

# *Fairfield County Rural Land Ownership Guide*



# RURAL LAND OWNERSHIP GUIDE

(to unincorporated areas)

Are you buying land and building a home in Fairfield County? Ownership of land is a fundamental right in this country. The ability to own and use your land is one of the driving forces that has made living here so great. It is the American dream. The prospect of owning your own home and being able to express your creativity brings with it added obligations. Owning part of the community means that you have accepted the responsibility of living by the community's guidelines.

Developing land for the sale to others for use contrary to existing zoning is regulated. These guidelines and summarized regulations are set up to ensure the prospective buyers and existing owners of property a sense of protection.

Within the pages of this guide, we strive to give direction on when, where, and how to meet regulations. There are questions though that may require a consensus of several offices within the county government structure. This is to ensure that you get the best answer possible from resources of the county.

Just knowing what is required and that you are responsible for certain actions can make the process of meeting your obligations more acceptable.

This booklet is to assist prospective home buyers and developers. The intent here is to provide you with the information to understand the proper procedures to acquiring and maintaining property. It is a general guide which should lead you to more specific information or where to get it. It is your responsibility to confirm current guidelines, as this booklet was published and current as of the date below. As always with real estate, remember location, location, location and let the buyer beware.

*Revised 2/2021*  
*Originally published in 1996*

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## SITE SELECTION

The process of picking a building site can be influenced by many factors. You may desire to remain in a particular area. The asking price may be within your budget. The school district can carry a lot of influence in making that final decision to purchase in a particular area. What is overlooked again and again are soils. Will the site function as you envisioned? Soils and drainage information needs to be investigated in the very beginning, before any purchase. Fairfield County has a soil survey and provides advice on drainage. Below is a potential check list:

- Drainage: Is there enough slope to get the water to drain away from the house? Is there an existing drainage (tile) system in place? If so, is it in good condition? Have holes formed due to tile system failure? Is the outlet on a neighboring property? Is there an existing pond or wetland? If so, what condition are the structures in? Are there possible drainage easements on the property? If so, what are the regulations?
- Erodibility: Does the property have gully erosion and large water patterns? Is there a meandering stream? Will the loss of soil adversely affect my investment?
- Water Table: Is the ground going to be wet for a good portion of the year? This can affect the design to accommodate a basement.
- Floodplain: There are maps and soils descriptions that can indicate their locations.

The Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has pertinent information to help you evaluate a particular site. Many of the problems encountered can be overcome, but may require additional work and money. The simple fact of setting the proper elevation of the house foundation can alleviate many problems with drainage. The point is to make decisions early to avoid costly mistakes.

Many of the other local government agencies base their decisions on information pertaining to soils and their limitations. Soils interpretation records cover a broad aspect of conditions. Aspects covered by a rating system include:

- Sanitary Facilities: on-site septic systems/household sewage treatment systems (HSTS)
- Building Site Development: shallow excavations, dwellings with and without basements, small commercial buildings, local roads, lawns
- Construction Material: road fill, sand, gravel, topsoil
- Water Management: drainage, diversions, waterways

Capability and yields for crops, recreational, woodland, environmental planting, and wildlife habitat suitability are also rated in the soils interpretation records. You may benefit from looking at our website at [www.fairfieldswcd.org](http://www.fairfieldswcd.org) and other booklets: Pond Design & Management and Stream Management Guide.

The SWCD is an information and educational office which operates as a political subdivision with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Fairfield County. It works together with the federally funded United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). Ways in which the SWCD can help those looking at properties in Fairfield County:

- A soil map of the property can be created to determine what soil types are in a parcel. As stated on the previous page, soil descriptions with interpretation records can then be obtained. Information can be given digitally for free or paper for a charge.
- Aerial maps can be looked at over several different years to evaluate the history of the parcel. Helpful items, if visible, can include: tile, wet areas, utilities.
- The aerial map can also show if the property is in the floodplain or has a United States Geological Service (blue line) stream with clearly defined jurisdictional regulations.
- Is a wet pocket on the property on the National Wetland Inventory or considered a NRCS, Ohio EPA (OEPA), Army Corps of Engineers (ACoE) regulated wetland?
- The SWCD has a database of all the plans they have designed over the years and can tell you if they have worked on a particular parcel. A farm could have a conservation practice currently under contract with a USDA restriction/easement.
- If you are interested in having a pond on your property, the SWCD can review the location (watershed, soils, etc.) to determine whether it is feasible. A [Pond Design & Management Booklet](#) can be found at [www.fairfieldswcd.org](http://www.fairfieldswcd.org). If you have an existing pond, weed management and fish stocking advice is available.
- If you are considering the purchase of a farm, the SWCD and NRCS offer various management and planning programs including farmland preservation. Wildlife damage to crop complaints are made to the SWCD.
- If you are buying acreage that is lacking tree cover, the SWCD has an annual tree seedling sale each February through March with a pick up date in April.
- SWCD sells plat books which are published approximately every three years.

