

Acknowledgements

The Board of Supervisors and staff wish to express their appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for assisting us in our natural resources programs.

Butler County Commissioners



Cindy Carpenter



Donald L. Dixon



T.C. Rogers

- USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- USDA- Farm Service Agency
- State of Ohio General Assembly
- Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil and Water Conservation
- ODNR - Division of Forestry
- ODNR - Division of Wildlife
- Hamilton to New Baltimore Groundwater Consortium
- Ohio State University Extension- Butler County
- Butler County Development and Planning
- Butler County Engineers Office
- Butler County Storm Water District
- Butler County Dept. of Water and Sewer
- Butler County Farm Bureau Federation
- Butler County Agricultural Society
- Butler County Health Department
- MetroParks of Butler County
- Izaak Walton League of America: Hamilton & Fairfield
- Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council of Governments
- Three Valley Conservation Trust
- Mill Creek Watershed Council of Communities
- Miami University
- Pheasants Forever
- Miami Conservancy District (MCD)
- Whitewater River Watershed
- Keep Middletown Beautiful

Our Generous Newsletter Sponsors

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- Jones Fish and Lake Management
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- Rich Excavating, Inc.
- Schenck Accounting
- Schenck Land Improvement

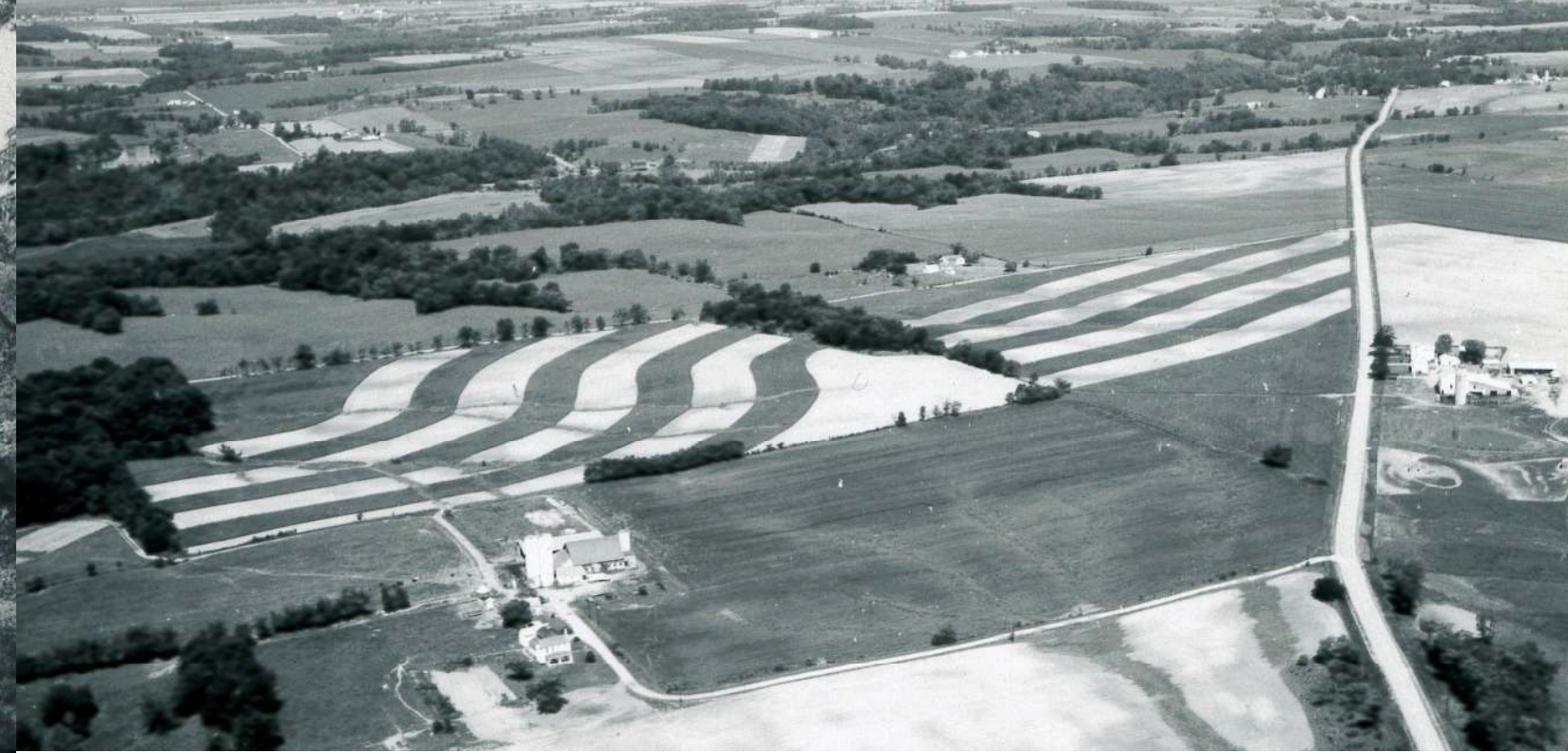
Vision

To be recognized as a non-partisan leader in the conservation and management of our soil, water and other natural resources through effective and efficient programs and services.

United States Department Of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.

Mission

To promote the conservation, restoration, and responsible use of our natural resources through technical assistance and education.



75 Years of Conservation in Butler County



2016-2017 Annual Report





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Receive our quarterly newsletter
 by sending your email address to
