



CLERMONT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Clermont Soil & Water Conservation District

The Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a political subdivision of the State of Ohio, as authorized under ORC 901: 13 and 940. Clermont SWCD was established by local election of the Clermont County populace in 1943 to work with landowners to help address soil and water conservation issues.

Soil Conservation Districts got their start following the Dust Bowl era in the 1930s, when a period of drought and high winds led to vast amounts of soil being blown from bare, over-plowed farmland, blanketing much of the country with thick layers of dust. In April 1935, Congress passed and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Soil Conservation Act creating the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service). In 1941, the Ohio Soil Conservation District Enabling Act was passed, allowing the creation of local Soil Conservation Districts. Clermont SWCD was established in August 1943.

In the early years, the District focused on working with the Soil Conservation Service and farmers to control erosion, promote water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat on agricultural working lands. Over the decades, Clermont, like many other SWCDs, has become a multi-faceted agency that works with rural, suburban and urban landowners alike. The District provides technical assistance, educational programming and other resources to landowners to help them address a diverse range of local conservation issues.



“Providing Resources to Meet the Conservation Needs of Clermont County”

Board of Supervisors

The Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District is governed by a volunteer board of five supervisors who are responsible for charting the course for the District's conservation programs and providing oversight of our operations and budget. Funding comes from the Clermont County Commissioners, whose contribution is matched by the State through the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The District also receives funding from the Adams-Clermont Solid Waste Management District to conduct education programs related to recycling and litter prevention. Other funding comes through grants, sales of conservation related items and donations.



From left to right: Joe Glassmeyer (Member), Todd Winemiller (Chair), Tim Rose (Member), Dave Anspach (Secretary-Treasurer), Connie O'Connor (Vice-Chair)

2024 Supervisor Election

In the election held on September 24, Mike McGraw was elected to a first term and Todd Winemiller was reelected for a fifth term on the District's Board of Supervisors. Todd grew up working on his family farm in Batavia and has been a resident of Clermont County for over 50 years. Along with Todd's cousin and now his son, the family farms approximately 3,500 acres. Mike is the owner of Roothouse Aquaponics in Williamsburg, which sold its first harvest in early 2020 and now serves over 30 retail and restaurant customers in the Greater Cincinnati area.



Mike McGraw

Joe Glassmeyer Retires

As 2024 ended, Joe Glassmeyer retired after 39 years as a District Supervisor. Joe's social skills and demeanor, his long-standing knowledge of agriculture, and his dedication to conservation and community service have helped pave the way for numerous District successes over the years. The entire Clermont SWCD family would like to express our gratitude to Joe for his 39 years of dedicated service to the District and the field of conservation. Thank you Joe, and best wishes as you retire from the Board and continue to write your next chapter!



Clermont SWCD Staff



Front row (left to right):

Abbie Frazer, AmeriCorps Member

Becky McClatchey, Watershed Programs Manager

John McManus, Director

Amanda Best, Agricultural Specialist

Back row (left to right):

Connie Miller, Executive Assistant

Elea Cooper, Education Coordinator

Jake Hahn, Conservation Programs Manager

Jacob Lynch, Urban Technician

Recognitions

Our programs and staff received multiple statewide recognitions in 2024. At the Ohio Federation of SWCDs partnership meeting in January, we were presented with the 2023 Urban Program of the Year award, and Becky McClatchey was honored as the Ohio Outstanding Employee of the Year. In November, John McManus received a Distinguished Service Award from the Water Management Association of Ohio.

Staff Changes

Clermont SWCD was pleased to welcome Elea Cooper as our new Education and Communications Coordinator in January. Elea is originally from Des Moines, Iowa, and recently graduated from Miami University with a B.A. in Biology and Sustainability, as well as a Master of Environmental Sciences.



Agricultural Conservation

H2Ohio Program

In 2024, Governor DeWine's H2Ohio water quality initiative was rolled out in the Ohio River Basin, providing financial incentives to producers to develop and

and implement volunteer nutrient management plans through Soil and Water Districts. Clermont SWCD has contracted 8,256 acres through this initial roll out (165% of our original goal), including 2,766 acres in the East Fork Lake watershed.



Agricultural Outreach

In 2024 we revamped our agricultural outreach. Early in 2024 Clermont SWCD hosted two farmer luncheons to discuss multiple conservation related matters which allowed us to connect with 14 local producers. In September, we partnered with OSU Extension and Pheasants Forever to hold a pasture walk. The Phillips farm in Bethel hosted the speakers and 34 attendees as we discussed establishing and managing warm season grasses and walked the Farm's warm season pasture.



