



Clark Soil & Water Conservation District
LONG RANGE PLAN
2021-2026



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CLARK SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS & STAFF

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

If you are using a digital PDF, you may click the headings below to jump to a section.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

COUNTY INFORMATION

CLARK COUNTY HISTORY

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SURVEY

PLAN DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- *Water Quality*
- *Soil Erosion & Health*
- *Wise Land Use*
- *Land Preservation, Enhancement & Development*
- *Education & Outreach*

Our Mission is to protect, enhance, and promote the wise use of the natural resources in Clark County through technical, educational, and financial assistance.

Our Vision is to continue providing voluntary technical assistance in natural resources conservation for clean water and healthy soils for future generations of Clark County residents.

District Organization

On May 16, 1941, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation to set up the Ohio Soil Conservation Committee. Clark County residents voted to approve the organization of the Clark SWCD with an overwhelming 85% vote. Exactly one year from the vote, on April 24, 1942, Clark SWCD became the 2nd SWCD in Ohio.



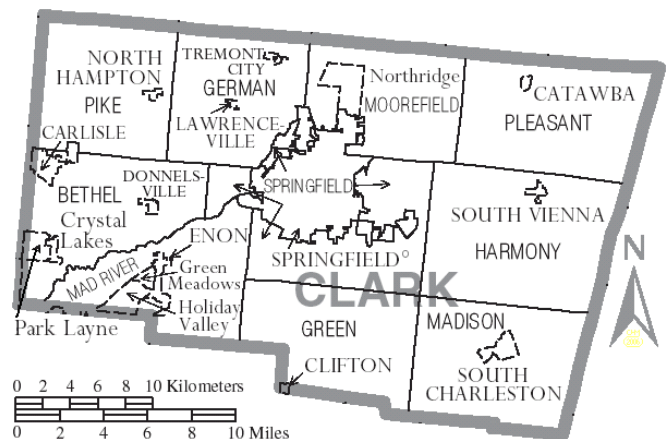
Residents of Clark County are credited as pioneers of Ohio's conservation movement under the leadership of Allen Craig and Robert Grieser. The Clark District's overall goal and mission is to keep the original intent of the soil and water movement alive. Offering technical assistance, working with landowners, and putting conservation projects on the ground have been the main focus of the Clark District for 75 years.

Clark County has a diverse landscape with a variety of land use that all pose different pressures on our natural resources. A ten-minute car ride across the watersheds of Clark County can take you from large municipalities to agricultural communities. With this, the Clark SWCD has to be technically diversified to address these issues and be involved with local agencies and programs that mesh with our mission.

In addition to our traditional work, Clark SWCD has become involved with locally mandated programs like Ohio EPA Phase II Storm water regulations, Current Agricultural Use Value program (CAUV), and pond zoning regulations and construction. Through the Ohio Conservation Partnership with ODA and USDA-NRCS, several thousand Federal dollars have been brought to Clark County for conservation practices that improve soil and water resources. Through these partnerships and programs, Clark SWCD is able to bring \$3 back to Clark County for every \$1 allocated at the local level.

County Information

Clark County is in the west-central part of Ohio with an area of 401 square miles or 256,833 acres. Of that total acreage, approximately 69% of the land produces an agricultural product. The main use of the land for agriculture is row crops, which consist of corn, soybeans, and wheat. Clark County is home to 134,528 people with 59,282 living in the City of Springfield which holds the county seat.



The average rainfall for Clark County is around 40" per year. In Clark County, there are woodlands, grassland/pasture, parks/recreation, and urbanized areas. The Mad River Watershed, The Little Miami River Watershed, and the Paint Creek Watershed are the three main watersheds Clark County is apart of.

Clark County History

Clark County has a long history with Native Americans and early European settlers. Prior to European settlement, the Miami and Shawnee Natives were the most recent inhabitants of the watershed. Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, and Mingo tribes also inhabited the area. The Mad River Valley was a favorite hunting ground and medical retreat because of its lush herb gardens and mineral springs.

Local folklore holds that the name “Mad” was given to the river because of its erratic path through the valley. A report on Champaign County published by the Ohio Geological Survey in 1878 states, “the multitude of small, crooked streams shows the swampy nature of the country.” This is especially true on the west side of the Mad River. The report also mentions the influence of abundant groundwater on the flow of the river.

