The H2Ohio Initiative Restoration Program: An Ohio Partnership for Better Water Statewide

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Ohio Governor Mike DeWine created the H2Ohio Initiative in 2019 as a comprehensive, data-driven approach to reduce harmful algal blooms, enhance water quality, and improve water infrastructure in Ohio. H2Ohio functions as an integrated, collaborative water-quality partnership among state agencies, non-profit conservation organizations, the research community, and others.

H2Ohio focuses specifically on incentivizing agricultural best management practices, upgrading water infrastructure and, under the auspices of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), restoring and enhancing wetland and related habitat to improve surface water quality. Since 2019, ODNR and their project partners have initiated over 140 grant-funded natural infrastructure projects and partnered on more than 150 private lands wetland and riparian restoration projects, setting in motion approximately 15,000 acres of wetland and associated habitat restoration. The ODNR prioritizes restoring wetland ecosystem function as a relatively low-cost mechanism to reduce surface water nutrient loading and eutrophication over the long term while also generating numerous beneficial add-on effects, such as the creation of habitat for endangered species and providing increased recreational opportunities. The ODNR H2Ohio Program has partnered with the Lake Erie and Aquatic Research Network's H2Ohio Wetland Monitoring Program to measure the impact of H2Ohio restoration projects on nutrient loading. This monitoring program will enable ODNR, its partners and others to make the best possible project selection and restoration design choices in the future.

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