In addition to events, we have developed new factsheets including our "Manure Manners" guide on how to manage manure in small scale operations, and a "Rock, Gravel and Rip Rap" guide sheet to help in selecting different rock to meet producer's and landowner's conservation needs.

Pollution Abatement

Under an agreement with the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Clermont SWCD investigates complaints related to sediment or manure runoff from agricultural activities. If a violation is identified, SWCD staff work together with the landowner to identify ways to correct the problem, lending them technical assistance, advice and expertise as needed. In 2024, staff successfully investigated and resolved two complaints related to manure runoff.

Conservation Planning

In 2024, Clermont SWCD initiated a program to develop whole farm conservation plans which identify conservation practice types and locations that are ideally suited for individual farms. The first of these plans was developed for the Glassmeyer Farm in Felicity.

Watershed Management

East Fork Riparian Reserve Stream and Wetland Restoration

In May, Clermont SWCD and the Clinton County Park District, along with many watershed partners, celebrated the completion of a stream and wetland restoration project at the East Fork Riparian Reserve, nestled along the banks of the East Fork Little Miami River on the border of Clinton and Highland counties. Approximately 850 feet of stream channel was realigned and restored and six pocket wetlands were constructed in the floodplain to absorb high flows and filter pollutants. The upland area was also restored by removing invasive species and constructing an ephemeral prairie wetland. The project was funded through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources H2Ohio Program and the Ohio Public Works Clean Ohio Green Space Program.



Visit the Reserve!
864 Webertown Road, Lynchburg OH.

Lower East Fork Restoration Project

Clermont SWCD has secured over \$3.5 million in funding through Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program to restore nearly one mile of the East Fork Little Miami River in Milford. Streambank erosion along this segment of the river has accelerated in recent years, with rates of erosion estimated as 7,600 tons of sediment loss annually. In 2024, Clermont SWCD awarded the project design-build contract to Davey Resource Group. Design will be starting in early 2025 with construction anticipated late in the year.



Cloverlick Creek Dam Removal

In 2024, we partnered with Bethel Village to secure funding through three separate grants (ODNR-H2Ohio Rivers Program, Clean Ohio Green Space Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's America the Beautiful Program) to remove the low head dam on Cloverlick Creek. The dam, originally built to provide a drinking water source for the village, is no longer needed for that purpose. The dam has also degraded the habitat and biology of Cloverlick Creek, and is a public safety hazard. Project design work will begin in 2025



Storm Water Management

Clermont County and many of its townships and municipalities are required by Ohio EPA to carry out programs designed to reduce the amount of pollution in storm water runoff. Under an agreement with the Board of County Commissioners, Clermont SWCD administers most of the required programs. Key accomplishments in 2024 include:

- Approximately 3,300 inspections of erosion control measures (avg 275/month) at construction sites
- Inspected 45 potential violations of Clermont County stormwater regulations
- Inspections of 123 storm water management basins, 27 corrective action letters sent
- Investigations of 12 reports of illegal discharges to the storm sewer system
- Led a rain barrel workshop attended by 44 people
- Hosted stormwater pollution prevention training for Clermont municipalities and townships
- Upkeep of Clermont County storm sewer maps

Drainage and Erosion Assistance

Technical assistance to property owners dealing with drainage or erosion problems is our most requested service. In 2024, SWCD staff conducted 71 site visits providing guidance to property owners on a range of issues such as flooding/standing water/poor drainage on property, storm sewer infrastructure problems, ditch and streambank erosion, and pond repair/construction/management

Public Events & Education

In April, we partnered with several organizations to host the annual Spring Litter Cleanup, during which 120 volunteers collected 150 bags of trash.

Also in April, Clermont SWCD, in partnership with the Regional Storm Water Collaborative and the Cincinnati Zoo, held the 12th annual Rain Barrel Art Event, during which 40 rain barrels painted by local artists were auctioned off to raise money for area conservation.



Education and Community Outreach

Fostering Sustainable Behavior Seminar

In July, we were excited to partner with Save Local Waters to present renowned environmental psychologist Dr. Doug McKenzie-Mohr for an intensive 3-day seminar focusing on community-based social marketing - a unique approach to fostering environmental behavioral changes that is utilized globally. This approach has led to positive behavior change for water quality, air quality, recycling and a host of other environmental & health-based initiatives. The seminar, funded in part by an Ohio Environmental Education Fund grant, was attended by over 70 environmental professionals across greater Cincinnati.



