

ACQUISITION OF MEDINA MARSH

STATE PROGRAM: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT: \$963,702

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Ohio's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP) employs sponsorship financing through the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) program, Ohio's CWSRF program, to broadly support land conservation including fee simple acquisition, easements, and restoration activities on stream and wetlands and surrounding upland buffers. The entity applying to the WPCLF to finance a traditional wastewater infrastructure project, such as a publicly owned treatment works (POTW), volunteers to sponsor a protection or restoration project, in exchange for a lower interest rate on the overall loan. In this way, the protection or restoration project is paid for through the same revenue source as the traditional POTW project.

In 2013, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) partnered with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy and the Medina County Park District to acquire the 87-acre Medina Marsh. NEORS was the sponsoring entity and received a 0.06 percent discount on its standard, below-market interest rate to finance four nonpoint source projects, including the purchase of Medina Marsh. Through the sponsorship agreement, NEORS saved an additional \$432,900 in reduced interest payments on its loan by sponsoring this and other WRRSP projects.

The purchase was funded with a \$963,702 Clean Ohio grant from the Clean Ohio Fund, a \$75,000 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant, and \$257,100 of WRRSP funding. The property provides protection for 1,450 linear feet of floodplain and forested buffer along the West Branch of the Rocky River, approximately 5,366 linear feet of its tributaries, 32 acres of high-quality wetlands, and a variety of habitats, including a heron rookery. The acquisition links a green corridor that is two miles long and covers more than 360 acres.

Ohio EPA established the WRRSP in 2000. Since that time, it has provided \$185 million for sponsorship projects. Water resource protection accomplishments include preservation of more than 5,200 acres of wetlands and 90 miles of streams. As of 2018, the program continues to provide \$15 million annually divided between protection and restoration projects.

To read more about this case study, please visit https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-10/documents/cwsrf_land_conservation.pdf.

