

Campbell County Conservation District

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The mission of the Campbell County Conservation District, in accordance with state statute, is to promote the best use of the land, water, and other natural resources within the district by encouraging the use of Best Management Practices. To further these efforts, the district provides assistance, information, and education throughout the county.

District Board Supervisors:

Dennis Walter, Chairman; Larry Varney, Vice Chairman; Alan Ahrman, Secretary/Treasurer; Gene Dobbs; Ken McCormick; Ron McCormick.; and Sanford Record.

District Staff:

Linda Grizzell, Admin. Secretary; Mary Kathryn Dickerson, District Coordinator; Kristin Scott, Agriculture Conservation Technician; Amanda "Mandy" Hils, Conservation Intern

USDA Natural Resources

Conservation Service:

Ed L. Thompson Jr., District Conservationist

Ky. Division of Conservation:

Linda Hunter, Field Representative

All programs and services of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and conservation districts are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.

Campbell County Conservation District Annual Report

July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

Farmland protection work has top priority

The District continues to build on the work started through the 2005 Farmland Study for Campbell County. Board members and staff from the Campbell County Conservation District and their partners continue to work to implement recommendations from the study. Partners include: Campbell Conservancy, Campbell County Fiscal Court, Campbell County Planning Commission, Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service, Campbell County Cattle Association, Campbell County Farm Bureau, Northern Kentucky Horse Network, Northern Kentucky University Center for Applied Ecology, and the Campbell County Economic Progress Authority. Campbell County Conservation District members on the Farmland Work Group include Dennis Walter, Ron McCormick, Alan Ahrman and former board member Helen Fehr, and staff Linda Grizzell and Mary Kathryn Dickerson.

An Outreach Task Force and Green Infrastructure Task Force were established this year.

- The **Outreach Task Force**, chaired by Linda Bray-Schafer, worked with Campbell County Fiscal Court, Northern Kentucky Horse Network, and Campbell County Economic Progress Authority on the Northern Kentucky media launch for the Kentucky Adventure Tourism initiative at A. J. Jolly Park on Fri., August 22. It featured booths from Northern Kentucky River Region Adventure Tourism providers as well as a display about the Farmland Work Group. Locally grown and produced foods were featured for refreshments.
- A free self-guided auto farm tour called "Campbell County Backroads Farm Tour" is being planned to be held on Saturday, July 18, 2009. Sixteen diverse farms will be opening their gates to experience local agriculture first-hand. A brochure is being printed and distributed at various locations with a map outlining the farm locations. The District website will also cover all the information.
- The **Green Infrastructure Task Force**, chaired by Don Girton, is continuing the process of identifying the location and activity of county farms. This work will help in establishing voluntary programs to protect local farms. Don Girton and staff member Mary Kathryn Dickerson met with a number of agencies and organizations regarding the work. Intern Mandy Hils and Agriculture Conservation Technician Kristin Scott are also working on the project. Ben Campbell of the Property Valuation Administration has provided various GIS data layers that are being used to create maps. The maps are being printed by the Campbell County Planning and Zoning office.

A display was set up at the Alexandria Fair and Horse Show in the Exhibit Hall containing farmland protection booklets, brochures, and

information promoting the Boone, Campbell, and Kenton County farmers' markets by member Helen Fehr and staff Linda Grizzell and Mary Kathryn Dickerson.

The District formed an easement committee to draft policies and procedures relating to conservation easements. Committee consists of Board members Alan Ahrman, Chair, Ron McCormick, and Sanford Record.

In November, staff member Linda Grizzell and board member Ron McCormick toured the Greenacres Farm in Ohio along with farmland work group members Linda Bray-Schafer (outreach task force chair), Bob Huck (Farm Bureau President), and Helen Fehr (former District board member) to learn how a farm can be self sustaining and profitable. The farm consists of 660 acres. Greenacres Foundation is a non-profit, private, operating foundation established in 1988 by Louis and Louise Nippert. The Nippert's purchased Greenacres Farm in 1949, and wanted to preserve the land for the education and enjoyment of future generations. In 1998 300 additional acres were purchased for equine use. Greenacres Foundation is a 401(c) organization. The farm store sells fresh Angus beef, vegetables, eggs, honey, and herbs. They advertise their products by word of mouth.

