



## Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This voluntary program provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and non-industrial forest land owners to protect, improve, and restore natural resources.

# EQIP Oak Management Project



*USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs that benefit agricultural producers and the environment.*



*Invasive species, like this tree of heaven, threaten forest health.*

## Background

Oak-Hickory woodlands are important in southeastern Ohio for many reasons. This region is a hotspot for forest birds, including the Cerulean Warbler which is at risk of becoming endangered. This small migratory songbird lives in the tree canopy and needs this forest habitat to breed successfully. Since 1966, the cerulean warbler population has declined by 70 percent, due primarily to the loss of oak-hickory woodlands. Many other animals rely on oak acorns as a food source, or find shelter in the forest.

Recent data show an increase in trees that grow well in the shade, like maple, and a decrease in oaks. Invasive species, such as the prolific tree of heaven, also threaten forest health. Using woodland management practices that encourage oak growth will help restore these forests and maintain their benefits now and in the future.

## Who is Eligible?

The eligibility criteria for the EQIP Oak Management Program include:

- Own or lease eligible land
- Comply with adjusted gross income limitation (AGI) provisions
- Comply with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements
- Agree to develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operations
- Own or manage woodland in one of the following Ohio counties:

Adams, Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Scioto, Vinton, Morgan, Monroe, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross or Washington

## What Forest Management Practices are Available?

EQIP Oak Management practices include:

- Crop tree release (selective cutting of trees to allow oak trees to grow)
- Thinning
- Control of woody invasive species (e.g., bush honeysuckle, tree of heaven, autumn-olive, privet)
- Temporary Forest Opening (creation of herbaceous or shrubby cover by tree removal)

## How Do I Apply?

Applications for the EQIP Oak Management Program are available at your local USDA Service Center in the NRCS Office.

EQIP is a competitive program; all applications are ranked and evaluated against other applications on the basis of benefit to the environment, with those demonstrating the highest benefit receiving priority for funding.



*The Cerulean Warbler population is declining due to loss of habitat they find in a oak-hickory forest.*

## More Information

Contact your local USDA Service Center or call your local ODNR Service Forester at 877-247-8733 to get started.

For more information online:

<http://www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov/>

or

<http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov/>

## Find Your Local USDA Service Center

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=OHlocator/app?state=OH>

**Technical assistance is available through a partnership agreement between USDA-NRCS and ODNR's Division of Forestry**

[www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov)



*Bush Honeysuckle is a woody invasive species that can be controlled with the EQIP Oak Management Program.*