

H2Ohio

Accomplishments for Fiscal Year
2025



h2.ohio.gov



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO

"Ohio is truly the heart of it all, and we must continue to protect our most valuable resource, our water, so that we can continue to thrive for generations to come. H2Ohio continues to use the best science and data available to inform our water quality decisions."

– Mike DeWine, Governor



Department of
Agriculture

Department of
Natural Resources

Environmental
Protection Agency

Lake Erie
Commission

H2Ohio Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2025

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Letter from the Governor

▲ ABOVE: Governor Mike DeWine participates in 2025 Fish Ohio Day on July 17, 2025. H2Ohio is making great strides in protecting our waters and improving the health of Ohio’s many waterways.

Dear Fellow Ohioans,

At the beginning of my administration, I created H2Ohio to protect Lake Erie, reduce harmful algal blooms, and improve water quality throughout Ohio. Through this program, we have invested more resources in water quality and water infrastructure than at any point in Ohio’s history.

H2Ohio is the first comprehensive plan of its kind in Ohio, and we have seen promising outcomes. What started with a focus in northwest Ohio has now expanded statewide and includes Ohio’s large rivers.

Today, more than 3,000 Ohio farmers are following best practices on more than 2.2 million acres of farmland to reduce nutrient runoff. Additionally, more than 200 wetlands across Ohio have been built or restored to improve our waterways and landscapes by filtering out nutrients before they cause problems in our water.

Prior to the creation of H2Ohio, some communities did not have proper access to drinking water - now they do. Over the last six years, H2Ohio has removed lead pipes from 183 day-cares and awarded 586 grants totaling \$72.1 million to communities across the state to ensure all Ohioans have access to critical water services.

I thank our many partners and the Ohio General Assembly for their continued dedication to H2Ohio. Through this program, we have set the stage for a long-term solution to improving Ohio’s water quality for future generations.



Very respectfully yours,
Mike DeWine
Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio

H2Ohio continues to deliver measurable progress in improving Ohio’s water quality through agricultural best practices, targeted wetland restoration, large river conservation, and water infrastructure improvements.

Since its inception, Governor Mike DeWine’s H2Ohio initiative has demonstrated a science-driven, collaborative approach to reducing nutrient runoff and enhancing the state’s waterways.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) continued to drive success in agricultural conservation, with over 3,200 farmers enrolling 2.2 million acres in nutrient management plans.

These efforts have led to a significant reduction in nutrient runoff, particularly phosphorus, across Ohio’s agricultural landscape. These voluntary practices not only protect water quality but also enhance soil health, demonstrating the power of collaboration between the agricultural community and the state.



The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) continued to expand H2Ohio’s wetland restoration efforts by leveraging funding, data, and partnerships to complete impactful projects.

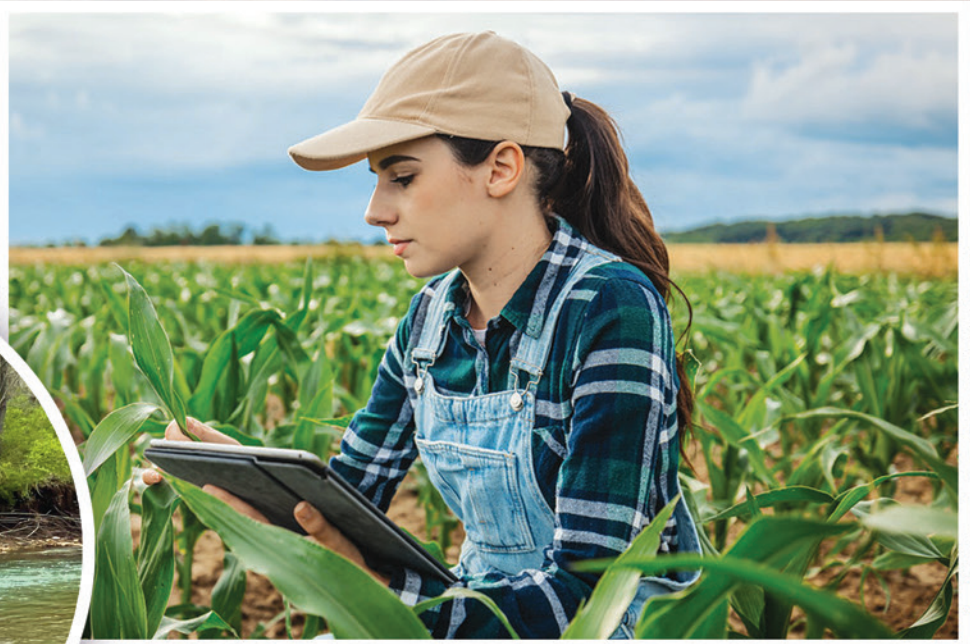
As of June 2025, a total of 458 wetland projects are in progress or completed through the H2Ohio Wetlands Grant Program and the Water Quality Incentive Program. Notable achievements include the Rainbow Run restoration and the Clear Fork Mohican River project, which together enhance nutrient filtration, prevent erosion, and protect valuable native habitats.

In Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) awarded more than \$18.5 million to 15 water infrastructure projects across 13 counties, improving water and waste-water access for more than 8,000 households and over 25 businesses.

These investments eliminated over 200 unsafe private wells, added or upgraded more than 15 miles of water and sewer lines, and helped connect nine communities to safer regional systems. By replacing aging infrastructure and extending reliable service to underserved areas, H2Ohio continues to support long-term public health and economic resilience.

H2Ohio’s Rivers program also made significant strides in preserving and enhancing Ohio’s waterways, with a focus on improving water quality, removing pollutants, and enhancing recreational opportunities.

In FY25, the program invested \$31.5 million to clear 190 river miles of litter, remove outdated dams, and preserve over 1,600 acres of high-quality riverbank. The program supported 32 liveries that engage the public in community-based litter cleanup.



H2Ohio is Ohio’s first statewide, comprehensive initiative that uses a collaborative approach to improve water quality long-term.

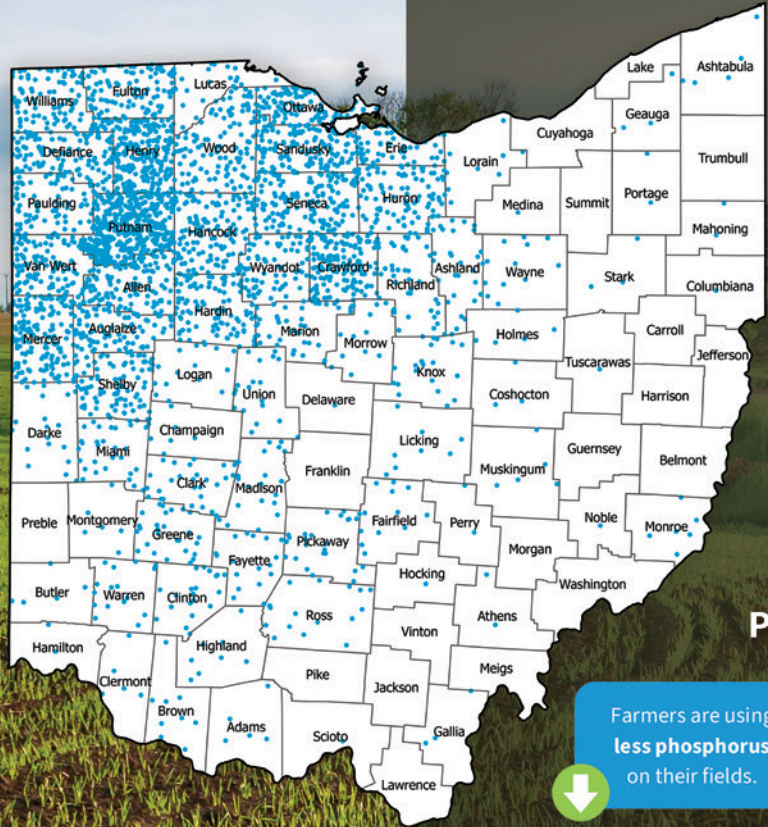
H2Ohio is making real, noticeable improvements in water quality across the state. With ongoing investments, the program is pushing forward on its goal of providing cleaner, healthier water for everyone in Ohio.

