

# CAMPBELL COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

[www.campbellkyconservation.org](http://www.campbellkyconservation.org)

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*St. Anne Woods and Wetlands*

***What is the Conservation District?*** Kentucky Conservation Districts are Special Purpose Government Entities, organized under Kentucky Revised Statute 262. Conservation Districts are responsible for protecting our soil, water, and other natural resources. The Campbell County Conservation District (CCCD) was established in 1945 by a vote of the citizens of the county.

***Mission Statement:*** The Campbell County Conservation District partners with citizens and private landowners as well as other organizations to promote the sustainability of the land, water, and other natural resources by encouraging the use of Best Management Practices. We do this by providing expertise, financial assistance, and hosting educational programs.

## OUR SUPERVISORS

2023	2024
Richard Simon, Chairman	Richard Simon, Chairman
Susan Ortlieb-Turner, Vice-Chair	Susan Ortlieb-Turner, Vice-Chair
Larry Schadler, Secretary/Treasurer	Larry Schadler, Secretary/Treasurer
Kirsten Hill	C. Kevin McCormick
C. Kevin McCormick	Jason Kilmer (January-May)
Jason Kilmer	Richard Carr
Richard Carr	Kirsten Hill

## OUR STAFF

Patti Dischar, District Manager
Linda Grizzell, Administrative Assistant
Tammy Webster, Conservation Assistant (May-June)

## USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ian Young, Supervisory District Conservationist
Chris Rawson, Soil Conservationist

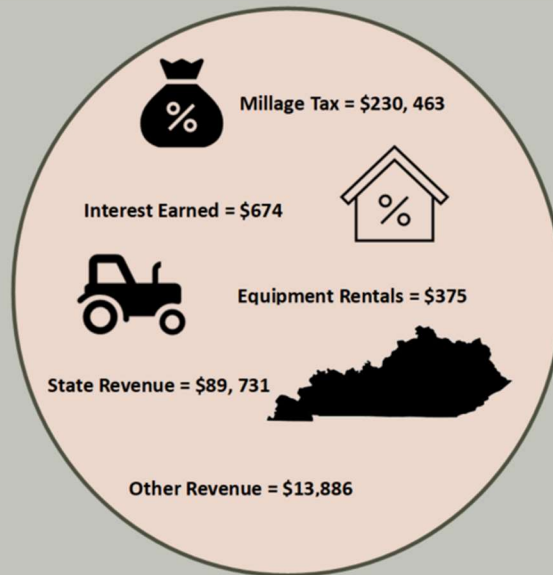
## KENTUCKY DIVISION OF CONSERVATION

Kimberly Barton, Environmental Scientist
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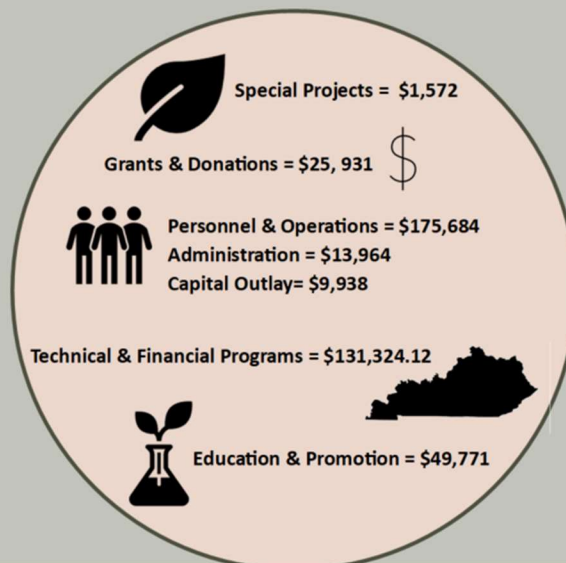
*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service and Conservation Districts prohibit discrimination in all programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.*

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## REVENUES



## EXPENDITURES



# DISTRICT COMMITTEES

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Committee members included the board chair, vice-chair, and secretary/treasurer. Annual staff reviews were completed on time, memorandums of agreement were reviewed annually and edited as needed, and the entire board reviewed the 2023-24 Annual Plan of Work quarterly.