Again, for more information, go to [www.fairfieldswcd.org](http://www.fairfieldswcd.org) and like us on [Facebook](#). You can also find various permit forms under MS4 and urban development. If you would like to do your own research, below are some useful links.

Soil maps can be created at the Web Soil Survey site

<http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

Various years of aerials (from approx. 1994 to 2020 using the history time clock) can be seen on Google Earth (free download required).

<https://www.google.com/earth/>

National Wetlands Inventory information (not verified by ACoE)

<https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>

Floodplain information (also see RPC pages 11-12)

<https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/rules-and-regulations/rules-for-landowners/floodplains>



## **FAIRFIELD COUNTY AUDITOR**

One of the many functions of the Auditor's office is updating property information on all properties within Fairfield County including current owners, tax parcel numbers, property taxes, school districts, and current agricultural use values (CAUV) that carry tax recoupment penalties if withdrawn from the program. This is a good place to start gathering information about a particular parcel.

Fairfield County Auditor (located in the Fairfield Co. Courthouse)  
210 East Main Street, Room 201  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-652-7020 - CAUV specific 740-652-7036  
<http://realestate.co.fairfield.oh.us/>

The above website includes:

- Parcel Quick Search by owner or address
- Aerials (2000, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020)
- School District locations
- Subdivision plats
- Surveys
- FEMA floodplain/floodway
- Soil type acreage summaries

## **FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The commissioners do well in directing your questions to the proper agency. They are empowered by the State of Ohio to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public. They approve all major subdivisions with recommendations from the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission.

Fairfield County Commissioners  
(located in the Fairfield Co. Courthouse)  
210 East Main Street, Room 301  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-652-7090  
<http://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/COMMISH/>

## FAIRFIELD COUNTY RECORDER

Many parcels of land today come with some type of easements or covenants that may restrict their use. The most common easement type is for public improvements, such as sewer, sanitary, drainage, and utility. Preservation easements are starting to appear on plats more frequently to protect natural resources like streams and wetlands. There can also be an easement that allows a person to cross your property to get access to another piece of property or maintain something like a tile or pipe on your property. Other covenants such as mineral rights can be beneficial or devastating depending on your position on the matter at the time. Gathering this type of information is important for you as the buyer or developer. It also enables all parties involved to understand what type of assistance is needed.

If you are researching a parcel that is part of a subdivision, there may be a multitude of restrictions, from the size of the house you can build to whether or not you can have a shed or outbuilding. All of the covenants attached to a deed are there to create a certain environment for those who wish to live there. It is important that you understand what you are buying. Deeds are recorded in the Recorder's office. There is information you must have before you attempt to research a parcel:

1. Landowner's full name
2. How long they have owned the land (within 5 years of the purchase date)
3. Township and section number
4. The acreage

The information is recorded in volumes called grantor/grantee indexes. The grantor is the person who sold the property and the grantee is who bought it. This enables you to find deeds by knowing either party.

If the parcel is in a subdivision, then it is recorded in plat books under the full name of the subdivision. There is also an index for these. Mineral rights and liens are also made available here.

People use the services of attorneys or title companies to conduct this type of search. The information here is not made available to preclude the use of a professional in these matters. It is to familiarize yourself with where the information is maintained.

The information within the Recorder's office is made public. There are people there that can assist you in finding the information for which you are looking.

