



# Miami

Soil & Water Conservation District

**Strategic Plan**

**2023-2027**

Midway through the decade of devastation known as the Dust Bowl years, the office of Soil Conservation Service was established by Congress on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1935 to address the loss of over 850,000,000 tons of topsoil caused by years of drought and overused farming practices.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1941, the 94<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 646, becoming the Ohio Soil Conservation District Enabling Act when it was signed by Governor John W. Bricker on June 5, 1941. This act created the Ohio Soil Conservation Committee (OSCC) as an agency of the State of Ohio. The Act also established procedures for the formation of local Soil Conservation Districts and the election of local District Boards of Supervisors in addition to defining the authorities and responsibilities of these local district boards and OSCC.

With a charter signed in December 1943, Miami County became the 16<sup>th</sup> county in Ohio to form a Soil Conservation office. The first members of the Miami SWCD Board were Emmet Brush, Bert Favorite, Dr. Harry Ronicker, William Thompson and Ernest Weaver. A few decades later, Miami SWCD board member Sam Studebaker, Sr., served as Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation District president and was the first Ohioan to serve as the National Association of Conservation District president from 1966-1970. In 2018, this office marked the 75<sup>th</sup> year the Miami Soil & Water Conservation District has worked directly with landowners in soil and water conservation assistance.

The Miami SWCD Board of Supervisors is made up of five elected officials who serve without pay. They are responsible for directing and approving programs and practices carried out by Miami SWCD staff which is assisted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a branch of USDA. In 2016, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC) was established to the Ohio Department of Agriculture through a transfer of programs from the Department of Natural Resources. The Miami SWCD is a member of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission provides administrative assistance.

*All NRCS programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.*



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**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2023 - 2027**



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# Miami County, Ohio

## IN BRIEF

**Population (2020)- 108,774**

**Size in Sq. Miles- 410**

**Total Acres- 262,230**

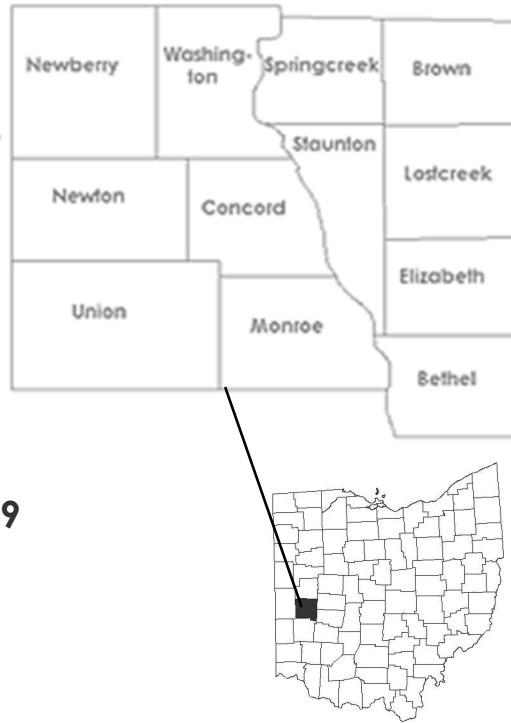
**Farms in Acres- 173,159**

**Average Acres- 167**

**Number of Producers- 1,659**

**Wetlands Acres- 2723**

**Woodland Acres- 7342**



## RESOLUTION

This Strategic Plan was adopted by the Miami SWCD Board of Supervisors on December 13, 2022.

## PUPROSE OF STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan allows the Miami Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors and staff members the ability to focus on the protection and enhancement of natural resources within Miami County over a five (5) year period

## VISION STATEMENT

To be responsible leaders in promoting innovative stewardship of natural resources through the development of Conservation partnerships to enhance the quality of life.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Miami SWCD is committed to providing quality conservation assistance to the people we serve.

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## MIAMI COUNTY STORMWATER PROGRAM

As authorized by the Miami County Board of Commissioners, the Miami SWCD is responsible for the implementation and management of the Small Municipal Storm Sewer System.

This storm water management program (SWMP) addresses six minimum control measures as required by federal and state regulations.

1. Public Education/Outreach
2. Public Participation/Involvement
3. Illicit Discharge Detection/Elimination
4. Construction Site Runoff Control
5. Post Construction Runoff Control
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

This office will encourage and assist with control measures that are expected to result in significant reductions in pollutants discharged within MS4s owned or operated by the Miami County Commissioners and those MS4s owned or operated by Bethel, Concord and Monroe Townships.

**OBJECTIVE** The overall goal of the SWMP is to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP), to protect water quality, and to satisfy requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act and Ohio EPA's Storm Water program.

