



## **CLINTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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### **BUSINESS PLAN FISCAL YEAR 2020**

The Clinton Conservation District's Business Plan for Fiscal Year 2020 is based on responses to the 2011 and 2017 Resource Assessment and includes new initiatives as well as on-going programs. The Business Plan is designed to focus the Clinton Conservation District's resources on issues the Board of Directors have determined to be of the highest priority for Fiscal Year 2020.

The Business Plan is divided into five major categories:

Water Quality and Water Quantity

Soil Health and Erosion Control

Land, Habitat and Invasive Species Management

Education and Outreach

District Operations

The following pages identify the background, goals, budget, action items, and evaluation criteria for each category. Progress on carrying out the Business Plan will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Directors.

**The Fiscal Year 2020 Business Plan was approved at the Clinton Conservation District Board of Directors on January 28, 2020.**

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**Andrea Polverento, Chair  
Clinton Conservation District**

**WATER QUALITY AND WATER QUANTITY**

**Background:** Surface water and groundwater issues have become more prevalent as land use becomes more intensive throughout Clinton County. Impairments to water from sediment, fertilizers, pesticides, human and animal wastes are costly to remediate and make waterways unsuitable for their designated uses. Changes in weather patterns including increases in both flooding and droughts affects the productivity and sustainability of agriculture and impacts both municipalities and homeowners.

**Goal:** Improve quality of surface water and groundwater in rural and urban areas. Increase water infiltration and retention while minimizing flooding. Minimize impacts from extreme weather events.

Budget: \$214,806

<b>Action Items:</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria:</b>
A. Use a watershed-based approach and MAEAP to target conservation efforts on areas having the greatest impact to water quality and water quantity.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number of verifications 3. Pounds of pollution reduced
B. Utilize available programs to install conservation practices that address water quality and quantity concerns including cover crops, drainage water management, nutrient and pest management, and/or buffer strips.	1. Number/acres of installed conservation practices 2. Total dollars spent on installed practices
C. Provide support and technical assistance with the Conservation Reserve Program to install grass waterways, windbreaks, tree plantings, and grass plantings in critical areas.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Acres of CRP planned and planted
D. Upon approval of watershed management plan, seek funding to implement Upper Looking Glass Watershed Management Plan.	1. Number of applied for grants 2. Received grants
E. Develop and implement outreach strategy to educate landowners on best septic maintenance practices. Promote common sense approaches to reduce contamination from failing septic systems.	1. Number of outreach efforts 2. Number of people engaged 3. Progress towards addressing failing septic systems
F. Assist large water withdrawal users and irrigators with well registration, annual water usage reporting, and uniformity testing. Encourage adoption of water conservation practices.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number of new registrations 3. Number of irrigation systems evaluated
G. Offer well water screening for nitrates and nitrites. Provide well water sampling for bacteria for MAEAP participants.	1. Number of water samples submitted for analysis
H. Collaborate with MGROW, Friends of the Looking Glass River, Friends of the Maple River, Friends of Park Lake, and Clinton County Drain Commissioner on watershed improvements.	1. Number of collaborative efforts 2. Hours spent collaborating
I. Advocate for groundwater quality improvements utilizing study results and policy-maker engagement through continued work with the septic stakeholder committee.	1. Number of stakeholder meetings 2. Summary document
J. Plan for protection and restoration activities in the Stoney Creek watershed.	1. Stakeholders engaged 2. Miles of watershed surveyed

**SOIL HEALTH AND EROSION CONTROL**

Background: Healthy soils result in higher crop yields; fewer weeds and pests to manage; better nutrient utilization; greater water holding capacity; and more resilience to environmental stressors. Erosion from wind and water threatens the productivity and sustainability of agriculture within Clinton County. Even minor improvements to stabilize vegetation on the banks of rivers, streams, drains and creeks can significantly improve erosion.

Goal: Increase adoption of management strategies and conservation practices throughout the county that enhance soil health, help control erosion, and minimize impacts from extreme weather events.

