

ODNR Division of Soil and Water Conservation

Strategic Plan – Themes and Initiatives

Strategic Theme #I. Building SWCD and DSWC Capacity

Professional Development

1. SWCD Board of Supervisor members

- a. Improve new supervisor training by conducting regional workshops before the OFSWCD annual meeting hosted by local directors to welcome and train new board members regarding their roles and responsibilities.
- b. Initiate an E-newsletter targeted at new board members reinforcing board member duties and responsibilities.
- c. Conduct area and statewide workshops to grow capacity and leadership skills. Provide training in:
 - Board governance and policy setting
 - Running effective meetings
 - Giving effective presentation
 - Making effective legislative contacts
 - Developing local networks and collaborations
 - Ethics in office
 - Fiscal accountability
 - New board member recruitment
 - Developing an associate board member program
 - Fostering successful watershed projects

2. SWCD District Administrators (DA)

- a. Assist SWCDs to create DA positions where one currently does not exist.
- b. Conduct “Conservation Leadership for District Administrator” workshops for new and remaining district administrators not yet trained.
- c. Develop Level II Conservation Leadership training.
- d. Conduct specific human resources training for all 88 SWCDs:
 - Hiring and dismissal
 - ADA, EEO, FMLA
 - Coaching and performance evaluations
 - Employee drug and background checks
- e. Provide professional development opportunities to encourage networking and partnership building.
- f. Facilitate "governance vs. management seminars" with DA's and board members.
- g. Continue to promote and facilitate the mentoring program for District Administrators.
- h. Conduct workshops on effective presentations.
- i. Conduct workshops on running effective meetings and using facilitation skills.
- j. Conduct workshops for DA's on how to use the SWCD Outreach Handbook.

3. SWCD Technicians & Other Technical Specialists

- a. Implement the Technician Development Program (TDP). Conduct six workshops for Level 1, seven workshops for Level 2 and eleven for Levels 3,4, and 5 over the next five years.
- b. Create and maintain a TDP link to the ODNR-DSWC website that posts

- relevant information such as training dates, registration forms and TDP general overview.
- c. In conjunction with OFSWCD and USDA-NRCS, coordinate a system for recognizing TDP participants that achieve certification status.
- d. Explore linking certification through the TDP with the Ohio Conservation Partnership Engineering Job Approval and/or annual technician performance reviews.
- e. Conduct workshops on how to use the SWCD Outreach Handbook.
- f. Conduct effective presentations workshop for all technicians.
- g. Train technicians on use of Pollution Complaint Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Pollution Abatement Handbook.
- h. Conduct customer relations training.
- i. Provide shadowing program for technicians taking OSU's online soil science course.

4. SWCD Administrative Assistants and Secretaries

- a. Develop and deliver an Administrative Assistants training program.
- b. Conduct workshops on the use of SWCD Administrative Handbook and SWCD Outreach Handbook.
- c. Coordinate on-line training of office computer and business operation products.
- d. Conduct customer relations workshops.

5. Urban Specialists

- a. Conduct effective presentations workshops for all technicians.
- b. Continue to promote and facilitate the mentoring program for urban technicians.
- c. Train technicians in use of the SWCD Outreach Handbook.
- d. Conduct two regional workshops to roll out and train district, county, and township officials and developers on the newly revised Rainwater and Land Development Handbook.
- e. Conduct customer relations training.

6. Education Specialists

- a. Plan and conduct an annual Conservation Education workshop.
- b. Pilot offering professional development courses online.
- c. Utilize mentoring program for all new hires.
- d. Conduct customer relations workshops.
- e. Provide workshops for new specialists on use of the SWCD Outreach Handbook.
- f. Conduct workshops on Ohio's new academic content standards.
- g. Keep Education Specialists current on issues related to education through email, Conservation E-Link, and workshops.

7. Watershed Coordinators

- a. Provide professional development on building coalitions and community watershed groups.
- b. Provide professional development on watershed planning and Appendix 8 of Ohio's Guide to Watershed Planning.
- c. Facilitate customer relations workshops for all watershed coordinators.
- d. Conduct workshops on use of the SWCD Outreach Handbook.

8. Wildlife Specialists

- a. Increase Division coordination and support for wildlife specialists program.
- b. Offer online professional development.

- c. Utilize mentoring program for all new hires.
- d. Conduct customer relations workshops.
- e. Provide workshops for new hires on use of the SWCD Outreach Handbook.

Technology

1. Provide efficient centralized warehouse of web-based information for SWCD and DSWC data, programs, and applications.
 - a. Outsource development of a web-based, GIS-enabled Soil and Water Information Management System (SWIMS).
 - b. Pilot SWIMS in 5 SWCDs in the Lake Erie coastal region.
 - c. Implement the SWIMS project statewide by 2005.
2. Centralize area DSWC field staff to better support and utilize technology funding and resources.
 - a. Determine current staff and office conditions and needs.
 - b. Survey potential locations for centralized area office/negotiate with partners.
3. Develop a Division plan for technology replacements, upgrades, and training and development.
 - a. Inventory existing technology and evaluate needs to determine costs.
 - b. Develop an update/replacement schedule.
4. Utilize new communication technology: net meetings, web cast, satellite links for meetings and training to reduce travel costs.
 - a. Benchmark other organizations' use of technology.
 - b. Develop capacity of division and partners.

