

# Conservation Quarterly

## Scioto CREP

Ohio Scioto River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers



*Blue heron in a created wetland that also enhances water quality (FSA photo).*

so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish permanent, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

Through the Ohio Scioto River Watershed CREP, federal and state resources provide additional benefits not available in “regular” CRP to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14–15 year contracts. Producers receive higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

The goals of the Ohio Scioto River Watershed CREP include:

- Create 70,000 acres of permanent vegetative cover adjacent to rivers and streams within the Scioto River Watershed when full enrollment is reached.
- Increase the population of migratory birds and waterfowl, grassland birds, and other wildlife on land enrolled in CRP through this CREP by 50 percent, when compared to similar land managed for agricultural production.
- Maintain CREP enrollment to sustain total suspended solids levels at the rate of 85 mg/l as an annual flow weighted mean concentration.

If you are interested in Scioto CREP or any other CRP program, contact your Madison County USDA Service Center at 740-852-4003 for more information. A Scioto CREP [factsheet](#) is posted under financial opportunities at [madisonsoilandwater.com](http://madisonsoilandwater.com)



*Happy  
Holidays*

### Inside this issue

Scioto CREP .....	1
Programs that Pay for Wetlands .....	3
Mind Your Manure .....	3
Preserve Local Farmland .....	4
Contact Us .....	4

### Important Dates

12/26	Christmas Observed (Office closed)
1/02	New Year's Observed (Office closed)
1/11	Board Meeting
1/16	Martin Luther King Day (Office closed)

### District Technician Wanted

We have an opening for a District Technician! Visit our [website](#) to learn more.

**Deadline is January 6, 2023**

## Programs that Pay for Wetlands

Wetlands are home to many species of migratory and resident birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish, insects, and plants. They benefit society by storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, serving as a carbon sink, and providing recreation sites for boating and fishing, just to name a few. There are three major groups of wetlands: marine, tidal, and non-tidal. Marine wetlands occur in coastal shallows. Tidal wetlands also occur in coastal areas but inland from the ocean. These are often referred to as estuaries and are affected by tides. Non-tidal wetlands occur inland and are not subject to tidal influences. These account for 94% of all the wetlands in the United States. Some examples of non-tidal wetlands are Prairie Potholes, Peat Bogs, Fens, Playas, Mountain Meadows, and Riverine wetlands on floodplains. Sometimes these non-tidal wetlands are called “upland wetlands”, “freshwater wetlands”, or “inland wetlands” to designate them as occurring in areas not influenced directly by coastal waters.

By 1984, over half (54%) of all the wetlands in the U.S. had been drained or filled for development or agriculture. Congress responded to these alarming figures by passing two critical wetland conservation and restoration Federal programs administered by NRCS to slow or reverse these alarming trends. These two programs are the Wetland Conservation Provisions (WC) which was authorized in the 1985 Farm Bill, and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) which was later authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill. These two programs dramatically reduced agricultural impacts when compared to pre-1985 wetland impacts.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) continues today to work with farmers and ranchers to maintain or increase important wetland benefits, while ensuring their ability to continue to produce food and fiber. Wetland Reserve Easements help landowners protect, restore and enhance



*Wetlands like this vernal pool do not always contain standing water throughout the year. Water levels can fluctuate depending on the season. Photo from OSU.*

wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses. How it works is NRCS enters into purchase agreements with eligible private landowners that include the right for NRCS to develop and implement a Wetland Reserve Plan of Operations. This plan will detail practices to help restore, protect and enhance the wetlands functions and values. There are several options available relating to the length of the easement including permanent and 30-year contracts. Cost share rates vary by contract length. For all Wetland Reserve Easements options, NRCS pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees and title insurance.

Another option for landowners is the Scioto River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Scioto CREP has incentivized wetland restoration by offering \$1,500/acre to qualifying landowners. Enrollment in the Scioto CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be either cropland or marginal pastureland. Cropland must meet cropping history criteria according to current FSA National CRP Directives and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Cost share up to 100% is available for qualifying applicants.

Wetlands are a vital part of a functioning ecosystem and provide habitat for numerous species of wildlife. If you are interested in protecting or restoring a wetland on your property, we encourage you to check if one of these programs are right for you as soon as possible. Contact your Madison County USDA Service Center at 740-852-4003 for more information.



*Birds like this sandhill crane rely on wetlands for nesting and chick rearing habitat. Wetland ecosystems are vital to waterfowl for survival and reproduction. Photo: Gary Leavens, [CC BY-SA](#).*





## Mind Your Manure

Can you spread manure in the winter when the ground is frozen, or snow covered? We get this question a lot, so... can you? The answer, it depends. Surface manure applications on frozen and/or snow-covered ground are discouraged and considered “not acceptable” under current USDA guidelines because these conditions provide a serious risk of runoff. Soil is considered “frozen” if the manure cannot be injected or immediately incorporated into the soil.

