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**USDA Awards $495,000 to Support Wetland Mitigation Banking in Ohio**

**COLUMUBS, Ohio October 2, 2020 –** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it will award $495,000 for a new wetland mitigation banking project in Ohio through the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program. This program helps conservation partners develop or establish mitigation banks to help agricultural producers maintain eligibility for USDA programs.

“Ohio’s USDA wetland mitigation bank will provide agriculture producers an affordable mitigation option to remain in compliance for USDA Farm Bill programs while establishing banks that support wetland functions and values,” said Ohio NRCS State Conservationist Terry Cosby. “Healthy wetlands help filter our water, sequester carbon, curb soil loss, and provide habitat for wildlife.”

The environmental consulting firm EnviroScience, Inc. headquartered in Stow, Ohio is collaborating with the Hondros Family of Companies to restore an approximately 100-acre property ideally suited to wetland restoration located within the Upper Scioto River watershed. Approximately 35 acres of the restored property will be used in the USDA Wetland Mitigation Banking Program. The project will improve and protect water quality flowing downstream into the Hoover Reservoir, a public drinking water system, and it will provide habitat to a variety of aquatic and terrestrial species.

Wetland mitigation banks create credits through the restoration, creation, or enhancement of wetlands to compensate for impacts on wetlands at other locations. Most wetland mitigation banks, however, serve the development community and are not affordable to agricultural producers.

Producers seeking benefits through most USDA programs must comply with wetland conservation provisions by affirming they will not impact wetlands on their lands. In situations where avoidance or on-site mitigation is challenging, the Farm Bill allows producers to mitigate their conversion activities off-site through the purchase of mitigation banking credits. This competitive grant program helps states, local governments, and other qualified partners develop wetland mitigation banks to assist agricultural producers with meeting the wetland conservation compliance requirements and remain eligible for USDA programs.

Nationally, USDA will award $5 million for eight wetland mitigation banking projects across the country. Projects include:

* CORBLU Ecology Group, LLC in Georgia
* EnviroScience in Ohio
* Iowa Agricultural Mitigation, Inc.
* Magnolia and Partners, LLC in Illinois
* Michigan Department of Natural Resources
* Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
* Milton Environmental Consultants in Arkansas
* South Dakota Farm Bureau

For project descriptions and more information, visit the [Wetland Mitigation Banking Program webpage](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farmbill/?cid=nrcseprd362686).

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