

# Ohio Balanced Growth Program

## Fact Sheet: Priority Conservation Area (PCA)

### What is it?

- A Priority Conservation Area is a locally designated area targeted for protection and restoration.

### Who would designate a PCA?

- PCAs would be designated by the local Watershed Planning Partnership in consultation with local and state governments.
- PCAs would be designated as part of a Watershed Balanced Growth Plan.

### What is the purpose of designating PCAs?

- Protect the ecological health of the watershed and tributaries.
- Provide a process by which areas containing environmental, natural, historic or archaeological resources of critical watershed concern may be identified and protected from substantial deterioration or loss.
- Agricultural areas can be included as PCAs or separately designated as Priority Agricultural Areas.
- Provide procedures by which areas of critical watershed concern may be designated.
- Protect and enhance public health, safety, and welfare.
- Guide state programs, policies, and investments that influence the location of conservation and/or development.

### What factors could determine the designation of a PCA?

- Whether the ecological value of the area is of substantial watershed or basin wide significance.
- Whether the ecological functions provided by the area are of substantial watershed or basin wide significance.
- Whether the area is susceptible to significant natural hazards that would affect existing or planned development within it.
- Whether the area contains designated critical habitat or any threatened or endangered plant or animal species.
- Whether the area contains a unique, ecologically sensitive, or valuable ecosystem whose loss or decline would negatively affect watershed, state, or national biodiversity.
- Whether the area offers significant recreational, historical, or quality of life benefits.
- Whether the area offers opportunities for ecological restoration in urban areas.