



**Resources for Life  
Resources for Growth**

# **Long Range Strategic Plan 2013-2018**

The Allen Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1945 by concerned landowners interested in protecting and improving the county's soil and water resources. The District is administered by a governing body of five supervisors duly elected for a three year-term by owners and occupiers of land within Allen County.

Allen Soil and Water Conservation District  
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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Allen SWCD is to promote the wise use, improvement and maintenance of the soil, water and other natural resources of Allen County.

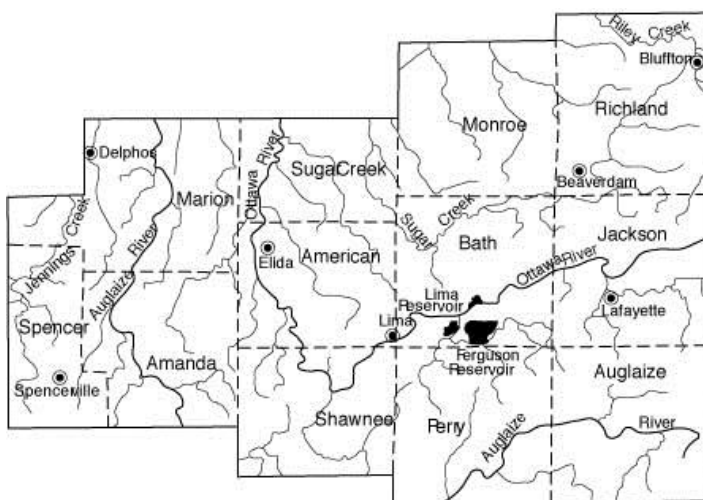
## HISTORY

Once a part of the “Great Black Swamp”, Allen County began as a major lumber and milling center. In the late 1880s, oil was struck near Lima and oil derricks dotted the landscape for a short period of time. Today, Seventy percent of Allen County’s land area is in agriculture production with annual receipts exceeding \$144 million, making agriculture an important industry in Allen County. The economy is otherwise dominated by manufacturing and health care industries.

## SETTING & LANDUSE

Allen County is located in the northwestern portion of Ohio, within the eastern confines of the Midwestern corn belt. It is in the central lowlands and straddles the till plain and lake plain areas of west central Ohio. U.S. Route 30, and State Routes 81, 117 and 309 cross the county east and west, and Interstate Highway 75 and State Routes 65, 115 and 696 run north and south. The Ottawa River and Auglaize Rivers flow through Allen County.

The county has a total land area of about 403 square miles or about 260,500 acres. The population according to 2010 census was 106,331 for the county. The county seat of Lima is located near the center of the county and is the largest town. Smaller towns include Delphos, Bluffton, Spencerville, Elida, Beaverdam, Cairo, Lafayette, and Harrod.



According to 2012 census of agriculture reports 904 farms in Allen County. Total acres of land in farms was 183,186 acres and the average farm size was 203 acres.

## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

The Allen Soil and Water Conservation District (hereinafter to be called the District) was organized in 1945 by concerned landowners interested in protecting and improving the county’s soil and water resources. The District consists of all the lands within Allen County including incorporated and unincorporated villages and cities.

As a separate unit of County and State government, the District receives funding from the Allen County Commissioners and the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The District also receives funding from Townships, Villages and Cities to serve urban Stormwater and site review programs. Modest funding comes from annual tree seedling sales and operation of the county farm each year.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has maintained a local presence and partnership with the District from the start. The federal agency largely serves farmers through technical assistance and cost-share qualification. Both agencies share resources in a manner that the average citizen see no distinction. The Allen SWCD is administered by a governing body of five supervisors duly elected for a three-year term by the owners and occupiers of land within Allen County. The Board establishes policy and it also guides the work of the District, utilizes funds for equipment and supplies, and hires personnel to carry out the work of the District.



A Soil and Water Conservation District is responsible for developing a comprehensive plan for conserving and protecting soil and water resources within the county. Developing a plan involves defining existing problems, finding appropriate solutions, and coordinating activities to solve problems. Integrating this programming into that of other county agencies has been an important approach for Allen SWCD.