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About Butler SWCD

After serving the community for 75 years, Butler Soil & Water Conservation District is looking forward to many more projects, events, and challenges in the years to come. The District has seen many changes since its establishment, but the one thing that hasn't wavered is the support from our landowners and local representatives. It is due to the support of landowners and civil servants that our Soil and Water District was created and still exists today.

Documentation throughout the early history of the United States demonstrates that soil erosion had been a consistent concern, but it wasn't until the Dust Bowl in the 1930's that changes across the country took place. As a result of the Dust Bowl, on May 16, 1941, the Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 646, which allowed local landowners to create soil conservation districts. This bill was also known as the Soil Conservation Enabling Act. In February of 1942, area agricultural leaders, government officials, and farmers began a series of organizational meetings and educational programs to inform residents of the need to organize a Soil Conservation District to serve Butler County.

As a result of several township meetings, 404 landowners signed a petition to organize Butler Soil and Water Conservation District. A local hearing was held where 24 farmers and interested parties attended, and 11 landowners testified in favor of forming the District including: B.S. VanGorden, Frank Cox, Robert Hiltbrand, Charles Krebs, Robert Keehner, Rowland Bevis, Ray Brown, John Baker, W.L. Bradley, M.N. Brate, Morris Taylor. A referendum followed with 364 landowners voting 88 percent in favor of creating a District. Butler SWCD was founded on May 25, 1942 and became the 5th SWCD to form in Ohio.

Founding Fathers Who Testified in Columbus, 1942

John Baker - Morgan
 Rowland Bevis - Ross
 W. L. Bradley - Oxford
 M.N. Brate - Union
 Ray Brown - Oxford
 Frank Cox - Madison
 Robert Hiltbrand - Wayne
 Robert Keehner - Union
 Charles Krebs - Union
 Morris Taylor - Ross
 B.S. Van Gorden - Liberty



First board above; current board below.