Fairfield County Recorder (located in the Fairfield Co. Courthouse)

210 East Main Street, Room 205

Lancaster, OH 43130

740-652-7100

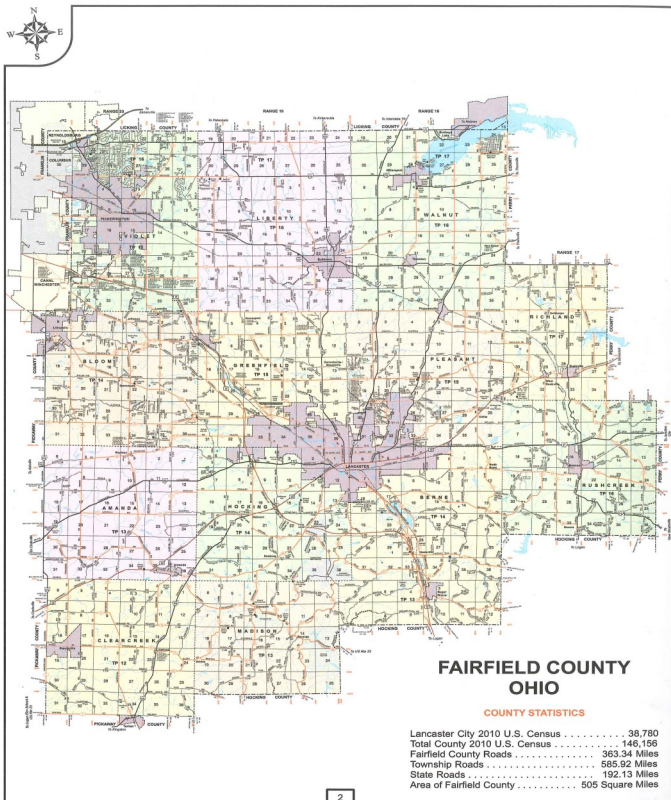
<https://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/Recorder/>

# TOWNSHIPS

Every township has its own regulations for the health, safety, and welfare of the public. They are also responsible for the maintenance of township roads. The township should be notified before any work is done within a township road right-of-way. This includes installing a driveway culvert and surfaces like concrete and asphalt.

If you have a specific purpose for the land or dwelling you are wanting to buy, it is very important that you check with the local zoning inspector for that township. The zoning inspector for the township is responsible for coordinating your needs with that of the community. Some areas are zoned for commercial use while others are strictly residential. A minimum lot size and road frontage may be required. Permits are required for various purposes. You need to involve the zoning inspector when you begin to formulate your plans. Zoning regulations can be changed, but it requires review by the zoning board and approval by the Board of Trustees.

The zoning inspectors and trustees are located within the township for which they are responsible. To date, not all townships in Fairfield County have been zoned. A map of townships is shown below. For a current list of zoning inspectors, go to [http://www.fairfieldcountyohio.gov/rpc/zoning\\_information.htm](http://www.fairfieldcountyohio.gov/rpc/zoning_information.htm).





## **FAIRFIELD COUNTY ENGINEER**

If a parcel has frontage on a county road, you should contact the county Engineer's office concerning any work to be done within the road right-of-way. Since the work to be done there has an effect on the safety to others using the road, a permit is normally required. Fairfield County has a minimum driveway culvert size. Also, the width of the right-of-way varies. Contact the Engineer's office for each location before making any assumptions.

Any problems outside the right-of-way are the responsibility of the landowner. Drainage problems are solved through cooperation between landowners or by civil suit.

When you build a house upstream from a road, the first floor living area should be above the lowest elevation of the road. There is always the potential for a storm large enough to build up to the point where it will go over the road. This is one instance where the elevation of your house is critical. Putting in a larger roadway culvert will not solve this issue. The water still has the potential of building up. It is recommended that the first floor elevation be a minimum of one foot above the road.

Maps and survey records are maintained in the Engineer's office. This information can be valuable in evaluating the potential use of the land. More information in greater detail is available on the website below. There is a page specific to right-of-way policy.

Fairfield County Engineer  
3026 West Fair Avenue  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-652-2300  
<http://www.fceo.org/>

## **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT)**

ODOT is responsible for building all state highways. Any time there is work to be performed within these rights-of way, a permit process must be followed. ODOT's Fairfield County Garage can help you or direct you to the necessary department within District 5. Site distance is always a concern when creating access onto a highway and may require the services of an engineer to perform the analysis. There is also a minimum culvert size requirement.

ODOT (Fairfield County Maintenance Garage)  
3265 West Fair Avenue  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-653-5961

[www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/D05/highwayMgt/Pages/FairfieldCounty.aspx](http://www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/D05/highwayMgt/Pages/FairfieldCounty.aspx)

District 5 website:

<https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odot/about-us/>

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

The energy required to heat, cool, and power your home can come from many sources. Common fuels are natural gas, fuel oil, propane, or electricity. The choices you have will depend on the area in which you will live. Electricity, fuel oil, or propane may be your only choices if you are in an area where natural gas taps aren't available. There are limits as to how far utilities are run before additional charges are incurred. Also, deposits may be required to begin services.

