

# Clean Water ~ Green Spaces

## Rural and Agricultural Landowner Water Quality Improvement Program Guidelines

Spring 2026



**Application Period: April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 31<sup>st</sup>**

## **Eligibility Guidelines**

**Projects must be pre-approved before work is started. Some exceptions may be considered. Approved projects must be completed by 1 March 2027.**

**Note** – All monetary incentives, program details and guidelines outlined in this document are subject to change as per the Essex Region Conservation Authority or funder discretion.

**Water Quality Improvement Projects** can be combined to a maximum of \$50,000 per farm business per year. Certain habitat improvement projects such as wetland creation and woodlots are funded under a separate program named **ERCA Habitat Improvement Projects** and do not count toward the \$50,000 per farm per year limit for Water Quality Improvement Projects. Stacking of funding from the Clean Water – Green Spaces program with other programs is permitted if the other program(s) allow stacking and with the expectation that the combination of funding sources does not exceed 100% of the actual costs.

Applicants are not guaranteed the maximum rates or total amounts. Preferences may be given to permanent infrastructure (e.g. habitat or planting projects, rock chutes, equipment, header tiles, etc.) or to other projects that are more impactful to the reduction of phosphorus into the Great Lakes. All approvals are subject to available funding. No assumption of approval should be made until a letter of approval is received.

All funded projects are subject to being photographed. ERCA retains the right to use photographs and media for promotional materials and for reporting purposes.

All incentives are available for all land in the Essex Region as indicated by the green coloration on the map below. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that their property is within the eligible area. Please visit [Conservation Ontario](https://www.conservationontario.ca/) to find out what Conservation Authority area you live in or email [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org) for assistance.



## **Program Guidelines**

To qualify for funding the following criteria must be met:

- Project types for the **Spring** application window must fall into one of the categories noted in the program categories as described below
- Projects must demonstrate an improvement to local surface water and/or groundwater quality and/or result in an increase in natural areas cover
- The applicant must demonstrate good land stewardship practices
- The applicant must contribute financially to the project as indicated for each category
- The applicant must complete a **Spring** 2026 Clean Water ~ Green Spaces Project application form
- Other grant programs can be used to top up ERCA's Clean Water ~ Green Spaces Program. Total grant dollars cannot exceed the cost of the project
- Projects that will result in the best benefits to water quality and toward improving fish and wildlife habitat will be prioritized for funding

## **How to Apply for Grants**

- Obtain specific program information from ERCA to determine if your project(s) qualifies. Contact [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org) for assistance or additional information
- Complete a Clean Water ~ Green Spaces 2026/27 **Spring** application form and send to [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org)
- Do not start your project until you have written approval from ERCA. Projects initiated prior to written approval may not be eligible for the grant program. Please inform ERCA if you cannot wait for an approval to start your project as some exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Please note** that ERCA's office is open to the public Tuesday-Thursday 8:30am-4:00pm

## Water Quality Improvement Projects

**Eligible Projects - Spring 2026****Spring Application Window: 1 April – 30 June**

<b>BMP type</b>	<b>Grant Rate</b>	<b>Annual Maximum</b>
<b>Cover Crops</b> June 30th deadline to have cover crop established		\$30,000
Inter-seeding a cover crop with > 3 species	\$40/acre	\$30,000
Inter-seeding a cover crop with 2 species	\$30/acre	\$20,000
Inter-seeding a cover crop with 1 species	\$20/acre	\$15,000
Red clover	\$15/acre	\$5,000
Using Drone Technology for inter-seeding cover crops	Add \$10/acre	\$500
<b>Spring Phosphorus Placement</b> April 1 <sup>st</sup> starting date for fertilizer application		\$15,000 total
Phosphorus Placement with Strip Till	\$30/acre	\$15,000
Variable Rate Application	\$15/acre	\$7,500
Other e.g. manure, compost, digestate applied after 1 April	\$20/acre	\$10,000
<b>Soil Sampling and Crop Nutrient Planning</b> Sampling to be completed by June 1 <sup>st</sup> deadline		\$8,000 total
Specialty Sampling & CNP (SWATmaps, Soil Optix, Other)	80% of costs up to \$25/acre	
Grid Sampling (2.5 acre) & CNP	80% of costs up to \$20/acre	
<b>Reduced Tillage – New adopters only</b> Spring Tillage to be completed between April 1 <sup>st</sup> – June 31 <sup>st</sup>		\$15,000 total
Strip Till	\$25/acre	\$15,000
Spring No-Till planting	\$10/acre	\$7,500
Spring Vertical Tillage	\$15/acre	\$10,000
<b>Equipment Modifications</b> June 1 <sup>st</sup> deadline to submit paperwork		\$40,000 total
Planter Modifications	75% of costs	
Phosphorus Placement Equipment	75% of costs	
Strip Tillers & Fertilizer Carts	75% of costs	

<b>BMP type</b>	<b>Grant Rate</b>	<b>Annual Maximum</b>
<b>Buffer Strips</b> Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup> to have established		\$20,000 total
Planting multi-species pollinator friendly (preference for native plant seed mixes)	\$3/linear foot	\$20,000
Planting grass mix	\$2/linear foot	\$15,000
<b>Infrastructure Projects</b> Dec 15th deadline		\$30,000 total
Rock Chutes	\$10/sq foot	\$20,000
Grassed Waterways	80% of cost	\$20,000
<b>Innovative Actions</b> (projects that reduce phosphorus entering the watershed)	80% of cost	\$10,000

Please review all program notes before applying for your projects to expedite the application process.