A Farmland Assessment Forum was held in March at the Campbell County High School Cafeteria. Property Value Administrator Daniel Braun spoke to the group as a part of a farmland protection program to explain the reassessment process and obstacles his department faced. The Farmland Work Group worked with Daniel this past year on farm building assessment and agricultural land by soil type to come up with a fair assessment for farmers and help improve economic viability of farms. Values on most land were expected to go down.

Agricultural Districts - There are fourteen agricultural districts in Campbell County with a total of 12,266 acres and 244 landowners. The board is pursuing solutions to issues regarding the consequences for agricultural districts located in areas considering incorporation as new cities.

Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Grant – The Conservation District, in cooperation with the Campbell Conservancy and the Campbell County Fiscal Court, applied for and was awarded a Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Grant to purchase land along the Licking River. The property will be open in the future for hiking, bird watching, nature study, and access to the Licking River for canoeing and kayaking. Work will be undertaken to restore and protect native prairie and woods, as well as to preserve a log cabin home site. The closing took place on August 12 for the purchase of 135 acres. The Campbell Conservancy, with assistance from the Campbell County Fiscal Court, acquired an additional five acres. A dedication was held on October 3 with a gathering of about 60 people on the property overlooking the Licking River. The property is officially named Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area to honor the history of the land. A joint advisory team composed of members from the District, Conservancy, and Fiscal Court was formed to research and discuss issues affecting the properties to ensure that the vision for the properties and the conservation easement for the Heritage Tract are upheld. Board member Ken McCormick chairs the team. Other Board members on the team are Dennis Walter, Larry Varney, and Gene Dobbs, assisted by staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson. By June the biological inventory was 40% complete and proposals are being taken for the archeological study.

In March a community meeting was held at the Licking Valley Baptist Church to introduce the project to our new neighbors and ask their assistance on sharing the history of the area. Doug Hume of Northern Kentucky University and his students are assisting us by meeting with the neighbors and gathering this information as well as conducting a conservation attitudes study.

Technical Assistance – Technical assistance is provided to Campbell County through Ed Thompson, District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, our federal partner; and Conservation District staff Kristin Scott. In 2008-2009, they provided assistance to over 225 Campbell County landowners concerning conservation planning, rotational grazing systems, wildlife habitat improvement, forestry practices, animal waste control, nutrient management, storm water runoff, drainage, erosion and sediment control, and other conservation needs.

The staff also currently provides ongoing assistance for twenty (20) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts initiated since 2002. Landowners are required to maintain the practices for up to ten years. EQIP is a program of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of the 2002 Farm Bill. To date conservation practices valued at \$346,838.83 have been implemented on 2,354 contract acres. EQIP goals include the reduction of soil erosion and non-point source pollution, as well as promotion of at-risk species wildlife habitat conservation.

Three landowners are currently involved in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), another program of the 2002 Farm Bill that will affect 36.8 acres of land and represent an investment of \$7,821.69. NRCS and District staff assist the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources with this program.

Conservation Progress-

- Conservation Plans Written – 86 acres
- Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality – 56 acres
- Land with conservation applied to improve water quality – 250 acres
- Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base – 396 acres
- Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality – 12 acres

The District operates a **Cricket 3-ton Lime Spreader** for rent to Campbell County farmers for \$25/day for spreading lime to improve productivity by increasing the soil pH, but cannot be used to spread fertilizer. Before using the lime spreader, farmers must attend a safety training program, offered by the Campbell County Extension Service. It was purchased as a cooperative effort of the Campbell County Farm Bureau, Campbell County Extension Service, Campbell County Cattle Association, and the Campbell County Conservation District. It was rented by 13 farmers this fiscal year and brought in revenue of \$475. It is housed and managed by board member Ron McCormick.

