



**SUMMIT
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**Summit Soil and Water Conservation District
2026 Annual Plan of Operation**

**1180 South Main Street
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<https://www.summitswcd.com/>

Category 1: Enhance Program Delivery and Customer Service

Objective 1.1 Enhance protection and management of virgin and naturally eroding soils

Action Item 1.1.1 – Provide education on protecting these soils through the District’s blog or podcast platforms. *(Prunty and Curtis, October 2026)*

Action Item 1.1.2 – Test and refine the assessment tool, and train staff on its use for property inventories and evaluations. *(Prunty and Curtis, September 2026)*

Objective 1.2 Strengthen program delivery by encouraging external relationships, building institutional knowledge of the District, ensuring consistent messaging and maintaining high-quality service standards

Action Item 1.2.1 – Update the website, social media, podcasts, and blogs to address ADA requirements and accessibility needs. *(All Program Areas, April 2026)*

Action Item 1.2.2 – Engage new watershed stakeholders and strengthen existing relationships. *(Watershed, July 2026)*

Action Item 1.2.3 – Draft new five-year MOUs to meet the OEPA MS4 permit requirements, develop sample narratives for Stormwater Management Plans, and host meetings to update community staff and officials. *(All Program Areas, August 2026)*

Objective 1.3 Strengthen and expand the watershed program to engage and educate the community and enhance service deliverables

Action Item 1.3.1 – Expand library corner presence, HUC highlight program and stream monitoring program throughout the county. *(Watershed, December 2026)*

Action Item 1.3.2 – Enhance NPS-IS plans as directed by funders, GIS services and watershed planning. *(Watershed, December 2026)*

Action Item 1.3.3 – Explore additional opportunities to engage Summit County residents. *(Watershed and Outreach, March 2026)*

Objective 1.4 Improve communication strategies to address teleworking challenges, ensuring seamless internal collaboration and enhanced external customer service

Action Item 1.4.1 – Coordinate with OIT to gain access to the mobile device dashboard and complete required training on system operations. *(Administration, April 2026)*

Objective 1.5 Expand and diversify payment options to improve customer convenience and accessibility

Action Item 1.5.1 – Implement a financial program in compliance with ORC 940.111 to accept payments by financial transaction devices. *(Administration, March 2026)*

Action Item 1.5.2 – Develop an SOP outlining escalation steps for managing outstanding invoices. *(Administration, March 2026)*

Objective 1.6 Optimize the Beehive program and database to enhance efficiency in tracking accomplishments

Action Item 1.6.1 – Conduct a thorough review of program initiatives and Beehive to ensure that all initiatives are accurately captured, tracked, and reported. *(All Program Areas, December 2026)*

Objective 1.7 Proactively engage with stakeholders of the MS4 program and the Surface Water Management District (SWMD) by conducting meetings following audits, to ensure alignment with community needs

Action Item 1.7.1 – Attend quarterly meetings with MS4 Operators to provide comprehensive service updates. *(All Program Areas, December 2026)*

Objective 1.8 Leverage H2Ohio funding to enhance agricultural assistance and watershed projects

Action Item 1.8.1 – Identify watershed projects suitable for H2Ohio grant funding. *(Watershed, November 2026)*

Action Item 1.8.2 – Host an agriculture-based nutrient management workshop or field day. *(All Program Areas, October 2026)*

Category 2: Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Objective 2.1 Align staffing levels and program organization with the pace of service expansion to ensure effective management and sustainability

Action Item 2.1.1 – Finalize the seasonal position description and responsibilities. *(Barrow, March 2026)*

Objective 2.2 Clarify and define the services offered by the watershed program to ensure a clear understanding of its purpose

Action Item 2.2.1 – Develop district-specific five-year watershed goals and an action plan. *(Watershed, September 2026)*

Objective 2.3 Demonstrate our leadership through collaborating on research and demonstration projects

Action Item 2.3.1 – Build relationships with higher education institutions and other partners to support collaborative research, demonstration projects, and certification programs. *(Watershed and Stormwater, December 2026)*

Category 3: Enhance External Relations and Community Engagement

Objective 3.1 Improve accessibility and utilization of public spaces at the Pry Building or an alternative location to enhance opportunities for indoor and outdoor programming

Action Item 3.1.1 – Compile a list of partners and programming spaces available to the District beyond the Pry Building. *(Outreach and Watershed, March 2026)*

Objective 3.2 Increase public awareness and recognition of the organization

Action Item 3.2.1 – Continue engaging the public through media, social media, podcasts, blogs, and videos, and evaluate the impact of these deliverables. *(Watershed, Outreach and Stormwater, November 2026)*

Action Item 3.2.2 – Implement the “Clean-Water Business” and “Paw-lution” initiatives for 2026 to encourage local business and resident participation in conservation programs. *(Outreach and Watershed, August 2026)*

Action Item 3.2.3 – Enhance community engagement through various in-person programming options. *(Outreach and Watershed, December 2026)*

