

# Erie Basin RC&D

## Annual Report 2024

### President, Michalina Schneider

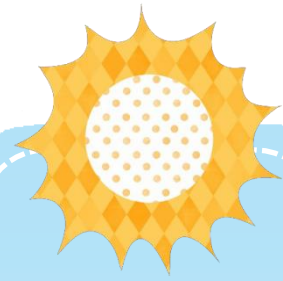
It is with great pride to have served as President for my final term in 2024, but I'm happy to know Cameo Carey (who also serves as the Ashland Economic Development Director) will be taking over duties, as I know she'll be a great addition to the Executive team, We have also been lucky to have Greg Small, with his vast experience, leading the helm. The Erie Basin RC&D, and it's 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.

In 2024 we reviewed ways to get the SK Worm and other educational opportunities/resources into the communities more, as we feel this was an underutilized resource that we have. It serves the great purpose of educating kids and adults alike on the importance of soil and water conservation. The future of conservation will eventually be the responsibility of this next generation, so organizations and resources like Erie Basin serve a very important mission. Please reach out if this resource interests you or your organization, as we can work with you to make this happen.

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, all for an interest rate less than the going 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. This program has also helped countless businesses in the region we serve to further grow and sustain their operations.

As we move forward to 2025 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



#### 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.



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#### Important Dates 2025

- 03/14 Council Meeting-Cancelled
- 06/13 Council Meeting- Seneca
- 09/12 Annual Meeting - Crawford
- 12/12 Council Meeting - Huron



## 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!

## Loan Programs that Give Back



Teresa Wood & Janet Aitcheson, Owners of Hot Shots Shooting Center have worked very hard to make this state-of-the-art center a reality Both businesses are in Ashland County



Molly McCorkle & Julie Cutter have worked several years to become a reality of Bon Bon Décor. A design shop.

*The owners needed to improve the facilities for their business to get started. The picture above left shows their training PowerPoint. Terri Wood fulfills this duty while Jan takes care of finances. Molly & Julie are pictured in front of their store which will open soon. There is enough funds and materials to complete the work and open thanks to Erie Basin Council.*

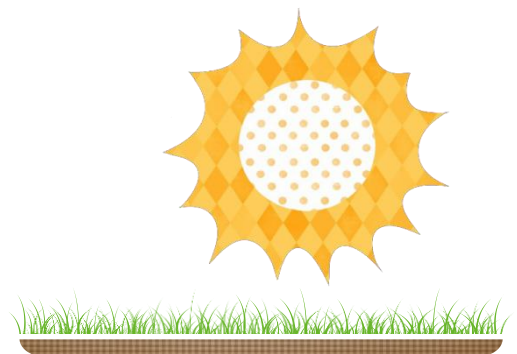
In addition to the educational components that Erie Basin RC&D offers, These types of loans not only serve a dual purpose of fulfilling Erie Basin the loan programs are a vital and significant part of the organization. RC&D's mission and helping businesses thrive, but they also assist with job Loans are available to small businesses that recycle or use natural creation. For every job that is created using the loan, \$15,000 can be resources efficiently, to farms or rural businesses that are striving to use approved to that small business. Thus, the loan programs target and renewable energy, and to small businesses that will positively contribute improve three very important aspects within the community: the environment, economy, and employment

The RLF Program now stands at 100 loans totaling \$3,188,689 since 1994. This enabled creating or retaining over 327 jobs in our 10 counties. The RLF Committee Members for 2024 were: Kurt Heyman, Jim Sass, Dan Schloemer, and Greg Moon. Along with loan making there is loan servicing. A lot of time is spent on this effort which results in the Committee successfully bring in principal to reloan. We had several pay offs. Currently we have 16 borrowers with 26 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. (see the Wildlife Site: [wildlife.eriebasinrcd.org](http://wildlife.eriebasinrcd.org))