Agriculture Water Quality Act - A total of 568 landowners currently have a self-certification form filed with the District stating that they have developed and are implementing a water quality plan for their operation.

An **Agriculture Water Quality Committee** formed by the Campbell, Kenton, and Boone County Conservation Districts meets as needed to help local producers comply with this law enacted in 1994. The committee includes representatives from over ten agencies and organizations involved in agriculture and water quality. Campbell County Conservation Board Members Sanford Record, Gene Dobbs, Alan Ahrman, and Dennis Walter, and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Kristin Scott serve on the committee.

Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund - This year \$20,000 was approved for one county producer through the Ky. Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund to help install Best Management Practices on his farm to resolve resource problems. Producers may be granted up to two years to complete their practices. This fiscal year, the program paid \$ 76,917.95 in incentive funds to assist nine county producers with installation of Best Management Practices under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Dead Livestock Disposal Program - The District received a matching grant from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to assist landowners with proper disposal of fallen livestock. This year 32 producers participated in the program that assisted in the disposal of 24 cows and 13 horses. The program also assists the county animal shelter with costs of proper disposal of pets.

Farm Dump Removal Grants – The Conservation District received a grant from the Kentucky Soil and Water Commission to assist in cleaning up farm dumps. Two applications were approved and they are working on their cleanup. The grant was re-advertised to accept applications through September 30, 2009. Board members Gene Dobbs and Ron McCormick serve on this grant committee.

Agriculture Development Fund- The conservation district administers the fund to distribute cost share money within the county. This is a program the County Agriculture Development Board set up to administer funds from the Phase I tobacco settlement using the menu approach to include model programs such as cattle genetics, cattle handling facilities, forages, fencing, agricultural diversification, and hay/grain storage facilities programs. A new energy program was added this year. Per the new guidelines all programs will be offered to the County applicants. Board members Kenneth McCormick and Dennis Walter serve as the district's representatives to this board. Dennis Walter, Ken McCormick, and staff Linda Grizzell attended an Agriculture Development Workshop training program in April. Ken also attended the 2009 Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation/Kentucky Agricultural Development Board Annual Meeting in Lexington in January.

K.A.R.E. (Kentucky Agricultural Relief Effort) - The conservation district is administering this initiative in Campbell County to help those farmers whose crops were damaged by the severe weather conditions in 2007. Farmers had until June 15, 2009 to submit receipts for payment. The review committee consists of supervisors Dennis Walter, Ken McCormick, and Ron McCormick. Forty-nine applications were received and 48 were

approved. In June 2008 the District received \$23,461.99 to award to qualified applicants. Staff Linda Grizzell administered the reporting, payment procedures, and any other correspondence initiated by the committee. At the close of the program 40 applicants were awarded funding through the program.

Campbell County Ag Community Leaders' Meeting – The Campbell County Conservation District co-hosted a lunch meeting for legislators in November at the Campbell County Environmental Education Center at A. J. Jolly Park. Speakers included representatives from the Northern Kentucky Vintners and Grape Growers Association, Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service, Campbell County Farm Bureau, Northern Kentucky Horse Network, Campbell County Cattle Association, and the Conservation District. The theme this year was “Economic Viability of Farms in Agriculture”. This annual event provides a forum for agricultural organizations and agencies to present issues of concern to state legislators. Conservation District board members who attended were Dennis Walter, Ron McCormick, Alan Ahrman, Ken McCormick, Sanford Record, Gene Dobbs, Larry Varney, and staff Linda Grizzell and Mary Kathryn Dickerson.

