

Sustainability today for growth tomorrow

Erie Basin RC&D Annual Report 2023

President, Michalina Schneider

I'm not sure how everyone else feels, but I felt like I "blinked," and 2023 was gone. 2023 has been a busy year for the Erie Basin Resource Conservation & Development Council, and we have been lucky to have Greg Small, with his vast experience, leading the helm. The Erie Basin RC&D, and its various members made up of county commissioners, SWCD personnel, economic development professionals, and at-large members, from the ten-county region we serve, in North-Central Ohio, have been busy with quarterly meetings, as we work towards the important mission of improving conservation efforts. Several efforts in line with this mission include educational programs and materials like our SK Worm animatronic and coloring books, a past Wildlife expo, and a downtown revitalization revolving loan fund that also helps to improve the communities we serve.

The Erie Basin RC&D committee is committed to the economy, in the counties we serve, and this has been strengthened by the Erie Basin Revolving Loan program. Qualified businesses and individuals wanting to start a business can apply for this unique micro-funding to help them revitalize a downtown space, purchase equipment/inventory, further develop energy-saving mechanisms, and all for an interest rate less than the going prime rate. This unique RLF is the primary reason the Erie Basin RC&D has been able to sustain itself, as most other similar organizations have folded over the years.

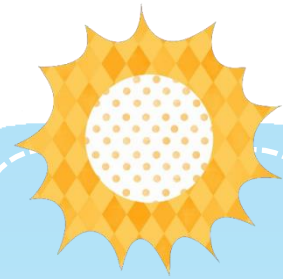
As we move forward in 2024, my goal for the Erie Basin RC&D is to further develop ideas that support the mission of improving conservation efforts in the region. These can also include more educational materials and educational opportunities for the general public. The committee is always open to ideas from the public we serve as well. We also encourage our supporters to please help us spread awareness of the various programs and resources we offer, as it truly "takes a village". Thank you for supporting our mission!

- Michalina

Our Mission

Erie Basin Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. is a non-profit organization that specializes in social and economic development while protecting natural resources. The organization began in 1991 serving ten counties within North Central Ohio. It offers loan programs, educational grants, and also engages with local children through various programs and activities to teach the importance of resource conservation and energy renewability. Erie Basin RC&D receives forms of support from the County Commissioners, the Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors, and the USDA Rural Development. The USDA NRCS also provides occasional opportunities to assist them with outreach efforts to underserved areas.

This organization is being known best for its ability to provide Gap Financing to Small Businesses which results in job creation or job retention! We have been making a stronger presence on social media. Please be sure to pick up a brochure and check out our Website and Facebook page to see all that we offer and do!



Erie Basin RC&D Mission:

To promote economic and social development in a way that protects natural resources and serve as a catalyst for conservation programs in the Erie Basin area.



Inside this issue

- Year of Soils
- S.K. Wormz
- Activity/Coloring Books²
- Loan Programs³
- The Ohio Wildlife Project
- Annual Meeting
- National Conference
- Financial Information
- Council Member and Contact Information

Important Dates 2024

- 03/08 Council Meeting - Seneca
- 06/14 Council Meeting - Sandusky
- 09/13 Annual Meeting - Ashland
- 12/13 Council Meeting - Huron



Fun Facts

Did you know...

That over 1,000 species of invertebrates may be found in a single square meter of forest soils?



That S.K. Worm will be celebrating his 14th year with Erie Basin this year? That means 14 years of soil conservation education to over 67 schools, 228 classes, and 6,749 students?



That Mike Patterson, former EBRC&D Coordinator, helped design the content for the S.K. Worm activity and coloring books?



Year of Soils is Every Year

The 68th UN General Assembly announced that 2015 would be the International Year of Soils! Environmental organizations around the globe collaborated to promote the education of soil and its conservation as well as support policies and regulations that would maintain and protect soil resources. This is (as it should be) ongoing every year.

Erie Basin RC&D is a part of this commitment, particularly with the assistance of our animatronic, soil-expert friend, S.K. Worm!



S.K. Worm



S.K. Worm gives a demonstration to 4th grade students.

S.K. Worm is the pride and joy of Erie Basin. An impressive, museum-quality, animatronic worm that interacts with kids through song and movement, this annelid (or worm) **educates children on the importance of soil** as a natural resource.

The capabilities of S.K. Worm are quite impressive; he is able to move as he interacts with the instructor and the students, plays a true-or-false game with the students in which he responds to whichever button is pressed, and ends his educational program with a catchy song about the wonders of soil. (41,539 children at 131 events)

S.K. has traveled far and wide (11,517 miles) to fulfill his mission of promoting the awareness of soil conservation. Though his education style is mostly geared toward North Central Ohio, he has visited students/children in over 50 counties within Ohio. Covid – 19 stopped his use in 2020/21; however, 2022 & 2023 has shown new interest.

