



Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP)

While advances in wastewater treatment practices have improved Ohio's surface water quality over the past 30 years, nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, hydromodification, habitat degradation and sediment deposition are now the leading causes of impairment of Ohio's waterways.

Ohio EPA established the WRRSP in 2000 to help address the loss of ecological function and biological diversity threatening water quality. WRRSP funds specifically target the protection and restoration of the highest quality aquatic habitats and biological communities.

Entities eligible to receive WRRSP funds, referred to as implementers, include non-profit conservation organizations, park districts, political sub-divisions and even WPCLF loan recipients.

Source of WRRSP Funds

WRRSP funds are generated by advancing the interest to be paid on loans awarded through the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) which is also administered by Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA). The WPCLF provides below market rate financing to Ohio municipalities for the planning, design and construction of wastewater infrastructure projects.

Participating WPCLF loan recipients voluntarily agree to sponsor a WRRSP project as part of their loan by entering into a formal sponsorship agreement with the WRRSP project implementer. Sponsors are responsible for ensuring that the WRRSP project is implemented as agreed. In return, the sponsor's WPCLF loan interest rate is reduced by up to 0.1 percent. To qualify, the total cost of the WRRSP project must be less than the interest generated on the WPCLF loan. WRRSP project implementers are not responsible for repaying any part of the WPCLF loan.

Eligible Activities

To qualify for WRRSP funding, a project must either by itself, or in concert with other past, present or future projects, result in the full protection or restoration of the targeted aquatic resources. Streams must either be in attainment of or be fully restored to at least the warmwater habitat (WWH) aquatic life use. Wetlands must achieve or be restored to a Category 3 designation.

Eligible projects include stream and wetland protection through fee-simple property acquisition, and stream and wetland restoration projects that correct impairments to those resources. Typical stream restoration projects include, but are not limited to, dam removals, stream restoration using natural channel design and riparian zone revegetation. Similarly, wetland restoration projects include, but are not limited to, invasive species control, restoration of hydrology by breakage of drain tiles and other rehabilitation efforts.

Ineligible Activities



Serving as both the implementer and borrower, the Summit County Department of Environmental Services used \$1,845,000 in WRRSP funds to complete the Munroe Falls Dam Modification. Successful removal of the 12-foot high Munroe Falls dam restored natural stream flow throughout the area. Accompanying the dam removal was the successful restoration of nearly three miles of streambank as well as stabilization of several tributaries flowing into the former impoundment caused by the dam.



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Projects that are required to fulfill mitigation requirements of a Section 404 permit or 401 Water Quality Certification or a supplemental environmental project (SEP) as part of an enforcement action are not eligible for WRRSP funding. Additionally, projects with severed mineral rights, encumbrances detrimental to the conservation values of the project or other issues that may impede readiness to proceed may not be funded.

Project Selection and Funding

Typically, nominations for WRRSP projects are accepted during July and the projects are competitively scored and ranked. Potential WPCLF sponsor projects are identified in DEFA's annual program management plan which is issued in December. During the following year, WRRSP implementers must develop a management plan, environmental covenant, restoration plan and partner with a WPCLF project sponsor. WRRSP projects are then funded in the second year after all required tasks have been completed.

WRRSP Achievements

As of October 2016, the WRRSP has awarded \$165 million in funding for 128 projects. The WRRSP has successfully protected 4,500 acres of wetlands and 399,225 linear feet of streams. The WRRSP has also removed 12 dams and restored 703 acres of wetlands and 119,539 linear feet of streams.

Additional Information

For more information, contact DEFA at (614) 644-2798. Program materials and frequently asked questions may also be found on DEFA's webpage at <https://epa.ohio.gov/defa/wrrsp>



As of October 2017



In Portage County, Kent Bog Addition protected 71 acres (58 are Category 3 wetlands) adjacent to the existing 45-acre Kent Bog State Nature Preserve. The sponsor of the project, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, provided \$635,000 through the WRRSP to the Ohio Valley Conservation Coalition to complete the project.