

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, 2007 - June 30, 2008

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 to hold the Northern Kentucky media launch for the Kentucky Adventure Tourism initiative at A. J. Jolly Park. The event is to be held on Fri., August 22. It will feature booths from Northern Kentucky River Region Adventure Tourism providers as well as a display about the Farmland Work Group. Locally grown and produced foods will be featured for refreshments.
- The **Green Infrastructure Task Force**, chaired by Don Girton, held a meeting with local farmers to start 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.

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.

A Farmland Protection Meeting was held in April at the Southern Campbell Fire House. Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson delivered a presentation on Ag Districts and other programs to preserve farmland. Guest speaker Daniel Braun, County Property Valuation Administrator, spoke on county property assessment. Over 80 farmers and representatives from the county fiscal court and other county entities attended. Topics raised by the audience included: loans for young farmers and for farm buildings and property, fencing issues, and conservation easements. Ron McCormick, Alan Ahrman, Ken McCormick, Sanford Record, Gene Dobbs, Larry Varney, and Linda Grizzell also attended.

Agricultural Districts - There are fourteen agricultural districts in Campbell County with a total of 11,792 acres and 236 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 citizens to hike, bird watch, study nature, and access 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. Negotiations on purchase of the property are pending.

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 2007 – 2008, they provided assistance to over 276 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 thirteen (13) landowners who have completed Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts initiated since 2002. Landowners are required to maintain the practices for up to ten years. EQIP, a program of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill), helped fund \$154,616.70 in conservation practices on 1,432 acres of land. EQIP goals include the reduction of soil erosion and non-point source pollution, as well as promotion of at-risk species wildlife habitat conservation. Another 11 contracts for EQIP are still being completed. These contracts will affect 1,735 acres of land and represent an investment of \$287,534.20 in EQIP funds.

Three landowners are currently involved in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), another program of the Farm Bill that will affect 36.8 acres of land and represent an investment of \$8,284.70. NRCS and District staff assist the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources with this program.

Conservation Progress-

- *Conservation Plans Written* – 636 acres
- *Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality* – 187 acres
- *Land with conservation applied to improve water quality* – 957 acres
- *Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base* – 795 acres
- *Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality* – 59 acres
- *Certified Nutrient Management Plans applied* – 2

The District helped purchase 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 is housed and managed by board members Alan Ahrman and Ron McCormick.

Agriculture Water Quality Act - A total of 548 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 \$33,462 was approved for three county producers through the Ky. Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund to help them install Best Management Practices on their farms to resolve resource problems. \$35,426.14 was approved for five county producers from the EQIP/State Cost Share Piggyback 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 20 cows and 12 horses. The program also assists the county animal shelter with costs of proper disposal of pets.

Farm Dump Removal Grants – The Conservation District applied for a grant through the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program to assist farmers in cleaning up old dumps on their farms. The grant is pending with the Kentucky Soil and Water Commission.

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, hay/grain storage facilities, and a non-model forage equipment program. Board members Kenneth McCormick and Dennis Walter serve as the district's representatives to this board. Dennis Walter and staff Linda Grizzell attended an Agriculture Development Workshop training program in May; Ken McCormick attended one in June.

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 have 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 will administer the reporting, payment procedures, and any other correspondence initiated by the committee.

Campbell County Ag Community Leaders' Meeting – The Campbell County Conservation District 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, Luke Schmidt with the Food with Wine Coalition, and the Conservation District. Topics addressed were agricultural diversification, farmland protection, and other issues facing the agricultural community. 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; 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:

- Larry Varney attended the **No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Council** Annual Meeting in October, **Licking River Watershed Watch** annual meeting in February, and the **Lafarge Open House** for the new SG2 addition in September.
- **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. Over 350 people attended the event, which included an address by Lieutenant Governor Daniel Mongiardo and displays and exhibits from participating agencies and conservation districts. Those attending were Larry Varney and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson.