Now in its sixth year, H2Ohio is proving to be a great example of how science and state-led efforts can drive meaningful changes in water quality.

Ohio Department of Agriculture

From Director Brian Baldrige:

“Farmers are not just managing nutrients through H2Ohio, they're protecting the water we all depend on. By consistently implementing conservation practices that are backed by real data, Ohio farmers are ensuring a healthier environment and a hopeful future for agriculture and the generations to come.”



H2Ohio Contract Density Map

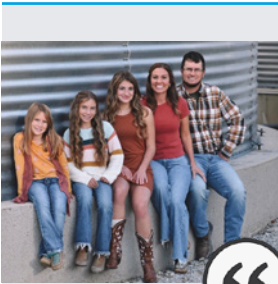
– Each blue dot represents a farm participating in H2Ohio. Nearly 1 in 2 farmland acres across the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) are enrolled.

Positive trends over the last 20-30 years:



Program Successes

Ohio farmers’ ongoing dedication to Governor DeWine’s H2Ohio initiative is contributing to improved water quality across the state. Through science-based conservation practices and new technology, data shows that producers are making a significant difference in reducing nutrient runoff.



“Because of H2Ohio, we have been able to implement soil grid sampling on all our farms this year. This allows us to place nutrients where they are needed and not overapply in some areas. H2Ohio gave us the opportunity to move forward with new technology and help preserve the land for our next generation to farm.”

Nicholas Dailey, Brown County, H2Ohio Farmer

By the Numbers



3,200 Agreements
signed by producers to implement practices on the farm



2.2 Million acres
enrolled in Voluntary Nutrient Management Plans



27,200 acres
of watershed improved by conservation ditches



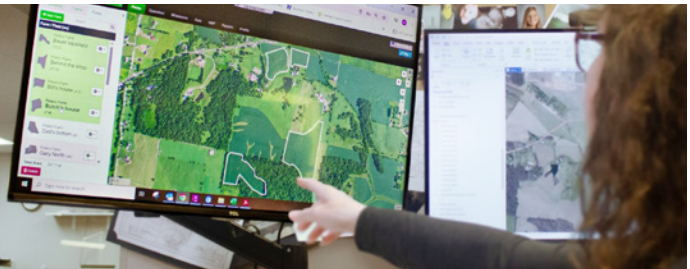
+140
agricultural retailers and independent crop consultants directly supporting producers

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), with support from local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), continues to guide farmers through the adoption and implementation of H2Ohio. After six years, notable achievements and trends are

being measured by soil tests and information collected through Voluntary Nutrient Management Plans (VNMPs).

VNMPs are customized nutrient management plans that prescribe the exact amount of each nutrient needed on the farm. It is one of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) offered through H2Ohio and a requirement for all H2Ohio participants. Data compiled from producers and additional sources of information show farmers are applying less fertilizer and reducing nutrient runoff year after year.

ODA is now using MyFarms to compare program participant VNMP soil test data with historical yield results, fertilizer sales, and live-stock inventories. The results show significantly more phosphorus is being removed than applied to farm fields in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) region, confirming a decreased trend of phosphorus in the soil over the last two to three decades. The downward trend in phosphorus levels in the soil is a positive indicator of H2Ohio’s progress to reduce nutrient runoff from farmland.



SWCDs collaborate with producers to use MyFarms software to create VNMPs.

Farmer participation in H2Ohio remains at an all-time high, with more than 3,200 farmers enrolling more than 2.2 million acres of cropland across the state. Previously only offered to producers in the 24 Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) counties, ODA expanded its footprint in 2024, offering incentives to 500 producers outside of the WLEB and across the rest of the state. SWCDs are providing technical assistance and training for producers on H2Ohio record keeping, practice standards, and development and implementation of VNMPs.



Farmers in northwest Ohio are in their fifth year of implementing a VNMP plus one or more of the core BMPs: overwintering cover crop, manure incorporation, precision application, and subsurface placement.

These voluntary, cost-effective conservation practices are being implemented on 1.85 million acres of cropland, which is approximately 43% of cropland or nearly one of every two fields in the WLEB.

Enrolled and Completed Practices 2024

H2Ohio requires farmers to implement and report completed BMPs to their local SWCD or ODA to verify completion of the practice before a payment is processed. In 2024, producers in the WLEB completed the development and implementation of VNMPs on over 1.7 million acres of cropland. In addition to VNMP implementation, producers completed more than 2 million acres of additional best management practices on enrolled cropland to reduce nutrient loss and improve soil health.

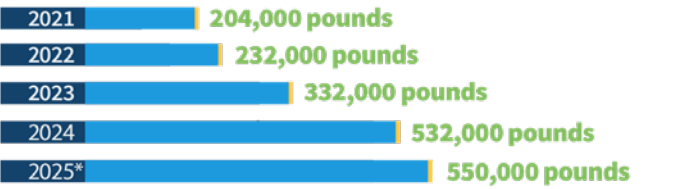
The data below shows the number of acres that have completed specific BMPs and incentive payments for each BMP.

WLEB (24 county) Completed BMP and Incentives Crop Year 2024

2024 Best Management Practices	Completed Practice Acres	Incentive Amount Paid
VNMP Implementation	1,736,000	\$23,417,000
Precision Phosphorus Application	953,000	\$4,766,000
Subsurface Phosphorus Placement	447,000	\$9,095,000
Manure Incorporation	44,000	\$2,258,000
Overwintering Cover Crop	572,000	\$21,010,000
TOTAL	3,752,000	\$60,546,000

rounded to the nearest thousand

Estimated ODA Phosphorus Source Reduction Progress



*Potential load reduction based on enrolled acres

Over the last five years, based on completed practice data, the agricultural industry has continued to trend in the right direction by reducing the amount of phosphorus coming off farmland. Based on the 2024 completed BMP data, ODA estimates agricultural producers reduced the phosphorus source load by 532,000 pounds in the WLEB. Based on enrollment in the WLEB, H2Ohio practices have the potential to reduce the phosphorus source load by as much as 550,000 pounds in 2025.

Conservation Ditch Program

Construction of a conservation ditch is an additional practice offered through H2Ohio to help improve water quality. The program incentivizes SWCDs and county engineers to construct conservation ditches in agricultural watersheds across the state.

Conservation ditches slow the flow of water, allow the processing of nutrients by plants, and remove sediment from storm runoff, ultimately improving downstream water quality and drainage for the watershed. Over the long term, established conservation ditches require little ongoing maintenance and can increase nutrient reduction results year after year.



