

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 - finding is limited

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	

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. Funding is limited. Funded on a first come, first served basis.

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 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)

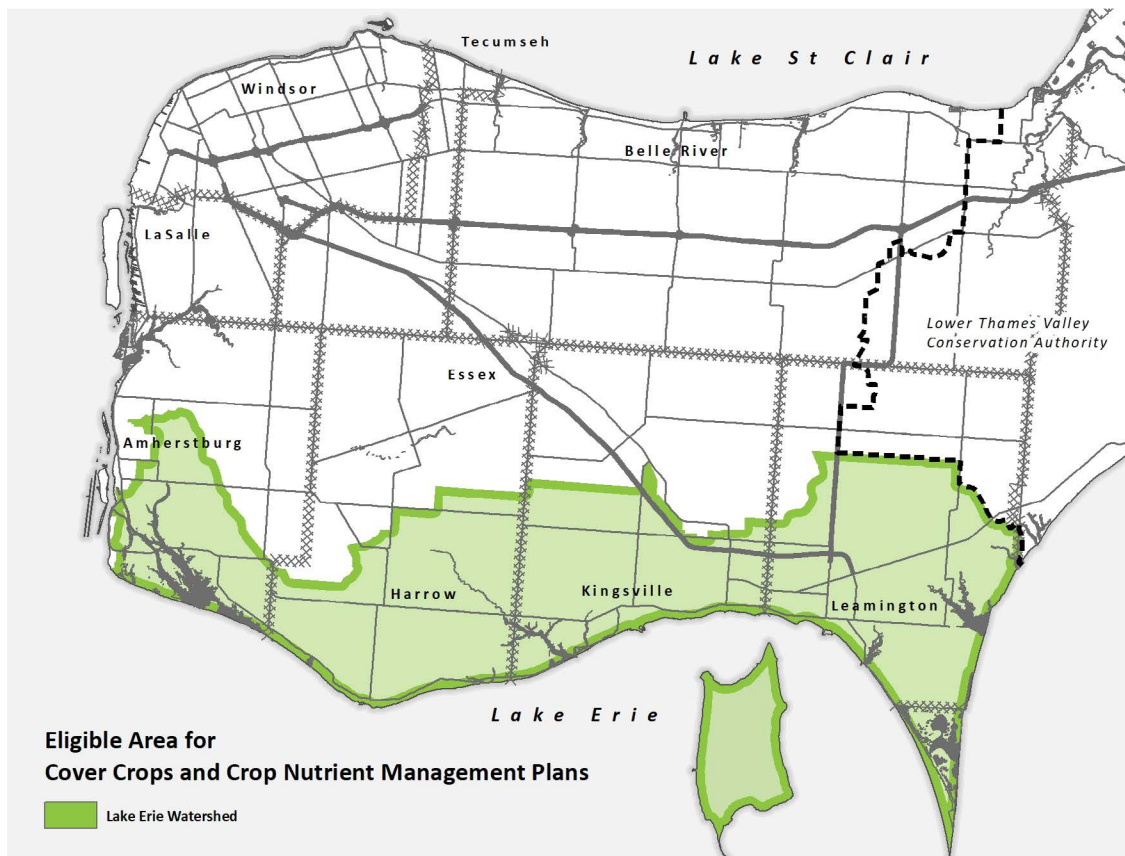
- In kind land value.
- Any costs involving new or re-tiling including header lines.
- Rock chutes at lateral tile ends.

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.



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.

Project	Activity	Maximum Grant
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)

