

Sustainability today for growth tomorrow

Erie Basin RC&D

Annual Report 2025

President, Cameo Carey

I am honored to continue to serve as the President of Erie Basin RC&D going into 2026!

The Erie Basin RC&D Council consists of county commissioners, members from Soil & Water Conservations Districts, economic development professionals, and at-large members all from a 10-county region. The Erie Basin RC&D Council is extremely thankful to our Coordinator, Greg Small, along with Angie Palmer for helping with the day-to-day activities of this organization. Without this group of dedicated volunteers, the Erie Basin RC&D would not exist.

The Erie Basin RC&D Revolving Loan Fund services ten counties including Ashland, Crawford, Erie, Huron, Ottawa, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Wood, and Wyandot, and as of today, is servicing 14 active small businesses. Since 1994, the Erie Basin RC&D Revolving Loan Fund has processed 101 loans for a total of \$3,218,698, which has resulted in the creation of 329 jobs. This year, one of our goals as an organization is to build relationships with various banks within our region in order to potentially help bridge funding gaps for local businesses looking for financing options.

Another resource that Erie Basin RC&D is known for is our SK Worm. SK Worm is an animatronics talking earth worm that educates the public on the importance of soils in our environment. In 2025 alone, SK Worm reached over 720 children, 360 adults, and 420 students! SK Worm is easy to rent and our organization would love to bring him to your community. For more information on SK Worm or if you have any questions, please contact Greg Small at eriebasinrcd@yahoo.com.

In closing, the Erie Basin RC&D Council appreciates your continued support and always welcomes new ideas on how we can serve our region.

-Cameo Carey



Erie Basin RC&D Mission:

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



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Important Dates 2026

03/13 Council Meeting-Huron Co.
06/12 Council Meeting- TBD
09/11 Annual Meeting - TBD
12/11 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



Julie & John Mitchell (third picture) are owners of Fig & Oak, LLC; a unique gift shop located at 100 W. Main St., Ashland. They have worked very hard to make this store a reality (closed 3/25). In the first & fourth picture, President Cameo Carey is presenting past President awards to Kurt Heyman & Jim Sass who also serve on the RLF Committee. The second picture illustrates how providing GAP financing to enable a partner lender loan approval, does not always make the Erie Basin RLF Committee feel as secure as they would wish!!

Julie Mitchell started her business in Ashland back in 2018 at a different location on Main Street. Erie Basin has assisted her with three loans since that time and two are paid off. The third loan was to improve the building where she is currently located. Julie has experimented with three different "themes" of products offered for customers; to see what sells best. (True entrepreneur)

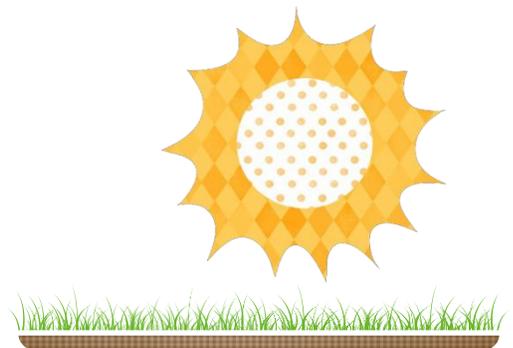
In addition to the educational components that Erie Basin RC&D offers, These types of loans not only serve a dual purpose of fulfilling Erie Basin the loan programs are a vital and significant part of the organization. RC&D's mission and helping businesses thrive, but they also assist with job Loans 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 to downtown revitalization and growth. environment, economy, and employment

The RLF Program now stands at 101 loans totaling \$3,218,689 since 1994. This enabled creating or retaining over 329 jobs in our 10 counties. The RLF Committee Members for 2025 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 revolving the principal. We had one pay off in 2025. Currently we have 17 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 700 Ac. (see the Wildlife Site: wildlife.eriebasinrcd.org)