28

total projects approved for construction

\$11.7 million

dedicated to the construction of ditches in agricultural watersheds

22.6 miles

of conservation ditches will benefit more than 22,300 acres of watershed

9,875 pounds

estimated phosphorus reduction load per year



Partnerships

The partnership between Ohio's local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and ODA is central to the success of H2Ohio. SWCDs serve as trusted, conservation leaders in their communities and provide technical assistance, administer producer contracts, guide producers through the adoption of best management practices, and ensure that BMPs are implemented before payments are made.

SWCDs are currently managing 3,200 H2Ohio contracts that cover 2.2 million acres of cropland across the state. Districts have processed \$155 million in incentive payments to producers for completed practices since the launch of the program.



“The H2Ohio initiative has been a catalyst for agricultural conservation in Erie County. The program has allowed our district to strengthen our support to local farmers and build new partnerships in an effort to improve our soil health and protect our water. We are proud of the improvements to nutrient management and increased use of winter cover crops in our area and look forward to the increasing trend of conservation this program has fostered.”

Breann Hohman, District Director, Erie SWCD

Support from agricultural retailers and crop consultants is also vital to the success of H2Ohio. These trusted advisors provide their expertise in nutrient and fertilizer science to help H2Ohio participants make informed decisions and implement nutrient management strategies that align with H2Ohio.



The MyFarms software allows ag retailers and crop consultants provide technical assistance by directly uploading farmer data and report practices.

- +140 private industry specialists contributed to the development of Voluntary Nutrient Management Plans
- 40 agricultural retailers and independent crop consultants also assisted in the development of H2Ohio contracts
- 600,000 acres of cropland enrolled in H2Ohio thanks to private industry specialists



“H2Ohio has been a great financial tool to help farmers incorporate new practices into their farming operations. In my experience as a crop consultant, I have witnessed an increase in farmers utilizing GPS soil sampling, Precision application, cover crops, and subsurface phosphorus placement. I believe these are all valuable practices in helping improve the water quality in the Western Lake Erie Basin.”

Cody Brubaker, Crop Consultant,
Nutrien Ag Solutions

Research and Outreach

Research and data play a critical role in understanding and improving water quality. ODA’s analysis of current datasets from the 14-county Maumee River Watershed shows that, in general, farmers are not over-applying phosphorus. In fact, more phosphorus is being removed from fields through crop harvest than what is applied each year. New MyFarms data also reveals that 97% of farm fields in the Maumee region have low to moderate phosphorus runoff risk.

This reflects a decades-long trend of decreasing phosphorus application, even as crop yields have steadily increased, resulting in declining soil test phosphorus levels across the region over the same period.



“The data collected through H2Ohio has provided Ohio’s farmers with a clearer picture of the real progress being made in nutrient management. One of the most significant trends we’re seeing is a consistent decrease in soil test phosphorus levels across participating acres, along with a measurable deficit of phosphorus applied versus phosphorus removed by crops. These trends demonstrate that voluntary conservation efforts, supported by sound science and farmer participation, are working. H2Ohio is helping farmers fine-tune practices that protect water quality while sustaining productive agriculture for the next generation.”

Jordan Hoewischer, Director of Water
Quality and Research, Ohio Farm Bureau
Federation



Staff collects water quality samples for the CAP fertilizer project.

Conservation Action Project (CAP)

On-farm demonstration plots are a valuable tool for agricultural research. Grassroots organizations like the Conservation Action Project (CAP) are performing trials on working farms to assess various fertilizer rates, including zero phosphorus application on fields with low phosphorus soil tests and its impact on crop yield. After the first year, results from CAP testing show there was no yield increase on plots where phosphorus fertilizer was applied as compared to plots where no phosphorus was used. In all trials, CAP found that there was no economic advantage to applying phosphorus fertilizer compared to zero application. This research, funded through H2Ohio, provides farmers with confidence that soil testing required by H2Ohio is reliable, and current fertilizer guidelines incorporate safety margins that will not result in a drop in yield.

Budget

In 2024, ODA invested \$60.6 million in continued funding to focus on water quality improvement and nutrient load reduction. With carryover funds from the previous fiscal year, ODA committed \$78 million to H2Ohio practices in the WLEB and \$7 million for the ongoing development and implementation of VNMPs across the rest of the state. Another \$10 million is dedicated to the construction of conservation ditches.



Vision for the Future

ODA is focused on reducing nutrient runoff in the rural landscape while also maintaining agricultural production. Looking ahead, ODA plans to expand collaboration with private industry to develop market-driven incentives for farmers who demonstrate good stewardship. To build on the program’s momentum, ODA will encourage new H2Ohio participants to adopt better management practices on their farms.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

From Director Mary Mertz:

“With the help of the H2Ohio initiative, ODNR has been able to restore, create, and enhance wetlands across the state. Our wetland projects help remove harmful pollutants, reduce the impact of harmful algal blooms, and ensure Ohio’s water is clean and safe. Our project sites are working year-round to clean our water, provide places for Ohioans to get outside and enjoy nature, and provide habitat for native wildlife. Each project is just one part towards achieving our long-term goal of cleaner, accessible water resources for future generations of Ohioans.”



By the Numbers for FY 2025

 **65**
new wetland projects started

 **\$30.7M**
total funding invested

 **24**
conservation partners

 **1,600**
new acres of wetland and associated habitat restoration

Program Successes

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) uses science and data to determine the best locations and designs for new and restored wetlands, which are essential for filtering out excess nutrients that harm Ohio’s water quality. Since 2019, H2Ohio’s wetland program has continued to develop and build on its success by channeling the power of partnerships. H2Ohio works with private landowners, local governments, and non-profits to improve water quality. As of June 2025, there are 458 projects within both the H2Ohio Wetlands Grant Program and Water Quality Incentive Program.

Part of H2Ohio’s strategy is to target areas where restored wetlands can make the biggest impact. With the Clear Fork Mohican River Wetland Restoration project, more than 17 acres will be transformed with reforested riverbanks and a restored floodplain. These changes will keep the water on the soil longer—allowing more time to soak up nutrients and reduce erosion. The lasting impact leads to cleaner water flowing into the Clear Fork Mohican River, which means better drinking water, improved outdoor recreation opportunities, and enhanced wildlife habitat.

The H2Ohio Students Take Action program also had another successful year. During FY25, they held 58 events reaching 1,679 students. Staff also reached an additional 7,975 students during other activities, including camps, career fairs, and other events.



Paddling event after performing maintenance to wood duck boxes at Findley State Park.

Budget

The H2Ohio budget included \$30.7 million in FY 2025 for ODNR to create, restore, and enhance wetlands around Ohio. Additionally, ODNR leveraged public and private partnerships to fund projects across the state. The H2Ohio Wetland Restoration Program continues to grow with the addition of 65 new water quality projects at the time of the report.

Partnerships

Every partner is vital, and these expansive collaborations lead to concrete results. Through H2Ohio, ODNR has partnered with 91 different conservation partners on 458 projects to restore over 19,000 acres of wetlands and other natural infrastructure.

This year, ODNR received \$2,396,500 in funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to support three wetland restoration projects. These projects help advance the shared mission of H2Ohio and GLRI to reduce nutrient runoff to combat harmful algal blooms.