## BUDGET COMMITTEE

This committee prepared the draft 2024-25 Annual Budget for the Board's approval, reviewed the 2023-24 Annual Budget quarterly, presented recommendations to the board and monitored the receipt of compensating tax information from the Kentucky Department for Local Government. Invoices were approved, and the secretary/treasurer reviewed and signed the credit card statements, bank statements, and bank reconciliations. The committee also monitored financial reporting deadlines required by the Department for Local Government and met the deadlines for submission of the District in Good Standing Report for state direct aid calculations.

The district achieved a 100% rating and received bonus dollars as well as the calculated direct aid dollars. The district's revenue is provided through a county millage tax on real property and funding from the Kentucky Division of Conservation. Financial reports are available at the district office or can be viewed on the Kentucky Department for Local Government website under Special Purpose Government Entities.

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The committee monitored bills in the House and/or Senate as they related to the district or county landowners and presented recommendations to the Board.

Supervisors Rick Simon (Alice), Rick Carr, Jason Kilmer and staff Patti Dischar and Linda Grizzell attended the KACD Legislative Reception in January at the Elizabeth in Frankfort.



In March Supervisors Rick Simon (Alice), Rick Carr, Jason Kilmer, Susan Ortlieb-Turner, Larry Schadler and staff Patti Dischar and Linda Grizzell (Bob) attended a general session in Frankfort. The district was recognized on their assembly room display board. Representative Mike Clines gave a personal tour of the capital afterwards along with a one-on-one networking experience with him.



## FARMLAND WORK GROUP

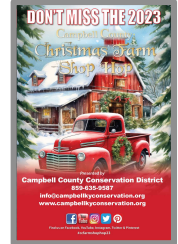
This committee consists of all the board members and partnering organizations including the Campbell County Cattle Association, Campbell County Farm Bureau Federation, Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service, the Northern Kentucky Horse Network, and the Campbell Conservancy, Inc. Their main objective is to carry out the elements as outlined in the Farmland Work Group Strategic Plan, developed in 2005 and updated through 2025.





**Backroads Farm Tour-** The Campbell County Backroads Farm Tour was held with 12 farms participating. Our partners at Campbell Media assisted us with videotaping each of our farm hosts, who provided a description of their farm and all they do. The video was promoted on our website and social media platforms.

**Christmas Farm Shop Hop** - This fiscal year was the second year for the Christmas Farm Shop Hop. Eight farm agribusinesses participated to showcase their farms during the holiday season.



**Cooperator Dinner** - On September 21 members of our agricultural and urban communities were honored at a cooperator dinner held at South Wind Farm. The Young Farmer award was presented to Andrew & Scott Schultz, TAS Farm, Cooperator of the Year Award was presented to Tom Curry, TC Farm, and our Partner Appreciation Recognition was presented to Jennifer Teipel, Campbell Media. Our twelve backroads farm tour hosts were awarded a monogrammed tool bag, and local cost share recipients were awarded certificates. The FFA Chapter was awarded a check for \$600.00 for their hard work during our farm tour event. Our

Campbell County Agricultural Development Council representatives Gary Nelson and Cyndi Bezold were given certificates for representing the district on the council. Our farm tour sponsors were recognized for their support of our farm tour events. We recognized all participants in our cost shares: Conservation Tree Planting & Urban Forest Enhancements, Farm Dump Cleanup, Heavy Use Area, Wastewater, Backyard Conservation, and the Tree Swap program.

**Raising Hope** - In January Dale Dobson and Dr. Cheryl Hill from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture came to speak on farmer mental health awareness and how everyone can be supportive. FFA students, the City of Alexandria Police Department, and local fire departments attended as well as local farmers and the public.