The groundwater’s influence on Mad River is unique in this part of Ohio. As a cold water stream that only rarely exceeds 70° Fahrenheit in the summer, the Mad River is the largest cold water stream in the state of Ohio.

Early French and English hunters trappers, explorers, and soldiers told stories of the great natural wealth and beauty of the area. The Mad River’s endless fresh clear water fed by numerous springs, the rich fertile lands in the valleys, and the plentiful forests in the varied countryside attracted a continuous stream of settlers to the area.

Early settlements were primitive, but after the Treaty of Greenville was signed in 1795, the population boomed. Cribb’s Station, the first major settlement, was established at the forks of the Mad River in the spring of 1796.

In 1803, Ohio became a state and the City of Springfield was laid out in 1803. On March 1, 1818, an act of the Ohio Legislature created Clark County from parts of Champaign, Greene, and Madison Counties. Clark County was named in honor of General George Rogers Clark who served in the Revolutionary War. With the creation of the county, the area progressed rapidly. The first county census, taken in 1820, showed a population of 610. Springfield is the county seat of Clark County, the city was founded in 1801, incorporated as a village in 1827, and as a city in 1850.

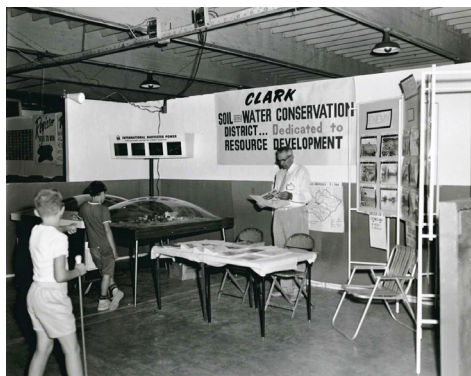
In the early years of pioneer settlement, marshes and bogs were scattered throughout the watershed. This included savannah areas that were wet in the early part of the year but was subject to summer droughts. These areas acted as natural filters that ensured high water quality.

One striking feature of the Mad River is the lack of sinuosity in Champaign and Clark Counties upstream of the Buck Creek confluence in Springfield. This is the result of the channelization of the river around 1915 to reduce flooding and provide for agricultural drainage. The river has not recovered appreciably from this modification because of the high levels that were created during channelization.

Modification of the Mad River created a straight artificial ditch without pools or riffles. The river has been less modified Downstream of the confluence with Buck Creek than in the upper reaches but has been impacted by channelization and sand and gravel mining in the past.



75th Anniversary of SWCD



1966 Clark Co. Fair Booth



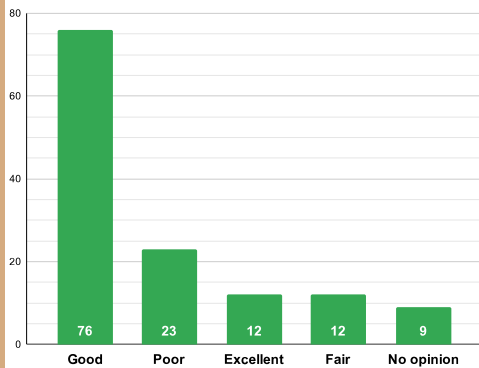
1976 Hay Show Winner

Community Feedback Survey

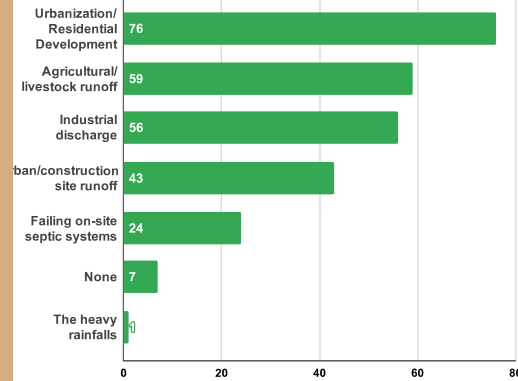
One of the conservation district's goals was to obtain feedback and generate a consensus of how people in Clark County feel about certain soil and water topics or issues. Due to the ongoing pandemic, it was important to find a digital way to collect this feedback and maximize responses. Clark SWCD will use the results of this survey to improve future efforts in the Clark County community.

