

**Resources for Life
Resources fo Growth**

Long Range Strategic Plan 2026-2030

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**Allen Soil and Water Conservation District
1870 Slabtown Road Lima, Ohio 45810**

MISSION STATEMENT

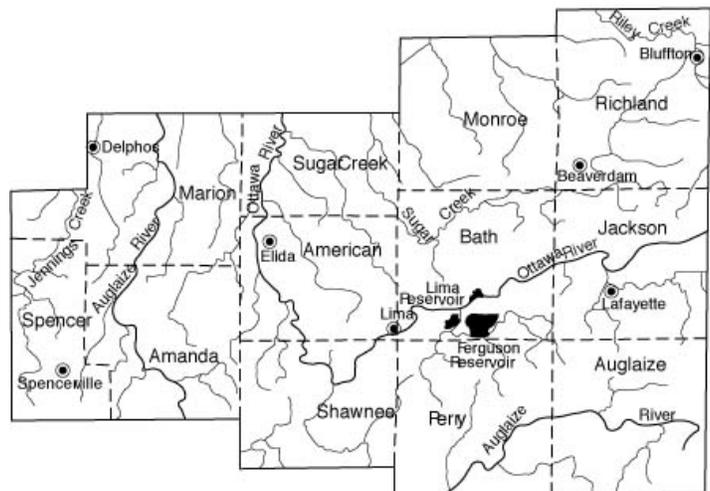
The mission of the Allen SWCD is to promote the wise use, improvement and maintenance of the soil, water and other natural resources of Allen County.

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, Agriculture and Agribusiness are the largest industries in Allen County. The economy is otherwise dominated by manufacturing and health care industries.

SETTING & LAND USE

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 2020 census was 102,206 for the county. The county seat of Lima is located near the center of the county and is the largest town. Smaller towns/villages include Delphos, Bluffton, Spencerville, Elida, Beaverdam, Cairo, Lafayette, and Harrod.

The 2022 Census Of Agriculture reports 897 farms in Allen County with 178,921 acres of farmland.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

The Allen Soil and Water Conservation District (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. The state of Ohio now requires all counties to adopt a Soil and Water Conservation District location.

As a separate unit of County and State government, the District receives taxpayer funding from the Allen County Commissioners and State match from 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 operation of county owned farm.

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 and utilizing state funding opportunities when available. Integrating this programing 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 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, logjam removal (Ottawa and Little Ottawa), Site review, erosion control structures, assist in state and federal cost share programs, water and sediment basins, surface drainage, manure management plans, ponds, filter strips, riparian buffers, 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.

- \$1,500.00 fee for each pond (engineering, plans, survey, design, etc.) to be collected before work has begun.

Semi-Annual Fish Sales: Our fish sales provide 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.

2026 and 2031 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, Allen County Engineers office, Township Trustee's and council members 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 semi-annual 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, digital/social media outlets, and TV interviews on conservation activities.
 - d. Distribute written material promoting District purpose, programs or goals.
 - e. Hold District Annual Meeting.
 - f. Promote Stormwater Stewardship Week.
 - g. Maintain and update District website
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. Partner with other SWCDs for educational opportunities.

- 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 rural and urban land.

Goals and Actions:

1. 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.
- 2. 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).
- 3. 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 covered on maintenance.

AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION

Objective #5: Promote 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 grass waterways.
 - b. Promote the use of filter strips and riparian buffers.
 - c. Promote the use of conservation tillage (no-till, mulch/vertical till, strip till)
 - d. Promote the use of field windbreaks.
 - e. 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. Assist in and promote ODA funded conservation cost share programs (H2Ohio)
- 3. Provide drainage information, technical assistance and planning to landowners needing assistance.
 - a. Provide watershed information.
 - b. Provide support to the West Central Ohio Land Conservancy for Conservation Easements.
- 4. Promote up to date information of county 9-element plans
 - a. State or Federal funded cost share funding opportunities for specific watershed HUC 10 projects.

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. 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 to promote and provide information regarding design, installation, and management of manure holding structures.
 - b. Promote and work with NRCS to secure state and federal cost-share dollars for assistance to producers.
 - c. Provide up to date regulation information 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. Available both online and through mailings.
 - 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. Promote on website.



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
- ODA Division of Soil and Water Conservation
- 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
- Ohio Division of Agriculture H2Ohio
- Allen County Conservation Club
- Allen County Farm Bureau
- Chamber of Commerce Agribusiness Committee