



State Highlights in Conservation: Ohio

Profile of State Program(s)

Clean Ohio Fund: In November 2000, Ohio voters passed a four-year, \$200 million statewide bond measure for “Brownfield” environmental cleanup projects and “Greenfield” conservation and open space projects. The Fund is divided into four sub-programs: Brownfield Revitalization, Clean Ohio Conservation Program, Farmland Preservation, and Recreational Trails. Of these, only the Clean Ohio Conservation and Farmland Preservation programs use funds primarily for land acquisition. Applicants for the bond funds may be local governments or non-profit entities and must provide a 25 percent local funding match, which can be in-kind services. The Recreation Trails program spends little on new trail acquisition. Its primary focus is on maintenance and restoration.

In 2008, voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot initiative that provides another \$200 million towards the Clean Ohio Fund. Since 2009, the Ohio legislature and Governor have cut funding for these programs despite voter authorization. A coalition is working to restore funding for Clean Ohio and in May 2012, the Governor signed HB 487, which included \$36 million for the Green Space Conservation Program and \$6 million for the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program and Brownfield revitalization.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) uses several different sources of revenue to fund land acquisition. In 1984, a tax check-off was established to supply funds for the Natural Areas and Preserves Fund, which is administered by the ODNR. The statute designates that funds may only be used for land acquisition, facility development, special projects related to natural areas, nature preserves, and wild, scenic, and recreational river areas as well as routine maintenance.

In addition, ODNR has four license plate programs that generate revenue for land conservation. These consist of the sportsman’s plates, the conservation plates, Ohio scenic river plate, and Ohio state park plate. Proceeds from the conservation plate go to the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund for management, and the acquisition of title and easements to lands, among other

purposes. Each program supports projects that help acquire land for conservation, wildlife, or water quality.

Ohio Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program: Established in 1989, the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) is a revolving fund meant to provide low interest loans in perpetuity to finance publicly owned wastewater treatment works to reduce pollution. Since then, many water quality problems have been addressed and efforts have now begun to target non-point source pollution that threatens water resources. Consequently, the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP) was established to provide WPCLF funding recipients the opportunity to finance land acquisition for projects that address non-point source pollution. Activities may range from land conservation to intensive restoration and recovery of stream and aquatic habitats. WRRSP uses funds generated through interest payments on the WPCLF loan. Since the program’s inception in 2000, approximately 90 percent of funding has been used for land acquisition.

Substantial State Investment

In 1993, voters passed a constitutional amendment to authorize the ODNR to issue a \$200 million bond for parks and recreation. Funds have since all been allocated for natural areas, park and recreation acquisition and development.

In November 2000, Ohio voters passed a four-year, \$400 million statewide bond measure for “Brownfield” environmental cleanup projects and “Greenfield” conservation and open space projects. This is referred to as the Clean Ohio Fund.

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State Incentive for Local Conservation Funding

The Clean Ohio Trails Fund and Green Space Conservation Program offer grants for conservation projects to local governments, park and joint recreation districts, conservancy districts, soil and water conservation districts, and non-profit organizations. Applicants must provide a 25 percent local match, which can include contributions of land, labor, or materials.

The Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Program offers grants to local governments and charitable organizations. Grants are issued for up to 75 percent of the value of the easement. The applicant must provide matching funds for at least 25 percent of the remaining value, or the farmer can donate that portion of the value of the easement. The state grant cannot exceed \$1 million per agricultural easement.

Local Financing Enabled

Local governments in Ohio have the authority to levy property taxes, use the sales tax, and issue general obligation bonds to raise funds for capital improvements, such as land acquisition or building construction. A levy on property taxes and sales tax is subject to voter approval. State statutes permit counties to levy both non-voted and voted debt within certain limits. The majority of counties and municipalities have used a property tax to fund land conservation.

Local Programs Included

Local conservation programs include:

- Cleveland Metro Park District, OH
- Cleveland, OH

- Columbus & Franklin County Metro Park District, OH
- Columbus, OH
- Five Rivers Metro Park District, OH
- Geauga County Park District, OH
- Lake County Metro Park District, OH
- Medina County Park District, OH

Visit www.landvote.org for detailed information on these programs.

Federal Partnerships

Federal agencies and programs that have conserved land in Ohio include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service – Forest Legacy Program (FLP)
- U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)
- U.S. National Park Service
- U.S. National Park Service – LWCF Stateside
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)



The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

The Conservation Almanac

A comprehensive database of land conservation and public conservation funding in America, the Conservation Almanac provides a context for assessing impacts of conservation and the growing conservation finance movement. The Almanac offers information on public dollars spent and acres conserved, details on local, state, and federal conservation programs, and geospatial mapping of conserved land.