- The District participated in the **Sanitation District #1 Stormwater Design Forum** at Holmes High School, at their invitation. Following the session, the district participated in interviews with EPA and SD #1 staff regarding issues of local importance to the Districts. Those included that regulations should protect, enhance and improve natural resources and that there is a disconnect with natural resources issues in current planning structures. Staff member Mary Kathryn Dickerson represented the district at this meeting and also represents the district on the **Watershed Planning Council**.
- **Vision 2015 Regional Parks Initiative** – Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson represents the Conservation District on this committee, which is promoting a coordinated approach to open space and recreation planning for the three Northern Kentucky counties.
- The District worked with the Northern Kentucky Water District and owners of the California Marketplace to facilitate the opening of the new **Flagg Spring Water Fill Station**. It will serve residents in and around the South Eastern Campbell County area who are not connected to the public water system. This issue was brought to the attention of the Conservation District board by concerned citizens.

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 Alexandria** received \$1000 for their Alexandria Tribute Park project and the **City of Bellevue** received \$1,000 for the Van Voast Tree Planting Plan 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 three grants were awarded: **Sonlight Ridge Academy** received \$380 to create a native plants natural fence line/windbreak; **Highlands Middle School** received \$900 for their Kentucky Pride Gardening project; **Grandview Elementary** received \$822 for the purchase of microscopes to study pond ecology; **St. Catherine of Siena School** received \$900 for their From Seeds to Serving Others project; and **St. Thomas School** received \$1000 for their How Does Your Garden Grow project.

Programs

- **Miranda Schack, Michelle Marie Simon, and Ryan Chaplin** were awarded scholarships through the Campbell County Conservation District. All received scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 for the academic year. 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.
- 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. Ryan Chaplin was awarded the state Natural Resources scholarship sponsored by the KACD Auxiliary Scholarship Fund.
- **Writing and Art Contests - “Kentucky’s Wildlife”** was the topic for this school year’s Conservation Contests. The theme focused on Kentucky’s wildlife species, habitat changes, and suitable management benefits for wildlife and humans. In the Art Contest there were 395 entries from eight schools. This year in the Writing Contest, there were 105 entries written from five schools. County and school winners received a certificate of achievement from The Courier Journal; and, from the Conservation District, a Golden Guide on Mammals book and a \$50 savings bond to the winners in each category. Teachers received a Peterson First Guides Urban Wildlife book from the Conservation District. Students also received a Legislative Citation to honor their work from Senator Katie Stine. Ron Browning and BJ McCoy, Conservation Program Education leaders from the Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Department Resources were guests to talk about the Camp Webb Scholarship program. The meal featured Bluegrass Ham, a Kentucky Proud registered product and homemade biscuits. To reduce waste, plates, bowls, and 8 oz. cups made from sugar cane were used. The cutlery and 16 oz. cups were made of corn starch.

- **Cindy Feedback**, St. Therese School, was the recipient of the District's **teacher incentive award**.
- 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/campbelled>
- Board members participated in the **Alexandria Fair & Horse Show** by purchasing a fair book advertisement with the theme, "From City to Country, Conservation Works," focusing on the Campbell County Farmland Study. They also purchased animals at the 4-H/ FFA Livestock Sale, in partnership with several other organizations, at the Alexandria Fair and Horse Show.
- **Big Bone Lick State Park Discovery Days** – The exhibit this year featured a display of plants titled "Did Lewis and Clark Find Me Here" and challenged people to identify the plants as native or introduced species. Children's activity was making a wildlife note card and painting with soil. 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 and Larry Varney.
- **Reforest Northern Kentucky** - The District assisted with this project of the No. Ky. Urban and Community Forestry Council held in Campbell County. Campbell County Conservation District purchased trees to give to volunteers and staff assisted on-site with the tree planting and tree give-away to volunteers. Over 300 volunteers planted about 3,000 trees on land surrounding the Campbell County Environmental Education Center and Parkside Conservancy property.
- **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.
- The district supports the **NKU Environmental Education Alliance** and the **Environmental Education in No. Ky. Resource** is available through the district office.
- **Programs for Students** - Mary Kathryn Dickerson taught classes for over 285 students this year through the Sanitation District #1 *Waterific* program.

