Program Contact: John Wilson  
(614) 255-2480  
[john.wilson@oh.usda.gov](mailto:john.wilson@oh.usda.gov)

**NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN   
LAKE ERIE BASIN FUNDING**

*Application Deadline is March 20, 2020*

**COLUMBUS, OH, Feb. 18, 2020** — The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced a funding opportunity for conservation assistance to Ohio agricultural producers in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB).

The WLEB Special Project targets funding to obtain the greatest environmental benefits in two ways. Applications containing the most effective systems of conservation practices to address water quality concerns will be given a higher priority. Applications with 100 percent of the land located within the WLEB that contain soils with a high risk for leaching or surface run-off, land with high soil test phosphorus levels, and land with direct drainage to tributaries within the Basin will receive priority over applications that do not address these conditions.

Ohio WLEB producers in Allen, Ashland, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Lorain, Lucas, Marion, Mercer, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot Counties may apply (some counties have only a small area in the basin, see map below).

This project will utilize Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding. EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers protect the environment while promoting agricultural production. With EQIP, NRCS conservation experts provide technical assistance to implement environmentally beneficial conservation practices on working agricultural land.

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Individuals interested in applying for the WLEB Special Project should make an appointment with the local NRCS conservationist as soon as possible. To learn more about EQIP or other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit Get Started with NRCS or visit your local USDA Service Center in Sandusky County at 2000 Countryside Drive, Fremont, OH or call the office at 419-334-6330, extension 3.



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