**Farmer Brew Crew** - This event was held at the Alexandria Brewing Company in December to network with local farmers on farming issues and what we could do to help. Supervisors Kirt Hill, Rick Simon (Alice), Larry Schadler and staff Patti Dischar attended.

## HAWTHORNE & ST. ANNE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HSAA)

A joint advisory team for Hawthorne Crossing and St. Anne Woods and Wetlands, composed of members from the district, Conservancy, Fiscal Court, and county citizens researches and discusses issues affecting the Heritage properties. The district owns two properties acquired through grants from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board; the state holds conservation easements on them.



### Hawthorne Crossing Conservation Area

The Hawthorne Crossing property is adjacent to the Licking River. Hawthorne Crossing continues to be monitored and natural resources conserved. The property is currently closed to the public. A suitable parking area is being pursued to have the property open in the future for educational activities, hiking, bird watching, and nature study. The Conservation District is now part of a regional initiative for the Licking River corridor to increase the recreational use of the river and gain more access points. This year we had a researcher

conduct an Odonata Dragonfly survey. A pollinator habitat in the upland was established through a stewardship grant from Campbell County Extension. Approval from the Heritage Board was granted to begin plans for an education shelter and we began cleaning up the site.



### **St. Anne Woods and Wetlands**

A section of the St. Anne Wetlands (South Wetlands) on Anderson Lane in Melbourne, KY is open to the public from dawn to dusk each day. Kiosks developed by the St. Anne Wetlands Education Center will help guide you along the established trail. Research is encouraged at this site and visitors are asked to ensure that the research is undisturbed. The North Wetland is adjacent to the NKU REFS facility and is predominately used for research. This area is open to the public during events. The Upland Woods is located adjacent to the St. Anne Retreat Center. This area will hopefully be open to the public following the

establishment of a public entrance and parking facility.

Seven bridges have been replaced and two pollinator habitats have been established within the St. Anne Uplands. The project was completed in the spring of 2022. We are continuing invasive removal per contract for the next three years.

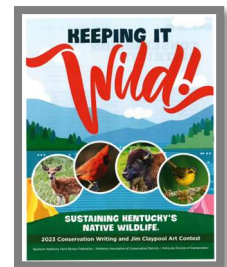
**NKU CER-** The Northern Kentucky University's Center for Environmental Restoration has been approved to complete restoration and preservation work in St. Anne Woods and Wetlands including invasive species removal. A stream that was eroding the bank was restored at St. Anne upland in the spring 2023.



**NKU REFS** - The Conservation District has partnered with the Northern Kentucky University Research and Education Field Station (NKU REFS). The field station is located next to the St. Anne Wetlands. Their focus is research, education, and community involvement. District Manager, Patti Dischar, is on the steering committee as a representative for the Conservation District. The summer talk and walk series were able to be held this year.

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The district holds an annual education awards dinner to honor the winners from the Jim Claypool Art and Conservation Writing Contests, scholarship recipients, and education grant recipients. The topic for this year's art and writing contest was "Keeping it Wild!". In the Writing Contest, we had 44 entries from four schools and 893 entries from eleven schools in the Jim Claypool art contest. Farm Bureau representatives Meg Crail and Jennifer Metcalf assisted our board in judging the entries. Depending on the ranking, the First Place County winners in the Jim Claypool Art and Conservation Writing Contests may receive a check ranging from \$25 up to \$250 from the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation. All students received a certificate of achievement, and all students and teachers received a t-shirt and a North American Trivia Card Game. In Campbell County, the art entries from grades K-2 are judged separately, and that county winner received a What Bird Am I? The Bird Identification Game. From Representatives Rachel Roberts, Mike Clines, and Mark Hart, and Senator Shelley Funke Frommeyer, students received Citations of Achievement. All art and writing winners in grades 4, 5, and 6 had the opportunity to attend Camp Webb for free. The registration fee of \$300 was paid by the Campbell County Conservation District for three art winners who attended camp. Three other scholarships were paid to Campbell County students who didn't participate in the contest.