Campbell Conservancy - Dennis Walter is a board member of the Campbell Conservancy and District Coordinator Mary Kathryn Dickerson serves as an advisor. In August 2006, the Conservancy and Conservation District board approved an agreement through which the Conservation District provides administrative and technical services to the Conservancy for a nominal fee. The Conservation District also provides a space for meetings and storage of records. Members of the Conservancy are: David Peck, chair; Dr. Yvonne Meichtry; Dennis Walter; Joe Piller; Lisa Araya; Don Girton; Melissa Williams; Penny Hoskin; and Peter Garrett. Advisory Board members are Mary Kathryn Dickerson of the Boone Campbell and Kenton County Conservation Districts, DJ. Scully of the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service, Robert Horine of Fiscal Court, and Peter Klear of Campbell County Planning and Zoning.

Projects and Partners

The District supported many individuals, organizations, agencies, and projects throughout the year, including:

- Board members Larry Varney, Ken McCormick, and Sanford Record attended a **No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Council** workshop at the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service in January; one topic covered was on invasive species. Larry Varney also attended the **No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Council** forum at the Drawbridge Inn in August and the Annual Meeting in October as well as the **Licking River Watershed Watch** annual meeting in February at Blue Licks State Park. Larry is the Board's representative in both these organizations.
- **Kentucky Wild Game Dinner**- The District participated in this annual event intended to be a time for county conservation district officials to meet with their legislators while they are in session in Frankfort. Board member Larry Varney attended in January.
- Staff member Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the District on Sanitation District #1's **Watershed Planning Council**.
- **Vision 2015 Regional Parks Initiative** – Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson represented the Conservation District on this committee, which is promoting a coordinated approach to open space and recreation planning for the three Northern Kentucky counties. She also represented the district during the Green Partners meeting sponsored by Vision 2015 and SD #1.
- The District co-sponsored a large animal rescue training workshop at the Lazy K Ranch in southern Campbell County. The **Northern Kentucky Horse Network** and area rescue workers participated in a three-day large animal rescue training program. The training included lectures and hands-on rescue scenarios including a night rescue operation, a mud-and-water rescue using a crane, and a trailer overturn demonstration.

Education and Outreach

Tree Planting and Urban Forestry Enhancement - The Campbell County Conservation District has been giving matching grants for Tree Planting and Community Beautification since 1993 to help cities and communities establish programs or develop projects to protect and conserve our natural resources. The project must be done on lands located in Campbell County that are owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by city, county, state, or federal government and must include funding or in-kind contributions in an amount equal to the grant request. This year

three grants were awarded. The **City of Melbourne** received \$1000 for their Latonia Avenue Street Trees (last phase) project, the **City of Newport** received \$1,000 for their “A Green Newport” project, and the **Robert D Johnson Elementary School** received \$1000 for their Landscape Enhancement and Soil Erosion Prevention project.

Education Grants - The Campbell County Conservation District has offered education grants since 1991 to assist schools in fostering learning about conservation and our environment. Grant applications are accepted from October through January each year. This year five grants were awarded: **Crossroads Elementary** received \$650 for their outdoor classroom for butterfly and herb gardens and a fish pond; **Grant’s Lick Elementary** received \$700 for their “Wings Across the Curriculum” project to observe plant growth for animal habitat; **Grandview Elementary** received \$650 for their Real Time Monitoring weather station; **Dayton High School** received \$550 for the greenhouse in their outdoor classroom; and **Roth Moyer Elementary** received \$450 for their Kentucky Landscape project to grow native Kentucky plants in various campus areas.