## POLICY

Programs and services of the District include resource management information and technical assistance with installing and maintaining a broad range of conservation practices. Assistance is provided at no cost to individuals, organizations, units of governments, and communities.

All programs and services of the District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

## DISTRICT SERVICES

**Technical Assistance:** is provided for survey, design, engineering construction plans, and construction layout for water management systems and erosion control practices such as: grassed waterways, erosion control structures, water and sediment basins, surface drainage, animal waste storage facilities, manure management plans, ponds, secondary containment, filter strips, riparian buffers, windbreaks and wetlands. Consultative assistance is also provided for whole field subsurface drainage.

**Adult and Youth Education:** School programs, slide presentations, tours, field days, pond clinics, woodland clinics, etc... are provided to the public on an as needed and scheduled basis.

**Pond Design Deposit:** To assure the installation of planned practices, the Allen SWCD requires a deposit for engineering plans for ponds.

- \$250.00 deposit for each pond (engineering, plans, survey, design, etc.)
- \$250.00 donation to the Allen SWCD for completed pond design.

The \$500.00 will be collected from the landowner after the preliminary investigation is complete and prior to the start of any survey and design work. One year after completion of pond, \$250.00 will be refunded if pond still meets design specifications.

**Annual Tree Sales:** The district annual tree sale provides landowners quality, low-priced seedlings and transplants (hardwoods, evergreens, and shrubs) for windbreak and wildlife establishment.

**Annual Fish Sales:** Our fish sale provides local pond owners a low cost opportunity for pond stocking.

**Ongoing Rain Barrel Sales:** The rain barrel sale program aims to make a well-constructed, low-cost unit available locally that will fit in the back seat of most cars.

## 2013 and 2018 LONG RANGE OBJECTIVES

The District has identified several areas of concern for the protection and wise use of the soil, water and other resources in Allen County

These areas of concern are:

- 1) Water Quality**
- 2) Drainage/Water Management**
- 3) Urban Conservation**
- 4) Information/Education**
- 5) Agriculture Conservation**
- 6) Manure/Nutrient Management**
- 7) Natural Area/Habitat**

### WATER QUALITY

**Objective #1:** Continue to involve both rural and urban landowners in an effective partnership to improve water quality, through the installation of conservation practices and wise land use decisions.

#### **Goals and Actions:**

1. Promote the establishment filter strips/riparian buffer along streams and ditches.
  - a. Use Federal, State and Local programs to assist with implementing filter strip/riparian buffer.
  - b. Provide technical and consultative assistance to program participants.
2. Promote water quality measures in various watersheds.
  - a. Provide technical support to the Ottawa River Coalition to implement conservation practices.
  - b. Encourage landowners in respective watersheds within Allen County to participate in conservation programs when available.
  - c. Provide technical assistance to landowners on planning, installing and maintaining conservation practices.





3. Continue with the development and work on joint county projects (Auglaize River, Ottawa River).
  - a. Work with Putnam, Auglaize, Hardin and Hancock Soil & Water Conservation District on project workloads.
  - b. Provide technical assistance with logjam removal and development of projects.
4. Continue to review erosion and sediment portion of stormwater and erosion control plans.
  - a. Conduct site reviews to check for drainage patterns and wetland.
  - b. Conduct plan reviews to investigate steps taken to control erosion problems.
  - c. Complete construction reviews during and after construction.
5. Assist Allen County Commissioners, Township Trustee's from American, Bath, Perry, Shawnee Townships, City of Lima and Village of Elida with implementing Phase II stormwater.



## INFORMATION/EDUCATION

**Objective #4:** Provide information/education activities and material to adults and youth promoting conservation and the wise use of our natural resources to make the public aware of the services provided by the District.