Keep in mind that it may be necessary to cross an adjacent property and an additional easement or right-of-way may be required and difficult to obtain. Contact the local utility company as soon as possible with specific information about your project in order to be sure adequate facilities are provided in a timely manner. Ample lead times are appreciated.

To determine what underground utilities exist on the property, you can contact OUPS to request phone response from local utility companies. You should also call them prior to any digging on the property. You will need to know the township and section number where the land is located and the address of the property, if it has one, otherwise, distances from the nearest road and cross road.

If there are existing established utilities on the property (gas lines, electric, etc.), there are likely easements and rights-of-way for those. You may want to research the right-of-way widths on each side of the utility line and what limitations or setbacks exist in that area.

Ohio Utilities Protection Services

811 or 800-362-2764

<http://www.oups.org/>

Another website that shows existing large natural gas lines in Fairfield County is the National Pipeline Mapping System:

<https://pvnpm.phmsa.dot.gov/PublicViewer/>

WARNING: Do not rely solely on this; it may not be all inclusive.

## **FAIRFIELD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

Whether the parcel you want to buy has a building on it or not, the health department has important information concerning potential problems. Its responsibility lies in monitoring septic systems, water wells, and hazardous materials. A permit is required for installing an on-site septic system and a water well. The soils, location, type, and size of the systems all enter into the decision as to whether the site will function properly. Some soils may not be suitable for leach fields. Others may require an easement to gain access to a perennial stream. Department of Health approval must be investigated early in your purchase-making process. You will be required to hire a soil scientist to evaluate the soils. The Department of Health may be aware of closed and active landfills which may affect your ability to drill a well near them. Your septic system must also be installed by an approved installer. Septic system permit step-by-step information including lists of soil consultants and installers can be found at <https://www.myfdh.org/Environmental-Division/Household-Sewage-Treatment-Systems.html>

Developers should start here early in the development process as you attempt to subdivide land into house lots. It is important to lay out subdivisions so as to minimize the difficulties encountered when the person buying the lot begins to build. It is not only your responsibility to provide a buildable lot, it is a requirement.

Fairfield Department of Health - Environmental Division  
1550 Sheridan Drive, Suite 100  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-652-2800 or 614-322-5245

<http://www.myfdh.org/Environmental-Division/Environmental-Health.html>

## **FAIRFIELD COUNTY UTILITIES**

The sanitary engineer can provide information on all sanitary sewer systems and public water systems installed in the unincorporated areas of the county. Not all of the public sewage treatment plants in the unincorporated areas are managed through this office. Some systems are managed by homeowner associations and monitored by the Department of Health or EPA. Information on existing capacities, location, and availability of facilities can be obtained at this office. All proposed plans for water and sewer systems must be submitted to this office for review.

Fairfield County Utilities  
6670 Lockville Road NW  
Carroll, OH 43112  
614-322-5200 or 740-652-7120

<https://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/util/>

## **FAIRFIELD COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (RPC)**

Long-range planning is important at the county and local level. Comprehensive planning provides a guide to the community's long-range goals for development. RPC provides assistance to the private and public sectors in development planning.

RPC was established in 1971 and has members from all the Fairfield County municipalities and townships and the Board of County Commissioners. Each member government appoints members to the commission.

The commission undertakes a wide variety of planning, advisory, administrative, and regulatory activities. The overall purpose of these activities is for the commission's member communities to work cooperatively to make Fairfield County an even better place to live and work. When subdividing land, there are local requirements. These requirements are established to maintain some uniformity to the whole land system. The Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing land splits and has classified these into major and minor subdivisions.

Minor subdivisions, better known as lot splits, are those involving divisions of land into five lots/parcels or fewer with frontage along an existing road or a recorded easement established prior to 1974. Remember, when a new lot is cut from a field, the result is two parcels. Minor subdivisions are processed by a simplified procedure once the buyer or seller shows that the proposed lot split is in accordance with health regulations and township zoning requirements.

Major subdivisions involve the division of land into six or more lots/parcels (including the remaining field, if any), any number of lots if any new streets are proposed, or the extension of public utilities. Major subdivisions are subject to intensive review by the RPC, and the process usually takes several months. Fees are applicable.