Conservation Scholarships -

- **Miranda Schack, Michelle Marie Simon, and Ryan Chaplin** will receive \$1000 scholarships and **Brett White and Andrew (Andy) Long** will receive \$500 scholarships for their academic year through the Campbell County Conservation District. Michelle is a student at the University of Kentucky (UK) – College of Agriculture, pursuing a degree in animal sciences – livestock concentration; Miranda and Ryan are also students at UK, majoring in Agriculture Education. Brett is a student at UK majoring in forestry. Andy will attend UK and begin his field of study in bio-systems and agricultural engineering.
- The Campbell County Conservation District supports the **Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Auxiliary Scholarship** program through a donation of money. Items for the annual auction are donated by board members. Michelle Simon was awarded the state Natural Resources scholarship sponsored by the KACD Auxiliary Scholarship Fund.
- Each year the District sponsors a \$175 scholarship to attend Camp Webb. This year the scholarship winner was **Brett Crowe** of Alexandria. A total of 52 scholarships were awarded to students in Northern Kentucky counties, all made possible by donations from hunting and fishing clubs in the area and the Campbell County Conservation District.
- **Writing and Art Contests – “Working Trees: Kentucky’s Renewable Future”** was the topic for this school year’s Conservation Contests. The theme focused on Kentucky’s forestry management, leaves and roots, water quality, history of the tree, and other forestry related topics. In the Art Contest there were 136 entries from seven schools. This year in the Writing Contest there were 141 entries written from five schools. County and school winners received a certificate of achievement from the District. Also from the District the art winners received a My Favorite Tree book and the writing winners received a Golden Guide on Trees book and a \$50 savings bond to the winners in each category. Teachers received a Take-Along Guide: Trees, Leaves, and Bark book from the Conservation District. Students also received a Legislative Citation to honor their work from Senator Katie Stine. **Ruth Myers** won the 2nd place state winner plaque and \$300 savings bond from the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation in the writing contest. The meal featured Bluegrass roast beef, a Kentucky Proud registered product, and homemade biscuits. Don Girton was our guest speaker, retired from the US Forest Service.
- **Sarah Richardson**, Crossroads Elementary was the recipient of the District’s **teacher incentive award** for the Writing and Art Contests.
- **Cooperator of the Year was Baker Farms, Lee and Allen Baker** of Grant’s Lick. Lee and his family own 123 acres and own a cow-calf operation. He has used many resources and programs through the Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service and developed a very efficient conservation plan for his operation. The original family farm was converted from Holstein dairy cows to Black Angus. The Allen Baker farm consists of 52 acres and they raise cattle, corn and hay.
- The quarterly newsletter, *Landscapes*, reaches over 2,000 Campbell County farmers and other cooperators.
- Board member Larry Varney maintains a web site for the District, at <http://home.fuse.net/campbellcd>
- Board members participated in the **Alexandria Fair & Horse Show** by purchasing a fair book advertisement

featuring “Farmland – more than just a pretty place” focusing on the Campbell County Farmland Study. They also purchased animals at the 4-H/ FFA Livestock Sale, in partnership with several other organizations, and sponsored the 4H Forestry Award at the Alexandria Fair and Horse Show. Board member Larry Varney presented the forestry award at the fair.

- **Big Bone Lick State Park Discovery Days** – The exhibit this year featured a display of plants titled “Take a Walk With Me” with plants and animals commonly found in our area. District programs were also highlighted. Over 1,000 people visited the booth during the festival. Board members and staff from the Boone, Campbell and Kenton Districts helped with the exhibit, including Sanford Record, Larry Varney, Ron McCormick, and Ken McCormick.
- **Reforest Northern Kentucky** - The District co-sponsored Reforest NKY 2009 at Middleton Mills Park in Kenton County in April. Over 250 volunteers planted over 1,800 trees in 2.5 hours. Board member Larry Varney attended.
- **Northern Kentucky University Earth Day** – The District participated in the event featuring Soil and Water Stewardship Week theme “Dig It”.
- **Ft. Thomas Go Green Earth Day** – In April board member Sanford Record participated in the event featuring Soil and Water Stewardship Week theme “Dig It”.
- **Toyota Employee Earth Day** – The District participated in this event in April featuring Backyard Conservation materials from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- **Northern Kentucky University (NKU) Tree Planting**– Thirty-three trees donated from the Arbor Day Foundation and Toyota were planted by volunteers at NKU in October. Board member Larry Varney attended.
- **Licking River Watershed Watch** - District staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Kristin Scott are assisting the Licking River Watershed Watch with compilation of existing data for monitoring sites in Campbell, Boone and Kenton Counties. Staff member Mary Kathryn Dickerson and board member Larry Varney attended a training workshop in May.
- The district supports the **NKU Environmental Education Alliance** and the **Environmental Education in No. Ky. Resource Guide** is available through the district office.
- **Programs for Students** – In April staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson taught 250 students through the Sanitation District #1 *Waterific* program.
- Board member Larry Varney attended the Sanitation District #1’s new Alexandria Treatment Plant Open House in September.
- Board member Larry Varney attended the Licking River Greenway and Trails Open House in Ft. Mitchell in September.
- Board member Larry Varney attended the annual Campbell County Future Farmers of America Banquet in May.
- Larry Varney and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended the Invasive Species Conference in Lexington in December.