In the case of solid manures, the guidance is manure will not be surface applied in these conditions and should be stockpiled on an acceptable site until it can be applied for the next growing season.

For liquid manure, it is also “not acceptable” to spread in these conditions and therefore discouraged in all but emergency situations. An “emergency” exists as a temporary situation due to unforeseen causes and after all other options have been exhausted. Only limited quantities of liquid manure shall be applied to address manure storage limitations until nonfrozen soils are available for manure application.

If you must make emergency winter manure applications, follow the accepted best management practices for the situation. In Ohio, those accepted best management practices can be found in the USDA-NRCS Nutrient Management Standard (590). They are (in part):

- Stay back at least 200-foot from grassed waterways, streams, drainage ditches, tile surface inlets and all other water bodies and 300 feet from developed springs, wells, and public surface drinking water intakes.
- Apply on fields with at least 90 percent surface residue cover.
- Apply manure to areas of the field with the lowest risk of nutrient transport, such as furthest from streams, ditches, waterways, or with the least amount of slope.
- Limit application rate to 5,000 gallons or, next crop need/removal for Phosphorus, whichever is less.
- Do not apply on more than 20 contiguous acres. Separate contiguous areas by breaks of at least 200 feet.

All applications of liquid manure to frozen and snow-covered soils should be documented in the producer’s records. As always, the 4R’s (Rate, Time, Source and Placement) of all nutrient applications applies anytime nutrients are applied.

Following best management practices keeps nutrients where crops can use them and protects the aquatic life in our creeks and streams.

Find more tips and tools for manure management at [madisonsoilandwater.com](http://madisonsoilandwater.com) on the [Be the Change](#) webpage.



*Spreading manure on frozen or snow-covered ground is considered “not acceptable” by USDA guidelines due to potential risk for runoff.*



*Injecting manure can be a great way to supplement nutrients when done correctly.*



## Preserve Local Farmland



The Madison County Commissioners were awarded \$301,612 from the Ohio Department of Agriculture to purchase agricultural easements from willing landowners who wish to preserve his or her farm in perpetuity. An agricultural easement is a voluntary, permanent, legally binding restriction placed on a farm that limits the use of the land to predominantly agricultural activity. To apply for the agricultural easement purchase program, contact the Madison Soil and Water Conservation District by calling (740) 852-4003 and make an appointment before March 17.

The benefit of an agricultural easement is that the landowner owns the land and may sell, gift or otherwise convey it to others. In addition, the farm will remain in one piece because the landowner and future generations will not be able to subdivide the

farm into smaller farms or houses once the agricultural easement is placed on it. One homestead is allowed per farm.

Farms with the highest scores are offered a price for their easement based on the score, not to exceed \$2,000/acre and \$500,000 total. Costs associated with placing a conservation easement on the land will come out of closing or directly from the landowner. Some costs could be a new survey, an appraisal, title/closing services, and a 1% stewardship fee based on the purchase price of the easement.

To be eligible for the program, the farm must be: (1) at least 40 acres in size (or 10 – 39 acres if contiguous to existing protected land); (2) enrolled in the Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV) program; and (3) enrolled in an Agricultural District.

The Madison County Commissioners would co-hold the easement with Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and/or the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Farms will be monitored once per year to ensure compliance. Landowners are encouraged to seek legal and financial advice from their own advisors. The program is competitive and funding is not guaranteed. Since 2002, thirty-one farms for a total of 7,204 acres in Madison County have been accepted into the program, at an average price of \$1,400/acre.

### Contact us

#### Board of Supervisors

Howard Yoder, Chairman  
Steve Davis, Vice Chairman  
Bob Hunter, Treasurer  
Jonathan Francis  
David Junk

#### NRCS Staff

Brianna Matthies, Resource Conservationist  
James Tillman, District Conservationist

#### SWCD Staff

Julia Cumming, Program Administrator  
Broc Sehen, District Technician  
Gail Wilson, Operations Coordinator

#### Madison Soil and Water Conservation District

831 U.S. Highway 42 NE  
London, Ohio 43140  
Phone: (740) 852-4003 opt. 3  
[www.madisonsoilandwater.com](http://www.madisonsoilandwater.com)  
[www.facebook.com/madisonswcdohio](https://www.facebook.com/madisonswcdohio)

All NRCS/MSWCD programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap. Please contact Gail Wilson at [gail.wilson@oh.nacdnet.net](mailto:gail.wilson@oh.nacdnet.net) if you wish to be put on or removed from our email list.

