



## Farming for Cleaner Water

### Upper Scioto River Watershed

Farming for Cleaner Water is an American Farmland Trust water quality project in central Ohio. With support from the Harte Charitable Foundation, AFT is partnering with stakeholders in the Upper Scioto River Watershed to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus loss from farmland. This watershed was prioritized in the Ohio Nutrient Reduction Strategy as it contributes significant nutrient loading from agriculture and is a key lever to improving the water quality in the Gulf of Mexico.

#### Why Does the Upper Scioto River Watershed Matter?

#1



It provides drinking water to nearly 1 million people in the city of Columbus and surrounding communities

#2



It has periodic spikes in nitrate-nitrogen levels which require additional treatment in order to meet drinking water standards

#3



It ultimately flows into the Gulf of Mexico delivering nitrogen and phosphorus; feeding large algal blooms that rob water of oxygen and threaten marine life



This project aims to improve water quality in the Upper Scioto River Watershed and achieve a 30% nitrate-N reduction established by the 2006 Upper Scioto Watershed Action Plan. Nitrate-N will be measured at the surface water intake areas for the city of Columbus to ensure the city's source of drinking water is protected.

## Project Goals

1. Drive **Awareness and Adoption** of the best farming practices to achieve both cleaner water and farmer/land owner profitability
2. Use a market-based approach to facilitate an **Agricultural-municipal Partnership** designed to achieve cleaner water and farmer/landowner profitability

Advance new outreach and education tools which focus on the economics and management of soil health practices

**FARMERS**



Implement a new Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) program in order to attract new sources of conservation funding and pay farmers for performance.

**PAYMENTS FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**



Utilize Learning Circles to educate and empower non-operating landowners with knowledge of soil health and conservation practices

**NON-OPERATING LANDOWNERS**



Conduct computer modeling and instream water monitoring in order to identify a baseline from which to track progress toward realizing nutrient load reduction goals

**MODELING & MONITORING**



## The Future of Farming for Clean Water

AFT will have new tools and experiences to scale-up pollution reductions across priority watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin and achieve improvements in water quality both locally and in the Gulf of Mexico.

For over 30 years, the mission of **American Farmland Trust** has been to protect farmland, promote sound farming practices, and keep farmers on the land. AFT is a leader in working side-by-side with farmers and landowners to accelerate adoption of conservation practices.

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## The Upper Scioto River Watershed Project

