

## Time is Running Out to Apply for H2Ohio's Water Quality Incentive Program

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – There is less than one month left to apply for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Water Quality Incentive Program (WQIP). The new program, under Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's H2Ohio initiative, is designed to encourage farmers to aid in conservation and improve water quality. ODNR is accepting applications through Jan. 29, 2021.

"Every step toward improving the quality of water in Ohio is crucial," said Governor Mike DeWine. "I encourage farmers to take advantage of this incentive program as a way to contribute to clean water for future generations of Ohioans."

The new program is being offered in combination with the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP is a USDA conservation program that offers farmers and landowners financial compensation for taking cropland out of production and establishing conservation practices. The H2Ohio Water Quality Incentive Program will offer a one-time payment of \$2,000 per acre for new Lake Erie CREP wetlands and forested riparian buffers (buffer strip with trees) to help improve water quality in the Lake Erie watershed. Wetlands and riparian buffers act as filters to reduce nutrient loading into waterways and help reduce flooding. Riparian buffers also stabilize streambanks to reduce soil erosion.

"The WQIP program will be vital to achieving the water quality goals set forth by H2Ohio," ODNR Director Mary Mertz said. "We want as many farmers as possible to take advantage of this unique opportunity that benefits them and ultimately the people of Ohio."

To qualify for the H2Ohio Water Quality Incentive Program, interested farmers and landowners must be eligible for CREP and submit an H2Ohio WQIP application during the announced sign-up period prior to their CREP contract approval. Applicants do not have to sign up for CREP prior to applying for the H2Ohio WQIP. However, if the applicant is approved for the WQIP, an approved CREP contract will be required to receive the WQIP payment. Applications will be scored and selected based on criteria to prioritize the best projects to improve water quality. For qualifying criteria click [here](#).

Farmers interested in more information can contact ODNR technical staff for additional program details, project planning assistance, and help with the application process. To contact an ODNR representative in your area click [here](#).

The new incentive program is one of several H2Ohio efforts currently underway by ODNR including the Forder Bridge Project in Paulding County, the Fruth Wetland Nature Preserve in Seneca County, the St. Joseph Confluence Reconnection in Williams County, the Van Order Wetland and Forest Restoration in Henry County, the Sandusky Headwaters Preserve in Crawford County, and the new wetland area east of the Andreoff Wildlife Area in Wyandot County.

H2Ohio is Governor Mike DeWine's initiative to ensure safe and clean water in Ohio. It is a

comprehensive, data-driven approach to improving water quality over the long term. H2Ohio focuses on encouraging agricultural best management practices, restoring, and enhancing wetlands, and replacing home septic systems to reduce nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms. For more information on the H2Ohio initiative, please visit [h2.ohio.gov](https://h2.ohio.gov).

*ODNR ensures a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Visit the ODNR website at [ohiodnr.gov](https://ohiodnr.gov).*

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