### **Goals and Actions:**

1. Continue to increase public awareness of district activities and services.
  - a. Circulation of bi-monthly newsletter and District Annual Report.
  - b. Give conservation presentations on an as requested basis to civic groups or clubs.
  - c. Generate news releases, radio broadcasts, and TV interviews on conservation activities.
  - d. Distribute written material promoting District purpose, programs or goals.
  - e. Hold District Annual Meeting.
  - f. Promote Soil & Water Stewardship Week.
  - g. Maintain and update District web site
2. Conduct, sponsor or participate in youth conservation and teacher education activities.
  - a. Provide on an as requested basis in-class hands-on conservation presentations and field days to Allen County schools (preK— 12), youth groups, etc.
  - b. Distribute tree videos and tree seedlings to all 3rd grade students in Allen County.
  - c. Encourage high schools in Allen County to participate in NW Ohio Envirothon.
  - d. Help with and participate with teacher workshops on an as needed basis.
3. Conduct or participate in programs, meetings and tours for landowners.
  - a. Host Annual rotating Pond and Woodland Clinics with Auglaize Soil & Water Conservation District.
  - b. Host VIP tours and field days as the need arises.
  - c. Assist OSU Extension with the Annual Conservation Tillage Conference.

- d. Assist County Offices on conducting stormwater and sediment workshops for Developers and Contractors.



## DRAINAGE/WATER MANAGEMENT

**Objective #2:** To improve drainage in Allen County on agricultural and urban land.

**Goals and Actions:**

1. Promote the use of Conservation Works of Improvement (senate bill 160) as an alternative to the counties petition ditch program.
  - a. Maintain a comprehensive drainage program, working in cooperation with the Allen County Commissioners, Allen County Engineer, Township Trustees and participating landowners.
  - b. Provide technical assistance on Conservation Works of Improvement projects.
  - c. Provide technical guidance and training to contractors for the successful completion of drainage projects.
2. Encourage mutual agreement project to landowners when applicable.
  - a. Work with landowners to improve drainage through the use of the mutual agreement process.
  - b. Provide technical assistance for mutual agreement projects to assure they are designed and assessed properly.
  - c. Provide assistance to contractors for the successful completion of



- mutual agreement projects.
- d. Work with county engineer's office and landowners to assure requirements are met so completed project can be put on county maintenance.
- 3. Continue Maintenance work on the, Ottawa and Little Ottawa River Project.
  - a. Keep Putnam, Auglaize, Hardin, Hancock and Allen County Commissioners, Engineers, SWCD's, and landowners informed on progress of project.
  - b. Partner with Putnam SWCD in carrying out the maintenance on the Ottawa River, (Putnam SWCD will handle their county and Allen SWCD will handle their county).
- 4. Auglaize River Joint County Logjam Project.
  - a. Keep Auglaize, Shelby and Allen County Commissioners, Engineers, SWCD's, and landowners in formed on progress of project.
  - b. Provide technical assistance to contractor throughout completion of project.
  - c. Work with county engineer's offices and landowners to assure requirements are met so completed project can be put on maintenance.

## **AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION**

**Objective #5:** Provide agricultural materials and activities promoting conservation and the wise use of our natural resources.

### **Goals and Action:**

1. Promote and encourage installation of conservation practices.
  - a. Provide technical assistance for development of grassed waterways.
  - b. Promote the use of filter strips and riparian buffers.
  - c. Promote the use of conservation tillage (no-till, mulch till, strip till)
  - d. Promote the use of field windbreaks.
  - e. Provide technical assistance with design of animal waste systems and waste utilization plans.
  - f. Provide technical assistance to livestock producers for the development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans.





2. Promote information of cost-share programs.
  - a. Cooperate with Farm Service Agency (FSA) to promote cost-share programs such as CRP, Lake Erie CREP and Scioto CREP.
  - b. Assist Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to promote EQIP cost-share program.
  - c. Assist Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) with Conservation Security Program (CSP) when local watersheds are announced and available for producer sign-up.
  - d. Continue cooperating with ODNR Division of Soil and Water to promote cost-share through Nature Works program.
3. Provide drainage information, technical assistance and planning to landowners needing assistance.
  - a. Provide technical assistance with conservation planning.
  - b. Provide watershed information.
  - c. Provide support to the West Central Ohio Land Conservancy for Conservation Easements.