Any subdivision resulting in all parcels containing more than five acres and not involving any new streets or easements of access are exempt from subdivision regulations, as is the exchange or sale of land between neighbors when a new building site is not created. It is worth noting that parcels greater than five acres are not reviewed by the Department of Health either.

Compliance with the Fairfield County Floodplain Regulations is also handled through RPC. A floodplain building permit is required for most activities being undertaken in a floodplain. The owner/prospective owner of the property should check official floodplain maps thoroughly before proceeding very far with land acquisition or construction.

RPC deals only with property in the unincorporated areas of the county. Each municipality may have its own subdivision, zoning, and floodplain regulations. The mayor or clerk of each municipality can provide the name of the municipal contact person.

Regulations may provide provisions to allow for variances which are reviewed by a committee composed of technical staff. The Subdivision Regulations Committee meets monthly, and its recommendations are then reviewed by the RPC at its own monthly meeting. The floodplain variance committee meets as needed. Fees are charged by RPC to process lot splits and floodplain building permits. RPC staff is available to answer any questions during business hours.

Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission  
(located in the Fairfield Co. Courthouse)  
210 East Main Street, Room 302  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-652-7110

<https://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/rpc/>

If you are looking for a flood map, you can contact the floodplain coordinator at RPC or go to the FEMA Map Service Center:

<http://msc.fema.gov/portal>

## **OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (OEPA)**

The federally mandated “Clean Water Act” requires that USEPA monitor construction activities for discharged pollutants coming from construction sites.

Construction activities produce many different kinds of pollutants which may cause storm water contamination problems. Grading activities remove vegetation and other protective ground cover resulting in the exposure of underlying soil to the elements. This soil will eventually reach streams through erosion. The construction of buildings and roads can require the use of toxic or hazardous materials such as petroleum products, pesticides, and herbicides, and building materials such as asphalt, sealants, and concrete which can pollute storm water running off the construction site.

All construction sites which plan to disturb one acre or more must file a general construction permit with the OEPA. They must prepare and implement a “Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan”. This plan is based on “Best Management Practices” which can be found in the Rainwater and Land Development Manual at <https://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/storm/rainwater>, and these controls are to be used as part of the plan. This plan must accompany and be an integral part of the development plan. For guidance in preparing this portion of the development plan, contact either OEPA or Fairfield SWCD.

Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water  
614-644-2001  
<https://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/>



## **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (ODNR)**

ODNR has various departments that are of interest to landowners. For general information, go to <http://ohiodnr.gov/>.

The Division of Forestry has service foresters on staff to help you create a long term woodland plan for larger tracts of land. The contact information for the service forester covering Fairfield County can be found at <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-odnr/forestry/contact-us/aab-service-foresters>.

The Division of Water Resources has several links of interest. Information about private water wells can be found at <https://apps.ohiodnr.gov/water/maptechs/wellogs/> to determine when it was dug and the contractor who installed it, how deep, etc. Some even include a map if you need to find it. Groundwater information and mapping is at <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/geologic-survey/groundwater-resources/groundwater-maps-publications>.

The Ohio Dam Safety Program regulates ponds of certain size. More information on permitted dams and regulations at <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/water-resources/ohio-dam-safety>. The website also has information about the required Emergency Action Plans for permitted ponds. If there is a pond on the property you are considering to purchase, you can check to see if it is a permitted dam, or should be, and what the laws are for that type of dam. Another concern with ponds is dam/water ownership. It is not recommended to share ownership of a pond with a neighbor unless there are clear legal agreements indicating who is responsible for what and any sharing of maintenance and upkeep costs.

Dams on streams require OEPA and Army Corps of Engineers permitting even if a permit is not required by ODNR.

### **RUSH CREEK CONSERVANCY DISTRICT (RCCD)**

RCCD was established in 1961 for the purpose of flood control, managing stream flows, and the maintenance of the constructed dam facilities. It covers 160,000 acres in parts of Fairfield, Hocking, and Perry Counties. These acres drain into Rush Creek and its tributaries. The watershed originates in Perry County (New Lexington area), then drains west through Fairfield County to Bremen, and continues south into Hocking County, eventually winding its way to the Village of Sugar Grove where it connects to the Hocking River. A second watershed begins in Fairfield County near Rushville, draining south to Bremen and passing through Sugar Grove on its way to the Hocking River.