Budget: \$131,879

<b>Action Items:</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria:</b>
A. Use a watershed-based approach and MAEAP to target conservation efforts on areas having the greatest impact on soil health and erosion.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number of verifications 3. Amount of erosion reduced
B. Promote the use of cover crops, no-till or reduced tillage management practices, crop rotation, buffer strips, integrated pest management, and other conservation practices within the agricultural community.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number/acres of installed practices 3. Total dollars spent on installed practices
C. Utilize and promote available programs to install conservation practices that address soil health and erosion concerns including cover crops, drainage water management, heavy use area protection, water and sediment control basins, and buffer strips.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number/acres of installed practices 3. Total dollars spent on installed practices
D. Provide support and technical assistance with the Conservation Reserve Program to install grass waterways, windbreaks, tree plantings, and grass plantings in critical areas.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number/acres of installed practices 3. Total dollars spent on installed practices
E. In conjunction with the native plant and tree sales, promote tree planting for windbreaks and riparian buffers.	1. Number of native plants, trees, and shrubs sold
F. Work with the County Road Commission and Drain Commissioner to identify erosion areas especially associated with road crossings and culverts, and develop strategies to mitigate the problems.	1. Number of erosion sites identified and plans developed 2. Number sites addressed
G. Cooperate with MGROW, Friends of the Looking Glass, Friends of the Maple River and Clinton Drain Commissioner to collaborate on watershed improvements.	1. Number of collaborative efforts 2. Hours spent collaborating
H. Provide educational and informational opportunities to encourage landowners to increase holding capacity of soils by improving microbiology and overall soil health.	1. Number of trainings held/partnered 2. Number of articles written

**LAND, HABITAT AND INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

Background: Clinton County has over 75,000 acres of grasslands, forests, and wetlands, a majority of which are managed by private landowners. These resources are threatened by invasive species, poor management decisions, and land use activities. Clinton Conservation District is the local resource for landowners to receive information and technical assistance regarding the management of their natural resources.

Goal: Provide information and technical assistance on natural resource management decisions and habitat improvement projects within Clinton County.

Budget: \$142,803

<b>Action Items:</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria:</b>
A. Conduct semi-annual tree and native plant sales and workshops to encourage plantings for windbreaks, riparian buffers, timber production, water quality, and wildlife habitat.	1. Number of trees and plants sold 2. Number of people reached
B. Support and promote the Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative and local pheasant co-ops.	1. Number of participants in MPRI 2. Number of participants in co-ops
C. Provide support and technical assistance on the Conservation Reserve Program to install pollinator habitat, winter cover, tree plantings, and grass plantings in critical areas.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number/acres of installed practices 3. Total spent on installed practices
D. Promote public hunting opportunities in Clinton County available through the Hunter Access Program. Enroll more land into the program and further increase public hunting opportunities in the County. Assist landowners with applications to improve habitat on HAP sites.	1. Number of hunters using HAP sites 2. Number of new HAP contracts 3. Number of HAP sites receiving funds for habitat improvement 4. Acres of HAP habitat improved
E. Work with partner organizations to promote reforestation especially in riparian areas.	1. Number of trees sold to riparian landowners
F. Partner with local conservation organizations to promote wildlife habitat plantings in environmentally sensitive areas.	1. Acres of wildlife habitat planted
G. Promote the use of the no-till drill and tree planter for habitat improvement projects. Promote use of injector for treatment of small infestations of knotweeds.	1. Number of rentals 2. Acres of habitat planted 3. Number of trees planted
H. Identify and report locations of invasive species throughout the county. Monitor for new invasive species infestations. Develop strategies to treat and prevent the spread of invasive species. Promote WCG/PCG through signage and installed boot brush stations.	1. Number of invasive species locations reported 2. Number of invasive species infestations treated 3. Number of signs/stations installed
I. Work with local government, county-wide partners and agencies to monitor invasive species on public & private lands.	1. Number of agencies engaged 2. Number of reports and treatments
J. Continue efforts to encourage sustainable forestry management in the County including proper woodlot management. Provide forestry assistance to private landowners in the County.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number of plans developed 3. Acres of woodlots with assistance given
K. Educate landowners using Forest, Wetlands & Habitat A*Syst. Encourage and promote FWH verification.	1. Number of people assisted 2. Number of verifications

## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

**Background:** Education and outreach are key components to implementing the mission of the Clinton Conservation District. Stakeholders must be informed and educated on conservation issues to make the best decisions regarding our natural resources.

Education and outreach priorities are determined based on community input from the District's resource assessment.