Program Development

1. Evaluate the institutionalization of the University of Wisconsin Extension Logic Model to identify, plan, and assess DSWC and SWCD programs.
2. Conduct an inventory of all existing programs/services.
 - a. Utilize recent program self-assessment as a base.
 - b. Use inventory to prioritize and market programs.
3. Develop and implement a process for analyzing and prioritizing programs based on the inventory.
4. Develop an appropriate format for sharing information and formalizing program trends and opportunities throughout the Division on a continual basis.
 - Utilize weekly Section Administrator staff meetings to identify new opportunities to accomplish DSWC mission.
5. Train DSWC and SWCD employees in regards to delivery of (1-4) above.
6. Facilitate SWCD access to the diverse resources within ODNR to allow SWCDs to serve as the gateway to ODNR in each county.

Communication, Education and Marketing

1. Design a new division logo and develop an overall "family" look for division products (e.g., website, print material)
2. Redesign the division website to meet a broader range of partner and public needs
 - a. Form a task force to evaluate current site
 - b. Develop guidelines for what type of information should be included on the site
 - c. Revise the site
 - d. Track number of times the site is accessed
3. Use a variety of communication tools for delivering the "conservation" message to various audiences:
 - a. Annual partnership report
 - b. New brochure on division products and services for the general public

- c. General topic press releases/newsletter articles for SWCDs to use locally
 - d. Press releases on division and SWCD activities (e.g., Envirothon winners, election of new supervisors)
 - e. News and Views
 - f. Conservation E-Link
 - g. Weekly report
 - h. Chief's View Points
 - i. Media coverage of special events as warranted
 - j. PowerPoint presentations (e.g., Legislator's breakfast, Farm Family Awards)
 - k. Displays (e.g., Ohio State Fair, Farm Science Review, Gwynne Conservation Area, Malabar Farm)
 - l. Legislative program, and news updates to SWCDs
4. Contract or otherwise obtain services of an information writer to produce as appropriate some of the products identified above in "3" on at least a bimonthly basis (e.g., general topic newsletter articles)
 5. Identify internal processes and procedures for sections to use in assisting with the production of products identified above in "3"
 - a. Form task force
 - b. Develop and implement processes and procedures
 6. Produce communication tools (e.g., fact sheets, brochures) for division programs
 7. Explore processes and procedures for more effectively developing and delivering communication products and services in collaboration with SWCDs, NRCS and other "internal" partners as appropriate.
 8. Provide Nonpoint Source Pollution Education Mini-grants to assist SWCDs in developing and implementing programs that address watershed awareness and watershed action (WAWA grants).
 9. Build partnerships with other ODNR divisions and key collaborators to facilitate delivering their soil and water related programs and services through SWCDs

Diversity

1. Board Diversity Recruitment – recruiting representation that mirrors the community.
 - a. Develop an evaluation tool for districts to use in the development of board diversity goals/plans.
 - b. Work with the OFSWCD to sponsor area or local forums to attract and recruit potential board members that help achieve their identified diversity goals.
 - c. Update the board member recruitment brochure to encourage more diversity in board members, programs, and partners.
2. ODNR-DSWC/SWCD Program Diversity – provide incentives to encourage development and implementation of innovative programming to reach new or underserved segments of community.
 - Seek and provide new funds for the next five years to fund local "outside the box" initiatives.
3. Partnership Diversity – Proactively form new program partnerships to diversify our capacity to meet resource goals and thereby more effectively utilizing human and financial resources.
 - Seek and develop partnerships with five new partners (e.g., corporations, academic institutions, public and private organizations, etc).

Strategic Theme #II: Land Resource Management

Watershed Management

- a. Provide training on building partnerships, fundraising, education and outreach, organizational development and other skills that allow watershed

- projects to develop and implement fully functional plans.
- b. Partner with other agencies and organizations to provide watershed project functional reviews that assist with project evaluation.
 - c. Partner with OSUE to continually improve the Ohio Watershed Academy.
 - d. Train 12 SWCD or watershed organization staff members per year on use of digital soils information and related GIS models in conservation and watershed planning.
 - e. Assist with completion and endorsement of 12 local watershed plans each year.
 - f. Assist with the development of seven Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plans each year.

Soil Resource Information

- a. Contract with remaining three SWCDs for digitization of soil survey.
- b. Complete 14 digitizing projects per year.
- c. Provide annual orientation to new SWCD Board members and staff of importance of utilizing soils information as a basis for all land use decisions.
- d. Develop online access to statewide digital soils information.

Land Use Management

- a. Facilitate partnerships between Ohio Department of Agriculture and SWCDs for farmland preservation programs based on resource protection (e.g., soils, prime farmland, high urban pressure).
- b. Train 50 sanitarians per year on identifying soil characteristics that affect household sewage system performance at SWCD-sponsored workshops.
- c. Develop program to equip SWCDs with ways to offer accurate on-site soil evaluations to meet needs of local health departments and other “customers.”
- d. Partner with ODNR-Mineral Resource Management in 37 southeast Ohio counties to work with local officials and landowners to provide county specific information on mine subsidence issues and risks.

