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# News Release

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## Forest Landowners Can Improve Woodlands in Southeastern Ohio

*Application Deadline is January 15, 2021*

**COLUMBUS, OH, Dec. 9, 2020** – If you are a woodland owner in Southeastern Ohio and interested in restoring your forest, the Oak Management special project could help. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is now accepting applications for a program that improves the health of oak-hickory woodlands in Southeastern Ohio. Application deadline is January 15, 2021.

To help restore Ohio's oak-hickory woodlands, NRCS and its conservation partners created the Oak Management special project. The project area includes the Wayne National Forest and Ohio State Forests, as well as privately held forestland. Approximately 72 percent of the land within the Wayne National Forest is privately owned and interspersed within forest boundaries. The Oak Management special project provides a mechanism to restore oak-hickory woodlands seamlessly across both public and private land.

NRCS uses the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to restore oak-hickory woodlands owned privately. Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices.

Prescribed burning, or planned fire, is just one of the valuable conservation practices used to improve our state's forest health. The use of this additional tool can safely reduce excessive amounts of brush, shrubs, trees, and shading while encouraging and rejuvenating new growth of native oak-hickory.

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Woodland owners in Adams, Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton and Washington Counties can receive both technical assistance from professional foresters and financial assistance to implement conservation practices recommended by foresters using EQIP.

To participate in USDA conservation programs, applicants should be forest landowners and must meet eligibility criteria. Individuals interested in applying for the Oak Management special project 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](#).

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