**Goal:** Increase participation in conservation activities within Clinton County by increasing awareness and understanding of conservation issues throughout the county.

Budget: 43,762

Action Items:	Evaluation Criteria:
A. Sponsor educational program(s) that promote existing and innovative conservation practices, including field days, tours, and workshops.	1. Number of programs 2. Number of attendees at educational programs
B. Conduct educational activities regarding the impacts from failing septic systems to water quality and human health.	1. Number of activities conducted 2. Number of people engaged
C. Consider new programs that align with community priorities as demonstrated in the most recent natural resource assessments.	1. Types of programs considered
D. Work with MGROW and Friends of the Maple River to implement the I&E activities laid out in the Upper Maple River Watershed Management Plan.	1. Accomplishments as laid out in the UMR I&E strategy
E. Prepare articles and newsletters promoting conservation programs and District activities throughout the County. Continue News & Notes newsletter with MSUE, District Digest and write new blog posts.	1. Number of articles and newsletters published
F. Promote and participate in MM-CISMA events and activities. Bring new partners into the CISMA.	1. Events promoted/attended 2. Number of people engaged 3. Number of new partners
G. Maintain Clinton Conservation District web site. Grow social media presence to better inform and involve county residents. Consider new social media platforms to reach all ages.	1. Number of posts to website and social media 2. Number of people engaged 3. New types of social media used
H. Target riparian landowners on healthy riparian landscaping and river debris management to reduce bank erosion and increase natural riverbanks and native habitats	1. Number of outreach materials distributed 2. Number of people engaged
I. Continue partnerships with community groups that support conservation efforts. Engage stakeholders in natural resource management decisions.	1. Number of partner meetings 2. Number of stakeholder/steering committees
J. Participate in activities with local schools to increase education and awareness of natural resources and conservation topics. Engage students at a range of grade levels.	1. Number of activities 2. Total students reached 3. Range of grade levels reached
K. Develop engagement strategy to recruit volunteers for District activities; and to engage and educate municipal elected officials and staff on District pursuits.	1. Number of volunteers recruited 2. Number of municipalities engaged

## DISTRICT OPERATIONS

**Background:** The Clinton Conservation District has several ongoing responsibilities as an entity of State Government.

**Goal:** Ensure all obligations and responsibilities of the Clinton Conservation District are fulfilled as required. Provide a professional and healthy work environment for District staff. Explore funding opportunities and develop programs as necessary to ensure a stable financial future exists for the District.

Budget \$34,115

Action Items:	Evaluation Criteria:
A. Develop an annual budget, maintain accurate financial records, and report progress to the Directors at monthly board meetings.	1. Approved budget 2. Accurately maintained financials 3. Monthly reports
B. Prepare and distribute an annual report of District accomplishments.	1. Completion and distribution of annual report
C. Organize and hold an annual meeting with director elections as necessary in accordance with Conservation District Law.	1. Occurrence of annual meeting and elections 2. Elections approved by MDARD
D. Administer grants and ensure all tasks are completed and all requirements are met. Manage Conservation District resources responsibly.	1. All grant requirements met 2. District finances within budget
E. Provide leadership, career development support, and education/training opportunities for District personnel.	1. Staff annual professional development goals reached
F. Ensure all District policies and procedures are adequate, appropriate, and up to date. Consider developing Board bylaws and updating financial policies.	1. Number of policies reviewed and updated 2. Bylaws and policies considered
G. Develop staff capacity and procedures to better assist NRCS with the implementation of Farm Bill programs. Utilize the Contribution Agreement when possible.	1. Number of staff trainings 2. Procedures implemented 3. Total contribution agreement money received
H. Analyze and evaluate natural resource assessment to develop a 5-year strategic plan.	1. Analysis of resource assessment data 2. Develop a 5-year strategic plan
I. Provide regular updates and information to County, local governments, and partner organizations.	1. Number of meetings where updates were provided
J. Seek out diverse funding sources to establish stable support for District operations and programs.	1. Number of new programs or funding sources developed
K. Explore potential program and partnership opportunities with assistance from Board of Directors.	1. Number of new opportunities explored
L. Build upon existing partnerships and develop new ones to help garner support and potential funding opportunities for District activities.	1. Number of working partnerships
M. Establish recruiting goals for Associate Director position.	2. Number of opportunities/positions considered