District Operations and Involvement

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

Dennis Walter, Ron McCormick, Ken McCormick, Gene Dobbs, Larry Varney, Sanford Record, Alan Ahrman, Mary Kathryn Dickerson, and Linda Grizzell attended the KACD Area 5 meeting in Henry County.

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

Sanford Record and Larry Varney attended a training session in London, Kentucky in December, sponsored by the Kentucky Division of Conservation and KACD.

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) – Ken McCormick attended the annual conference in Reno, Nevada in February.

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

Alan Ahrman attended **Rally 2007: National Land Conservation Conference** in Denver in October.

Ron McCormick, Ken McCormick, Sanford Record, Gene Dobbs, Larry Varney, Linda Grizzell, Kristin Scott, and

Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended a **watershed training** presented by Marc Hult, hydrologist, and the Kenton County Conservation District chairman.

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council (OKI-RCC) The annual meeting was held at the Boone County Extension Service in March. Ohio River Happenings was the featured topic. Board members Sanford Record, Dennis Walter, Gene Dobbs, and Larry Varney attended along with staff Linda Grizzell. Larry Varney 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 Hamilton County in October were: Supervisors Ron McCormick, Ken McCormick, Sanford Record, Gene Dobbs, and Larry Varney.

Sanitation District #1 Green Infrastructure Presentation- The District Board and staff attended a special meeting to learn more about Sanitation District's initiatives to use green infrastructure practices to help alleviate and prevent problems with storm water. Those attending were Ron McCormick, Gene Dobbs, Sanford Record, Alan Ahrman, Dennis Walter, and Campbell Conservancy member Yvonne Meichtry, and staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson, Kristin Scott, and Linda Grizzell.

Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Local Government: In response to a request from Senator Damon Thayer, Mary Kathryn Dickerson represented the District before this committee to present the work of local conservation districts. Other speakers were Ky. Division of Conservation Director Steve Coleman and Ward Wilson, chairman of the Jefferson County Conservation District.

The District hired Amanda "Mandy" Hils for an **intern** position for 8 – 10 hours per week. Ms. Hils is a graduate of Northern Kentucky University with a major in Biology and an additional year of environmental studies. She is currently working on the Farmland Protection Initiative as well as other district projects.

Staff Training:

- *Conservation Planning Using A Green Infrastructure Approach* – Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended this week-long training at the National Conservation Training Center. The course was designed for professionals working in the fields of land conservation and restoration. She received financial assistance to attend the training from The Conservation Fund and Sanitation District #1.
- *Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees Training* – Staff Mary Kathryn Dickerson attended this training to bring back new programs and skills to local staff. Topics included trail building, the Envirothon competition, and programs from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture the Wild Turkey Federation.
- *Soil Quality Training* - District staff Kristin Scott and Mary Kathryn Dickerson, along with NRCS District Conservationist Ed Thompson, attended this NRCS-sponsored training to develop skills in promoting conservation practices to farmers and other landusers that will enhance soil quality.
- *Security and Privacy Act Training* –District staff completed USDA training in basic Security and Privacy Act compliance.

The **Executive Committee** of the Campbell County Conservation District meets regularly 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.

The Campbell County Conservation District also participated in several joint meetings with the Boone and Kenton Conservation Districts to discuss planning for the future and joint projects and workshops.

Standing Committees of the District are:

Land Use Committee - Sanford Record, Chairman; Ken McCormick; and, Gene Dobbs. 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 - Larry Varney, Chairman; Alan Ahrman, and Ron McCormick. 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.