

# Clean Water ~ Green Spaces

**Rural and Agricultural Landowner  
Water Quality & Natural Areas Restoration  
Grant Program Guidelines**

**All projects must be pre-approved before work is started**

### Soil Health and Nutrient Reduction Projects • Region wide

Eligible Projects	Grant Rate	Maximum Grant	Staff Contacts
3 meter wide buffer strips	\$1/linear foot	\$1,500	
Wind breaks	75%	\$3,000	Michael Dick ext 369 mdick@erca.org
Soil erosion control structures (e.g. rock chutes, header tile retrofits, etc.)	75%	\$3,000	
Well capping	50%	\$1,500	

### Soil Health and Nutrient Reduction Projects • Lake Erie watersheds only

Eligible Projects	Grant Rate	Maximum Grant	Staff Contacts
Cover crops	\$60/acre	150 acres	Michael Dick ext 369 mdick@erca.org
Crop nutrient plans	80%	\$8,000	

### Habitat Improvement Projects

Eligible Projects	Grant Rate	Maximum Grant	Staff Contacts
Tree plantings	75–90%	No maximum	Robert Davies ext 310 rdavies@erca.org
Wind breaks	75%	\$3,000	Michael Dick ext 369 mdick@erca.org
Prairie or meadow establishment. Wetland enquiries	75–90%	No maximum	Kate Arthur ext 303 karthur@erca.org

## Program Guidelines

To qualify for funding the following criteria must be met:

- Project types must fall into one of the categories noted in the table above.
- Projects must demonstrate an improvement to local surface water and/or groundwater quality and/or result in an increase in natural areas cover.
- The landowner must demonstrate good land stewardship practices.
- The landowner must contribute financially to the project (see table above).
- The landowner must complete a Clean Water ~ Green Spaces Project application form.
- Other grant programs (e.g., Environmental Farm Plan) can be used to top up ERCA's Clean Water ~ Green Spaces Program. Total grant dollars cannot exceed the cost of the project. ERCA's Cover Crop incentives are excluded from this provision.

## How to Apply for Grants

- Obtain specific program information from ERCA to determine if your project qualifies.
- Complete a Clean Water ~ Green Spaces application form.
- A site visit from ERCA staff will be necessary to determine eligibility, and again following project completion. **Do not start your project until you have written approval from ERCA. Projects initiated prior to written approval are not eligible for the grant program.**
- Projects that will result in the best benefits to water quality and fish and wildlife habitat will be prioritized for funding.
- All applications will be reviewed by an evaluation committee.

**All projects must be pre-approved before work is started**

## **Soil Health and Nutrient Reduction Projects • Region wide**

### **BUFFER STRIPS**

\$3/linear meter (\$1/foot) up to \$1,500

#### **Project Details**

- Buffers must be a minimum of 3 metres (10 feet) or wider buffer and a minimum length of 500 feet.
- Buffer strips can be combined with other projects e.g. rock chutes.

#### **Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)**

- Windbreaks (see windbreak incentives).
- Buffer strips less than 500 feet.
- In kind land value.

### **AGRICULTURAL SOIL EROSION CONTROL STRUCTURES (E.G. ROCK CHUTES)**

#### **Project Details**

- Only structures that reduce soil erosion from agricultural fields will be funded.
- All rock chutes must be installed according to accepted practices e.g., gabion rip rap stone with a filter fabric layer, appropriate slopes, etc. Please refer to Rock Chute Installation sheet.
- Minimum 3 foot buffer required with the rockchute(s).
- Liaison with the municipal Drainage Superintendent is recommended and may be required
- Grant amount will not exceed the cash costs paid by the landowner plus pre-approved in kind contributions for labour and machinery, based on a maximum cost of \$5.00/sq.ft. of finished rock chute.

#### **Eligible Costs**

- Professional design, labour, material and equipment.
- In kind labour and machinery cost per attached Eligible Expenditure Guidelines.
- Header tile retrofits on existing tile systems in lieu of lateral tile outlets that are within 10 metres of the receiving drain.

#### **Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)**

- In kind land value.
- Any costs involving new or re-tiling including header lines.
- Rock chutes at lateral tile ends.

## ABANDONED WATER WELL PLUGGING

### Project Details

- Wells must be plugged by a Ontario Ministry of the Environment licensed well contractor
- Projects must comply with Ontario Ministry of the Environment procedures for plugging an unused water well according to Ontario Regulation 903; details of the procedure must be documented on an Ontario Ministry of the Environment Water Well Record and a copy submitted to ERCA.

### Eligible Costs

- Licensed contractor fees.
- Labour and material associated with proper well plugging procedures.

### Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)

- Labour and machinery costs other than those of a licensed contractor.
- In kind contributions.