Financial Report

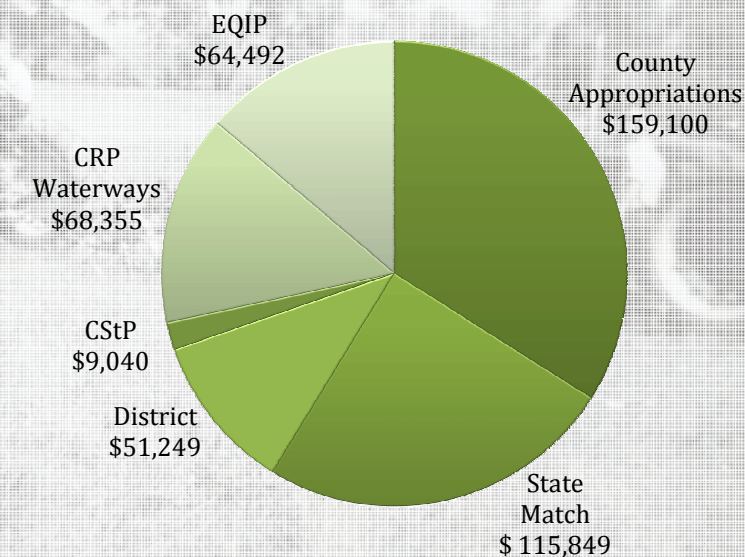
August 1, 2016 through July 31, 2017

District Accounts

Balance on Hand August 1, 2016	\$ 216,766
Receipts	\$ 50,448
Interest	\$ 801
Expenditures	\$ 30,416
Balance on Hand July 31, 2017	\$ 237,523

Special Fund

Balance on Hand August 1, 2016	\$ 131,288
Receipts Butler Co. Appropriations	\$ 159,100
State Matching Fund	\$ 115,849
Workman's Comp Reimburse	\$ 801
Expenditures	\$ 260,742
Balance on Hand July 31, 2017	\$ 146,297



Notable Achievements Since 1942



Ohio Federation of Soil & Water
Conservation Districts

1943—Butler, Clark, and Highland
Supervisors formed the OFSWCD



1959—Hired the first Program
Administrator in Ohio, Joe Dudley



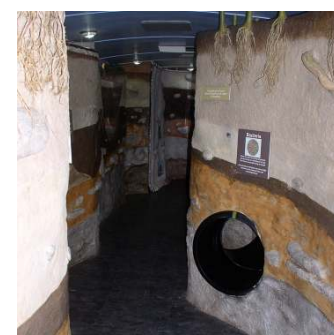
1960s—First to pioneer several
conservation practices



1985—Created the first Urban
Erosion Control Specialist in Ohio.
Edsel Harrison Jr.



2007—Recognized by the National
Association of Conservation
Districts for partnerships



2012—Received the Outstanding
Environmental Education Award
from the Ohio EPA for the trailer

Education & Outreach

Youth Education

During the 2016-2017 school year, the district provided 354 educational programs for over 8,200 children and 870 adults. In addition to these programs, there were several other highlights...

This Spring, Butler and Hamilton County SWCD's hosted the Area IV Envirothon at Fernald Preserve. An academic environmental competition for high school students, we welcomed 83 teams of students from 18 counties in Southwest Ohio.

In 2016, Butler County was represented in the National Association of Conservation District's poster contest by an Elda Elementary student. For the 2017 theme of "Healthy Soils are Full of Life," four local students participated in the state contest.



Adult Education

The District provides a variety of workshops for homeowners, landowners and producers. Butler County Educational Service Center and pre-service teachers at Miami University have attended professional development to provide content to their students. Residents have created their own rain barrels and built worm bins for composting during our Backyard Conservation workshops, and learned about water quality at the Stream Biology Workshop. Landowners and producers attended Agronomy Field Day, a Pasture Management Workshop, and the annual Landowner Workshop where Farm Bill programs and Best Management Practices are shared.

In addition to these opportunities for local residents, Butler hosted a tour for the state conference for Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors and Staff. The tour visited Rumpke landfill, Fernald Preserve, Niederman Family Farm, and ended at the SWCD facility to look at demonstration areas including the rain garden, composting area, and the new ACED site.

Events

Butler SWCD takes their educational trailer and materials to numerous community events around the county. In addition, we also host events such as Test Your Well Water and Butler County Farm Day. Even after what was predicted to be a cold and wet day, Farm Day at Pedro's Angus Farm was a success with over 500 people in attendance. This event is an example of the great partnership between Butler SWCD, the Ohio State Extension, and local farm families.

