

OHIO BALANCED GROWTH PROGRAM

Scope: State

Location: Ohio

SCOPE:

- » The goal of the program is to link land-use planning to the health of Lake Erie, the Ohio River, and Ohio's other watersheds and drinking water source areas.
- » Local governments voluntarily come together to create Watershed Planning Partnerships that create regional land use plans that protect water quality by designating priority growth, priority conservation, and priority agricultural areas.
- » A State Agency Working Group provides support to participating local governments and works on an inter-departmental basis to coordinate water quality protection efforts among state agencies including Environmental Protection, Agriculture, Transportation, Development Services, and others.
- » Watershed Planning Partnerships receive state funding for Balanced Growth planning work.
- » 269 local communities and governments participate—representing over 2 million Ohio residents.

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- » Balanced Growth program was originally endorsed by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and piloted in four watersheds affecting Lake Erie in 2004. The State Agency Working Group was created at the outset.
- » Ohio Water Resources Council approved statewide expansion of the program in 2009.
- » Watershed Planning Partnerships form to guide balanced growth planning process and then dissolve.

MEMBERS:

- » Ohio Lake Erie Commission
- » Ohio Water Resources Council
- » Ohio Department of Agriculture
- » Ohio Development Services Agency
- » Ohio Department of Transportation
- » Ohio Public Works Commission
- » Ohio Water Development Authority
- » Ohio Department of Public Health
- » Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- » Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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- » Office of the Governor of Ohio
- » US Environmental Protection Agency

WATER CONCERNS:

- » Local governments can decide the areas within a watershed to encourage development (Priority Development Areas) and promote conservation (Priority Conservation Areas) based on local issues such as flooding, erosion, and water quality.

STRATEGIES:

- » Regional focus on land use and development.
- » Creation of local watershed planning partnerships to design Priority Development Areas, Priority Conservation Areas, and if desired in the watershed, Priority Agricultural Areas.
- » Alignment of state policies, incentives, funding, and other resources to support watershed balanced growth planning and implementation.
- » Ongoing collaboration of state agency representatives to resolve conflicts among agency programs and actions that influence local growth decisions.
- » Local implementation of recommended Best Local Land Use practices that minimize impacts on water quality and provide for well-planned development efficiently served by infrastructure.

RESULTS:

- » Many watershed planning coalitions have created Watershed Balanced Growth Plans.
- » 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.
- » 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 and incentives that support implementation of Balanced Growth plans. This inventory is available at: <http://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/BalancedGrowthStrategy/eStateProgramsInventory.aspx>.