## 33<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

On Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Erie Basin Full Council held their 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting at Hot Shots Shooting Center, 2112 South Baney Road, Ashland, Oh. 44805. Arrangements were made by Commissioner Jim Justice & Ashland Area Economic Development Cameo Carey. **President Michalina Schneider** welcomed everyone and asked for each to introduce themselves. Those Council Members present were Denny Bittle, Cameo Carey, Michalina Lacy, Mark Coppeler, Larry Schmidt, Dave Courtad, Darrell Banks, Larry Passet, Dan Schloemer, Bernie Scott, Greg Moon and Alisa Highlander. Those Guests present were Mayor Matt Miller, CIC Hal Schaeffer, and Jean Scott. After this, the meeting was called to order and the usual business was discussed – Minutes, Financials, RLF Update that David Zak resigned-need a new Volunteer, S K Worm Report and Noted that National Dues are paid, and Grant Station is available free to all members. Michalina noted that education mini-grants were given to SBDC Terra State \$500; Huron SWCD 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Day \$250; and Ottawa SWCD \$50. After business was completed, the meeting was adjourned to Lunch by Exclusively Yours Catering and Hot Shots Owner Terri Wood our Host and Guide. The shooting facilities made an impression. A highlight of the RLF Program for 2024 was that there were 3 loans closed for a total of \$129,000.

The latest Council info can always be found on our Website – [www.eriebasinrcd.org](http://www.eriebasinrcd.org)...

**2024 Partners/Renewals** are: George Freeman, Diana Strouse, Angie Palmer; Business – Flickinger Insurance, Payne Nickles & Co., Ashland Area Council, Huron County Farm Bureau..

Education Mini-Grants paid = \$800



## National Assoc. RC&D Council in good standing September, 2024

See [www.narcdc.org](http://www.narcdc.org) for more information





## 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 15th year with Erie Basin this year? That means 15 years of soil conservation education to over 71 schools, 235 classes, and 6,851 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 can move as he interacts with the instructor and the students; and he plays a true-or-false game with the students (6,851) in which he responds to whichever button is pressed, and ends his educational program with a catchy song about the wonders of soil. (41,664 children at 134 events)

S.K. has traveled far and wide (11,642 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, 2023 & 2024 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](http://www.eriebasinrcd.org) **if you are interested in being a sponsor, please let us know!**

So far the Ohio Farm Bureau has sponsored 43,014 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.



# Financial Information

## Current Assets & Liabilities

			Dec 31, 24
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Checking/Savings</b>			
	10000	· Cash	151,241
	10100	· Cash - Restricted	309,960
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>			461,201
<b>Other Current Assets</b>			
	12000	· Current Notes Receivable	59,751
	12200	· Inventory	3,698
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>			63,449
<b>Total Current Assets</b>			524,650
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
	12600	· Computers	2,065
	12650	· Accum. Depr. Computers	-2,065
	12700	· Equipment	8,779
	12701	· Accum. Depr. Equip.	-8,779
	12710	· S.K.Worm animated model	52,000
	12711	· Accum. Depr. SK Worm model	-52,000
	12720	· S.K.Worm custom trailer	3,066
	12721	· Accum. Depr. trailer	-3,066
	12730	· Crowd Control Posts and Tape	579
	12731	· Accum. Depr. posts	-579
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>			0
<b>Other Assets</b>			
	12500	· Notes Receivable	523,536
<b>Total Other Assets</b>			523,536
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>			<b>1,048,186</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>			
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>			
	21000	· Accrued Payroll Taxes	3,116
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>			3,116
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>			3,116
<b>Total Liabilities</b>			3,116

### Other Programs

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

Mini Grants for a total of \$800

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 2024

**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

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



[eriebasinrcd.org](http://eriebasinrcd.org)



[Facebook.com/  
pages/Erie-Basin-RCD](https://www.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 2024

### Ashland Co.

Ruth McCrea  
Jim Justice  
Cameo Cary

### Crawford Co.

Larry Leonhardt  
Larry Schmidt  
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.

Matt Christian  
Darrell Banks  
Michalina Schneider

### Sandusky Co.

Ron House  
David Warner  
Charles Schwochow

### Seneca Co.

Janet Dell Freeman  
Dawn Mizen  
Bill Frankart

### Wood Co.

Theodore Bowlus  
Bernie Scott  
Julie Lause

### Wyandot Co.

Dave Courtard  
Larry Passet  
Gregory Moon

