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# News Release

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## **Ag Producers Can Help Protect Water Quality in Three East Fork Little Miami River Basin Watersheds Through USDA's National Water Quality Initiative**

*Applications due January 15, 2021*

**COLUMBUS, OH, Dec. 7, 2020** —The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers an opportunity for agricultural producers in three Ohio watersheds in the East Fork Little Miami River Basin to apply for assistance installing conservation practices that protect water quality through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI).

NRCS conservation professionals will provide one-on-one personalized advice to help farmers determine which conservation actions will provide the best results to address a broad range of natural resource concerns, including water quality. All applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Applications that provide the greatest environmental benefit will be selected for funding and NRCS will provide financial assistance to selected applicants through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Conservation actions include practices that promote soil health, reduce erosion, and lessen nutrient runoff, such as cover crops, reduced tillage, and nutrient management; waste management systems that treat agricultural waste and livestock manure; and wetland restoration that increases wildlife habitat, mitigates flooding, and improves water quality. These practices not only benefit natural resources but enhance agricultural productivity and profitability by improving soil health and optimizing the use of agricultural inputs.

"Farmers recognize the importance of water quality," said State Conservationist for Ohio Terry Cosby. "These voluntary initiatives provide them with the tools to implement and accelerate on-farm conservation practices to improve the watershed. Local partnerships, like the one that Ohio NRCS has fostered with the area SWCDs, are invaluable in getting farmers the resources they need to deliver the greatest benefits for clean water."

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The three watersheds within Ohio's East Fork Little Miami River Basin where on-farm conservation investments have the best chance to address resource concerns and improve water quality include:

- Glady Creek Watershed
- Solomon Run Watershed
- Five Mile Creek Watershed

Together, Ohio NRCS and the Clermont, Brown, Clinton and Highland Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) will utilize funds to implement core water quality practices.

### Participating in NWQI

Individuals interested in applying for NWQI should contact their [local NRCS conservationist](#) as soon as possible. Be sure to check the status of your Service Center when you reach out to us. For offices with restrictions on in-person appointments, we are still available by phone, email, and through other digital tools. Your Service Center's status is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status>.

Applications signed and submitted to NRCS by the January 15 deadline will be evaluated for fiscal year 2021 funding. Visit Ohio NRCS website under "[EQIP Funding Categories](#)" for more details. To learn more about EQIP or other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit [Get Started with NRCS](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