**Envirothon** - The District registered four teams from Highlands High School to participate in the Envirothon Contest. This year's Envirothon team was the largest and most successful to date at Highlands High School! They had 20 students go to the training day in Frankfort on March 8, 2024. They had four teams compete at the West Regional Competition in Christian County, KY, and three qualified for the State Competition in Carlisle, KY. Their long-time senior team, consisting of Max Zangel, Dominic Mills, Sophia Scherrer, Jude Eckerle, and Owen Borden took

first place in Oral Presentation and third place in the overall Envirothon competition! This is the best finish they have ever had at Highlands High School since their first participation in 2010! The oral competition is based on the current issue, which was Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Future. The second senior team, a first-year team, scored second overall in the state for oral presentation! The teams scored 3rd, 13th, and 14th overall.

**Soil Stewardship Week** -The district promoted Soil Stewardship Week when Supervisor Kirt Hill & District Manager Patti Dischar presented the district's goals and accomplishments to Fiscal Court in May.



**Conservation Scholarships** - The District awarded a \$1,500 scholarship each to Hannah Heiert, Weston Wolf (not present), Morgan Neises, and Saskia Bentz. Campbell Media interviewed each candidate discussing their college careers and future goals. Their videos can be found on our website.

## LAND USE COMMITTEE

**Agricultural Districts** - The district has a total of 18 consisting of 19,748.51 acres and 536 landowners.

**The Campbell Conservancy** and the District approved an agreement in August 2006 through which the Conservation District provides administrative and technical services to the Conservancy for a nominal fee. The district also provides space for meetings and the storage of records. District Administrative Assistant Linda Grizzell provides the staff support for the Conservancy.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE

Their focus is to promote all district programs and events via the district's website, by increasing our presence on social media, or through other applicable means as recommended by the committee. Patti maintains the district's social media including our Facebook page (Campbell County Conservation District Kentucky), Instagram, Twitter, and the district's website ([www.campbellkyconservation.org](http://www.campbellkyconservation.org)). You can also find the link to our YouTube channel where you can see videos from our Right to Farm forums, our Backroads Farm Tours, EXPOs, and our annual awards dinners. These videos are provided through services by Campbell County Media Central.





**What's Happening** -The Campbell County Conservation District places a two-page article in the spring and fall issues of What's Happening. This publication reaches every household in Campbell County.

The **Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conservation Council (OKI-RCC)** annual business meeting was held at the OKI RCC downtown Cincinnati office in May. Attendees were supervisors Rick Simon (Alice) and Larry Schadler and staff Linda, Patti, and Tammy. The annual tour was held in Dearborn County in September. Supervisors Rick Simon (Alice) and Larry Schadler and staff Linda and Patti attended. It began at the Kaiser Pickle Plant in Indiana. It then proceeded to Scenic View Farm, where we saw a Limousine and Registered Angus operation, on to Hall Farms where they produce straw blankets and ending at Lobenstein's Farm.

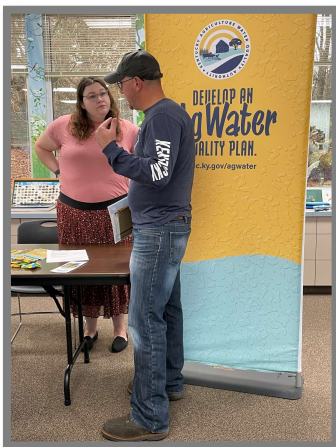


### Fall & Spring EXPOs

The district partnered with Campbell County Extension to present Campbell County EXPOs!

**Fall-** The New Landowner EXPO was an open house forum at the Campbell County Environmental Education Center. This gave the landowners the opportunity to talk to our partners about all the opportunities available in Campbell County.

**Spring-** The Campbell County Farm & Livestock EXPO was at the Alexandria Fair Grounds and gave our citizens the opportunity to learn about the Mobile Dairy Classroom, Kentucky Department of Agriculture tractor rollover safety, herding dog demonstration, and more!