Core 4

- a. Assist with and promote the “Ohio Agricultural Environmental Assurance Self Assessment” program.
- b. Develop Master Conservation Farmer certification program in partnership with the Ohio Agricultural Environmental Assurance Alliance to encourage producers to operate their farm according to a prescribed conservation plan and to market their conservation ethic to the public.
- c. Develop inherent soil quality index for 39 benchmark soil series to integrate soil survey information with soil quality properties affected by applying Core 4 management practices.
- d. Test the Soil Conditioning Index as a tool to measure impacts of management practices on soil quality, particularly in areas with soil series that have low inherent soil quality.

Forest Stewardship

- a. Partner with ODNR Division of Forestry to provide grants to southeast Ohio SWCDs for Forestry Technicians.
- b. Utilize 2002 USDA Farm Bill programs to implement the “Cows, Trees and Floods” initiative in southeastern Ohio.
- c. Partner with the ODNR Division of Forestry and the SWCDs to promote and implement the Forest Land Enhancement Program.

- d. Partner with the Ohio Forestry Association, Division of Forestry and SWCDs to conduct BMP training workshops for logger certification.
- e. Partner with ODNR-DOF to increase use of soils information in erosion control practices through SWCDs.

Strategic Theme #III: Water Resource Protection

Stream Protection and Restoration

- a. Encourage local landowners and communities to adopt natural stream design principles that improve the resource integrity of Ohio's streams.
- b. Encourage SWCDs and local communities to develop plans and regulations that minimize encroachment of development into floodplains.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- a. Seek additional state support of the Lake Erie CREP to fully match federal funding.
- b. Work with partners to provide financial and technical support for implementation of Scioto River CREP.

Livestock Operations

- a. Strengthen the Division's standard operation procedures for pollution complaints and provide training and coaching to SWCDs to carry them out.
- b. Encourage SWCDs to identify and assist farms with known pollution violations.
- c. Increase the number of SWCD technicians certified to develop Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans to meet increased workload demands.
- d. Develop and provide SWCDs support materials, which they can utilize with local agencies and groups to strengthen pollution complaint response and resolution at the local level.
- e. Pursue funding for a special, statewide livestock exclusion cost share program.
- f. Update the existing Pollution Abatement MOU between the DSWC and the 88 SWCDs.
- g. Assist the Ohio Livestock Coalition with promotion of the On-Farm Assessment and Environmental Review program to the SWCDs.
- h. Assist the Ohio Livestock Coalition with the continued promotion of all the Livestock Environmental Assurance Program (LEAP) and assist SWCDs with local LEAP training workshops.
- i. Assist with development and implementation of a statewide environmental assurance program for equine owners.
- j. Develop and provide a "Pollution Abatement Handbook" to the SWCDs.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Control

- a. Assist Ohio EPA and other state agencies with coordination of periodic updates to the Ohio Nonpoint Source Management Plan and Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program Plan, Ohio Water Resources Council Strategic Plan, and Lake Erie Restoration and Protection Plan.
- b. Prioritize, where possible, state cost-share funds on projects with the highest potential for improving streams to attainment status.
- c. Enhance implementation of endorsed watershed plans by prioritizing expenditure of state and federal incentive dollars in watersheds with endorsed

- plans.
- d. Support local implementation of Total Maximum Daily Loads and Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment (AMDAT) plans.
- e. Participate in review and selection of annual Section 319 Program grants.
- f. Foster the involvement of SWCDs and watershed organizations in major water resource planning/coordination efforts as described above.

Strategic Theme #IV: Urban Conservation and Growth Management

Urban Erosion Control and Storm Water Management

- a. Support development and implementation of local Erosion and Sediment Control programs.
- b. Update model ordinances for water resources protection and management.
- c. Revise the Rainwater and Land Development Handbook.
- d. Provide two additional DSWC urban specialists to assist with urban SWCD programs.

Stream Morphology

- a. Improve storm water detention criteria and application.
- b. Assist SWCDs in implementing NPDES Storm Water Phase II.
- c. Update design standards and conduct workshops on hydromodification and structural encroachments.
- d. Reduce the encroachment of floodplains by development through promotion of setbacks, easements and model ordinances.
- e. Explore and initiate restoration opportunities during land development.
- f. Seek opportunities through SWCDs and other agencies to allow and/or facilitate channel recovery.
- g. Increase stream mitigation and restoration through development of ODNR stream mitigation banking program.

Land Use Planning

- a. Support development and implementation of watershed balanced growth plans which identify priority conservation areas (as defined in the Lake Erie Commission's balanced growth initiative).
- b. Support detailed local assessments of soil, water and stream resources to help determine management goals.
- c. Develop additional tools and information for low impact/environmentally sound developments.
- d. Encourage adoption/modification of local land use ordinances to facilitate low impact development.