas of erosion, sediment, stormwater control / management (as requested)	40	Mark Watkins and Matt Williams/ Engineer, Health Department, Twp. Trustees, and City of Marysville	2025
Respond to pollution abatement complaints; work with appropriate parties to resolve the issue; maintain up-to-date complaints; Record in Beehive	2	Mark Watkins and Matt Williams/ ODA, EPA, and Union County Health Department	2025
Provide new pond site evaluations / planning (as requested)	40	Brent Nickel, Mark Watkins, and USWCD Engineering Staff	2025
862 Mid-Contract Management (MCM's) & Re-Enrollment Inspections, Assessments, and landowner meetings	40	Brent Nickel, NRCS, FSA, and Pheasants Forever	2025
Assist landowners in preserving their farmland through ODA's Landowner Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP).	4	Joseph Grove and USWCD Staff	2025
H2Ohio Program (17,500 + acres) Assist landowners for	20	Matt Williams, Joseph Grove, and USWCD Staff	2025
Scioto Crep Program	12	Matt Williams, Joseph Grove, and USWCD Staff	2025

### Objective 3: Education

**Goal:** Provide and promote conservation education opportunities.

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Area IV Envirothon – Promote and encourage participation by Union County Students	1	USWCD Staff / OFSWCD	April 29, 2025
Conservation Tillage Breakfast Meetings - planning meetings	4	Mark Watkins / OSU Extension / NRCS / Local Ag Businesses	Jan. 16th, Jan. 30th, Feb. 13th, & Feb. 27 <sup>th</sup> 2025
Don Cook Memorial Scholarship - Offer to 4-H members to attend Camp during the summer.	4	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Board / Dave Cook, and Dean Cook	April 2025
Pond Clinic (indoor) w/OSU Extension (last one held 9/26/18)	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR-DOW / OSU Extension	2025
Science Fair Judging-Union County (as requested)	2	USWCD Staff / Union County Local Schools	2025
<u>School Presentations:</u> Groundwater Simulator, Enviroscope, 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 Development	8	Brent Nickel and Joseph Grove / Union County Local Schools	2025
Soil Stewardship Week – Provide NACD Stewardship Materials to churches/ schools if funding allows. (as requested,)	4	Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Educators	April 27 – May 4, 2025
Union County FFA Wildlife Judging Teams - provide information (as requested)	2	Brent Nickel / ODNR and DOW	2025



**Objective 4: Drainage Maintenance (DM)**

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Organization and implementation of Union County landowner ditch petition projects (940 / 6131)	5	Joe Eads / USWCD staff, Union County Commissioners (UCC) and Union County Engineer (UCE)	2025
Maintain bookkeeping to track petition ditch and subdivision accounts	112	Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Auditor	2025
Maintain DM Time entries and post staff time to the spreadsheet (monthly)	12	Sherry Maisenbacher / Joe Eads	2025
Maintain historical records pertaining to County petition ditch projects.	1	Sherry Maisenbacher / Joe Eads	2025
Manage maintenance program for current maintained ditches and subdivisions	71	Joe Eads / USWCD staff and UCE	2025
Manage the construction / inspections of new petition ditch projects.	4	Joe Eads, Matt Archer, Cody Beery / USWCD Engineering staff / (UCE)	2025
Mapping, inventory, and coordination of log jam removal project on Mill Creek.	1	Joe Eads / USWCD staff, UCC, UCE, and UC Township Trustees	2025

**Objective 4: Drainage Maintenance (continued)**

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Preform maintenance, mowing and inspections on all maintained ditches and subdivisions	80	Drainage Maintenance Technicians / Joe Eads	2025
Provide engineering and design for proposed petition ditch projects.	4	USWCD Engineering staff / UCE	2025
Punch List Walk-Throughs	30	Joe Eads / UCE	2025
Special Assessments: Maintain special assessment spreadsheets update splits, combinations, and transfers.	105	Joe Eads, Joseph Grove, and Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Auditor	2025

## Objective 5: Wildlife Education/Assistance

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Wildlife Specialist Report to ODNR DOW ( Annual)	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	July 1, 2025
National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) Organize / promote held at the Heart of Ohio Fishing Club	1	Brent Nickel / John Carl, ODNR DOW	September 27, 2025
Union County Pheasants Forever (PF) Meetings: Attend to answer questions, promote proper conservation/ habitat practice establishment and maintenance. (monthly)	12	Brent Nickel / Union County PF Chapter #535	2025
Attend ODNR DOW District 1 Meetings, Trainings and Events	4	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2025
Wildlife Conservation Education, Fishing, Hunting, and Outdoor programs: Develop to promote future generations of hunters, fishermen/women, and outdoor enthusiasts.	12	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2025
Pond Management Visits & Pond Fish Kill Investigations (as requested)	10	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2025
Conservation practice sites Promote, implement, monitor, and maintaining contact with union county residents.	25	Brent Nickel / NRCS	2025
Wildlife Damage Complaints: Respond to and offer human-wildlife conflict resolutions (as requested)	10	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2025

**Objective 5: Wildlife Education/Assistance (continued)**

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Funding: Secure to promote and hold Outdoor Education/ Fishing Days throughout the county at township & local park as requested. (1 grant)	1	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW , City of Marysville, and the Village of Richwood	2025
Wildlife Management Ordinance Execution – City of Marysville (as requested)	4	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW and the City of Marysville	2025
Wildlife Management, Monitoring & Recommendations	20	Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	2025