RCCD consists of 19 flood-control dams, 20 miles of channel improvement, and one mile of urban levee, with construction on the first flood-control structure beginning in 1966. The entire system combines to control flooding in an area that once devastated villages, homes, and families. They also have created areas of wildlife habitat plantings which have resulted in public areas for fishing and hunting. Rush Creek Lake which is 300 acres in size, is the largest structure built and is adjacent to 700 acres of wildlife habitat. This lake, along with five others, are open for public hunting and fishing.

Monies for the project have come from federal and state dollars, as well as local landowners through an assessment. Maintenance is continually being monitored by RCCD. RCCD is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Common Pleas judges of each of the three counties. If you are looking at property within this district, check to see if there is a structure on it. The tax assessment can be seen on the Fairfield County Auditor's website once you have completed a parcel search. There will be a tax assessment on your property tax.

Rush Creek Conservancy District  
134 N. Mulberry St., PO Box 56  
Bremen, OH 43107  
740-569-4500

## **HUNTER'S RUN CONSERVANCY DISTRICT (HRC D)**

HRC D was established in 1952 for many of the same reasons. It consists of 8 flood-control dams, 21 sediment control dams, 1.7 miles of channel modification, 22 bridges, and 8 miles of roads. Construction began in 1954 and continued through 1961. Hunter's Run structures control 50% of runoff that goes through Lancaster.

Hunter's Run Conservancy District  
PO Box 1139  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-409-2131

<https://huntersruncd.org/>

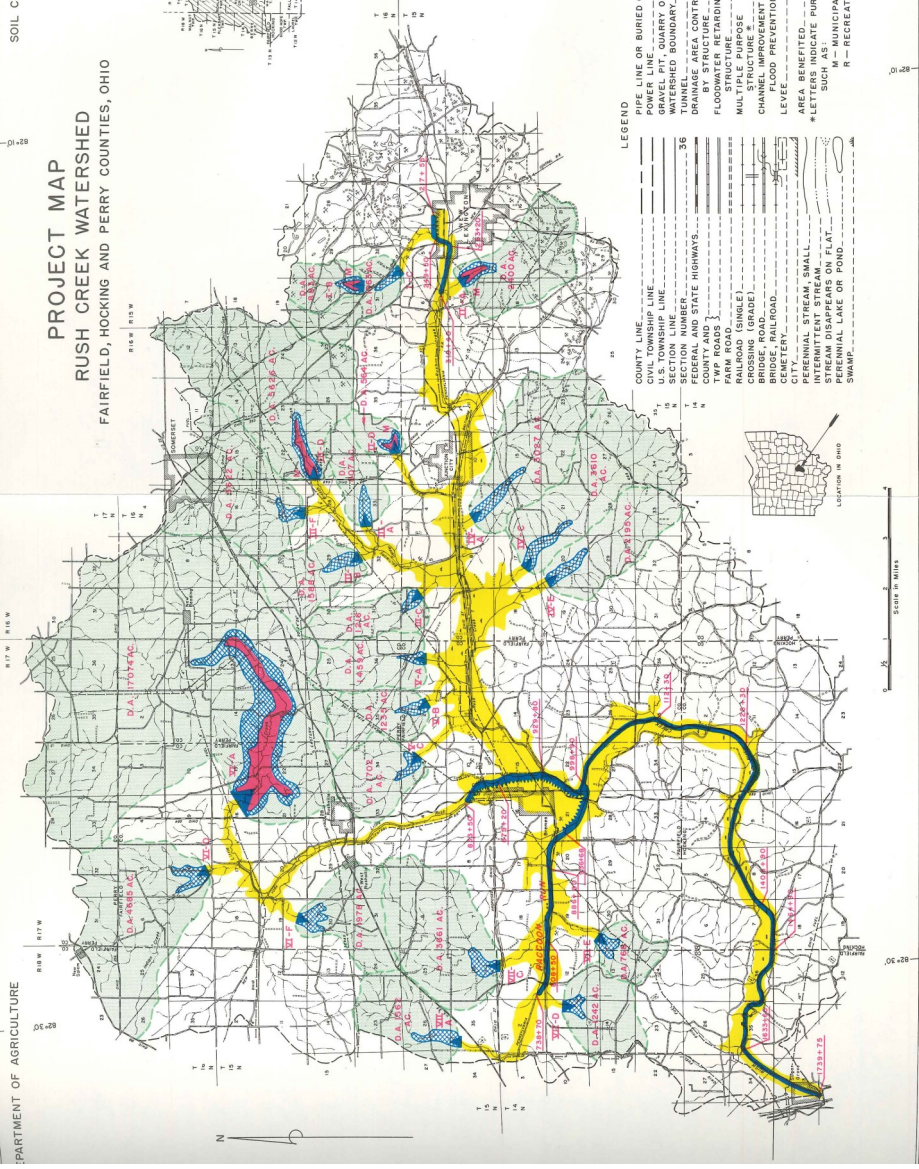
To see a map of each watershed, see pages 15-16.