## URBAN CONSERVATION

**Objective #3:** Provide an effective urban erosion control and water quality program through education and technical assistance involving not only homeowners, but also planners, developers, contractors, and local officials.

### **Goals and Actions:**

1. Continue to review erosion and sediment portion of Allen County's Stormwater and Sediment Control regulations.
  - a. Conduct site reviews to check for drainage patterns and wetlands.
  - b. Review construction drawings to ensure that proper steps are being taken to control erosion problems.
  - c. Attend pre-construction meeting to address any problems that might occur during construction.
  - d. Conduct on site reviews during construction and after construction is completed.
2. Address new construction runoff issues.
  - a. Provide technical assistance.
  - b. Conduct developer/contractors workshop.
  - c. Provide erosion control products and information to developers, contractors and landowners.
3. Continue to encourage better working relations between Regional Planning, City of Lima, County and Township Officials.
  - a. Continue to review subdivision plats, and construction drawings with Regional Planning Commission.
  - b. Continue to promote the partnership with County Health Department.





- c. Encourage the use of the soil survey in land use planning
- 4. Explore the possibility of a county wetland bank and monitoring of wetlands.
  - a. Work with County Officials and other partners on starting a wetland bank.
  - b. Encourage planners and developers to keep wetlands in county.
  - c. Work with planners, developers, contractors and landowners to ensure that newly created wetland are constructed and functioning properly.
- 5. Natural Resources Site Review Program
  - a. Continue work with Regional Planning, Health Department and County Engineers on site review process.
  - b. Work with all townships, zoning inspectors, villages in carrying out the site review process for all new construction projects.
  - c. Work with landowners and individuals wanting to develop property to make sure area is a good construction site and proper placement of structures are met.
  - d. Continuing working with Townships and Villages on funding of this program and keep them informed how important this process is to all parties.

## **MANURE/NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

**Objective #6:** Provide technical assistance to the Allen County livestock producers.

### **Goals and Actions:**

- 1. Reduce the impact on water quality from existing and future livestock operations.
  - a. Work closely with livestock producers and provide technical assistance for design, installation, and management of manure holding structures.
  - b. Work to help secure state and federal cost-share dollars for assistance to producers.
  - c. Provide training for manure application to landowners and applicators for winter application rates as well as setbacks.
  - d. Work with producers to develop comprehensive nutrient management plans for their operation.
- 2. Develop methods to better educate the public about proper manure/nutrient management.
  - a. Publish articles in district newsletter on manure/nutrient.
  - b. Create livestock inventory for Allen County (livestock and facilities).
  - c. Provide training to livestock producers on proper application of manure.



## NATURAL AREA/HABITAT

**Objective #7:** Provide natural areas, woodland and wildlife materials and activities promoting conservation and the wise use of our natural resources.

### **Goals and Actions:**

1. Encourage Wildlife Habitat areas in Allen County.
  - a. Continue to promote the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).
  - b. Continue to promote the Lake Erie and Scioto Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs.
  - c. Provide technical assistance to landowners.
2. Encourage wetland and pond design enhancement.
  - a. Provide technical assistance to landowners.
  - b. Cooperate with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and other organizations to promote wetland areas.
3. Promote windbreaks and tree packet program.
  - a. Encourage landowners to participate in The Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program.
  - b. Continue to provide districts annual tree packet program to landowners.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the Allen Soil and Water Conservation District programs is greatly enriched by the cooperation and assistance from many agencies and organizations. These include:

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- OSU Extension
- Allen County Commissioners
- Allen County Engineer
- Lima/Allen County Regional Planning Commission
- Allen County Agricultural Society/Fairgrounds
- Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District
- ODNR Division of Forestry
- ODNR Division of Wildlife
- ODNR Division of Soil and Water
- Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- Allen County Contractors and Suppliers
- Allen County Program Volunteers
- Allen County Area Media