Transforming Ohio’s water quality takes creativity and an all-of-the-above approach. In FY 2025, H2Ohio continued to team up with different partners who share the same goal of improved water quality, such as the Henry-Wood Sportsmans Alliance for the Laskey Family Preserve Wetland Restoration project.

By the Numbers - Overall

 **458**
total wetland projects

 **322**
wetland projects completed

 **\$180M**
total funding invested

 **91**
conservation partners

 **19,007**
new acres of wetland and associated habitat restoration

When completed, this project will convert 37 acres of land to improve water quality. Trees will be strategically placed to act as beaver dams, slowing down the flow of water that will eventually pool in 3.7 acres of restored wetland. The Henry-Wood Sportsmans Alliance recognizes that clean water means better habitat, which goes hand-in-hand with our shared goal of conservation.

Notable FY25 Projects

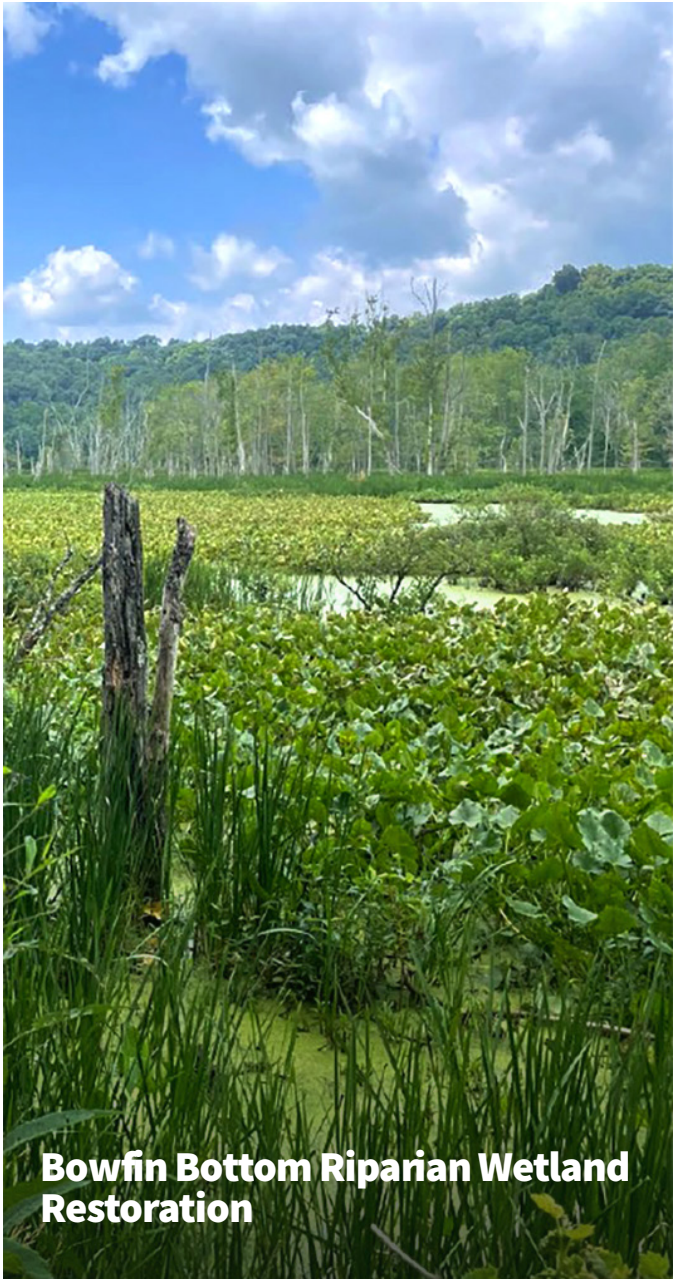


This project is the third H2Ohio project to expand the Rainbow Run Wetlands in Clark County. This project connects to the previous wetland projects, increasing connectivity and water quality.

Collaborator: Tecumseh Land Trust and private landowners

Restoration: 11 Acres

Phosphorus Reduction: 38.5 lbs/year



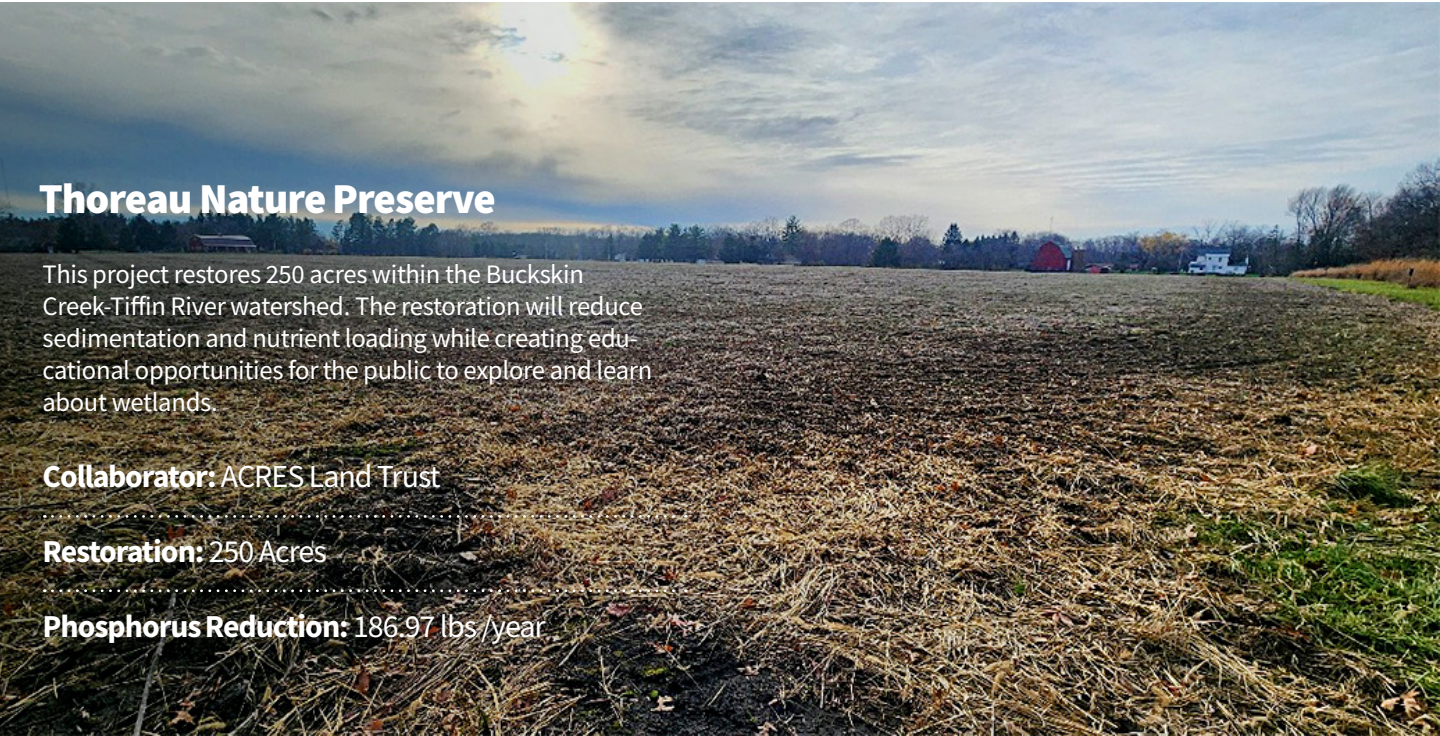
Bowfin Bottom Riparian Wetland Restoration

This project in Holmes County restores historical riparian and floodplain wetlands along 3,860 feet of Killbuck Creek and the lower 1,500 feet of an intermittent headwater stream that has been altered in the last century.