By utilizing email marketing, a google form survey was sent with nine curated questions. The survey audience was primarily comprised of our monthly email recipients. The survey was sent three times and was sent to 464 people, 132 responded. Each person could only respond one time.

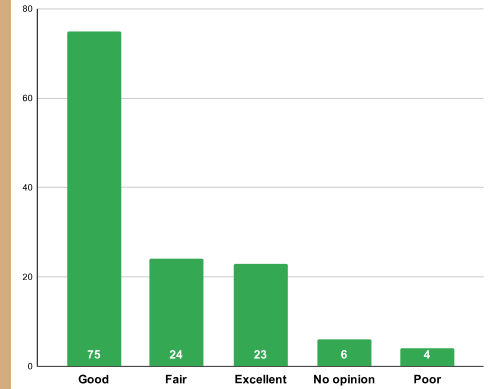
#1. How would you describe the overall QUALITY of Streams, Creeks and Water Resources in Clark County?



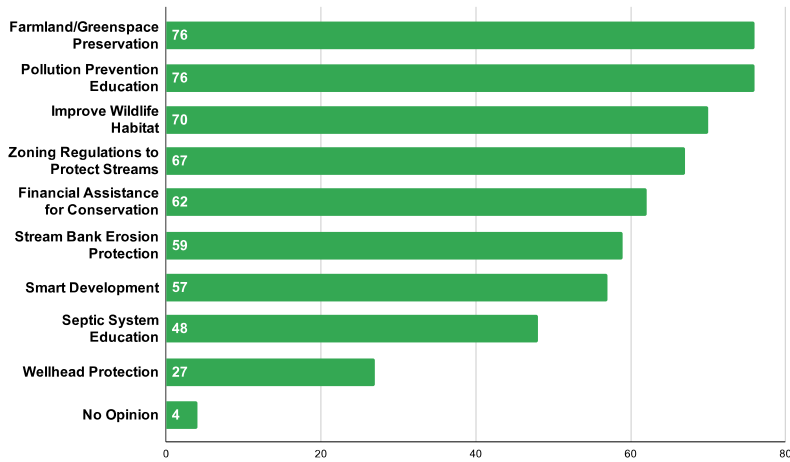
#2. What land-use activities do you feel are impairing the water resources of Clark County? (check all that apply)



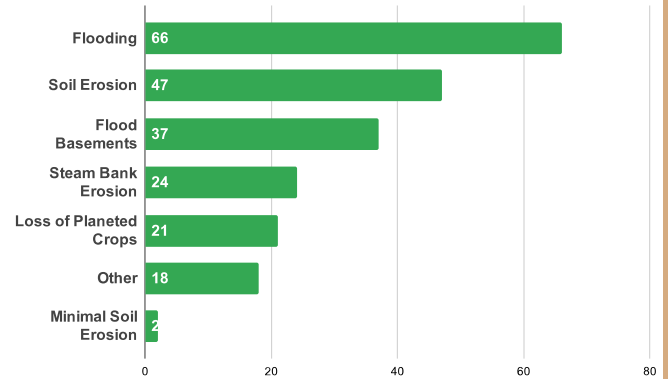
#3. How would you describe the overall QUALITY of our natural areas such as Woods, Agricultural Lands, and Wetlands?



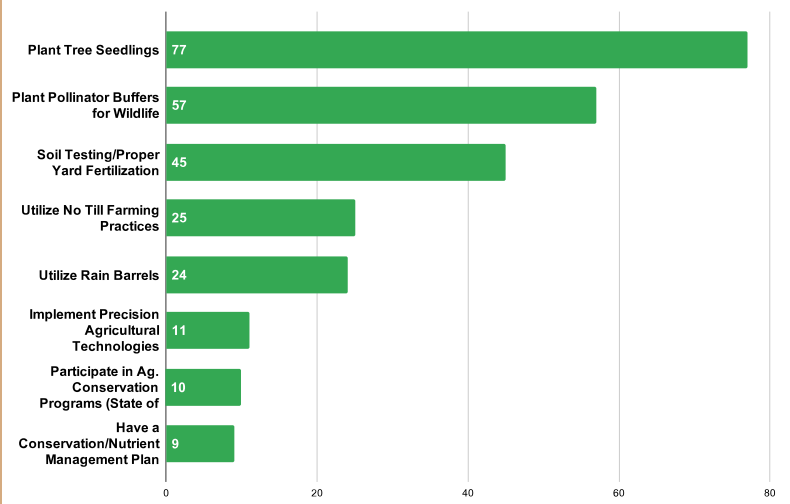
#4. What activities/programs do you feel should be addressed for natural resource protection? (check all that apply)



