

2026 ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK-MERCER SWCD

Mission: To protect and improve the soil, water resources and natural habitats in Mercer County; and, to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations.

Vision: To be the primary source of information and technical assistance related to soil and water conservation in Mercer County, Ohio.

Item 1: Water Management and wildlife

Goal: Provide technical assistance concerning flooding and water management while improving wildlife habitat.

Action	Timeframe	Staff Involved	Measurable Goal
1. Help cooperators develop water detention/retention plans.	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Develop 2 plans to alleviate flooding problems.
2. Assist with flood mitigation	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Assist 5 individuals with options.
3. Drainage Water Management Structures	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Install 6 structures.
4. Wetlands	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Assists in the implementation of 2 wetland projects.
5. Two-Stage Ditch	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Assist 1 group with a plan.

Item 2: Nutrient Management

Goal: Provide technical assistance concerning the management of nutrients from agriculture facilities.

Action	Timeframe	Staff Involved	Measurable Goal
1. Provide technical assistance for installation of animal waste management systems.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Assist with the installation of 2 animal waste structures.
2. Assist local units of government and cooperators in dealing with manure complaints and allegations of improper manure application.	Ongoing	District Technicians, and Watershed Technicians	Investigate all reported complaints, enter the information into Beehive and review at board meetings.
3. Develop CNMP's or NMP's that guide and evaluate producer's goals and identify BMP's for all cooperators.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Develop and/or update 30-40 plans.
4. Assist with implementation of the distressed watershed rules.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Monitor all 120 producers in the GLSM watershed to ensure they are following the rules.

Item 3: Water Quality and Erosion

Goal: Reduce soil erosion and sediment pollution and reduce nutrient loading into streams.

Action	Timeframe	Staff Involved	Measurable Goal
1. Oversee the construction of grass waterways.	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Design and install 5 grass waterways.
2. Oversee the construction of wetlands.	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Design and install 2 wetlands.
3. Conduct tillage transects.	Spring & Winter	SWCD Staff	Complete winter & spring tillage transects for all of Mercer County.
4. Two-Stage Ditch	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Design and install 1 two-stage ditch.
5. Cascading Waterways/Wascobs	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Develop 1 plans.
6. Cover Crops	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Provide information to 3 landowners as requested.
7. P-Reduction Structures	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Install 3-4 P-Reduction Structures.

Item 4: Drainage**Goal:** Provide technical assistance to cooperators and contractors to improve drainage on properties.

Action	Timeframe	Staff Involved	Measurable Goal
1. Assist both voluntary and Petition groups on drainage projects.	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Complete 2 group tile projects per year.
2. Provide technical assistance to individuals and the Engineer's office on drainage issues.	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Provide guidance on 5 projects as requested.
3. Develop watershed maps.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Develop 50 maps as requested
4. Two-Stage Ditch	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Complete installation of 1 two-stage ditch project per year.
5. Drainage Water Management Structures	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Install 6 Structures.

Item 5: Outreach and Education

Goal: Provide education and information to students, the general public and partnering agencies to promote the conservation of our natural resources.

Action	Timeframe	Staff Involved	Measurable Goal
1. Organize AG Education Series on a variety of topics throughout the year.	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Hold 3-4 AG Education Series events. Work with a committee to develop a list of speakers and topics.
2. Participate in LRC Meetings.	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Attend 4 LRC events and meetings.
3. Provide reports for monthly LIA Meetings.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Attend 4 LIA meetings per year and provide an office update.
4. Participate in WCSM's Spectrum program.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Be a guest on the program 4 times during the year.
5. Assist landowners with maintenance of woodlots and contact with the area forester.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Provide information to 3 landowners if requested.
6. Provide technical support and information for individuals building homes and/or businesses in rural areas.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Provide information to 6 homeowners if requested.
7. Promote the District through social and traditional media outlets.	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Make 25 posts to the District Facebook page and submit 5 press releases/WCSM Memo.
8. Provide Mercer County residents an opportunity to purchase tree seedlings and fish through our annual sales.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Submit press releases/WCSM Memo and post to Facebook. Send information to all county employees and tree email list. Mail to those requested.
9. Develop an educational display for the Mercer County Fair.	Summer/Fall	SWCD Staff	Staff booth 5 hours per day during the fair.
10. Organize and host Annual Meeting Event.	Fall	SWCD Staff	Host 50 guests at the 2026 celebration of conservation and agriculture.
11. Present information and lessons on agriculture and conservation to school aged children as requested.	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Give a minimum of 12 presentations throughout the year.
12. Provide assistance to local schools that participate in the Envirothon.	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Encourage 2 area school teams to attend the area IV event.

13. Assist in Area 4 Envirothon Event	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Send staff to Area 4 Envirothon Event to help with scoring, guiding, etc.
14. Sponsor poster contest to coincide with Stewardship Week.	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Have the winners of the poster contest on a billboard sponsored by Mercer SWCD and sponsored Affiliate Members.
15. Provide education and tree seedlings to all 3 rd graders through the T.R.E.E. program.	Spring	SWCD Staff	Visit all 7 elementary schools in the county, give lessons, booklet and seedling to the 3 rd graders.
16. Offer two college scholarships to Mercer County students.	Winter/Spring	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Send scholarship information to 6 county schools, WSU-Lake Campus and media.
17. Provide education programs at county 4-H Cloverbud Camp.	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist	Present 1 lesson to all campers at Mercer County 4-H Cloverbud Day Camp.
18. Host county soils judging contest.	Fall	SWCD Staff	Offer event to all 6 Ag teachers and their students.
19. Promote the installation of filter strips and cover crops.	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Send 2 press release/WCSM Memo and post to Facebook information on the impact of filter strips and cover crops.
20. Promotion of the EQIP Program	Ongoing	SWCD Staff	Provide 6 posts on Facebook/Displays about practices involved in the EQIP Program.
21. Work with the Area Pheasants Forever Biologist	Ongoing	District Technicians, Watershed Technicians and District Engineer	Work alongside the Pheasants Forever Biologist to recommend the installation of Conservation Practices.
22. Expand outreach of the H2Ohio Program	Ongoing	District Administrator - Education Specialist, District Technicians & H2Ohio Technician	Send 1 press release/WCSM Memo and provide information on the district Facebook page.
23. Host Milkweed Collection	Fall	District Administrator - Education Specialist, Watershed Technician, H2Ohio Technician	Send 1 press release/WCSM Memo and provide information on the district Facebook page.

District Administrator-Education Specialist: Ariel Hein

Nutrient Management Technician: Adam Highley

District Technician: Matt Heckler & James Couch

District Engineer: Theresa Dirksen

H2Ohio Technician: Abby Borgerding

Watershed Technician: Kyle Fullenkamp