## GOALS

- \* Address storm water runoff within urbanized areas (unincorporated) of Miami County.
- \* Monitor and inspect all construction within the unincorporated, but urbanized areas of Miami County
- \* Provide education for residents within the unincorporated, but urbanized areas of Miami County
- \* Complete Annual Report for entire MS4 areas and submit to the Ohio EPA Southwest District Office.

The District intends to hire an Urban Technician in 2023 who will focus on Storm Water inspections, as well as assist the District Technician with Farm Bill practices such as grassed waterways and wetlands.

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## COMMUNITY EDUCATION, OUTREACH & ASSISTANCE

The Miami SWCD provides free natural resources educational programs and materials to audiences that include conventional and home-schooled children, youth groups, agriculture operators, civic and private groups, specific professions and government agencies.

Through our own resources and through partnerships with local, state and federal organizations and agencies, we deliver information on soils formation, soil erosion, water resources, wildlife habitat, pond construction and management, resource conservation, recycling, geology, tree and ground cover planting, watersheds and wetlands.

This office has published a Cooperator Newsletter since 1952, the first begun by an SWCD in Ohio. Currently a bi-monthly Cooperator Newsletter is mailed to 1553 homes and emailed to 521 inboxes. Two educators newsletter are also created and we maintain a presence on Facebook. Also, a newly updated website offers continuous information. Programs have been created for WTTV (Tipp City) local television and we hold a monthly WPTW radio segment relaying news of this office.

Tree seedling sales, fish fingerling sales, rain barrel sales and proceeds from other product sales offset costs and materials used in education and outreach programs. From 2018-2022, approximately 5 grants have been submitted to and granted from Miami County Foundation and the Troy Foundation amounting to over \$10,000.

**OBJECTIVE** Continue to provide conservation and environmental education under the soil and water conservation function in the form of in-school programs, workshops, clinics or meetings to a wide ranging audience from pre-school students to adults.

### GOALS

- \* Continue presence in Miami County Schools with conservation and natural resources education programs and educator workshops
- \* Continue publications, workshops and tours that promote conservation cost-share programs & practices and easement purchase programs.
- \* Maintain open communication with elected officials.
- \* Public outreach through District sales (i.e. tree sale, fish sale, rain barrel sales)
- \* General assistance to walk-in and phone-in customers.
- \* Organize frequent tours and workshops promoting practices, programs and easements purchase programs.

# MIAMI SWCD

## Staff



**Brian Francis**



**Kreig Smail**  
- District Administrator



**Kristin Lewber**  
- Admin. Assistant



**Andy Shuman**



**Jennifer Korte**  
- District Technician



**Linda Raterman**  
- Education/PR



**Diane Yingst**



**Don Hiegel**



**Jeff Shoup**

### Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)



**Erika Kemper**  
- District Conservationist



**Renee Buck**  
- Pheasants Forever Senior Biologist

## PAST SUCCESSES

Even with the very unique challenge of COVID 19 throughout 2020 and beyond, Miami SWCD was again able to assist over 30,000 Miami County residents over the five year span from 2018-2022 with student and adult education, walk ins and programs and practices.

### SUCCESSFUL MIAMI SWCD/NRCS PROGRAMS (2018-2022)

- \* 1318 acres protected under permanent Ag Easements through ODA-Local Ag Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP).
- \* 204 Rural Drainage Sites reviewed.
- \* 10+ Adult & Professional Seminars & Workshops
- \* 15,012 Students, 9390 Adults visited through in-class or outreach education programs. Pandemic adaptations included creating web videos / ZOOM programs
- \* 9787 tires collected through Annual Tire Recycling Events
- \* 34,736 trees and 871 perennials sold through Annual Tree Seedling Sales
- \* 28,467 Fish sold Annual Fish Fingerling Sales
- \* 103 grassed waterways completed (46+ acres)
- \* 125+ tons (cumulative) removed through Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River
- \* 8 Canoe Clean ups & Educational Canoe Floats
- \* 20,000+ lineal feet of Windbreaks
- \* 36 residents served with Pond Management Assistance
- \* 436 acres Wildlife acres, 140+Water Quality acres
- \* 179.75 acres of Field Borders established.

## CONSERVATION COST-SHARE PROGRAM

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP)** Partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Miami SWCD can provide financial assistance for agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits, such as improved water quality and reduce soil erosion and sedimentation.

**CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)** Partnering with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Miami SWCD can provide financial and technical assistance for agricultural landowners and producers to enroll environmentally sensitive land into non-farmed grass and trees. Some practices include grassed waterways, grass filters strips or wetlands. As well, the CRP program can provide funding for landowners to enhance pollinator habitat on their land.

## AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION ABATEMENT

The Ohio Administrative Code applies to the control of pollutants from agricultural production, including land being used for the production of animals or for the production of agricultural crops. The Miami SWCD is charged with abating agricultural pollution in Miami County. The District will work with all producers to minimize the effects of animal waste and soil erosion from agricultural land.

## PARTNERSHIPS

**OBJECTIVES** Preserve and foster current partnerships with like-minded agencies in order to sustain/conserve/ improve soil and water quality in Miami County.

### GOALS

Continue working/collaborating on workshops, publications and relaying information with partners named here:

- Miami County Farm Bureau
- Miami Conservancy District
- Miami County Park District
- Miami County Health District
- Other Conservation Districts
- OSU Ext.-Miami County

- Miami County Engineers
- Miami County Sanitary Engineers
- Pheasants Forever-Miami County
- Miami County Ag Society
- NRCS/FSA
- SW District Office Ohio EPA

## CONTINUING LONG RANGE PLANS

This office will remain true to its commitment to conservation, and will continue to maintain connections with current land owners while also promoting and providing technical and informational assistance to Miami County residents. Also, opportunities to improve, update and train staff to their best abilities will be made the most of.

### RURAL & URBAN DRAINAGE

Drainage concerns are a continual issue for agricultural, residential, commercial or business and this office will remain available to offer suggestions or solutions through resources and technical assistance.

**Objectives** Derive practical and economical solutions for drainage problems with rural and urban environments.

#### **Goals**

- \*Assist the Miami County Department of Development with the review of zoning map amendments for proposed development. The District will look at existing and future drainage concerns that pertain to development.

- \*Assist with Voluntary Group Drainage Projects (ex. Tile replacement Projects for an aging clay tile main.)

- \*Assist with rural and urban drainage concerns

Community Education, Outreach & Assistance

Pond Permit Process & Development

### ODA LOCAL AG EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM (LAEPP)

Since 2016, Miami SWCD has applied for Local Sponsor status and has assisted landowners in applying for the Ohio Department of Agriculture Local Ag Easement Purchase Program, resulting in 11 fully completed easements that, as of this writing, will protect over 1300 acres .

**Objectives** Hold and enforce completed Ag Easements and upon approval, continue acting as Local Sponsorship with ODA –LAEPP.

#### **Goals**

- \* Complete applications with mapping & proper attachments
- \* Distribute funding
- \* Continue Monitoring Reports

## POND PERMIT PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

**Miami County Recreational Pond Permit:** With exceptions, a "Certificate of Zoning Compliance" must first be obtained through the Miami County Department of Development. Once the application is completed and the fee of \$50.00 is collected, the application is sent to the Miami Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). Once received, the SWCD contacts the property owner for a site visit to inspect the area for a proposed pond. The SWCD will assess such issues as location, overflow and existing field tile that may be present. The property owner will be required to conduct a tile search around the proposed site to see if any is present. This prevents future drainage problems that could arise from field tile being damaged while the pond is being constructed. After the initial site visit and the tile search have been completed, the SWCD will return the application to the Miami County Department of Development for an approved permit.

### POND DEVELOPMENT

Yearly pond clinics outlining construction, maintenance, stocking and wildlife continue to attract audiences at a yearly Tri-County Pond Clinic shared with the Darke and Shelby SWCD offices. While no programs offer monetary assistance to the potential pond builder, this office will assist with soil suitability, survey and pond design.

#### **Objectives**

Continue assistance for the recreational, natural resources or agricultural use of Miami County ponds.

#### **Goals**

- \* Publish/promote guidelines for pond installation
- \* Educate landowners on pond maintenance
- \* Educate landowners on appropriate site/soil types for ponds
- \* Hold one multi county pond clinic
- \* Inspect potential pond sites





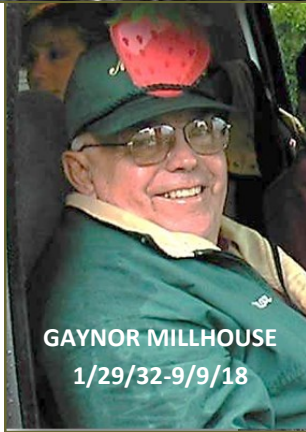
Free Stine Project



Grassed Waterway



Hickey Wetland



GAYNOR MILLHOUSE  
1/29/32-9/9/18



Clean Sweep of the Great Miami River