

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District

2020 – 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Developed by Members of the Strategic Planning Committee
Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 19, 2019



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Introduction

The Strategic Planning Committee began its work to update the 2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan on February 19, 2019. At its first meeting the Committee developed a process for the work of creating a Strategic Plan to guide Summit Soil and Water Conservation District (SSWCD) through the next five years. The process included the following steps:

1. Review and revise the existing Mission Statement
2. Create a Vision Statement
3. Create a Statement of Core Values
4. Identify and analyze SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) elements
5. Identify Goals that address the SWOT analysis
6. Identify Strategies to support those Goals
7. Create, review, and edit the Strategic Plan
8. Present the Strategic Plan to the Board of Supervisors for review, input, and adoption

An executive report updating the Committee's progress-to-date was submitted to the Board on April 15, 2019. The Board and Staff suggested modifications to the Mission Statement and Vision Statement, which the Committee reviewed and incorporated. A verbal progress report was presented to the Board on May 20, 2019. That report included the Committee's work relative to the SWOT analysis and the initial development of Goals.

The Committee completed its work at its final meeting on June 13, 2019 and directed the Chair to format the Plan and submit a draft to the Board for review and adoption. The Strategic Plan was submitted to the Board and adopted on August 19, 2019.

The Strategic Planning Committee consisted of:

- Sandy Barbic (Education Specialist, SSWCD)
- Ana Burns (Area Manager, Davey Resource Group)
- Brad Kosco (City Engineer, City of Hudson)
- Brian Prunty, Vice-Chair (District Administrator, SSWCD)
- Mike Rorar (Supervisor, SSWCD and Director of Public Service, City of Tallmadge)
- Matt Springer (Director, Community & Economic Development, Copley Township)
- Denny Stoiber, Chair (Supervisor, SSWCD)

Our Mission Statement

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District provides leadership and advocates for the stewardship of our natural resources and responsible land use through the provision of education, technical assistance, and partnerships in Summit County.

Our Vision Statement

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District aspires to be a trusted leader of an engaged community in support of a sustainable, natural environment for future generations.

Our Statement of Core Values

Summit Soil and Water Conservation District's Core Values are:

1. **Sustainability.** Stable soils, clean water, and healthy habitats are essential to the continued viability of our community.
2. **Leadership.** Apply sound science and innovation as the technical experts in the fields of natural resource stewardship and responsible land use.
3. **Service.** Engage in trusted, timely, and professional communication with stakeholders.

SWOT Assessment

Strengths

- Technically qualified, team oriented and motivated staff
- Good network connections with other SWCDs and associated agencies
- Up to date equipment and resources
- Professional, progressive and supportive board
- Diversity of funding sources
- Diverse, flexible programming
- County support and resources (offices, administration)
- Administrative support (Ohio Department of Agriculture, Div. of Soil and Water)
- Dependability
- Power of enforcement
- Historic value of District (established 1946)
- Non-profit status

Weaknesses

- Small staff (not easily adaptable to increased workload or staff turnover)
- Limited staff experience
- Inconsistent staff communication
- Limited office space
- Lack of outdoor demonstration spaces at office
- Organization is mostly unknown to the public
- Lack of trust/respect from some segments of the community
- Lack of support for urban stormwater issues from ODA and OFSWCD

Opportunities

- Expansion of education and training services
- Expansion of collaborative programs
- Expansion of MS4 program services for Minimum Control Measures #2 (public involvement), #5 (stormwater control measures inspection), and #6 (inspection of municipal facilities)
- Expansion of conservation easement administration
- Watershed management services
- County-wide stormwater masterplan coordination
- Grant writing
- Riparian in-lieu-fee program administration
- Marketing, branding, technology, and social media focus on younger generation
- Volunteer/intern program

Threats

- Unreliable funding streams
- Complaints/political pressures
- Loss of staff to retirement or departure
- Market competition for our programs or services

Strategic Goals

The Strategic Planning Committee organized the goals into the following four categories:

- **Programs and Services**
- **Community Awareness and Outreach**
- **Staffing, Facilities, and Equipment Resources**
- **Funding**

Within each category Goals were established resulting from the SWOT analysis. The aim of those Goals was to amplify our strengths, minimize our weaknesses, exploit our opportunities, or avert our threats. In some cases, the Committee identified more specific Strategies that might apply to each of those Goals. The Goals and Strategies are organized by category on the following pages.

Category 1: Programs and Services

- 1. Expand programs and services offered to our communities**
 - a. Education and training
 - b. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) technical assistance and compliance
 - c. Conservation easements
 - d. Riparian in-lieu-fee program
 - e. Grant writing
- 2. Create a Watershed Master Planning and Management Program in Summit County**
- 3. Improve constituency satisfaction**
 - a. Create policies for communication, enforcement procedures, and addressing complaints
 - b. Create an evaluation form for communities, developers, and the public to provide feedback

Category 2: Community Awareness and Outreach

- 1. Create a branding campaign**
 - a. Highlight our history, mission, vision, core principles, and services
 - b. Marketing on many platforms, open houses, and events
 - c. Appeal to young people

- 2. Develop outreach initiatives with communities, agencies, and other organizations**

Category 3: Staffing, Facilities and Equipment Resources

- 1. Maintain a technically competent, qualified, efficient, and team-oriented staff**
 - a. Promote education, training, and professional development
 - b. Conduct annual reviews of staff performance and qualifications
 - c. Build flexibility via cross training
 - d. Plan for retirements and staff turnover
 - e. Create a happy, healthy, and fulfilling work environment
 - f. Establish a volunteer/intern program

- 2. Create new staff positions for growing demand and emerging services**

- 3. Maintain up-to-date equipment, technology and resources**
 - a. Promote education, training and professional development
 - b. Conduct annual review of equipment and technology
 - c. Maintain work vehicles appropriate to and adequate for our mission

- 4. Maintain office and outdoor spaces that further support our program initiatives**
 - a. Enhance outside office and administrative assistance (County and ODA)
 - b. Plan for revisions to existing spaces or acquisition of additional spaces to accommodate expanded staff
 - c. Seek partners to provide outdoor and/or indoor spaces appropriate for events and demonstrations

Category 4: Funding

- 1. Ensure long-range stability of State and County funding**
 - a. Reinforce relationships with funders
 - b. Provide annual reports to demonstrate our value and accomplishments
 - c. Build strong relationships with our communities to provide support if needed to combat political pressures
 - d. Identify a 5-year budget/funding plan

- 2. Pursue additional sources of revenue through new programs and services**

- 3. Pursue grants to support specific programs or initiatives**