Collaborator: Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

Restoration: 88.8 Acres

Phosphorus Reduction: 72 lbs /year



Thoreau Nature Preserve

This project restores 250 acres within the Buckskin Creek-Tiffin River watershed. The restoration will reduce sedimentation and nutrient loading while creating educational opportunities for the public to explore and learn about wetlands.

Collaborator: ACRES Land Trust

Restoration: 250 Acres

Phosphorus Reduction: 186.97 lbs /year



EJ Mackenbach Preserve Restoration

This project restores agriculture fields to approximately four acres of wetlands and 27 acres of upland native plantings. H2Ohio is facilitating the project through a grant from the GLRI. This project supports both the goals of GLRI and H2Ohio due to its nutrient-reduction focus. This project is located at a future public park in Auglaize County that will benefit the community.

Collaborator: Heritage Trails Park District, Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Restoration: 4.6 Acres

Phosphorus Reduction: 26.13 lbs /year



Black Swamp Nature Center

Funded in partnership with GLRI, this project aims to restore floodplain, wetland, and wet prairie habitat along Flatrock Creek. This project is expected to reduce phosphorus loading within the Flatrock Creek-Auglaize River watershed.

Collaborator: The Nature Conservancy

Restoration: 30 Acres

Phosphorus Reduction: 111.75 lbs /year



Unger Park Restoration

The Crawford Park District restores a 2-acre wetland at Unger Park. The wetland is currently unable to properly function due to the collapse of an old eight-inch clay agricultural drainage tile running underneath it and through the dike. The restoration of this wetland will reduce nutrient loads that would otherwise enter the Sandusky River from surrounding farmland.

Collaborator: Crawford Park District

Restoration: 2 Acres

Phosphorus Reduction: 5.3 lbs /year

Partner Quotes



“Our wetland project was part of a multi-phased assignment which began with the removal of noxious weeds and vegetation. Richard DeWitt worked closely with Wyandot Soil & Water Conservation District Technician, Todd Karg, to plan and implement an excavation plan that would best incorporate the natural resources already available on the property to create a complementary wetland for local wildlife. Finally, the project culminated in the broadcast of a restorative grass seed mix.

We appreciated the guidance, responsiveness, dedication, and hard work from the Wyandot Soil & Water Conservation District team. I don’t believe we would have had the confidence or wherewithal to even consider doing the project without their knowledge and expert guidance. When Todd explained the Lake Erie CREP and H2Ohio \$2,000 bonus, I immediately began planning for future conservation projects! Thank you, Governor DeWine, and thank you, Ohio Department of Natural Resources.”

Sandra Michelle Hall , Wyandot County, WQIP Participant



“I would say the biggest benefit of the ODNR H2Ohio Grant Program is the flexibility of the projects. Unlike other funding sources, all aspects of projects do not have to fit into a box – the program has the flexibility to be designed to fit the wants and needs of a landowner. Doing this and reducing the red tape that a landowner needs to go through are huge benefits for the program.”

Manuel Lay, Williams SWCD District Technician



“As stewards of the land and natural resources of Richland County, we are deeply grateful for the support of our partners who help make our conservation projects possible. The H2Ohio program has funded critical wetland restoration in our county that will improve water quality in our drinking water reservoirs, lakes, and streams. This program is vital to meet the conservation needs of our county residents and everyone downstream of us.”

Jordan S. Tackett , Operations Director, Richland County Park District



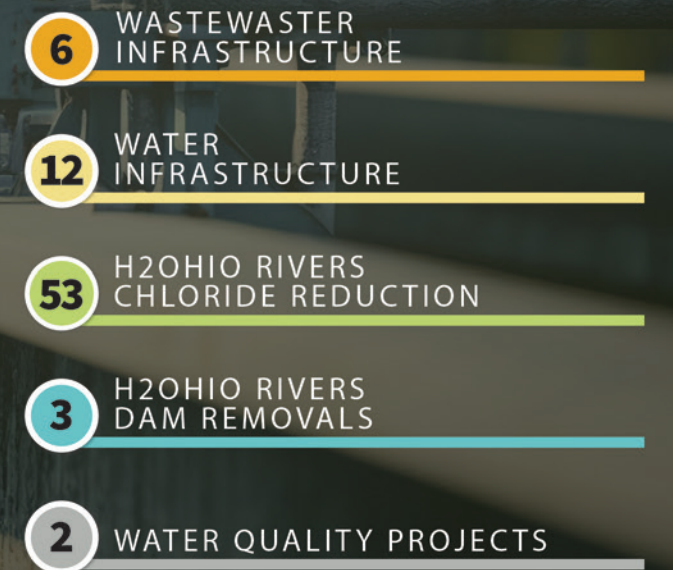
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

From Director John Logue:

“At Ohio EPA, we are proud to play a central role in H2Ohio delivering real, measurable improvements to the health, safety, and quality of life for Ohioans. From eliminating harmful contaminants to expanding reliable water and sewer service, these projects are making a lasting difference in communities across the state. By investing in smart, sustainable infrastructure, we’re protecting public health, supporting economic development, and preserving Ohio’s water resources for future generations.”



STATEWIDE PROJECTS FY2025



Program Successes

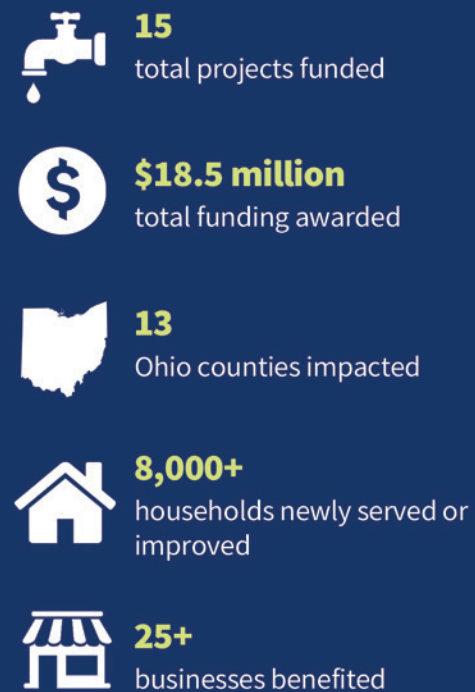
Water Infrastructure Highlights

In FY25, Ohio EPA awarded more than \$18.5 million in H2Ohio funding to support 15 water infrastructure projects across the state. These investments focus on regionalization, connecting smaller or underserved communities to larger, more reliable water systems, improving public health, reducing operational costs for communities, and boosting long-term sustainability.



By the Numbers

Impact of FY25 Water Infrastructure Investments



By the Numbers (continued)

Impact of FY25 Water Infrastructure Investments



Notable Projects & Outcomes

Village of Donnelsville (Clark County) \$5,000,000

The Village of Donnelsville’s aquifer was contaminated by volatile organic compounds that migrated into local drinking water wells. This project will build a water distribution system that extends water from Clark County’s Park Layne public water system to Donnelsville, connecting over 200 residents to a safe, reliable public water system.

