

Ohio CWSRF Provides Loan for Riparian Zone Conservation

The Nature Conservancy of Ohio recently received three CWSRF loans for riparian zone conservation totaling \$264,000. The conservation organization used the loan funds to protect 383 acres along Ohio Brush Creek in Adams County, Ohio – it purchased conservation easements on 321 acres and purchased another 62 acres outright. These purchases have enabled The Nature Conservancy to undertake restoration efforts such as the planting of the riparian corridor with hardwood trees for streambank stabilization. This was the first time The Nature Conservancy obtained financing from the CWSRF.

By Ohio EPA water quality standards, this section of Ohio Brush Creek almost achieves an exceptional warm-water aquatic habitat classification. The creek is a significant state-wide water resource and is known to contain four endangered aquatic species, including one mussel that occurs in only 12 streams nationwide.

“Conservation easements are an effective way to protect the quality of streams and their adjacent areas,” said Ohio EPA Director Donald R. Schregardus. “Restoring and preserving these riparian areas is an important part of controlling contaminated runoff that threatens water quality and stream habitat.”

These lands will also act as a buffer for the Edge of Appalachia Preserve, a series of eleven nearly contiguous properties owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy and the Cincinnati Museum Center. The nearly 13,000-acre preserve is the largest privately-owned protected area in Ohio. It is located at the edge of the Appalachian plateau and contains one of the most biologically diverse



collections of natural systems in the Midwestern United States. It provides critical habitat for more than 100 rare species of plants and animals.

Land acquisition efforts in the preserve have focused on consolidating land holdings and linking critical areas in the landscape in the interest of creating a more functional preserve system. The conservation of these properties contributes to that goal.

These purchases with CWSRF funds were a key part of a larger acquisition effort on Ohio Brush Creek. For example, on one property, The Nature Conservancy used its own resources to purchase land abutting the river and a piece of upland forest but used CWSRF funds to purchase a conservation easement on the farmland that comprised the remainder of the parcel.

These loans from Ohio’s Water Pollution Loan Control Fund address nonpoint source pollution and are consistent with the state’s Nonpoint Source Management Plan. The loans to The Nature Conservancy carry an interest rate of 3.2 percent and have a repayment term of 5 years. The loans will be repaid by The Nature Conservancy with funds from membership fees and from its Wills and Bequeaths Program.

The Nature

Conservancy used a

CWSRF loan to protect

385 acres along Ohio

Brush Creek, a

significant state-wide

water resource



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