## Soil Health and Nutrient Reduction Projects • Lake Erie watersheds only

**Cover Crops and Crop Nutrient Management Plans  
are eligible in Lake Erie watersheds ONLY**

*(see attached map)*

- Lake Erie watersheds include Big Creek, Colchester Drains, Fox/Dolson Creeks, Cedar Creek, Wigle Creek, Mill Creek, Kingsville Drains, Sturgeon Creek, Hillman/Lebo Creeks, Polders area and Muddy Creek.
- Combined funding maximum of \$12,000/year for Cover Crops and Nutrient management plans for each eligible farm business.
- Available on a first come, first serve basis while funds are available.
- Farm Business must have a Farmland Health Checkup from a Certified Crop Advisor.
- Eligibility for Nutrient Management Plans and Cover Crop grants is July 1, 2018.

## COVER CROPS

Increased use of non-harvested and non-grazed cover crops to provide undisturbed cover over winter and/or early spring months.

### Project Details

- Cover crops are a great way to provide erosion control, improve soil structure, increase organic matter, keep your nutrients in your field and suppress weeds.
- \$60/acre up to 150 acres for each eligible farm business.

### Eligible Activities

- Single stands, intercropping, one variety or complex mixes.
- Maximum of \$9,000.00 per year (150 acres).

### Ineligible Activities (expenses not covered by grant)

- Costs associated with mechanical or chemical termination of the cover crop (red clover underseeded in winter wheat the previous winter may be terminated in the fall).
- Equipment modification costs.
- Fertilizer and crop protection costs.
- Crops that will be harvested, grazed or fall terminated, including volunteer wheat.
- Fields that have had a cover crop in the last three years.
- Fields that are disturbed or tilled in any way prior to winter.

## CROP NUTRIENT PLANS OR FIELD NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANS

A 5-year written plan prepared by a designated specialist (i.e. Certified Crop Advisor, Agricultural Operations Strategy/Plan Development Certificate holder, Non Agricultural Source Material Plan Development Certificate Holder).

### Project Details

- A five-year plan which makes recommendations on nutrient source, application, timing and placement for each applicable field or crop (4R).
- 80% up to \$8,000 for each eligible farm business.
- A copy of the crop nutrient plan with soil test results and proof of the Farmland Health Checkup is required when submitting your claim.

### Eligible Costs

- Soil testing and mapping exercises that are necessary for the plan.
- Expert services provided by an eligible professional/consultant.

### Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)

- Computer hardware, software, yield monitors or other GPS tools/equipment.
- Claims for time invested by the producer in plan preparation.
- Routine crop scouting and pest monitoring.
- Other grant programs (e.g., Environmental Farm Plan) can be used to top up ERCA's Clean Water ~ Green Spaces Program, however, total grant dollars cannot exceed the total cost of the project.
- Manure storage plans.
- Costs associated with the renewal of a new plan.

## Habitat Improvement Projects

### TREE PLANTING PROJECTS

#### Project Details

- In kind costs can be included as eligible expenses only if the project retires at least one acre (0.4 hectare) of cultivated farmland.
- All projects must include a minimum of 500 trees or shrubs.
- A \$0.15 per seedling minimum cash contribution is required for all tree planting projects (not including buffer strips and wind breaks).
- Accepted tree planting practices will apply for all applications (e.g., appropriate site preparation, spacing, diverse plantings etc.)
- Seedling trees only will be funded (not large stock or potted stock).
- Preference will be given to those applications that take into consideration water quality improvement, wildlife habitat and the creation/joining of wildlife corridors.
- Only native species are eligible.
- Tree plantations that retire fragile land will be given preference over applications that are not on marginal lands.
- The landowner agrees to implement a regular maintenance program of mowing on each side of every row. Failure to have mowed by July 15 will result in the Seedling Survival Guarantee being null and void.

#### Eligible Costs

- Design, plant material and labour costs.
- Tree protection systems (guards, etc.).
- In kind labour and machinery costs based on attached Eligible Expenditure Guidelines for projects larger than 1 acre (0.4 hectare).

### **Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)**

- Commercial stock, Christmas tree, fruit tree or other species which are economically marketable in less than 10 years.
- In kind land value.
- All in kind contributions on projects retiring less than 1 acre (0.4 hectare) of cultivated farmland.

## **WINDBREAKS**

### **Project Details**

- In kind costs can be included as eligible expenses only if the project retires at least one acre (0.4 hectare) of cultivated farmland.
- All projects must include a minimum of 500 trees or shrubs if planted by ERCA.
- Accepted tree planting practices will apply for all applications (e.g., appropriate site preparation, spacing, etc.).
- A distance of not less than 1 meter will be left between the tree row and the cultivated crop. Distances of less than 1 meter at any point in the row will result in the Seedling Survival Guarantee being null and void.
- The landowner agrees to leave marker flags in the tree row for a minimum of 3 years. Removal will result in the Seedling Survival Guarantee being null and void.
- The landowner agrees to implement a regular maintenance program of mowing on each side of every row. Failure to have mowed by July 15 will result in the Seedling Survival Guarantee being null and void.
- Seedling trees only will be funded (not large stock or potted stock).
- Preference will be given to those applications that take into consideration wildlife habitat and the creation/joining of wildlife corridors.
- Native species will be planted unless such species are not suitable for the application.
- Preference will be given to windbreaks in combination with buffers that are at least 9 metres (30 feet) in width and consist of multiple tree rows and diverse species.
- Grant amount will not exceed the cash costs to the landowner plus pre-approved in kind contributions for labour and machinery as per Eligible Expenditure Guidelines (see attached).

