

Water Quality Incentive Program Application

Guidance Information

Important Information:

1. The H2Ohio Water Quality Incentive Program (WQIP) has not changed anything about the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The same rules and standards still apply to LE CREP.
2. Only technical staff members from these agencies shall complete and submit an H2Ohio WQIP application due to the technical aspects required. CREP applicants are not authorized to submit their own application.
 - a. ODNR, ODA, SWCD, PF/QF, or USFWS
3. All applicants and land being considered to enroll must be eligible for LE CREP to be eligible for the WQIP.
4. Only new LE CREP wetlands (CP23 or CP23A) and riparian buffers (CP22) are eligible for the WQIP. See the H2Ohio WQIP Fact Sheet for more details.
 - a. Applicants do not have to sign up for CREP prior to applying for the H2Ohio WQIP.
 - b. If the applicant signed up for CREP, the WQIP application must be submitted prior to the CREP contract approval to be eligible for the WQIP.
 - c. If the applicant is approved for the WQIP, an approved CREP contract for the same project will be required to receive the WQIP payment.
5. One WQIP application must be submitted for each CREP practice per tract. See examples below.
 - a. CP23A on one tract = 1 WQIP application
 - b. CP22 and CP23 on one tract = 2 WQIP applications (one for each practice)
 - c. CP23 and CP23A on one tract = 2 WQIP applications (one for each practice)
 - d. CP22 on 2 tracts = 2 WQIP applications (one for each tract)
 - e. 2 separate CP23 wetlands on 1 tract = 1 WQIP application containing all CREP acreage
6. This is an application process. It does not commit the applicant to the program. If the applicant's application is selected, the applicant will be notified by ODNR. If the applicant wishes to move ahead with the project, the applicant will be required sign an agreement with ODNR to commit WQIP funding.

Application Steps:

1. CREP applicant must determine if he/she and the offered area(s) is eligible for LE CREP. FSA staff make this decision.
2. Technical staff member works with the CREP applicant to determine the following information.
 - a. Practice eligibility, suitability (LE CREP suitability and feasibility worksheet), and applicant's preferences.
 - i. This will require use of technical resources (e.g. resource data/maps) and a site visit.
3. Create planning maps.
 - a. Wetlands
 - i. Planning map: Must contain the proposed CREP boundary, practice name, acreages (wetlands: wetland pool and buffer drawn and labeled separately), nearest road intersection (with roads labeled) on an aerial photo base map.

- ii. Watershed map: Must contain the proposed CREP boundary, wetland pool, watershed (label acreage) on an aerial photo base map with road names.
 - b. Riparian buffers: Map must contain the proposed CREP boundary, practice name, acreage, 100-year floodplain boundary, nearest road intersection (with roads labeled) on an aerial photo base map.
- 4. Complete a hard copy of the H2Ohio WQIP application and have the applicant sign and date it.
- 5. Submit the WQIP application and supporting documents (maps and other pertinent information) on the online “H2Ohio WQIP Application and Ranking Survey” at this location:
<https://odnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f0d995b1e6d44726a9abd76794cd4a67>
 - a. Technical agencies will receive an access code for your agency to access and enter application data and supporting documents.
 - b. The application and ranking survey will automatically calculate the application score, acres, and dollar amount for the incentive.

Application Instructions: Most information in the application is self-explanatory. Instructions below will help the technical staff member fill out the application correctly.

1. Questions followed with a red asterisk (*) require an answer
2. *County:* County of the CREP project location
3. *12-digit HUC Watershed:* 12-digit HUC (Hydrologic Unit Code) watershed of the CREP project location. Access the H2Ohio WQIP Application and Ranking Survey and zoom into the project location. Left click on the CREP practice location. The 12-digit HUC will be highlighted and the HUC number and name will appear in a pop-up window. Other HUC data sources can also be utilized to complete this portion.
4. *Technical Staff Member Information:* Provide the information about the technical staff member submitting the application
5. *Applicant Information:* Provide the name and information of the farmer or landowner that will appear on the CREP contract
6. *CREP Practice Information:* Fill out the wetland or riparian buffer portion. Do not fill out for both if the applicant is applying for both. A separate application will be needed per practice per tract. See item number 5 under Important Information for more detail.
 - a. *Is the applicant and offered area(s) eligible for the Lake Erie CREP?* It is important to have the applicant contact FSA to determine if he/she is eligible and the area of land they wish to enroll into the LE CREP is eligible.
 - b. *Is any portion of the offered area(s) not being farmed and/or considered marginal pastureland and is or was previously enrolled in the CRP or the LE CREP?* The purpose of this question is to determine if any portion of the offered area(s) is currently in a CRP/CREP contract or previously in a CRP/CREP contract with the cover still remaining in the offered area(s). If the answer is “Yes”, 10 points will be deducted from the score. The purpose of this is to prioritize new LE CREP wetlands and riparian buffers on new acres.
7. *Wetland Practice Information:*
 - a. *Will the wetland receive agricultural drainage?* Agricultural drainage includes land planted to agricultural crops and land containing livestock manure sources with the potential for runoff. If the entire watershed (containing agricultural drainage area) for the proposed wetland is enrolled into LE CREP (e.g. wetland buffer) as part of this wetland project, the project is still eligible for the H2Ohio WQIP.