Findlay (Hancock County) \$1,000,000

This funding will support the Spring Lake subdivision in Findlay by helping repair the neighborhood’s broken, deteriorating sewer pipelines, which regularly caused collection system backups and odors around the subdivision. These repairs will ensure that the 100 homes in the neighborhood have access to safe and reliable sewer services.

Gallipolis (Gallia County) \$1,000,000

H2Ohio funding allowed Gallipolis to replace aging water mains and other drinking water infrastructure that has reached the end of its useful life. Frequent water main breaks in the area have led to boil water advisories, and the upgrades aim to address these issues.



Guernsey County \$1,000,000

Sewer access will be extended on a four-mile stretch of US 40 east of Interstate 77, from approximately Corduroy Road to Route 265. A county-owned wastewater treatment facility will also be built as part of the project. These upgrades will allow the county to further develop the land for both residential and commercial uses.

Lakeview (Logan County) \$1,000,000

This project will provide residents with access to safe and reliable drinking water by helping to fund the construction of approximately 2,400 linear feet of new 8" waterlines, extending water service to an area that no longer meets private well water regulations.

Madison Water District (Hamilton County) \$1,000,000

This project will tie 11 properties, including six public water systems, in the Lincoln Fields area into Madison Water District's drinking water system. This area has a history of groundwater contamination, and this project will ensure that over 200 Madison Township residents and 10 businesses have safe public drinking water.



“The Madison Water District is pleased to participate in a joint effort with Ohio EPA to provide safe, potable water to businesses and residents of Madison Township. Many of these projects have been ongoing over the last 20 years. Ohio EPA has been mindful of any continued contamination in the district and has offered funding to assist the Madison Water District in connecting additional customers throughout the last several years.”

Cheryl Casler, President, Madison Water Board of Directors

Meigs County \$675,000

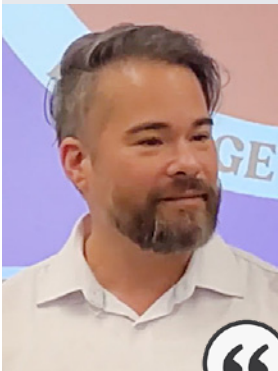
This funding will provide leachate treatment at Meigs County's now-closed landfill. Ammonia discharges from the landfill have negatively impacted surface water quality, and this aeration system is needed to mitigate these effects.

Ohio & Lee Water and Sewer District (Monroe County) \$1,500,000

The unincorporated area of Hannibal is an unsewered community that consists of 211 homes and 15 commercial properties in Monroe County. This project will provide sanitary sewers to transfer wastewater to the existing Duffy wastewater treatment plant, replacing aging home sewage treatment systems.

Ravenna Township (Portage County) \$2,000,000

Portage County will use H2Ohio funds to connect 195 homes to the existing Ravenna Wastewater Treatment Plant, putting an end to sanitation issues dating back to the 1980s. New sewers and pump stations will provide regional improvements in the surrounding area.



“Portage County is deeply grateful to Governor Mike DeWine for assisting the residents living within the affected area of the Chinn Regional Sewer Project. The H2Ohio funding greatly reduces the financial impact of this sewer project and increases the quality of life for the residents of this area.”

Daniel Blakely, Director, Portage County Water Resources

Video link: <https://ohioepa.canto.com/b/L7VRI>



South Vienna (Clark County) \$1,500,000

This project will install upgrades to South Vienna's water treatment plant to reduce arsenic levels in the water system. It will also include iron removal filtration and will make improvements to the plant's water reservoir. This will provide safer drinking water to nearly 400 people, while simultaneously improving water management at the facility.

Warren Township (Trumbull County) \$1,000,000

To address unsanitary conditions in the area, this project includes the construction of more than 10,000 feet of sewer to service 71 structures in Warren Township. A wastewater treatment plant will also be built, serving approximately 750 properties.

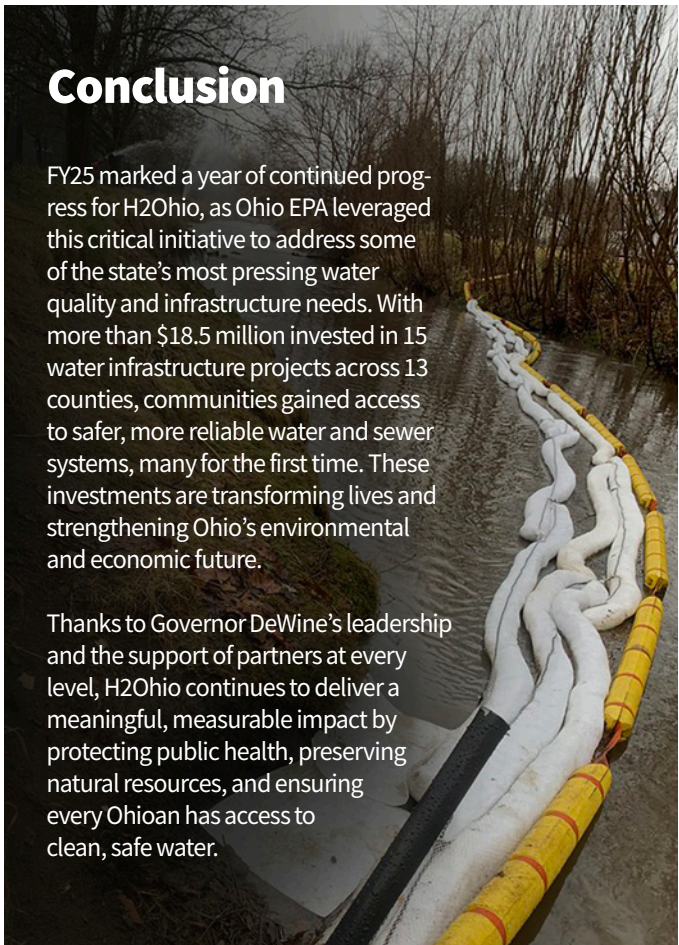
City of Wintersville (Jefferson County) \$650,000

This project funds improvements to a drinking water pump station for the City of Wintersville, which had been inactive for 20 years due to a lack of funding. The improvements will enable a drinking water connection between Wintersville and Steubenville, allowing the systems to buy water from each other in case of an emergency.