Community Involvement

The District is proud to work with residents on several volunteer projects. The Butler County Stream Team is a citizen science group that collects, analyzes, and reports water quality data from local waterways. This partnership between Butler SWCD, the Butler County Storm Water District, Miami University, and the community provides high quality data that the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency can utilize when observing water quality trends.

The Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River is one of our largest annual partnership events. In 2016, over 450 volunteers helped to collect almost 10 tons of trash and over 260 tires from the banks of the Great Miami River.

Grants & Scholarships

The District awarded Talawanda High School a grant to build benches for the development of an outdoor classroom within their education area which features wetlands, prairie and forest.

Cody Keifer from Reily Township received the 2017 Gerald A. Morris College Scholarship to be used towards his studies at Wilmington College.



Adding Value to Butler County Since 1942

Since its creation on May 25, 1942, Butler Soil and Water Conservation District board and staff have made it their mission to promote the conservation, preservation and responsible use of our natural resources through technical assistance and education. Butler SWCD serves both the agricultural and urban landscapes of Butler County. Here are some of the great works provided between August 1, 2016 and July 31, 2017.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a vital part to our economy not only in Butler County, but across the United States. In order to keep the role that agriculture plays in the economy, farms and farm businesses need to remain viable and sustainable to provide healthy, local food, maintain a diversity of open space, and continue to provide needed jobs. According to the most recent Census of Agriculture (2012) the total value of agricultural products sold in Butler County is \$52,310,000 in crop sales (80%) and \$12,730,000 in livestock sales (20%). Farm land use in Butler County is comprised of 79.7% cropland, 7.8% woodland, 7.5% pastureland, and 5% other. The Butler SWCD has the opportunity to work with the farmers and landowners and assist them implement best management practices that improve production and conserve natural resources.

The programs provided by the SWCD to assist agricultural operators in remaining sustainable and viable include the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP), and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) programs. We had a total of 22 projects:

- Waterways - 7.02 acres, 9,556 linear feet and a total of \$68,355.
- CSP - 120.9 acres and \$9,040.39.
- EQIP - 3 Nutrient management plans (\$9,670), 144.8 acres of brush management (\$28,265), 4,320 square foot high tunnel (\$18,253), 0.2 acres cover crops (\$15), 5 acres tree/shrub preparation (\$1,210), 22.3 acres of tree/shrub establishment (\$6,477), 7 structures for wildlife (\$175), and 5 acres of forest stand improvement. (\$427). For a total of \$64,492 in EQIP practices.

As federal administrations change, Butler Soil and Water Conservation District continues to provide assistance for landowners through initiative programs and technical support.

Development

To serve the County Planning and Zoning Department, local townships and municipalities, Butler SWCD provides guidance and technical assistance by way of reviewing proposed subdivision and building plans. The 92 natural resource reviews provided this year examined features related to erosion, water quality, wetlands, and other potential natural resource concerns.

Butler SWCD also works closely with the non-agricultural landowners and municipalities throughout the County. Our staff assists homeowners with drainage and erosion problems on their property; as well as offer guidance to prospective landowners to help them understand environment-related limitations. The Conservation District provided assistance at least 75 times within the last year.

Education & Outreach

A core value of the District since its inception has been to educate residents on the conservation of natural resources. Throughout the years has had many strong partnerships in education. Over the last decade, Butler SWCD partners with the Butler County Stormwater District to provide education and outreach specific to stormwater management.

An effort is made to work with diverse audiences, from farmers, to suburban homeowners through a multitude of mediums. 18 workshops were held educating over 375 residents on stormwater issues, composting, nutrient management and more. During this same period, over 8,200 children and 870 adults received free educational programs, and we attended dozens of events.