Almanac data collection efforts focus on land conserved using public dollars; contributions funded by private and non-governmental organizations are not tracked comprehensively. Federal data is complete from 1998-2017. State and local data is complete from 1998-2011. In the tables and charts below, acres are allocated to each program proportionate to the size of the contributions to each acquisition. For example, if an acquisition had two contributions, and each program contributed equal dollar amounts, each program receives 50% of the acres. If you have questions or want to provide updated information, please contact Jessica Welch at jessica.welch@tpl.org.

www.tpl.org

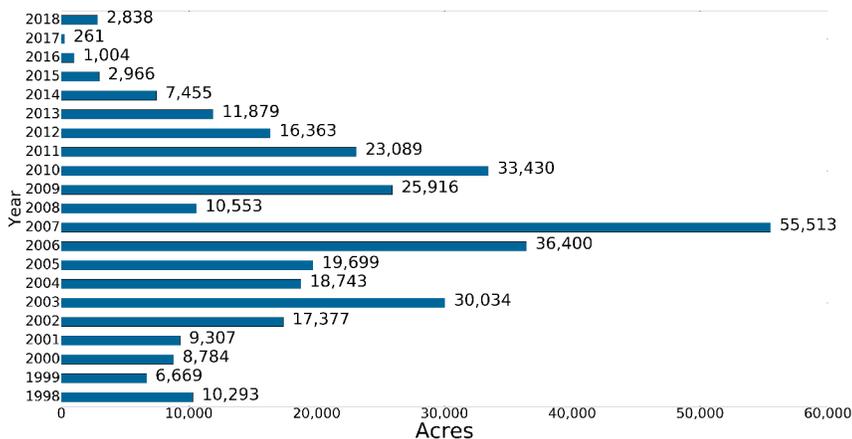
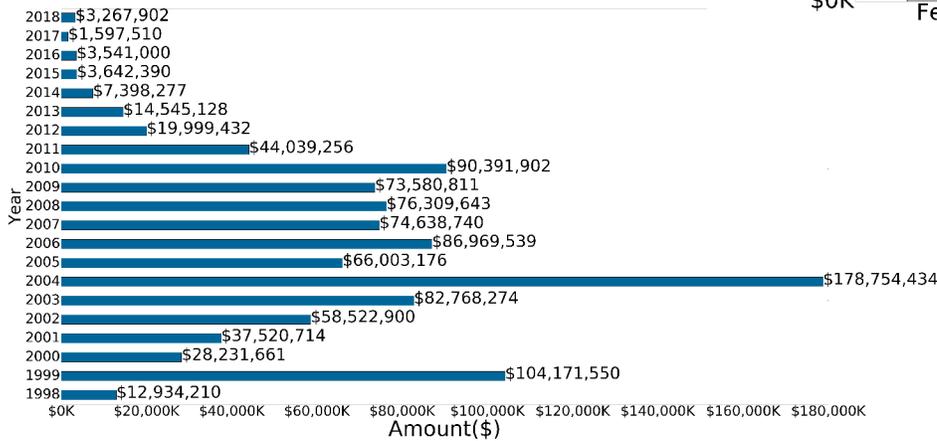
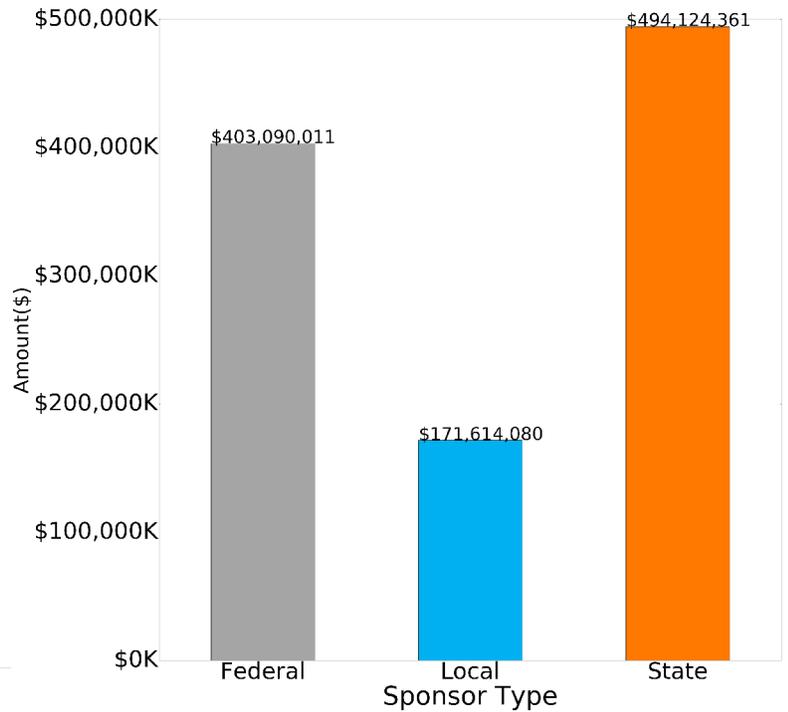
www.conservationalmanac.org

State Conservation Report Ohio



CONSERVATION ALMANAC
Tracking Investments in Protected Lands

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The data in the Conservation Almanac track the impacts of public spending on land conservation. Created by The Trust for Public Land, the Conservation Almanac brings those data together along with state policy profiles, current conservation finance news, and an interactive map, to provide a powerful online tool.