34th Annual Meeting

On Friday, September 12th, 2025, the Erie Basin Full Council held their 34nd Annual Meeting at Milan Township Hall in Milan, Ohio. **Folks at the Milan Museum & Edison Museum** assisted with meeting arrangements. Director Ann Jones welcomed everyone and spoke about local places of interest. **President Cameo Carey** called the meeting to order. Those **Council Members** present were: Cameo Carey, Kurt Heyman, Kevin Cannon, Mark Coppeler, Jim Sass, Tom Dunlap, Michalina Schneider, Bill Frankart, Bernie Scott, Greg Moon and Alisa Highlander; Those **Guests** present were Bryce Riggs Seneca County Collaborative, CIC Hal Schaeffer, Troy Parks Huron County Growth Partnership, Makenna Laser Crawford Partnership, Breann Hohman Erie SWCD Director, Jarret Trendel Erie SWCD Conservation Specialist, Tammy Coppeler Sue Heyman, and Jean Scott. This was a very good attendance for a beautiful relaxing day. The usual business was discussed – Minutes, Financials, RLF Update, S K Worm Report, TSP report and Outreach efforts for the RLF. Cameo noted that education mini-grants were given to Huron SWCD 4th Grade Conservation Day \$250, Ottawa SWCD \$50, & Area 2 Envirothon \$250. A memorial gift was given to University Hospital on behalf of Dr. David McConoughey. After business was completed, the meeting was adjourned to Lunch by Catering by Design and two great tours – Milan Museum and Edison Museum. Many interesting facts were learned during the tours.

The latest Council info can always be found on our Website – www.eriebasinrcd.org...

2025 Partners/Renewals are: George Freeman, Diana Strouse, Angie Palmer, Gundrum; **Business** – Flickinger Insurance, Payne Nickles & Co., Ashland Area, Mohican Haunted School.



**National Assoc. RC&D
Council in good standing
September, 2025**

See 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 75 schools, 243 classes, and 7,311 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 (7,311) in which he responds to whichever button is pressed and ends his educational program with a catchy song about the wonders of soil. (42,701 children at 136 events)

S.K. has traveled far and wide (11,707 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, 2025 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 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

	<u>Dec 31, 2025</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
10000 · Cash	122,869
10100 · Cash - Restricted	<u>356,769</u>
Total Checking/Savings	479,638
Other Current Assets	
12000 · Current Notes Receivable	4,086
12200 · Inventory	<u>3,698</u>
Total Other Current Assets	<u>7,784</u>
Total Current Assets	487,422
Fixed Assets	
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	<u>-579</u>
Total Fixed Assets	0
Other Assets	
12500 · Notes Receivable	<u>512,932</u>
Total Other Assets	<u>512,932</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>1,000,354</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
21000 · Accrued Payroll Taxes	<u>2,001</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>2,001</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>2,001</u>
Total Liabilities	2,001

Other Programs

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

Mini Grants for a total of \$550

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 #13 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 2025

President—Cameo Carey

Vice President—Mark Coppeler

Secretary/Treasurer—Kurt Heyman

Trustee—Michalina Schneider

Trustee—Janet Freeman

Trustee—Larry Leonhardt

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 2025

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

Ashland Co.

Zoey Dudte
Jim Justice
Cameo Carey

Richland Co.

Matt Christian
Darrell Banks
Michalina Schneider

Crawford Co.

Larry Leonhardt
Jeff Price
Makenna Laser

Sandusky Co.

Ron House
David Warner
Charles Schwochow

Erie Co.

Kurt Heyman
Mathew Old
Kevin Cannon

Seneca Co.

Janet Dell Freeman
Dawn Mizen
Bill Frankart

Huron Co.

Alisa Highlander
Tom Dunlap
Dan Schloemer

Wood Co.

Theodore Bowlus
Bernie Scott
Julie Lause

Ottawa Co.

Mike Libben
Mark Coppeler
James Sass

Wyandot Co.

Dave Courtard
Larry Passet
Gregory Moon

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



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