Agriculture

Along with the traditional work on EQIP and CRP contracts, Butler SWCD is providing two new programs funded by the Ohio Farm Bureau's County Water Quality Initiative Program. The Butler County Farm Bureau and Butler Soil and Water Conservation District have received \$33,123 to implement these two water quality initiatives:

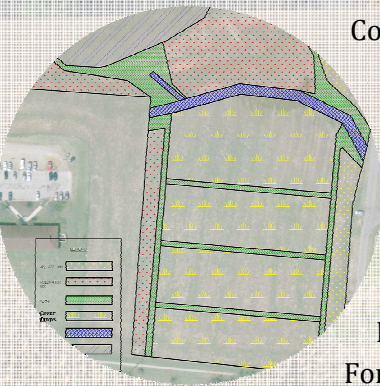
Cover Crop Program

A portion of the grant is being used to fund the Butler County Cover Crop Initiative. By participating in this program, local farmers receive assistance with cover crop seed and aerial application costs. Cost share funds up to 20% of seed cost and 100% of aerial application cost for up to 1,000 acres across Butler County. This program emphasizes early application and water quality benefits for the betterment of the agriculture community.



Agricultural Conservation and Education Demonstration Site

Butler Soil and Water Conservation District is coordinating the construction of a 9-acre Agricultural Conservation Education & Demonstration site (ACED). This will showcase best management practices (BMPs) in agricultural conservation. Practices include a grassed waterway, cover crops, pollinator buffers, and natural field buffers.



Conservation themes highlighted in the area include: water quality, soil health and erosion, and native habitat establishment. Through the ACED site, Butler SWCD will be able to host workshops and tours; as well as display educational materials to promote the use of these BMPs throughout the region's agriculture community.

Butler SWCD would like to thank the Butler County Board of Commissioners for being a vital partner and supporting this project. Other partners include: Butler County Farm Bureau, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pheasants Forever, Wild Turkey Federation, and Butler County OSU Extension. This grant

through the Ohio Farm Bureau's Water Quality Initiative Program has provided funding for improvements to water quality all across the state.



Equipment used during the terracing contest in 1948.



Equipment used constructing grassed waterways in 2016.

Development

The Regional Stormwater Collaborative - Save Local Waters

The Stormwater Collaborative is composed of stormwater districts, municipalities and soil and water conservation districts in Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky. Our purpose is to raise awareness about water quality issues in the Ohio River Valley. Together, we can keep our waterways clean and healthy by leveraging joint resources to promote a consistent message throughout the region. To accomplish this effort, the Stormwater Collaborative hosts many educational events and workshops for residents and professional development.

Sediment and Erosion Control Field Day - This event is aimed at providing technical and professional hours of experience to local agencies involved in construction and development. Best management practices and new technologies created to improve sediment control on construction sites are exhibited and demonstrated to attendees. Several other topics are covered including regulatory updates, and testimonies from industry professionals.

Rain Barrel Art Auction - The Rain Barrel Art Auction is a wonderful partnership between the Cincinnati Zoo and Save Local Waters to promote the use of rain barrels while raising funds for continuing education programs. This event provides the opportunity for local artists, art clubs, elementary classes, and special interest groups to display their artwork on functional rain barrels for the month of April at the Zoo.



Hopewell Elementary Stormwater & Riparian Enhancement Project

The Hopewell Elementary Stormwater and Riparian Enhancement project is designed to address flooding, stormwater, and habitat alteration issues on a section of the East Fork Mill Creek. The goal of this project is to filter and detain stormwater through a bio-filtration system from the campus of Hopewell Elementary School and improve habitat along the riparian corridor.



The project redirects stormwater from the school and parking lot through a vegetated bioswale drainage course to a constructed rain garden. Other features of the project include: a 2-acre wetland with native wetland species, planting native riparian plants, stabilizing eroded stream banks with coir matting and rock structures to prevent sedimentation and nutrient loading, and two acres of prairie grasses to create a buffer.

The corresponding education program for this project is a major asset to the school and the surrounding community. The project is tied to the school's science curriculum and provides a platform to continue discussions of similar improvements in other areas of the district and watershed-wide. Educational signage at the project provides a continuous educational opportunity for community members to learn about the project and its benefits.

At the 2017 Ohio Stormwater Association's conference, the project received the non-profit award. Cardno JFNew nominated the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District and the Mill Creek Watershed Council for this award.