ODNR Ohio Conservancy District Fact Sheet:

<http://uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/a4f35052-f5fd-4523-be17-356caebdcf8a~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

# PROJECT MAP RUSH CREEK WATERSHED FAIRFIELD, HOCKING AND PERRY COUNTIES, OHIO

39° 50'



- LEGEND**
- COUNTY LINE
  - U.S. TOWNSHIP LINE
  - SECTION LINE
  - FEDERAL AND STATE HIGHWAYS
  - COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP ROAD
  - FARM ROAD
  - RAILROAD (SINGLE)
  - BRIDGE (ROAD)
  - BRIDGE (RAILROAD)
  - CEMETERY
  - PERENNIAL STREAM - SMALL
  - INTERMITTENT STREAM
  - PERENNIAL LAKE OR POND
  - SWAMP
  - POWER LINE OR BURIED CABLE
  - GRAVEL PIT, QUARRY OR MINE
  - WATERSHED BOUNDARY
  - DRAINAGE AREA CONTROLLED BY STRUCTURE
  - FLOOD STRUCTURE
  - FLOOD STRUCTURE
  - MULTIPLE PURPOSE CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT FOR: FLOOD PREVENTION
  - LEVEE
  - AREA BENEFITTED
  - LETTERS INDICATE PURPOSE OF WATER SUPPLY: M - MUNICIPAL R - RECREATION

