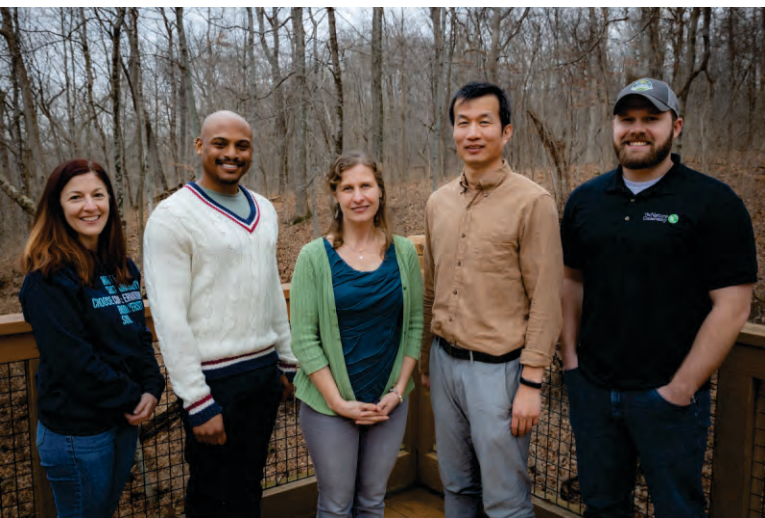




Ohio Farmer | photo ©DAVID IKE

# 2022 impact summary

## The Nature Conservancy Ohio/Western Lake Erie Basin Agriculture Team



The Nature Conservancy Ohio/Western Lake Erie Basin Agriculture Team, left to right: Jessica D'Ambrosio, AJ Boyce, Stephanie Singer, Xiaoqiang Liu, Brent Nicol | photo © DAVID IKE

### How we work:

**The Nature Conservancy is working toward a more sustainable and equitable food system for all.**

Our work centers around collaboration because multi-faceted challenges require multi-faceted solutions. We are proud to partner with farmers and growers, service providers, crop advisors, soil and water conservation districts, and other non-profits who are working to be part of the solution. Our goal is to increase the adoption of soil health, nutrient management, water management and nature-based solutions. Implemented in the right places and at the right scale, these practices will contribute to functional foodsheds and watersheds throughout Ohio and the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB).

We acknowledge that we must do more to build trust and to address historic racism in agriculture by working in partnership to remove systemic barriers facing young and first-generation farmers and Black, Indigenous and farmers of color.

# Soil Health & Nutrient Management

## Goals:

- Farmers adopt regenerative soil health practices on 900,000 acres.
- Farmers and farm advisors adopt 4R Nutrient Stewardship practices and participate in a Certification Program on 8 million acres.



Soil Health Field Day | photo ©CHRISTINA PAOLUCCI



Indiana Farmer | photo ©DAVID IKE



Farmer Advocates for Conservation | photo ©CHRISTINA PAOLUCCI

TNC supports farmers shifting to management systems that work in harmony with nature to restore and protect the soil's long-term health. Regenerative farm systems use cover crops and diverse crop rotations to cover bare soils and provide a living root in the soil for all or much of the year. They also utilize the 4Rs of nutrient stewardship and rotational grazing to manage fertilizer and manure and reduce or eliminate tilling the soil. The benefits of these practices include increased profits through sustained or better yields with fewer inputs, enhancing the soil's ability to store water, nutrients and carbon and improving the farm's overall resilience to climate change.

## Progress:

- **Farmers Leading Change:** We support 20 [Farmer Advocates for Conservation](#) in the Maumee River Watershed to advance and elevate regenerative soil health and water management practices.
  - 1,966 farmers engaged with direct peer-to-peer methods influencing 405,612 acres.
  - 433,900 people reached through indirect contact such as meetings, articles, videos and social media.
  - 51 women participated through six Women's Learning Circles in collaboration with American Farmland Trust.
- **Soil Health Field Days:** We supported nine soil health events reaching 520 people.
- **Support work of Others:** Sponsor of Agraria's Black Farmers Conference, which reached 150 attendees, and the Regenerative Farmer Fellowship Program, which trained eight new growers.
- **Education Materials:** Created two Self-Paced Learning Modules on nutrient management education: Interpreting a Soil test and Tri State Fertilizer Recommendations.
- **4R Nutrient Stewardship & Certification:** We serve on the Ohio Agriculture Conservation Initiative in support of H2Ohio and on the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Council.

### Current 4R Certification Program stats:

55 certified facilities servicing 2.5 million acres.

