

Ohio Balanced Growth Program

Program Overview

balancedgrowth.ohio.gov



Balanced Growth Plans:

In the Ohio Balanced Growth Program, watersheds are the key organizing feature for land use planning. Collaboration across the watershed allows coordinated, regional decision-making about how growth and conservation should be promoted by local and state policies and investments.

Best Local Land Use Practices:

The Ohio Balanced Growth Program supplies information on best local land use practices for minimizing development and redevelopment impacts on water quality. This includes model zoning ordinances and resolutions, guidance documents, and training opportunities for local government elected officials and staff.

Implementation:

- Several Watershed Planning partnerships have developed Watershed Balanced Growth Plans (see map on reverse).
- The state sponsors an awareness and training program on Best Local Land Use Practices highlighting examples used in Ohio, guidance for local governments, and free technical assistance to local officials interested in improving land use practices in their communities.
- An Ohio Balanced Growth Strategy identifies programs and policies that state agencies can use to assist and encourage local governments in implementing the Watershed Balanced Growth Plans.
- The program maintains an online Inventory of State Programs that influence or support local land use decisions.

About Balanced Growth

The Ohio Balanced Growth Program is a voluntary, incentive based program to encourage local governments to engage in watershed-based regional planning and water quality oriented best local land use practices. The goal of the program is to protect and restore Lake Erie, the Ohio River, and Ohio's watersheds and drinking water source areas to assure long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health, and quality of life in Ohio.

The program focuses state funded development and redevelopment into suitable areas, and focuses state conservation investments into areas of ecological and hydrological significance. If local governments can agree on areas within a watershed where development is to be encouraged (Priority Development Areas) and areas where conservation activities are to be promoted (Priority Conservation Areas), the state will support those decisions by aligning state programs to support those decisions, and conversely will not utilize state programs to violate those locally based decisions.

State Commitment

Originally endorsed by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and piloted in the Lake Erie watershed in 2004, the Ohio Balanced Growth Program was expanded statewide by action of the Ohio Water Resources Council in 2009. Member agencies of the Commission and Council have committed to supporting the program through their indi-

vidual agency activities. One of the state incentives for local governments is the opportunity to work with state agencies through the State Assistance Work Group (SAWG). The SAWG consists of management level representatives of each member agency. The SAWG members will assist in identifying sources of state support, providing agency guidance on utilizing state support, and promoting awareness of the local government watershed based planning intentions within the agencies.