Activity/Coloring Books

Erie Basin has sought out sponsors to enable the Activity Books and Coloring Books to be provided **FREE** to Elementary Students Grades K to 3. The goal is to provide all students in our 10 county area with a book. Samples can be seen on our Website www.eriebasinrcd.org if you are interested in being a sponsor, please let us know!

So far the Ohio Farm Bureau has sponsored 42,764 books that were delivered to several SWCD offices for distribution to Students. Erie Basin Council has directly provided approx.. 14,500 books at many events involving S K Worm.

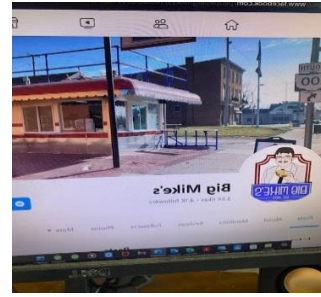
We printed 10,000 more Activity Books in 2021 thanks to a Grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service of USDA. All books are \$.40 each, if not sponsored.



Loan Programs that Give Back



Mark & Betsy Hackenburg, Owners of Buckeye Acres Campground close a loan with Kurt Heyman, RLF Committee



Big Mike's Food, LLC; Owners Daniel & Jonathan Perry New Fast-Food parlor at 274 Washington St., Tiffin, Oh.

Mark & Betsy Hackenburg, Buckeye Acres Campground, LLC of Clyde, Ohio needed to improve the recreational facilities of the camp. The picture above shows them receiving loan #6 to help fund the site projects. Daniel Perry's Big Mike's diner (right) fulfills a goal to continue a town tradition in Tiffin, Ohio. This was the first loan made in Seneca County since our 1994 RLF program began.

In addition to the educational components that Erie Basin RC&D offers, the loan programs are a vital and significant part of the organization. Loans are available to small businesses that recycle or use natural resources efficiently, to farms or rural businesses that are striving to use renewable energy, and to small businesses that will positively contribute to downtown revitalization and growth.

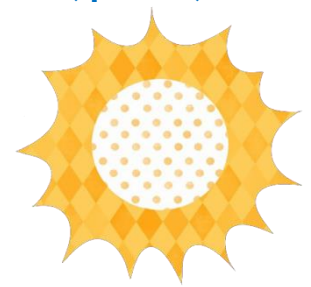
These types of loans not only serve a dual purpose of fulfilling Erie Basin RC&D's mission and helping businesses thrive, but they also assist with job creation. For every job that is created through the use of the loan, \$15,000 can be approved to that small business. Thus, the loan programs target and improve three very important aspects within the community: the environment, economy, and employment.

The RLF Program now stands at 97 loans totaling \$3,059,689 since 1994. This enabled creating or retaining over 311 jobs in our 10 counties. RLF Committee Members for 2023 were: Kurt Heyman, Jim Sass, Dan Schloemer, and Joyce Morehart. Along with loan making there is loan servicing. A lot of time was spent on this effort which resulted in the Committee successfully bring in a total of \$66,070. Currently we have 30 borrowers with 47 loans.

For every job created, a \$15,000 loan can be approved to that business.

The Ohio Wildlife Project – A Legacy, Mike Patterson, TSP (4/8/20)

Erie Basin RC&D Council adopted this project on 6/5/17. Ohio is eligible for funding from US Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937. (requires a 25% Match) Donated funds will provide and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities on 195,000 acres of ODNR, Div. of Wildlife Managed Lands. They will be used to enhance wildlife education and to help maintain public use facilities, trails, hunting blinds, towers, board walks, & roads. Since Oct. 2017, Website donations, store counter boxes, raffle (\$1347), Fin Feather Fur change roundup has raised a total of \$8,371. We donated \$5,200 in August 2019 to ODNR Division of Wildlife as match dollars which enabled \$20,800 for the purchase of 5 Acres to expand a parking area to access a 700 Ac. Wildlife Site.



32th Annual Meeting

On Friday, September 8th, 2023, the Erie Basin Full Council held their 32nd Annual Meeting at White Shutter Winery & Brewery, 3794 County Hwy. 56, Nevada, Ohio 44849. **President Michalina Schneider** welcomed everyone and asked for each to introduce themselves. TaTrecia Davis, Assistant State Conservationist Outreach was a special guest from NRCS in Columbus; along with Tom Holmes and Cathy Berg of ODA. After this, Wyandot County Commissioner David Courtad introduced our Guest Speaker Steve Sites who proceeded to talk about Bees & Honey. David, Joyce, Larry and Joanie Redd arranged for this great day. Steve has harvested many hundreds of pounds of honey over the years and said to just let them take care of themselves. He pointed out that Golden Rod weed pollen was great for honey. Also, Bees improve Soybean yields. He suggested not to buy anything but natural honey from the farm or you will lose the nutritional benefits.

Michalina then **continued** our meeting asking for the usual reports & updates: Cameo Cary, David Zak, and Greg Moon, are three new volunteers. A highlight of the RLF Program for 2023 was that there were 4 loans paid off. Kurt Heyman noted a greater loss for Erie Basin due to a \$31,000 charge off.