**Alexandria Fair & Horse Show/Parade** - The district participated in the Alexandria Fair & Horse Show by purchasing the champion sponsorship package. The district entered the parade and displayed a banner on the fair's grandstand. Seamus Gilbert was awarded \$100.00 for the 4-H Forestry Award, and \$5,644.00 was awarded to the 4-H/FFA Livestock Club for district purchases of their animal projects.



**KACD Area 5 Spring Meeting** was held at the Gallatin County Extension/Conservation Office. Supervisors Rick Simon (Alice), Rick Carr, Larry Schadler, Kirt Hill, Susan Turner-Ortlieb and staff Patti Dischar and Linda Grizzell attended.



**KACD Convention** was held at the Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green in July. Supervisors Rick Simon, Kevin McCormick, and Rick Carr; Larry Schadler, and staff Linda Grizzell and Patti Dischar attended. We had representation at Chaney's Dairy Farm in Butler County, a Leadership breakfast, KACDE Banquet, a live auction, and closing with a banquet on Tuesday evening. The district supported the auction with the donation of a composite rocking chair. Some of our supervisors walked away with some nice auction items.

**Citizen's Academy** was held in October and Supervisor Kirt Hill represented the district.

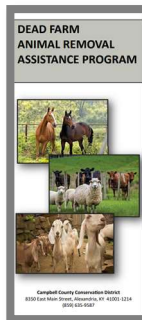
Supervisors Jason Kilmer, Rick Simon and Kirt Hill along with District Manager Patti Dischar represented the district in **Ft. Thomas** for their **Earth Day** celebration in April.

## TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

One of the main duties of this committee is assisting landowners in complying with the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act and encouraging participation in state and federal cost-share programs. The district assists landowners in completing Agriculture Water Quality plans.

**Environmental Grants** are offered by the district. Dead animal removal is partially funded by the Kentucky Division of Conservation and Farm Dump Cleanup is funded as a local cost share by the Conservation District:

**Farm Dump Removal Local Cost Share** assists landowners in cleaning up farm dumps. The district approved five applications this fiscal year; funds are provided by the district as a 75/25 cost share.



**Dead Farm Animal Disposal Program** to assist landowners with the proper disposal of fallen livestock. Sixty-two producers participated in the program and \$16,937.50 was paid to our licensed haulers this fiscal year. \$7,400.00 of these costs was covered under an environmental grant from the Kentucky Division of Conservation, which included \$2,400 in carryover dollars and \$5,000 for the fiscal year grant. The district covered \$9,537.50 of these costs.

**Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund** - Two landowners were awarded a total of \$22,310.73 for state cost share. Two applications were approved for funding.

**County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP)** - The district has two representatives on the County Agricultural Development Council who may serve up to two two-year terms. They are Cyndi Bezold and Gary Nelson. The Council is responsible for setting guidelines for KY Agricultural Development Fund programs in Campbell County; the district administers the CAIP program. This program is offered every year now to Campbell County producers. In June the district received \$30,188 to administer the 2024 program. Twenty-six landowners were awarded a total of \$57,978 for the 2023 program year.



**District Grants** - This fiscal year the district awarded Tree Planting and Urban Forest Enhancement Grants in the amount of \$5,621.00 to the City of Ft. Thomas, City of Alexandria, and the Westside Citizens Coalition. The 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 accomplished on lands located in Campbell County that are owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by the city, county, state, or federal government and must include funding or in-kind contributions in an amount equal to the grant request.

#### Local cost share:

**Backyard Conservation** - The Campbell County Conservation District's Backyard Conservation Local Cost-Share Program is an incentive program intended to assist with landowner's costs while implementing conservation practices that benefit soil and water quality and wildlife habitat. This program is open to all landowners to apply, but preference will be for those landowners who are not eligible for other state and federal cost-share programs. The goal of this program is to help landowners be good stewards of the land by providing financial assistance for the implementation of conservation practices in their own backyards. Possible projects for funding, but are not limited to rain barrels, monarch waystation, raised garden beds, certified backyard wildlife habitats (National Wildlife Federation, [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org)), invasive removal, rain gardens, and composting. Sixty-nine applications were approved this fiscal year, and fourteen landowners were awarded a total of \$6,796.70. Applications are limited to one per household/farm per fiscal year.



