



NORTHWEST OHIO

**Flood Mitigation
Partnership, INC.**

Blanchard Watershed Conservancy District Fact Sheet

What is a Conservancy District?

As the result of the 1913 flood in Ohio, the Ohio Conservancy District Law (ORC §6101) was enacted in 1914 for flood control and prevention. The law permits citizens of a threatened area to work together to plan, finance and manage flood control projects. Under the law, a watershed area can be organized into a Conservancy District, with the status of a political subdivision of the state and a public corporation. The Conservancy District has the authority to plan, construct and administer flood control and conservation projects. It operates under the jurisdiction of a conservancy court, consisting of one Common Pleas judge from each county within the district.

A conservancy district can be organized for any of the following purposes:

- Preventing floods
- Regulating stream channels by changing, widening and deepening the stream channels
- Reclaiming or filling wet and overflowed lands
- Providing for irrigation where needed
- Regulating the flow of streams and conserving their waters
- Diverting or eliminating watercourses
- Exercising the right of eminent domain as it relates to flooding
- Providing water for domestic, industrial and public use*
- Providing for the collection and disposal of sewage and other liquid wastes produced within the district*
- Arresting erosion along Lake Erie*

*The charter for the Conservancy District will be written to exclude these purposes.

Why do we need a Conservancy District?

The proposed Blanchard Watershed Conservancy District would be created for the purpose of flood control and conservation. It would encompass parts of six counties, Hancock, Putnam, Allen, Hardin, Wyandot and Seneca. It would serve to operate and maintain the flood mitigation projects that are put in place as a result of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' study. Currently, the overall solution includes three studies and has three local sponsors: Ottawa, Findlay and the Hancock County Commissioners. The creation of the new District would enable us to combine the three studies and the new District would become the single local sponsor—One Watershed. One Solution!

Why don't we continue as part of the Maumee Watershed Conservancy District?

Part of the Blanchard River watershed currently is included in the Maumee Watershed Conservancy District, which was created in 1950. The proposed District will focus only on the Blanchard River watershed. Its governing Board, judges and offices will be local and more easily accessible to residents of the watershed. This would provide for more focused attention on the Blanchard watershed area. The Maumee District office is located in Defiance, Ohio. Additionally, the size of the projects proposed for flood control would be considerably different than those of the current operations of the Maumee District. The proposed projects also would require specific technical infrastructure not currently available through the Maumee District. Additionally, ORC §6101.25 allows for recreation facilities on district land, which will be an integral part of the overall solution for the Blanchard watershed flooding. The Maumee District has no interest in becoming engaged in recreation.

Who manages the Conservancy District?

The conservancy court is composed of a common pleas judge from each county included in the Conservancy District. The court will appoint a 3-person board of directors for the Conservancy District for 5-year terms. Two of the appointees must live in the district. Within two years of its formation, the Conservancy District must obtain approval from the Ohio EPA for its plan for improvement. The court also will appoint three appraisers to the board of appraisers, which must appraise the benefits to all property in/out of the district affected by the execution of the plan. The board of appraisers also must appraise damages sustained and the value of the necessary land and other property that may be taken by the district.



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What are the powers of the Conservancy District Board of Directors?

- Clean out, straighten, widen, alter, deepen or change the course/terminus of any ditch, drain, sewer, river, watercourse, pond, lake, creek or natural/artificial stream located in/out of the District that contribute to flooding.
- Fill any abandoned/altered ditch, drain, sewer, river, watercourse, pond, lake, creek or natural/artificial stream and concentrate, divert or divide the flow of water in/out of the District.
- Construct/acquire/operate/maintain main and lateral ditches, holding basins, floodways, wells, intakes, pipelines, purification works, treatment and disposal works, pumping stations and siphons and any other works and improvements considered necessary to accomplish the purposes of the District, or to construct, preserve, operate or maintain the works in/out of the District.
- Conduct its own, or in combination with other entities, water quantity/quality studies and other water monitoring activities that do not conflict with similar studies/activities of other agencies.
- Other functions involving bridges, roads, fences, water supplies, etc., that are detailed in ORC § 6101.15.

What benefits does the Conservancy District provide to residents?

- It provides a single authority to implement flood mitigation projects.
- It incorporates all aspects of the watershed, such as flood control, water quality and recreation.
- It provides for the operation and maintenance of all watershed projects.

How is the Conservancy District funded?

Funding can come from bonds, land assessments or fees for use of recreational facilities developed from flood mitigation projects.

Who supports the creation of the Conservancy District?

The Maumee Watershed Conservancy District and the partners of the Northwest Ohio Flood Mitigation Partnership are encouraging the creation of the new District. Support also is expected from city, county and township officials from the six counties within the watershed.

How do you create the Conservancy District?

- We must first have a petition signed by 500 residents or political subdivisions representing 500 residents.
- The Validity of the petition is determined.
- A Bond is posted.
- Directors of overlapping jurisdictions are notified.
- The Conservancy Court is then established.
- A hearing on the petition is held.
- Court determination is made.

What is the first step once the Conservancy District is created?

A proposed work plan (developed in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) would be submitted to the conservancy court for approval. The conservancy court is composed of a common pleas judge from each county included in the conservancy district. Once approved by the court, the Conservancy District would begin implementation of the plan.

For more information, visit our website at www.floodpartnership.org