### **Eligible Costs**

- Design, plant material and labour costs.
- Tree protection systems (guards, etc.).
- In kind labour and machinery costs based on attached Eligible Expenditure Guidelines for projects larger than 1 acre (0.4 hectare).



### **Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)**

- Commercial stock, Christmas tree, fruit tree or other species which are economically marketable in less than 10 years.
- In kind land value.
- All in kind contributions on projects retiring less than 1 acre (0.4 hectare) of cultivated farmland.

## **TALLGRASS PRAIRIE & MEADOW PLANTING**

### **Project Details**

- In kind costs can be included as eligible expenses only if the project retires at least one acre (0.4 hectare) of cultivated farmland.
- **All projects must include a minimum of 1 acre of restored habitat area** – ie. this can be a combination of tree planting, prairie and/or wetland(s), etc. to make up total project acreage.
- Site may be seeded mechanically and/or by hand (pending project size, site access and weather conditions).
- Only seed will be funded (not plugs or potted stock).
- Only **native species** are eligible.
- Preference will be given to those applications that take into consideration water quality improvement, wildlife habitat and the creation/joining of wildlife corridors.
- Projects that have a connection with existing habitat areas (or located in priority watersheds), will be given preference.
- Preference will be given to those projects that incorporate a suggested maintenance program e.g. mowing, burning, etc, as required.

### **Eligible Costs**

- Design, plant material and labour costs.
- Nurse crop (ie. annual oats or millet).
- In kind labour and machinery costs based on attached Eligible Expenditure Guidelines for projects larger than 1 acre (0.4 hectare).

### **Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)**

- Non-native and/or not locally appropriate species/seed mixes.
- In kind land value.

## WETLAND CREATION PROJECTS

We work with landowners to design and implement eligible wetland projects, which involves securing additional funding sources to cover a portion of the higher costs associated with excavating these features. A site visit is required to determine if there is an opportunity for a wetland feature which would fit within the wetland funding/habitat creation criteria.

### Wetland Design Criteria

- Primary purpose is to create wetland habitat for wildlife.
- Located in former/historical wetland sites or in low-lying, poorly drained or seasonally flooded areas.
- Ranging from approximately 0.25 acres to 2 acres in size.
- Fairly shallow – average depth of 3-4 feet but can include deeper 6.5' pocket(s).
- Irregularly shaped with gently sloping sides (approximately 5:1 or 6:1 grade).
- Seeded and planted with native wetland and riparian vegetation.
- Connection/linkage with natural features/native species habitats.
- Please note that we do not fund or excavate “backyard/landscaped” ponds, deep irrigation ponds, or stand alone features – in other words there must also be a connection to **several acres of adjacent native habitat** such as prairie/meadow, forest or riparian habitat, etc.

### Project Details

- **All projects must include a minimum of 1 acre of restored habitat area** – ie. this can be in combination with tree planting, prairie and wetland(s), etc. to make up total project acreage.
- Preference will be given to those applications that take into consideration water quality improvement, wildlife habitat and the creation/joining of wildlife corridors.
- Only native wetland species are eligible for planting around wetlands (seed and/or plugs).
- Projects that have a connection with existing habitat areas (or are located in priority watersheds), will be given preference.

### Eligible Costs

- Project design, excavation and grading costs, native seed/plugs, permit application(s), as required.
- Nurse crop (ie. annual oats or millet) for slope stabilization.
- Native wetland seed mixes.

### Ineligible Costs (expenses not covered by grant)

- Non-native and/or not locally appropriate species/seed mixes.
- In kind land value.

The rates included in the table below should be used by landowners when calculating their in-kind contributions to projects. Information on whether your project qualifies for in-kind contributions is outlined in the *Eligibility Criteria* section of this application package. Rates are based on Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Custom Rate Schedule and Essex Region Conservation Authority Fee Schedule.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Maximum Grant</b>
Rock chutes	Backhoe	Up to \$75/hour (includes equipment & operator)
	Excavator	Up to \$130/hour (includes equipment & operator)
	Rock	\$20/ton (including trucking)
Tree planting/buffer strip/windbreak	Ploughing	Minimum \$148 or \$29/acre (includes operator)
	Discing or Roto tilling	Minimum \$289 or \$16/acre (includes operator)
	Broadcast seeding	Minimum \$94 or \$5/acre (includes equipment & operator)
	Drill seeding	Minimum \$136 or \$17/acre (includes equipment & operator)
	Pasture seed mix	\$2/lb at 10 to 35 lbs/acre
	Clover seed	\$3.50/lb at 8 to 15 lbs/acre
	Tree planting	\$0.65/seedling
	Spraying rows of trees (pre-emergent herbicide)	\$0.15/seedling (includes chemical, equipment & operator)
	Site burn down (pull type sprayer)(broad spectrum herbicide)	Minimum \$452 or \$10/acre (includes chemical, equipment & operator)
Mowing between rows of trees	\$15/acre (based on 2-3 times/year for 2 years) (includes equipment & operator)	