Conclusion

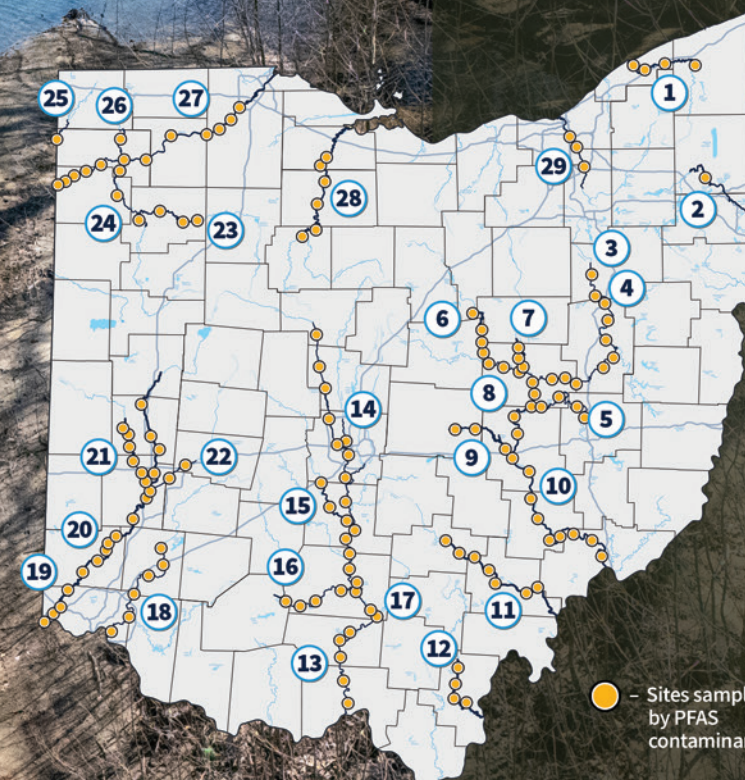
FY25 marked a year of continued progress for H2Ohio, as Ohio EPA leveraged this critical initiative to address some of the state's most pressing water quality and infrastructure needs. With more than \$18.5 million invested in 15 water infrastructure projects across 13 counties, communities gained access to safer, more reliable water and sewer systems, many for the first time. These investments are transforming lives and strengthening Ohio's environmental and economic future.

Thanks to Governor DeWine's leadership and the support of partners at every level, H2Ohio continues to deliver a meaningful, measurable impact by protecting public health, preserving natural resources, and ensuring every Ohioan has access to clean, safe water.



H2Ohio Rivers Program

The H2Ohio Rivers Program has made significant strides in improving the health and beauty of Ohio's waterways. Through initiatives like the Healthy Rivers Livery Grant Program, large-scale studies on river pollutants, and the removal of dams, the program is dedicated to preserving and restoring Ohio's rivers. These efforts not only improve water quality but also enhance recreational opportunities and protect vital ecosystems.



PFAS Prevalence Study

Study of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Ohio Rivers

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Grand River | 16. Paint Creek |
| 2. Mahoning River | 17. Salt Creek |
| 3. Tuscarawas River | 18. Little Miami River |
| 4. Sandy Creek | 19. Whitewater River |
| 5. Wills Creek | 20. Great Miami River |
| 6. Killbuck Creek | 21. Stillwater River |
| 7. Mohican River | 22. Mad River |
| 8. Walhonding River | 23. Blanchard River |
| 9. Licking River | 24. Auglaize River |
| 10. Muskingum River | 25. St. Joseph River |
| 11. Hocking River | 26. Tiffin River |
| 12. Raccoon Creek | 27. Maumee River |
| 13. Scioto River | 28. Sandusky River |
| 14. Olentangy River | 29. Cuyahoga Creek |
| 15. Big Darby Creek | |

By the Numbers

-  **\$31.5 million**
total funding investment
-  **190**
Number of river miles cleared of litter
-  **487,000**
Pounds of trash collected
-  **3,330 acres**
amount of high-quality riverbank preserved or in contract to be preserved
-  **32**
Number of liveries involved with programs

Trash Cleanup

In 2024, ODNR launched the H2Ohio Healthy Rivers Livery Grant Program, which awarded funds to canoe liveries to increase volunteer opportunities and purchase safety gear and additional equipment needed to collect, haul, and remove large litter items. Through the program, over 37,000 pounds of trash was removed from several rivers that are popular for paddlers. In addition to the Healthy Rivers Livery Program, H2Ohio Rivers identified and restored sites where people illegally dump materials along the river. In circumstances where trash has been deposited along the Ohio River by flooding, ODNR has partnered with Scioto-Lawrence Solid Waste District to operate a custom-built trash cleanup boat. The boat is equipped with a crane that pulls tires and other large trash items quickly from the river and its banks. Since its inception, the program has collected over 450,000 pounds of trash, preventing it from washing downstream, deteriorating into microplastics, and detracting from the beauty of Ohio's scenic rivers.



Large Rivers Studies

Ohio EPA dedicated \$1.1 million in H2Ohio Rivers funding to conduct the first-ever statewide assessment of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in Ohio's large rivers. This comprehensive survey, completed in fall 2024, included sampling the water column, fish tissue (whole body and fillet), and macroinvertebrate tissue at 149 river locations across the state. The goal was to evaluate the presence of PFAS in Ohio's waterways and compare the findings to U.S. EPA's draft Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criteria for PFOA and PFOS. The majority of the samples were found to be below the US EPA's draft aquatic life criteria. This baseline data provides Ohio EPA with a critical foundation for understanding PFAS levels in Ohio's river systems and will guide future decision-making, monitoring, and potential remediation efforts as scientific knowledge about PFAS continues to evolve.



Another study focused on mussel populations in Ohio's large rivers. In 2024, ODNR conducted the largest mussel survey ever completed in Ohio, covering over 150 large-river sites. This survey cataloged over 14,000 mussels and identified more than 80 previously undocumented populations of state endangered, threatened, and species of concern. The findings will inform future strategies to improve and maintain healthy river ecosystems, with the Hocking River being a focal point for mussel-related studies this summer.



Dam Removal

Through the H2Ohio Rivers Program, Ohio EPA and ODNR have funded the removal or modification of aging dams that can negatively impact water quality. These dams deplete oxygen, trap sediment, and disrupt fish migration. H2Ohio allocates funding for feasibility assessments, project design, and construction.

In the first year, the program supported the removal, modification, and assessment of five dams: one in Troy (Miami County), two in Piqua (Miami County), one in Covington (Miami County), and the McDonald Steel/Girard Dam (Trumbull County).



Several more dam removal projects were funded during FY2025, including the Fourmile Creek dams in Oxford (Butler County), which will enhance fish passage, reduce bank erosion, stabilize the channel, and improve stream habitat. Other dam removals funded this year include the Fort Jennings rubble dam on the Auglaize River (Putnam County), the Leavittsburg Dam on the Mahoning River (Trumbull County), and the City of New Philadelphia dam on the Tuscarawas River (Tuscarawas County).

Protecting Healthy Rivers

The H2Ohio Rivers program is also focusing on identifying, acquiring, and protecting high-quality riparian areas. Protecting riparian corridors allows trees and vegetation in these areas to prevent water quality degradation through the uptake of nutrients; they also provide excellent filtration of both surface and groundwater resources before they enter drinking water supplies. Riparian buffers have the additional benefits of conserving wildlife habitat for species such as bald eagles and migratory songbirds and providing expanded outdoor recreational opportunities for paddling, birding, and fishing. During the fiscal year, more than 1,800 acres of high-quality riparian property have been preserved as part of the H2Ohio Rivers program which will increase public access to enjoy Ohio's rivers.

Salt Management Infrastructure

H2Ohio's Chloride Reduction Grant Program continues to expand, helping communities improve salt usage practices to reduce chloride pollution in Ohio's waterways. Once salt is in the water, it cannot be removed by ordinary treatment practices, which is why reduction and prevention are so important. This program is a win-win: local governments save money on needed upgrades while helping protect our surface waters.



