

IN THE COMMON PLEAS COURT OF LICKING COUNTY, OHIO

**IN THE MATTER OF:
SOUTH LICKING WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

Case No. 68 CV 54569

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DECEMBER 1, 2017 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2018**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Daniel Blatter, President
Linda Nicodemus, Secretary/Treasurer
Robert Cumbow, Member**

1. Directors Daniel Blatter, Linda Nicodemus and Robert Cumbow served as members of the Board of Directors of the South Licking Watershed Conservancy District (Conservancy District) during the period covered by this report. Mr. Cumbow was appointed and sworn-in as a Director by the Conservancy Court at last year's Annual Meeting.
2. Brian Reed and Christopher Meyer served as legal counsel.
3. The Directors held one annual and ten regular business meetings during the period covered by this report.
4. Denise Brooks, Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District, provided assistance to the Conservancy District.
5. The regularly scheduled meeting night of the Conservancy District was the second Monday of each month at 6:00 PM; meetings were held at the Village of Hebron Municipal Complex, 943 West Main St., Hebron, Ohio 43025.
6. Conservancy District records are held by Directors Blatter and Nicodemus.

DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Conservancy District has contacted all cities, villages, and townships within the watershed to advise them of our renewed existence and invite them to the District's meetings.

The Conservancy District has identified a number of issues to address, in addition to South Fork flooding, which continues to be a priority:

- A log jam in the South Fork Licking River, located east of The Newark Ohio Industrial Park, has existed for a long time and is getting progressively worse. It restricts flow and backs up water from the Hebron and Buckeye Lake areas, particularly during higher-than-normal flows. The Conservancy District is supporting efforts by the Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District and Licking County Commissioners to develop a plan for appropriate obstruction removal, and application for funding from the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District. Licking County Soil & Water Conservation District received \$28,000 from the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District for this project and a portion of the debris has been removed. We have hosted site viewings and coordinated drone reconnaissance with the assistance of The Licking County Planning Department. The District will support additional efforts made by Licking County Soil & Water Conservation District to remove this debris field, including supporting MWCD fund requests and other efforts to eliminate excessive obstructions that may cause flooding.
- Buckeye Lake continues to be an important and high profile area within the Conservancy District. The Board reviewed plans and supported the West Buckeye Lake Drainage Project submitted by the Fairfield County Engineer which provides vital drainage improvements for the West Bank area. The ongoing dam rehabilitation project is nearly completed and additional related initiatives have begun such as the addition of silt traps within the feeder canal, feeder canal riparian improvements, and an RFP advertised by ODNR for a study of the Feeder Canal. Additionally, local advocacy groups Buckeye Lake for Tomorrow (BLT)

and Buckeye Lake Corporation (BLC) have successfully obtained \$400,000 in the State of Ohio Capital Budget for improvements to 1 mile of the feeder canal in Fairfield County between the lake proper and State Route 37. BLC was also successful in obtaining \$400,000 in State Capital Funding for preliminary work on feasibility of a Pier in Buckeye Lake located within the Village of Buckeye Lake as well as another \$400,000 in ODNR funding for a Perry County access to Buckeye Lake.

- The Board submitted letters of support for applications of Licking County Soil and Water as well as Perry County Soil and Water grant applications for the position of a South Fork Licking River Watershed Coordinator and Buckeye Lake Watershed Coordinator respectively. The South Fork proposal included over 32 letters of support and over \$220,000 in in-kind support, but was not funded by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Perry County Soil and Water's proposal included at least 10 letters of support and over \$170,000 in in-kind and cash contributions. The Buckeye Lake Watershed Coordinator grant was funded for two years, and Claire Donley was hired for the position of Buckeye Lake Watershed Coordinator. This position serves the entire Buckeye Lake area.
- The City of Heath contacted the Conservancy District about severe streambank erosion of the South Fork by their well field and potential future impacts as they report a loss of five to ten feet per year from the bank. Initial Army Corps of Engineers' estimates to mitigate are over \$400,000. The City is presently working to mitigate the erosion under US Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 13 and Ohio EPA 401 Water Quality Certification.