### Current H2Ohio Program Stats:

35% WLEB cropland enrolled in program.

# Water Management & Natural Infrastructure

## Goals:

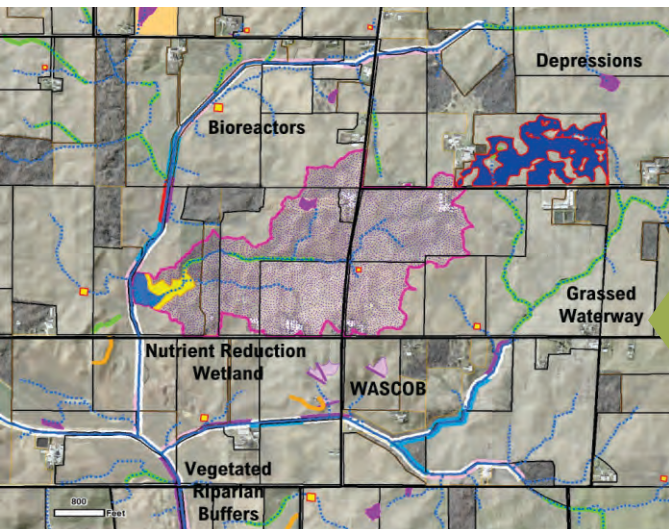
- Edge-of-field and water management practices treat 50% of the agriculture acres in Ohio and the WLEB.
- Restore 1% marginal row crop agriculture land to natural infrastructure.



Cascading Waterway | photo ©Xiaoqiang Liu



Two-Stage Ditch, Hillsdale | photo ©Jessica D'Ambrosio



TNC provides resources to drainage managers, conservation technicians, farm advisors and farmers to implement water management and edge-of-field practices. Strategically introducing edge-of-field solutions that mimic nature can help farmers better withstand climate change-related impacts of flooding and drought and improve field conditions to support food production.

## Progress:

- Advancing Science on Edge-of-Field Practices:
  - Public Private Partnership: Monitoring the performance of nutrient reduction wetlands, controlled drainage structures, and phosphorus removal filters on 13 sites.
  - Planning for Conservation: Collaborating with Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana state agencies to advance the [Agriculture Conservation Planning Framework Toolbox \(ACPF\)](#), a mapping tool for locating edge-of-field conservation practices, in 36 HUC12 watersheds.
  - Emerging Practices: Catalyzed \$850,000 in new edge-of-field science funding to monitor and document two-stage and self-forming ditch designs and cascading waterways.
  - Building Awareness: Partnered with OSU Extension to develop a new Conservation Drainage website.
  - Restoring Natural Systems: The Grand opening of TNC's new 280-acre [Sandhill Crane Wetland](#) expanded our Kitty Todd Nature Preserve.

### Ohio Department of Agriculture

released a \$5 million H2Ohio Program request for proposals for two-stage and self-forming ditch projects in the WLEB.

### TNC Ohio's Natural Infrastructure team

partnered on over 30 wetland and stream restoration projects totaling over 17,000 acres.

#### Agriculture Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF)

- A mapping tool for location edge-of-field conservation practices
- ACPF can help prioritize funding and project action



Farmer Advocate Conference 2022 | photo ©DAVID IKE

# Communications, Outreach & Partnerships

Increasing the sustainability and diversity of farm operations, reducing nutrient loss and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions in the agricultural sector requires collective action.

By raising funds, providing administrative support on public and private grants, leveraging our access and relationships with policy and decision-makers and amplifying the work of others through marketing and communications, we support partners to help stimulate systemic change throughout the food system.

- We serve on 16 multi-stakeholder partner boards and committees that enable us to amplify shared conservation messaging.
- We co-host, sponsor and train partners to host outreach events such as lunch and learns, field days and workshops. During 2022, the Ohio TNC Ag team held or participated in 208 events, directly engaging 5,267 people.
- We reached an additional 107,000 people with indirect outreach methods such as e-newsletters, videos, articles and social media.
- We updated our website: [nature.org/ohioag](https://nature.org/ohioag).




Soil Health Field Day | photo ©CHRISTINA PAOLUCCI

## Connect With Us:

Would you like to collaborate? Each of these strategies requires diverse partnerships and perspectives. We'd love to speak with you to learn how we might partner if you are interested in advancing soil health, water management, or natural infrastructure.

Partnerships are key to everyone's success. Thank you to the many individuals, corporations, foundations, and NGOs who have contributed to the impacts highlighted in this report.

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