- b. *Wetland pool area?* This number should be the best estimate possible at the time of application. It is likely that a wetland design will not be complete, so estimate the pool area as close as possible based upon anticipated wetland design.
 - c. *Wetland buffer area?* The maximum buffer area is 3 times the pool area for a CP23 and 4 times the pool area for a CP23A.
 - d. *Wetland Watershed area?* The area of all land draining into the wetland.
 - i. If pumping will be utilized, this area will have to be calculated based upon the planned volume of water to be pumped on an annual basis. Consult an engineer to assist with these calculations.
 - e. *Will subsurface tile water free flow into the wetland?* Will subsurface tile outlet (day-lighted) into the wetland pool?
 - f. *Will a water control structure be incorporated into the wetland design?* A water control structure is encouraged for wetland management and maintenance purposes.
 - g. *Will the wetland(s) be constructed as a 4-sided diked wetland?* These are unique projects that require water to be pumped into the wetland to maintain water levels. These projects are eligible for the WQIP, but they must have a water source (e.g. drainage ditch, subsurface drainage system, other) to effectively treat water to improve water quality.
 - h. *Will a pump be utilized to transfer water into the wetland?* Pumping water is likely for 4-sided diked wetlands. However, there may be other situations where pumping might be utilized. Please provide additional information and attach to the application.
 - i. If Yes, *Where will the water be pumped from?* Select the best answer.
8. *Riparian Buffer Practice Information:*
- a. *Is the riparian buffer located in the 100-year floodplain?* The proposed riparian buffer must intersect the 100-year floodplain boundary. The best source for floodplain data can be found at FEMA's National Floodplain Hazard Layer at this address <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd>
 - b. *Riparian buffer average width?* The minimum is 100 feet. Anything less than this will be rejected.
 - c. *Riparian buffer area?* The minimum is 3 acres. Anything less than this will be rejected.
9. *Location Information:*
- a. *Is the wetland or riparian buffer within 300 feet of a State Scenic River?* The only State Scenic Rivers in the LE CREP area are the Maumee and Sandusky Rivers. See this information from ODNR for more information. <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/land-water/rivers-streams-wetlands/scenic-rivers-program>
 - b. The CREP Practice map in the H2Ohio WQIP Application and Ranking Survey will have you pick the location of the CREP practice. You will drop one point. If there is more than one of the same practice (e.g. Two CP23A wetlands) on the same tract, drop the point between the two. It is important to note that you can switch base maps on this map by clicking the button in the upper right-hand corner of the map.
10. *Needed Documents:*
- a. *Project Application:* Scan the completed hardcopy of the application (including signature and date) and attach (.pdf is preferred) to the survey.
 - b. *Project Map:* Attach a digital version of the project map (.pdf is preferred) to the survey.
 - c. *Wetland Watershed Map:* Attach a digital version of the wetland watershed map (.pdf is preferred) to the survey.

- d. *Other Documents:* Attach any other pertinent documents, e.g. wetland design (if completed), soils map, other info (.pdf is preferred). If you have more than one document to submit, you may have to combine all into one digital file.
- 11. *Scores:* These are automatically generated based on data entered in the H2Ohio WQIP Application and Ranking Survey
- 12. *Submission of the survey:* Once you click on the submit button, the survey will indicate if the data has been successfully submitted. If not, enter missing data and submit. It is important to note that once you submit the survey, there is no turning back. Be sure all data is correct before submitting the survey.
- 13. Be sure to retain a copy of the application and supporting documents for all applications submitted.

For questions, please refer to the H2Ohio Frequently Asked Questions document. If you have further questions, please contact your ODNR contact for your county. See the H2Ohio WQIP Fact Sheet for these contacts.