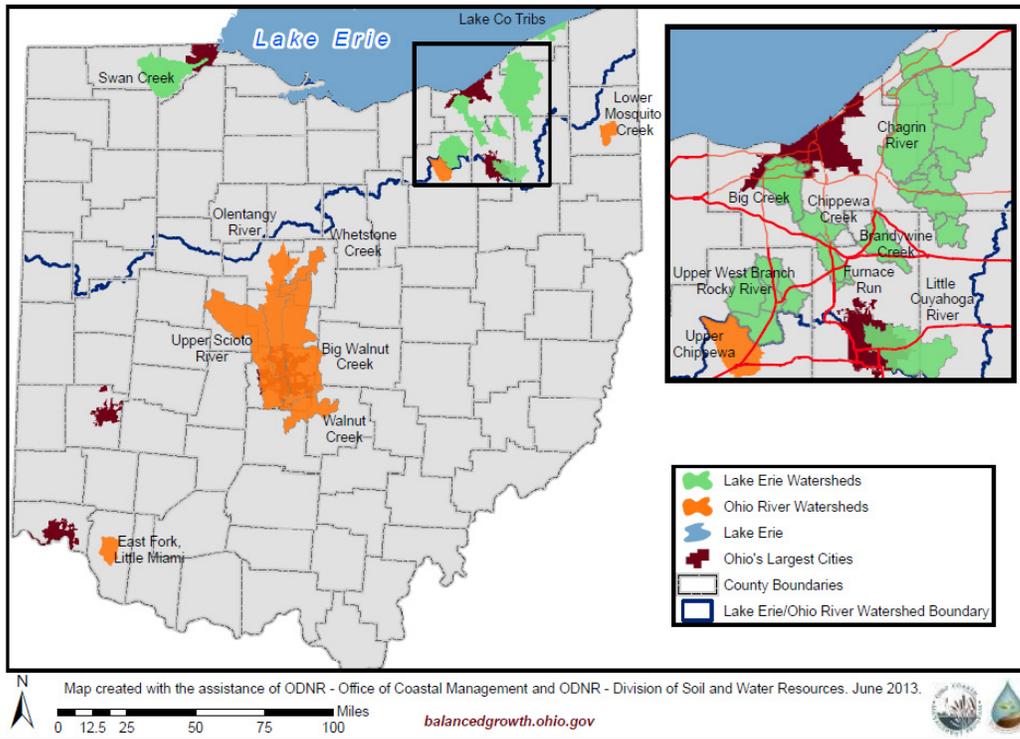
Recommendations

- A regional focus on land use and development planning.
- The creation of local Watershed Planning Partnerships to designate Priority Development Areas, Priority Conservation Areas, and, if desired in the watershed, Priority Agricultural Areas.
- The alignment of state policies, incentives, funding, and other resources to support watershed balanced growth planning and implementation.
- The implementation of recommended best local land use practices that minimize impacts on water quality and provide for well planned development efficiently served by infrastructure.

A Vision for Ohio

The Ohio Balanced Growth Program will raise the stewardship of Ohio's watersheds to a higher level; promote new forms of regional cooperation; and help us all envision how stewardship of our great water resources will be an essential part of Ohio's future progress.

Balanced Growth Planning Partnership Watersheds



Watersheds with state endorsed Balanced Growth Plans:

- Swan Creek
- Upper West Branch Rocky River
- Chippewa Creek
- Big Creek
- Chagrin River
- Eastern Lake County Coastal Tribs
- Brandywine Creek
- Lower Mosquito Creek
- Middle East Fork
- Upper Chippewa Creek
- Olentangy River
- Upper Scioto River
- Walnut Creek
- Big Walnut Creek (draft)

Watershed Planning Partnerships

A Watershed Planning Partnership is the organization leading a watershed planning process that reviews local development pressures and opportunities, inventories sensitive resources, and produces a Watershed Balanced Growth Plan. Once the plan is endorsed by the state, the participating local communities are eligible for state incentives.

The **Financial and Technical State Incentives** consist of existing state programs that have implemented additional consideration (extra priority ranking, interest rate discounts, or special support) for funding applications or technical support that will implement specific activities in Priority Development Areas or Priority Conservation Areas in Balanced Growth participating communities:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency:

- Section 208 Planning
- Clean Water Act Section 319 Implementation Grants
- Water Pollution Ctrl Loan Fund
- Water Supply Revolving Loan Account

Ohio Development Services Agency:

- Technical Assistance for Business and Community Development

Ohio Lake Erie Commission:

- Lake Erie Protection Fund

Ohio Water Development Authority:

- Dam Safety Loan Program
- Community Assistance Loan Program
- Fresh Water Loan Group

Ohio Department of Natural Resources:

- Coastal Mgmt Assistance Grant
- Watershed Coordinator Grant
- Market Development Grant
- Scrap Tire Grant
- Land & Water Cons. Fund
- Nature Works
- Streams & Storm Water Program
- Ohio Lake Erie and Scioto River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Wetland Restoration Program
- National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System
- Floodplain Management Technical Assistance Program
- Dam Safety Technical Assistance
- Statewide Geologic Mapping
- Recreation Harbor Evaluation Program

Ohio Department of Agriculture:

- Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program
- Agricultural Security Area



**Water Resources Council
Lake Erie Commission**

OWRC: 614.644.2033
OLEC: 419.357.2775

dnr.ohio.gov/OWRC/
lakeerie.ohio.gov