**Cover Crop Local Cost Share** is to assist landowners and the district supplies funds for this program. One application was approved, and one landowner was awarded \$1,000.00 this fiscal year.

**Supplemental Agriculture Local Cost Share** is a 75/25 local cost share with 75% of the project cost being reimbursed up to \$2,500.00. This is to assist landowners who are not eligible for traditional cost-share programs to install practices for the control of sediment and erosion. Fourteen applications were approved this fiscal year, and two landowners were awarded a total of \$4,575.48.

**Heavy Use Area Local Cost Share** - This is a 75/25 cost share with 75% of the project cost being reimbursed up to \$2,500.00. Ten applications were approved this fiscal year, and five landowners were awarded a total of \$12,096.93.00. Applications are limited to one per household/farm per fiscal year.



**Tree Swap Program** - Through a partnership with a local landscaper, the district offered a program to help control the spread of invasive trees in Campbell County by giving citizens the opportunity to swap up to two invasive trees from their yard with up to two non-invasive native hardwood trees. Fifteen applicants participated and received two trees each from the tree swap program. At the spring EXPO, a drawing was held for a chance to win more trees, and two lucky citizens were winners!

**Wastewater Disposal** - In recent years Campbell County has seen increases in population, development, and economic growth. Unfortunately, the County has also seen increases in water pollution. This Wastewater Disposal cost-share program is



a financial incentive for landowners to dispose of effluent properly by providing funds for code-compliant plumbing installation/modifications of both supply- and drain/vent- pipes to carry wastewater into existing sewer/septic systems. Leach line repair will also be considered. A project may be funded up to \$2,500 and applicants must provide at least 25% of the total cost of the project. Campbell County residents are eligible to receive financial assistance only one time per location address. No applications were received for consideration this fiscal year.

**Technical Assistance** for the District is provided by Ian Young-NRCS Supervisory District Conservationist and additional staff are available through the Kentucky Division of Conservation. For Campbell County, NRCS had three approved EQIP contracts funded this year.

## RENTAL EQUIPMENT

Through a memorandum of agreement, Southern States houses and maintains the district's Cricket 3-ton Lime Spreader. It is available for rent to Campbell County farmers for \$75/day for spreading lime to improve productivity by increasing the soil pH. Before using the spreader, farmers must view a training video or attend a safety training program offered by the Campbell County Extension Service. The spreader 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 five farmers this fiscal year and brought in revenue of \$375.00. In October the district purchased a KASCO 5' seeder that rents for \$75/day and is also administered by Southern States. No rentals occurred this fiscal year for the seeder.



## OTHER EVENTS

Supervisor Rick Carr represents the district on the Campbell County Hazard Mitigation Planning Team.

Supervisor Rick Simon attended the NRCS Focus Group in July, and Rick Simon and staff Patti Dischar attended in June.

The district held a leadership training session for the board supervisors in January. Jason Farkas from Northern Kentucky University facilitated the training.

Campbell County Planning and Zoning is working with the county on updating the county's Comprehensive Plan. The board held a couple of roundtable discussions with other county farming entities as well as additional district board meetings in getting the process started.

Supervisor Kirt Hill represents the district on Green Umbrella's Greenspace Alliance Committee.

In May supervisor Rick Simon (Alice) attended the City of Silver Grove's Arboretum kickoff ceremony.

In April supervisors Rick Simon (Alice), Susan Ortlieb-Turner, Jason Kilmer, and staff Patti Dischar and Linda Grizzell attended an Ohio River Way Viewing held at the Boone County Enrichment Center in Burlington. The speakers were from Ohio River Way and Kentucky Waterways Alliance.



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