District Operations and Involvement

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) –The state convention was held in Lexington in July. Dennis Walter, Ken McCormick, Ron McCormick, Sanford Record, Alan Ahrman, Gene Dobbs, Larry Varney, Linda Grizzell, and Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended the meeting. The Board participated in conference calls throughout the year to discuss conservation issues.

Staff members Mary Kathryn Dickerson and Linda Grizzell attended the Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees Association 4th Annual Convention and Training in Jabez in September.

Ron McCormick, Ken McCormick, Gene Dobbs, Larry Varney, Sanford Record, Alan Ahrman, and Linda Grizzell attended the KACD Area 5 meeting in Pendleton County. Board member Larry Varney was nominated to fill the unexpired term of Larry Jeffries, Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

Board members serve on statewide KACD committees, which meet annually: Public Information, Sanford Record; Research and Natural Resources, Larry Varney; and Education, Ken McCormick.

Dennis Walter, Ron McCormick, Ken McCormick, Sanford Record, Gene Dobbs, Larry Varney, and staff Linda Grizzell attended a supervisor/employee training session at the Franklin County Extension Service in December sponsored by the Kentucky Division of Conservation and KACD. Board member Dennis Walter gave a presentation on Campbell County's accomplishments and ongoing projects during the outreach sessions.

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) – Larry Varney and Sanford Record attended the annual conference in New Orleans in February.

Legislative Action - Dennis Walter serves as the district's legislative liaison.

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council (OKI-RCC) The annual meeting was held at the OKI Regional office in March. Conservation in Today's Economy was the featured topic. Board members Sanford Record, Ron McCormick, Ken McCormick, Larry Varney, and staff Linda Grizzell attended. Larry Varney and Ken McCormick participated on the planning committee for the meeting. A conservation tour is hosted each year by a member of the **OKI-RCC**. Those attending the tour in Kenton County in September were: Supervisors Dennis Walter, Ron McCormick, Ken McCormick, Sanford Record, Larry Varney, and staff members Linda Grizzell, Mary Kathryn Dickerson, and Kristin Scott.

Staff Training: District staff completed USDA training in basic Security and Privacy Act compliance.

The **Executive Committee** of the Campbell County Conservation District meets as needed with those of the Boone and Kenton County Conservation Districts. The boards work together on conservation programs and employee policy, making updates and changes as needed.

Standing Committees of the District are:

Land Use Committee – Gene Dobbs, Chairman; Ken McCormick; Larry Varney, and, Sanford Record. Advisory Committee: DJ. Scully, Don Sorrell, and Dave Koester, Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service; Ed Thompson, NRCS District Conservationist; and, Kristin Scott, Campbell County Conservation District Staff. Gene Dobbs is the Agriculture Water Quality Act contact in the event a landowner is cited for violations under the Bad Actor clause of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act (AWQA).

Conservation Education and Public Information Committee – Alan Ahrman, Chairman; Dennis Walter, and Ron McCormick, Larry Varney. Advisory Committee: DJ. Scully and Owen Prim of the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service and Helen Fehr, former district board member.

District Funding - District revenue is provided through a county tax on real property and funding from the Kentucky Division of Conservation. A complete financial report is available at the district office.