There were no wide-spread flood events in 2018 that impacted the Conservancy District, though flooding of cropland in some flood-prone areas did occur. Localized areas did experience heavy rains resulting in flooded basements and flooding of rural roads.

BOARD ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board spent considerable time in evaluating the overall mission of the District and the Board's role in providing effective leadership, stewardship and positive contributions to the community it serves. Currently the board operates without a dedicated funding source, without a court approved Watershed Plan and without any enforceable regulations. The Board has concluded that to move from an entity that primarily serves as a sounding board for issues within the South Licking Watershed Conservancy District, to a Board with the ability to accomplish specific initiatives within the district, it is necessary to address these three areas.

The Board is considering adoption of the recently revised Licking County NPDES Phase II Stormwater Management Program for the entire South Licking Watershed Conservancy District. This would provide consistent regulatory oversight for all areas within the District which are currently not covered by regulation due to size, boundaries or other considerations. We have assembled a team of representatives from Licking, Fairfield and Perry County Soil and Water agencies to review this proposal and offer input specific to their respective areas for consideration and, seek the support of the Conservancy Court for final adoption and implementation.

The Board has also applied for assistance through the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for a Watershed Study of the entire South Licking Watershed Conservancy District. This is a long term process and will require support from many partner agencies with either in kind approved services or dedicated funding for the \$100,000 match requirement. This study is necessary as step one in developing a Watershed Plan for the District.

There are other options available to the District for the development of a Watershed Plan. These include self-funding a plan, seeking grants and loans for plan development or petitioning the Muskingum Water Conservancy District to become a "sub-unit" within their district. We ask for discussion and direction from the Conservancy Court on this matter.

Finally, we are asking the Conservancy Court to consider approval of a district wide assessment for each platted property in order to obtain a dedicated funding source. These funds would allow the board to provide actual project engineering and funding, provide grant match opportunities, fund watershed educational outreach projects, etc... The amount of assessment is suggested to be in the \$3 to \$5 dollar per property range which would generate approximately \$120,000 to \$200,000 annually.

RECORDS AND ACCOUNTS

Pursuant to statute, minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors have been reduced to writing and are recorded in a three ring binder marked as the official minutes of the South Licking Watershed Conservancy District. The Directors prepare monthly financial reports for approval. The records and accounts remain open for public inspection by appointment. A financial report covering the reporting period is a part of this report. The funds of the Conservancy District are currently on deposit with the Park National Bank. A representative of the Auditor of State reviewed our records for 2005 and decided not to do an audit because of the limited account activity. No other auditing activity has occurred since then.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The regular monthly meetings that were held in 2018 by the Board of Directors were open to the public. During the reporting period, members of the public attended these regular monthly meetings.

This Annual Report is respectfully submitted by:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
SOUTH LICKING WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

DATED: December ____, 2018

Daniel Blatter

Linda Nicodemus

Robert Cumbow

This report was prepared by:

Robert Cumbow, Linda Nicodemus, and Daniel Blatter, Directors

Contact:
Daniel Blatter, Director
141 Reserve Dr.
Granville, OH 43023

Financial Report
South Licking Watershed Conservancy District

December 1, 2017 – November 30, 2018

ASSETS

Checking Account

Balance as of November 30, 2017 \$1,924.03

Interest Receipts Deposited:

December 1, 2017 – November 30, 2018 \$ 0.17

Other Deposits:

December 1, 2017 – November 30, 2018 \$ 0.00

Disbursements:

Media Network of Central Ohio –
Monthly meeting Advertisement \$ 132.80

Linda Nicodemus -APG Media –
Legal notice- Perry County Tribune \$ 49.60

Bank Balance – November 30, 2018 \$1,741.80

Encumbrances- unpaid

Annual Meeting notice and 2018 meeting notice
Media Network of Central Ohio:

Newark Advocate \$ 66.20

Lancaster Eagle Gazette \$ 55.40

APG Media of Ohio
Perry County Tribune \$ 33.40

Total \$155.00

Total Posted Assets \$1,586.80