Objective 3.3 Mitigate the impact of public official turnover by preserving historical knowledge of Summit SWCD programs and proactively rebuilding and maintaining strong relationships with new officials

Action Item 3.3.1 – Coordinate outreach to new officials following elections or employee transitions in vacated positions. *(All Programs, March 2026)*

Objective 3.4 Establish and strengthen relationships with local agricultural producers by providing targeted agricultural assistance, programming and support

Action Item 3.4.1 – Identify local producers who are candidates for NRCS programs, facilitate introductions, and promote conservation planning to support watershed health. *(Watershed and NRCS, October 2026)*

Objective 3.5 Expand education and training services in program areas to strengthen external relationships and increase community engagement

Action Item 3.5.1 – Increase District capacity through Barrow’s certification as an HHEI trainer. *(Barrow, November 2026)*

Action Item 3.5.2 – Host at least one workshop for the development community.
(Stormwater and Outreach, October 2026)

Objective 3.6 Leverage marketing, branding, technology, videos, and social media strategies into program areas and services

Action Item 3.6.1 – Research, develop, and implement a watershed donation program.
(Watershed, December 2026)

Action Item 3.6.2 – Implement a Mailchimp email-marketing solution across all program areas. (All program Areas, March 2026)

Action Item 3.6.3 – Develop a District drone-usage policy, SOP, and insurance coverage.
(Administration, July 2026)

Objective 3.7 Expand the volunteer program beyond stream monitoring

Action Item 3.7.1 – Develop a volunteer program using adaptive management practices and create SOPs for volunteer training and vetting based on watershed needs. (Watershed, April 2026)

Action Item 3.7.2 – Expand volunteer opportunities to include cleanups, rain-garden maintenance, invasive-species removal, and other community events. (Watershed and Outreach, October 2026)

Category 4: Fostering a Positive and Collaborative Work Environment

Objective 4.1 Improve staff communication and leadership within program areas to foster a positive and collaborative work environment

Action Item 4.1.1 – Conduct monthly meetings with program supervisors to assess their needs and priorities, ensuring that services are delivered at a high standard. (Andresen, Barrow, Prunty, December 2026)

Objective 4.2 Break down program silos to foster a positive and collaborative work environment internally

Action Item 4.2.1 – Establish four in-service days to facilitate cross-training and improve awareness among program areas. (Administration, December 2026)

Action Item 4.2.2 - Implement a project spreadsheet where employees identify their top three projects each week. (Administration, January 2026)

Objective 4.3 Encourage the conservation and protection of sensitive areas through conservation easement administration and collaborations through external partnerships

Action Item 4.3.1 – Identify parcels that are suitable candidates for conservation easements and connect with the appropriate stakeholders. *(Stormwater and Watershed, November 2026)*

Objective 4.4 Establish and implement standard operating procedures within the program area to support employees and new hires

Action Item 4.4.1 – Create or review a training plan and review job descriptions and SOPs in all program areas and for all positions. *(All Programs, March 2026)*

Action Item 4.4.2 – Update the onboarding and offboarding checklist. *(Administration, January 2026)*

Category 5: Expand and Diversify Funding Sources

Objective 5.1 Advocate for the utilization of state matching funds to enhance and diversify local revenue streams

Action Item 5.1.1 – Communicate with local officials to explain the benefits of state matching funds on local appropriations for services within our mission. *(All programs, August 2026)*

Objective 5.2 Investigate additional funding sources

Action Item 5.2.1 – Identify grant opportunities across all program areas. *(All programs, December 2026)*

Objective 5.3 Secure and utilize H2Ohio funding from ODA, ODNR or OEPA for agricultural assistance and watershed projects

Action Item 5.3.1 – Pursue H2Ohio grants for identified watershed projects. *(Watershed, December 2026)*

Action Item 5.3.2 - Maintain an active relationship with ODA by attending H2Ohio meetings and training. *(Administration, December 2026)*

Category 6: Mitigate Threats and Ensure Long-Term Stability

Objective 6.1 Increase employee retention and ensure long-term organizational stability by aligning our salaries with competitive rates offered by other government organizations (City, County, State, Federal)

Action Item 6.1.1 – Investigate health-care incentive options for employees who select benefit plans that reduce organizational costs. *(Administration, July 2026)*

Objective 6.2 Effectively address complaints and manage political pressure

Action Item 6.2.1 – Ensure complaints are directed to the appropriate person and/or escalated through the chain of command to maintain consistent messaging and coordinate changes from the top down, effectively addressing all concerns. *(All programs, December 2026)*

Objective 6.3 Acknowledge market competition for our programs and services and promote our strengths and quality of service

Action Item 6.3.1 – Promote District services by showcasing our strengths, expertise, and leadership in stormwater and watershed programs. *(All programs, December 2026)*

Objective 6.4 Develop and implement strategies in response to potential state and federal deregulations of environmental regulations

Action Item 6.4.1 – Continuously monitor federal and state agencies for potential deregulation announcements, program-defunding threats, or property-tax repeals, and develop appropriate responses or reorganize services as needed. *(Administration, December 2026)*