In FY25, Ohio EPA awarded 84 communities a total of \$4.6 million in funds through the Chloride Salt Reduction Grant Program. In addition to \$2.7 million in H2Ohio Rivers Program funds, Ohio EPA used \$1.9 million in funding from a settlement between the state, Cargill, Inc. and Central Salt, LLC after the company's facility caused environmental contamination from salt runoff. The grants support long-term pollution prevention from salt runoff by upgrading equipment and storage facilities to reduce the over-application of de-icing materials on Ohio's roads, which ultimately helps the health of Ohio's waterways.

Since 2023, the H2Ohio Rivers Chloride Reduction Grant Program has:

- Awarded **\$6 million**
- Supported **112 projects**
- Improved salt management in **52 counties**



FY2025 Chloride Reduction Grants

\$4.6 million
total grant funding

84
communities received salt equipment & storage grants

42
new or upgraded salt storage facilities

75+
Live-Edge Blades and control systems installed

52
number of Ohio counties benefited



H2Ohio Rivers Conclusion

The work of the H2Ohio Rivers underscores a holistic approach to improving water quality statewide. With 84 communities receiving chloride reduction grants, tens of thousands of pounds of litter removed from waterways, more than 140 river locations sampled for PFAS, and thousands of acres of streamside land conserved to protect key water resources, Ohio is building a foundation for long-term water health and reliability for generations to come.

Ohio Lake Erie Commission

Executive Summary

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) is primarily tasked with coordinating the H2Ohio initiative and convenes regular meetings among the agencies participating in H2Ohio, as well as joint meetings with the public.

With appreciation to the Ohio General Assembly, OLEC received H2Ohio funding in FY25 for projects that will improve the state's ability to estimate and forecast outcomes of H2Ohio nutrient reduction programs that will ultimately benefit the Western Lake Erie Basin. The Commission is working with partners to improve estimates of relevant edge-of-field outcomes. OLEC funded two projects to model and summarize field-based nutrient reductions: one to assist ODA with field model selection for determining baseline nutrient losses, and one to assist ODNR with estimates of nutrient load reductions from wetlands.

Program Successes

This biennium, OLEC used H2Ohio funds to improve how H2Ohio estimates and evaluates nutrient reductions. The first phase of this work established a process to determine the level of nutrients in fields prior to H2Ohio practices being adopted. This information will give OLEC a baseline history of nutrients in the landscape, which will aid in determining how much progress H2Ohio is making in reducing nutrient loads. In connection with ODA and the MyFarms application, the data being collected at each farmer's field will help inform how H2Ohio best management practices are impacting nutrients in the field.

Additionally, the Commission partnered with ODNR and Tetra Tech on a project to improve the calculations of phosphorus reduction for H2Ohio wetland grant projects and Water Quality Incentive Project (WQIP) projects. In coordination with the Lake



Erie Aquatic Research Network (LEARN), Tetra Tech will create an updated methodology developed from previous wetland modeling efforts to update ODNR's wetland reduction estimates with new data that has since become available.

Budget

The Commission received \$262,000 in the biennium budget, which is being used for projects that will improve Ohio's ability to estimate and forecast outcomes of H2Ohio nutrient reduction programs. In FY25, \$131,000 was used to leverage ODA's investment in the MyFarms software to enhance H2Ohio's ability to use information about each field to understand nutrient reduction outcomes from the H2Ohio program.



Partnerships

Since the beginning of H2Ohio, OLEC has developed numerous partnerships and networks to help share information about the work being done and to get assistance from stakeholders in implementing projects. For example, the Commission has facilitated cross-agency work with researchers at The Ohio State University and the University of Toledo. Further, the Commission helped connect partner agencies with these organizations to leverage additional funds from the Harmful Algae Bloom Research Initiative through the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

This year, the Commission partnered with The Nature Conservancy and LimnoTech for work that will enhance ODA's investment in the MyFarms platform with additional functionality to improve estimates of H2Ohio outcomes.

Conclusion

H2Ohio is a comprehensive water quality initiative that is working to strategically address complex issues impacting Lake Erie and Ohio's waterways. The program relies on sound science and data and is committed to adapting as needed in the future. The Commission's role in coordination and oversight of the program includes continued evaluation of cost effectiveness, not just at the project and field scale, but also overall. In the future, the Commission will continue efforts to collect better data, advance



strategic research projects, develop tools for adaptive management, and provide added accountability for H2Ohio decisions. By leveraging other resources to address H2Ohio specific questions, the Commission will be able to provide supporting information to the Governor, the legislature, and all Ohioans on the continued cost effectiveness of the program.



"H2Ohio has been vital to our work across the state, from wetland restoration projects in the Sandusky Bay to encouraging farmers to adopt healthy soil practices that reduce nutrient runoff and help fields withstand flooding and droughts. Our current project with LimnoTech is a prime example of H2Ohio resources at work as we collaborate on a project to evaluate conservation farming practices work at the field scale and to improve phosphorus load reduction estimates, which will help inform our conservation communities in Ohio and beyond. Ohio's waterways are cleaner, our economy is stronger, and more plants and animals thrive thanks to H2Ohio."

Jessica D'Ambrosio, The Nature Conservancy

H2Ohio Conclusions

All H2Ohio practices and projects combined are making an impact on phosphorus load reduction from the source, indicating H2Ohio is progressing on the right course for long-term results.

Year 6 - H2Ohio Summary

Agency	Appropriation	Expended	Encumbered	Remaining at year-end
Agriculture	\$60,755,574	54,294,413.49	\$6,453,296.88	\$7,864
Environmental Protection	\$27,966,089	\$20,465,037.64	\$7,501,051.36	0
Natural Resources	\$46,622,268	\$8,895,194.36	\$37,726,157.30	\$916
Lake Erie Commission	\$166,000	\$117,399	\$48,600	0
Total	\$135,509,931	\$83,772,044	\$51,729,106	\$8,781

ODA continues to demonstrate meaningful progress toward reducing nutrient runoff and improving water quality across the state. Through science-based, best management practices and the commitment from farmers, H2Ohio is keeping phosphorus and other nutrients on the land and out of waterways. With current enrollment in the WLEB of 1.85 million acres, ODA estimates a phosphorus reduction of 532,000 pounds based on 2024 completed practices. With statewide enrollment at 2.2 million acres, ODA looks to reduce phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment loads in all of Ohio’s rivers, lakes, and streams.



ODNR is committed to making increasingly accurate measurements of the phosphorus reduction that is achieved through wetland restoration. As of May 2025, ODNR’s work as part of the H2Ohio initiative is reducing 41,308 pounds of phosphorus per year in the Western Lake Erie Basin. This is a combination of 115 projects via the Wetland Grant Program (24,000 lbs P/year) and 4,327 WQIP projects with private landowners (17,308 lbs P/year).

These nutrient reduction projections are based on actual measurements made by the wetland monitoring program on a subset of completed wetland projects. These projections are conservative because they are newly constructed wetlands, and the measurements were made in two drier-than-average years. ODNR is continuously monitoring and evaluating wetland projects to reduce harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie.



Edge of Field Monitoring Station

Ohio EPA’s investments to improve large-scale wastewater facilities, home sewage treatment systems, and other infrastructure projects have reduced phosphorus runoff by an estimated 400 pounds in the WLEB and an estimated 3,900 pounds statewide.



In the coming year, H2Ohio will remain focused on the long-term plan of improving water quality in Lake Erie and in Ohio’s large rivers.



H2Ohio





H2Ohio Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2025



Department of Agriculture

Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Agency

Lake Erie Commission



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO

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