## Objective 6: Urban

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Address/assist Union County property owners with drainage complaints. (as needed)	24	Mark Watkins / USWCD Staff	2025
Check outlets for drainage with Union County Health Department (as requested)	20	USWCD Staff / Union County Health Department	2025
Construction Site Reviews (as requested)	12	USWCD Staff	2025
Encourage Township Trustees to consider drainage before issuing zoning permits for development.	10	Joe Eads and USWCD Staff	2025
Promote BMPs for urban sites.	20	USWCD Staff / NRCS	2025
Provide assistance to landowners with drainage concerns.	24	USWCD Staff	2025
Review subdivision plats to address drainage/water quality concerns. (as needed)	30	Joe Eads, Joseph Grove - LUC Regional Planning Commission	2025
USWCD input on proposed changes to subdivision regulations. (as needed)	12	Joe Eads / Joseph Grove - LUC Regional Planning Commission	2025

## Objective 7: Resource/Watershed Planning

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Develop promotional storm water education materials (i.e., brochures, maps, placemats)	2	Union SWCD Staff	2025
Hold Local Work Group meeting in conjunction with annual planning meeting	1	Ron Neiman, Mariah Lashley, Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Board	April-2025
Implement and facilitate educational dealing with water quality protection water studies with Bunsold students, protection watershed tours, canoe floats, storm drain marking, stream monitoring, etc.).	8	Joseph Grove	Spring / Summer 2025

## Objective 8: Outreach/Public Relations

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Ditch Maintenance: Provide Information (as requested)	20	Joe Eads / UCE and USWCD Staff	2025
Dry Hydrants: Provide Information (as requested)	2	Mark Watkins / Local Fire Departments	2025
Union SWCD Facebook and Web Page - maintain announcements, events, and individual pages	2	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff / Union County IT	2025
Newspaper Articles (when necessary)	3	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff	2025
“Ohio Woodland Journal” – provide to Fairbanks, Marysville, and North Union High School libraries	3	USWCD Board and Brent Nickel / ODNR DOW	Annually
Union SWCD Annual Report published in the district newsletter.	1	Sherry Maisenbacher, USWCD Board and Staff	Annually
Union SWCD Cooperator of Year Award /Other recognition of deserving partners presented at the Union SWCD Annual Meeting	1	USWCD Board and Staff	Annually
Union SWCD Newsletters (quarterly) - “Wild About Wildlife” & “Up the Crick” newsletter sections	4	Brent Nickel , Joseph Grove and USWCD Staff	Winter 2025 Spring 2025 Summer 2025 Fall 2025
Unmanned Fair Booths/Displays for Wildlife & Conservation Info.	2	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2025
79th Annual Meeting and Election	1	USWCD Board and Staff	August 13, 2025

## Objective 9: Conservation Products

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Tree Seedling and Related Items Sale held annually.	5,150	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff	April 26, 2025
Fish Fingerling Sale held annually	6,000	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff	October 2, 2025
Miscellaneous Item Sales - Marking Flags and Soil Survey Narratives	30	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Staff	2025
No-till Drill Rental	20	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2025
Straw Blower Rental	4	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2025
Tree Planter Rental	2	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2025
Tree Puller Rental	2	Brent Nickel and USWCD Staff	2025



## Objective 10: District Policies/Administration

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Beehive - Track projects, initiatives, and timesheets. Utilize information as needed.	1	USWCD Staff / ODA	2025
Bookkeeping- Maintains the Special Fund and District Fund accounts.	2	Sherry Maisenbacher and USWCD Board	2025
Cash Basis (Hinkle) Prepare and submit to the Auditor of State Annually	1	Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County Auditor	March 1, 2025
District Budget - Prepare on an annual basis.	1	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Board	September 2025
Form 11 - Complete the fiduciary review	1	Sherry Maisenbacher and Brent Nickel / Area IV Program Specialist	May 1, 2025
Grants – Research, apply, and obtain when necessary.	3	USWCD Staff and Board	2025
Maintain a high level of professionalism and customer service	20	USWCD Board and Staff	2025
MOUs - Maintain between District and Cooperating agencies	12	Brent Nickel, USWCD Board and Staff, NRCS, OSU Extension, Townships, ODNR, etc.	2025
Preform annual staff evaluations	10	Brent Nickel and USWCD Board Supervisors	2025
Personnel Management: Maintain policy and procedure manuals, insurance, benefits, and safety.	10	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Board Supervisors	2025

**Objective 10: District Policies/Administration (continued)**

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

<u>Action Items</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Responsibility/Partners</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Policies: Review current policies and create new policies as needed	20	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff and Board	Annually
Provide information to ODA Program Specialist	20	Brent Nickel and Sherry Maisenbacher	2025
Strategic Plan (2023 - 2027) revise and update	1	Brent Nickel, USWCD Staff, and Board	2027
Union County Staff Meetings: (1st Tuesday of each month)	12	Brent Nickel / Sherry Maisenbacher / Union County BCC	2025
USWCD Board Meetings held monthly (2nd Thursday of each month)	12	USWCD Board, Brent Nickel, and Sherry Maisenbacher / USWCD Staff	2025
USWCD Staff Meetings: Hold to work on team building, morale, project planning, project implementation review, information transfer, etc. (Monday's)	52	Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and USWCD Staff	2025
Public Records Request: fulfill and record (as requested)	6	Sherry Maisenbacher and Union Staff	2025
Records Retention: Manage and maintain District records according to retention schedules	1	Sherry Maisenbacher and Union County Records Dept	2025
Update MOA/MOU's and Policy Statement/Operational Agreements with NRCS.	1	USWCD Board, Brent Nickel, Sherry Maisenbacher, and NRCS DC Ron Nieman	2025