The latest Council info can always be found on our Website – www.eriebasinrcd.org...**Other meeting highlights included: the Mike Patterson Family Memorial is on our Website;** .

2023 Partners/Renewals are: Tim White, George Freeman, Mary Bauer, Carl Watt, Linda Gundrum, Diana Strouse; Business – Flickinger Insurance, Payne Nickles & Co., Lawgix International, Ashland SWCD, Sandusky SWCD.

Education Mini-Grants paid = \$750



National Assoc. RC&D Council in good standing September, 2023

See www.narcdc.org for more information.



Financial Information

Current Assets & Liabilities

| | | | Dec 31, 23 |
|--|-------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| ASSETS | | | |
| Current Assets | | | |
| Checking/Savings | | | |
| | 10000 | · Cash | 158,679.29 |
| | 10100 | · Cash - Restricted | 242,052.91 |
| Total Checking/Savings | | | 400,732.20 |
| Other Current Assets | | | |
| | 12000 | · Current Notes Receivable | 109,086.01 |
| | 12200 | · Inventory | 3,868.98 |
| Total Other Current Assets | | | 112,954.99 |
| Total Current Assets | | | 513,687.19 |
| Fixed Assets | | | |
| | 12600 | · Computers | 2,065.00 |
| | 12650 | · Accum. Depr. Computers | -1,443.67 |
| | 12700 | · Equipment | 8,778.99 |
| | 12701 | · Accum. Depr. Equip. | -8,778.99 |
| | 12710 | · S.K.Worm animated model | 52,000.00 |
| | 12711 | · Accum. Depr. SK Worm model | -52,000.00 |
| | 12720 | · S.K.Worm custom trailer | 3,065.70 |
| | 12721 | · Accum. Depr. trailer | -3,065.70 |
| | 12730 | · Crowd Control Posts and Tape | 578.80 |
| | 12731 | · Accum. Depr. posts | -578.80 |
| Total Fixed Assets | | | 621.33 |
| Other Assets | | | |
| | 12500 | · Notes Receivable | 452,800.00 |
| Total Other Assets | | | 452,800.00 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | | 967,108.52 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | | |
| Liabilities | | | |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| Other Current Liabilities | | | |
| | 21000 | · Accrued Payroll Taxes | 2,571.24 |
| Total Other Current Liabilities | | | 2,571.24 |
| Total Current Liabilities | | | 2,571.24 |
| Total Liabilities | | | 2,571.24 |

Other Programs

Sponsor – Small Business Basics Seminars at Terra Community College for RLF Program Clients

Mini Grants for a total of \$750

Home of S K Worm – A 6' tall museum quality Animatronics Worm that teaches the importance of our most important natural resource – The Soil

SKW Activity Books and Coloring Books for children – Operation Soil Education

Member of the National Association of RC&D – obtained the RLF Grant #12 with their assistance.

Member of the Ohio Farm Bureau

The Ohio Wildlife Project – fund raising to help make all types of improvement to wildlife areas in Ohio

Council Officers 2023

President—Michalina Lacy

Vice President—Cameo Carey

Secretary/Treasurer—Kurt Heyman

Trustee—Mark Coppeler

Trustee—Janet Freeman

Trustee—Larry Leonhardt

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

Greg Small
Coordinator

Angie Palmer, TSP
Vicki Patterson, TSP

Phone: (419) 681-6013
Fax: (419) 663-8405
E-mail: eriebasinrcd@yahoo.com

Erie Basin RC&D
180 Milan Ave. Ste 9
Norwalk, OH 44857

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Friday: 9:00 AM—4:00 PM
Closed on Saturday and Sunday



eriebasinrcd.org



Facebook.com/
pages/Erie-Basin-RCD

Our Council

The Erie Basin RC&D Council consists of an appointed County Commissioner and Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor who in turn appoint a Member-at-Large from each of the ten counties.

The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and three Trustees.

The Executive Committee meets between the regularly scheduled Council meetings and makes decisions on the day to day operations of the office.

Council Members 2023

Ashland Co.

Ruth McCrea
Denny Bittle
Aaron
Pauly/Cameo Cary

Crawford Co.

Larry Leonhardt
Doug Weisenauer
David Zak

Erie Co.

Kurt Heyman
Mathew Old
Kevin Cannon

Huron Co.

Alisa Highlander
Terry Boose
Dan Schloemer

Ottawa Co.

Mike Libben
Mark Coppeler
James Sass

Richland Co.

Erica Thomas
Darrell Banks
Michalina Schneider

Sandusky Co.

Ron House
David Warner
Charles Schwochow

Seneca Co.

Janet Dell Freeman
Dawn Mizen
Tyler Shuff

Wood Co.

Theodore Bowlus
Bernie Scott
Julie Lause

Wyandot Co.

Dave Courtard
Larry Passet
Joyce Morehart