Pond Management Clinic

In April, we hosted our annual pond management clinic. A total of 20 people attended and learned about problems that arise as ponds age, pond design, fish stocking, pond weed control, vegetative buffers and more.



Landowner Conservation Series

Throughout 2024, we partnered with the Clermont County Park District and OSU Extension to host the monthly Landowner Conservation Series. Presentation topics included dealing with heavy rains, sustainable yard care, composting, and much more. These monthly sessions will continue in 2025.



Education and Community Outreach

School and Community Programs

We made some exciting changes to our school programs in 2024. We introduced 5 new “loaner trunks” for K-6 programs. Each trunk is filled with hands-on activities, detailed lesson plans, and engaging materials on specific topics. Also, our programs are now putting more focus on field experiences. New field trip programs were created include stream sampling, macroinvertebrate identification, soil testing, and more.

90 school programs to 2000 K-12 students

6 adult programs to 170 participants

5 educational trunks created

4 new field trips created



Litter Prevention & Recycling

Clermont SWCD continued to assist the Adams-Clermont Solid Waste District with its litter prevention and recycling education programs.

Our accomplishments in 2024 include:

- Conducting end-of-school year recycling events at 7 schools, during which over 1,000 lbs. of school supplies were collected and donated to multiple groups.
- Establishing new recycling programs at 2 schools
- Applied for an Ohio EPA waste reduction grant to help Marr-Cook Elementary School implement food sharing, composting, and waste reduction programs in the 2025 school year



Education and Community Outreach

Bethel Tree Giveaway

In May, Clermont SWCD was honored to partner with the OKI Regional Council of Governments and Taking Root to distribute 275 free trees to landowners in the Bethel area. The distribution was made possible by an Urban Forestry grant provided by ODNR Division of Forestry. Bethel and Tate Township have experienced a tremendous amount of tree loss due to the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB), and our goal with this project was to begin to help the community re-establish the tree canopy. We will conduct two additional giveaways in 2025.

Conservation Tours

Clermont SWCD staff gave a tour of our recent restoration projects to the Greater Cincinnati Regional Watershed Network in July. The tour included stops at the East Fork Riparian Reserve stream and floodplain restoration project, our combination WASCOB basin and submerged vegetated bed installed at Cornwell Farms, the Williamsburg Off-Channel Nutrient Removal Wetland, and the Shor Park Stream and Wetland Restoration project, constructed in 2022.

Conservation Plant Sale

Each spring, Clermont SWCD holds a plant sale for Clermont County residents. Customers can purchase low cost plants to enhance their home landscaping, develop small areas of reforestation, and provide plants for native and pollinator gardens. In 2024, 4,050 plants, along with 13 rain barrels and 33 compost bins were sold to more than 175 people.



AmeriCorps is a federal agency that brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. Clermont SWCD has partnered with Hamilton County Conservation District to host a full time Watershed Technician AmeriCorps Member through a new environmental AmeriCorps Cohort known as the Ohio River Basin Corps (ORBCoprs). Abbie Frazer has filled the role by assisting with the monitoring sampling program in the East Fork Little Miami River watershed including but not limited to the Williamsburg Wetland project. She has also assisted in the creation of a loaner trunk for our educational programs, drafting a Nine-Element Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategy Plan for Cloverlick Creek, completed 100 post construction storm water basin inspections, and serves in community events for both Hamilton and Clermont counties while building professional development skills.



AmeriCorps



Financial Report

DISTRICT ACCOUNT

BALANCE ON HAND JANUARY 1, 2024	\$87,649	
INCOME	\$11,308	Resale Income
	\$79	Other - Registrations, Compensation
	\$1,225	Interest Income
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>-\$3,162</u>	
BALANCE ON HAND DECEMBER 31, 2024	\$97,099	

SPECIAL ACCOUNT

BALANCE ON HAND JANUARY 1, 2024	\$333,165	
INCOME	\$321,940	County Funding
	\$269,431	State Match
	\$19,650	Solid Waste
	\$54,715	Individual Grants
	\$33,151	Other
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>-\$771,218</u>	
BALANCE ON HAND DECEMBER 31, 2024	\$260,834	



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