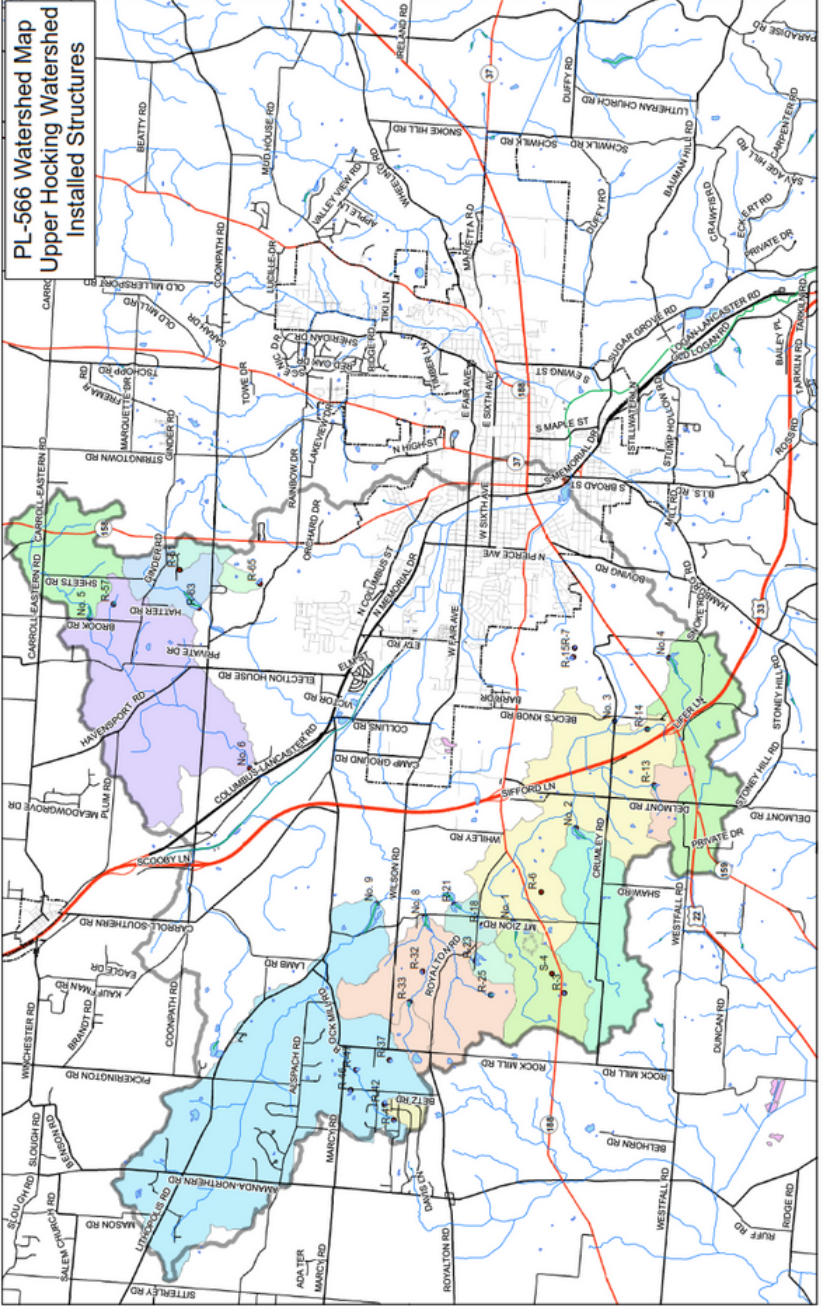


SCALE IN MILES

Figure 3

Revised August 1968

42



May 4, 2015



## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR RURAL LIVING

- When your house faces west on a north-south road, the prevailing winds will tend to make your house dustier than if it were on the west side facing east.
- When planting shrubbery or trees remember to visualize what they will be like 20 years from now. They may be blocking your line of sight when trying to pull out of your drive or crowding your house with no room to grow. No plantings should be made in the legal road right-of-way. Do not plant trees under power lines. Tree roots can clog drainage tile. Try to plant trees at least 75' away from underground perforated tile. Do not plant trees or shrubs on a pond dam; roots will cause leakage as they grow. Are your trees or shrubs invasive, rather than native to the area? Will they take over the landscape?
- Trees around your house can lower the temperature about 10 degrees in hot weather. Remember, tree leaves, seeds and/or fruit can plug downspouts.
- Driveway turnarounds are necessary for safety. Do not back out onto any public road.
- Never connect downspouts from roofs to your house footer drain or perimeter drains around the leach field. This adds surface water to a system that is designed to handle subsurface water.
- Road ditches and water patterns are the equivalent to the storm sewer system built into infrastructure of an urbanized area. Filling in a ditch or a water pattern is the equivalent of plugging a storm sewer; flooding can occur and road right-of-way regulations can be violated.
- Do not depend on existing agricultural field tile as your only source for solving drainage problems.
- Ohio's Drainage Law can be reviewed at [http://erieconserves.org/wp-content/uploads/Drain\\_Laws\\_OSUE\\_8221.pdf](http://erieconserves.org/wp-content/uploads/Drain_Laws_OSUE_8221.pdf). A key piece of advice is to not back up water onto neighboring properties.
- Don't pollute! Don't throw grass clippings or yard waste into any water course or pattern. Keep any compost/manure away that could leach into water.
- Do not build structures (house, barn, shed, etc.) in or too close to a water pattern.



- Talk to the previous owner or current seller about the history of the property and its drainage. Where are hidden items such as tile, septic, well, fuel oil tanks, etc.?
- Visit the property during or just after a heavy rainstorm to see how the drainage works.
- The Army Corps of Engineers may regulate various stream activities. Call 304-399-5210 to inquire whether you may need a permit for a stream crossing, culvert, etc.

## **LAND DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST**

Subdivision platting requires the services of a professional surveyor and/or professional engineer.

If you are researching a parcel for a housing or commercial development, check with the local zoning inspector and RPC for the schedule of approval steps and a general time frame for completing the process.

Prepare a concept sketch to submit to RPC for review. Remember fees may be applicable.

Preliminary plans prepared and submitted to RPC will be reviewed by various agencies for completeness and checked to see if the required regulations have been met. The plan will then be reviewed by the Subdivision Regulations Committee for compliance with the subdivision regulations. If approved, it will then be brought before RPC. It can then be approved, rejected, or approved with conditions based upon compliance with the subdivision regulations.

You must then prepare the final plat and construction drawings and submit them to RPC. It then follows the same path as the preliminary plan.

Continue to work with RPC to obtain construction drawing approval. Once the drawings are approved, securing of necessary bonds and development agreements are needed before construction can begin.

Once the final plat is approved, the plat must be recorded in the Fairfield County Auditor and Recorder office.

*Publication by*



## FAIRFIELD SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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