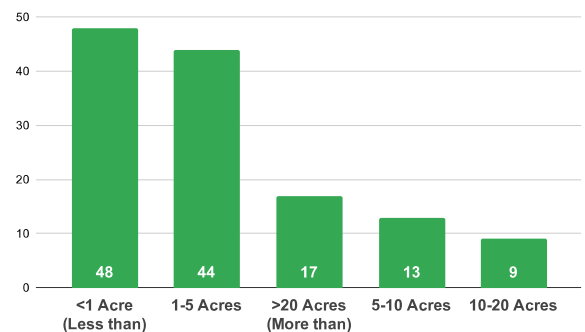
#5. How have the increased rainfall totals impacted your property in Clark County? (check all that apply)



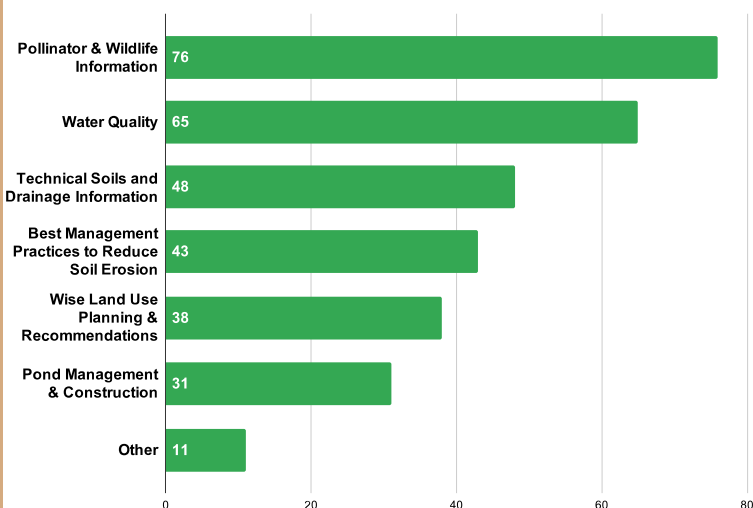
#6. Do you or your family employ any of the following Best Management Practices to enhance natural resources on your property? (check all that apply)



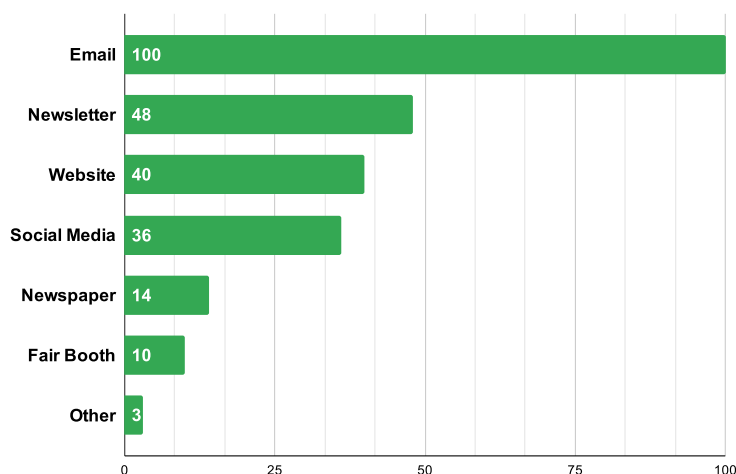
#7. I live on a property in Clark County that is __ acres.



#8. Which of the following would you like more information from the Clark Soil & Water Conservation District? (check all that apply).



#9. What is your preferred method of receiving information from Clark SWCD? (check all that apply)



Plan Development

Information for this plan was provided by the Clark SWCD staff, board of supervisors as well as county landowners. A survey was distributed to county landowners through e-mail and social media to provide data to help develop the plan. The board and staff then used the information from the survey to develop the long-range plan that highlights 4 objectives; Water Quality, Soil Erosion & Health, Wise Land Use, Land Preservation, and Education/Outreach.

Objectives: Water Quality

Goals

- 1 Promote the protection and improvement of water quality by working voluntarily with Clark County landowners, operators, and other entities to reduce point and non-point source pollution. Special emphasis is to be placed on manure/nutrient management.
- 2 Provide technical assistance to Clark County landowners using Autocad Civil 3D and GIS programs to engineer and design Best Management Practices (BMP's).
- 3 Promote and develop outreach materials for county landowners to utilize to reduce non-point source pollution.
- 4 Promote the use of water conservation with the use of rain barrels and other alternative storm water management practices.
- 5 Locate land areas and operations contributing to nutrient loading into "Waters of the State" by providing technical assistance to the landowners to install BMP's addressing their resource concern.
- 6 Provide technical assistance to Clark County to help implement the Storm Water Management Program required by Ohio EPA for Clark County.

Objectives: Soil Erosion & Health

Goals

- 1** Promote the wise use of Best Management Practices and update methods to reduce soil erosion. Encourage as well as expand the use of cover crops and variable rate agriculture technologies.
- 2** Identify critical resource areas (HEL lands) and work with landowners by providing technical assistance to address resource concerns where they exist.
- 3** Provide survey, design, and other technical services for USDA Farm Bill Programs to county landowners.
- 4** Provide technical assistance to Clark County landowners regarding group drainage requests.
- 5** Promote urban BMP's that reduce storm water runoff to reduce downstream erosion and flooding.
- 6** Promote the importance of existing and/or proposed sub-surface drainage to rural/agricultural landowners and public officials.
- 7** Promote the use of cover crops to reduce soil erosion and benefits the overall health of the soil.

Objectives: Wise Land Use

Goals

- 1** Assist landowners, residents, developers, and local leaders with planning and application of conservation and natural resources management practices. Promote the use of Geographic Information System technologies to facilitate planning efforts.
- 2** Assist land trust groups with technical information and service for conservation easement programs.
- 3** Utilize Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies to provide planning maps and proposals for better land-use decision making.
- 4** Provide technical assistance to The Clark County Community Development for proposed pond locations.
- 5** Attend educational training sessions for the development of Nutrient Management Plans.
- 6** Promote proper manure/nutrient management applications in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) – Division of Soil & Water.
- 7** Support the expansion of Greenway Programs outlined in the Connect Clark County.

Objectives: Land Preservation, Enhancement & Development

Goals

- 1 Encourage the expansion and protection of natural areas such as stream corridors, lakes, ponds, woods, agricultural lands, and wetlands.
- 2 Provide technical assistance to the Clark County Community Development Department, all County Zoning Boards, and all Township Zoning Boards to promote land preservation and the enhancements of Clark County's natural resources.
- 3 Work with Clark County and Clark County's Township zoning boards to promote set back ordinances in flood prone areas.
- 4 Work with the Clark County Auditor to promote the CAUV Program and assist with the compliance audit of current CAUV parcels currently enrolled in the program.
- 5 Provide technical assistance to Clark County landowners using AutoCAD – Civil 3D and GIS Software to enhance their natural resources.
- 6 Work with USDA and ODA to promote cost-share programs available to Clark County landowners.

Objectives: Education & Outreach

Goals

- 1 Enhance education efforts with landowners, operators, civic leaders and other organizations on the importance of protecting our soil and water resources for current and future generations.
- 2 Provide an annual tree seedling and fish fingerling sale available to all Clark County residents to promote and enhance their natural resources.
- 3 Utilize various forms of media including the district website, the district facebook account, the district newsletter and local newspapers to promote conservation programs and promote the conservation message.
- 4 Pursue opportunities to install both rural and urban conservation practices on public lands to promote and demonstrate projects for the purpose of marketing programs and public education.
- 5 Host the annual Clark County FFA Land Judging contest to promote conservation.
- 6 Assist ODA staff by hosting training events for SWCD & ODA Staff.



www.clarkswcd.com