## SPRING COVER CROPS

### Annual Maximum (spring and fall combined) \$30,000\*

Accepting applications: 1 April – 30 June 2026

Spring Cover Crop Deadline: June 30<sup>th</sup> to have cover crop established

**Inter-seeded Cover Crops - 3 species - \$40/acre**

**Inter-seeded Cover Crops - 2 species - \$30/acre**

**Inter-seeded Cover Crops - 1 species - \$20/acre**

**Frost Seeded Clover Cover Crop - \$15/acre**

**Using drones for inter-seeding cover crops - add \$10/acre to above rates\*\***

\* Cover crop types can be combined to reach a maximum of \$30,000 annually

\*\* The additional Drone technology bonus will be funded if there are no other practical means to apply a cover crop or if implementing a new cover cropping systems

#### Project Details:

- Cover crops provide 50% soil cover over winter months and/or early spring months to reduce soil erosion potential and the loss of phosphorus into waterways during the non-growing season
- Eligible crops must not be harvested for profit
- All cover crops are required to be left to overwinter to help reduce phosphorus erosion into the watersheds during a winter event
- Interseeded and Red Clover Cover Crops can receive fall strip till to prepare seedbed or apply fertilizer permitting >80% of soil surface is not disturbed

#### Additional notes:

- You are **not** eligible for cover crop grants if you receive an equipment modification for planting cover crops in the same year
- Cover Crops to be planted after July 1<sup>st</sup> are eligible under the **Fall 2026 grant program**
- Interseeded Cover Crops are not eligible if they will receive fall termination via chemical, tillage or terminated via chopping with a chopping corn head
- Clover is the only exception as it can be chemically terminated in the fall to control overwinter growth

**Eligible project costs will include:**

- Single stands, intercropping, one variety or complex mixes planted before June 31st
- Cover crops can be interseeded/overseeded into annual crop
- Target requirement 50% residue by Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2026, Some exceptions will be considered based on drone seeding, weather or extraordinary circumstances

**Ineligible costs (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- In-kind land value

**Audit Process:**

1. Applications are received
2. Applications undergo review process; approvals are released
3. Applicant plants cover crop and submits a photo once established
4. ERCA will perform a site visit before Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2026, to confirm the growth of the cover crop for overwinter protection. Additional Photographs will be taken
5. Checks are mailed for imbursement

## SOIL SAMPLING & CROP NUTRIENT PLANS

### Annual Maximum \$8,000

Accepting Spring Applications: 1 April – 1 June 2026

Spring Deadline: Sampling must be completed by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

#### Specialized soil sampling (e.g. SWAT Maps, Soil Optix) and CNP

- 80% of costs up to \$25/acre

#### Soil Sampling (min. 2.5-acre grid) and CNP

- 80% of costs up to \$20/acre

#### Project Details:

Soil sampling and 3-year crop nutrient plans are a necessary part of implementing a 4R approach with the right rate, source, timing and placement of soil fertility to better manage crop input applications. Plans must be prepared by a designated specialist (e.g. Certified Crop Advisor, Agricultural Operations Strategy/ Plan Development Certificate holder, Non-Agricultural Source Material Plan Development Certificate holder) that makes recommendations on soil fertility inputs using the soil test results (e.g. a voluntary nutrient management plan prepared using Agrisuite software).

#### Additional notes:

- Sampling to be completed after June 1<sup>st</sup> will be eligible for the **2026 Fall Grant Program**
- Recommendations must also include those based on OMAFA's recommendations

#### Eligible project costs will include:

- Soil testing and mapping exercises that are necessary for the plan
- Minimum one soil sample/2.5 acres using site specific (grid) or smart zone, enhanced soil sampling such as Soil Optix or SWATMAPS
- Please confirm eligibility of other sampling products if not listed on this brochure by contacting: [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org)
- Expert services provided by an eligible professional/consultant
- Planning and design support tools (e.g. computer software need to develop plan)
- Plan must cover one full crop rotation cycle (three-year plan) and include:
  - Soil sampling and analysis
  - Maps of fields, including locations of any sensitive features requiring special management or setbacks
  - Fertilizer rate recommendations following OMAFRA's recommendations
  - Management practices to reduce the risk of nutrient loss



**Ineligible Activities (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- Computer hardware
- Claims for time invested by the producer in plan preparation
- Routine crop scouting and pest monitoring
- Acreage that has previously received funding for soil sampling and crop nutrient plans under the Clean Water~ Green Spaces grant program since 2024

**Audit Process:**

1. Applications are received
2. Applications undergo review; approvals are released
3. Sampling is completed
4. Submission of sample results (tables & maps), crop nutrient plans and invoices with OMAFRA's recommendations by certified professional by March 1, 2027
5. Payment is issued to the farmer/applicant

## SPRING PHOSPHORUS PLACEMENT

### Annual Maximum \$15,000\*

Accepting applications: 1 April – 30 June 2026

Spring Phosphorus eligible fieldwork window: 1 April – 30 June 2026

**Phosphorus Placement (Strip Till) - \$30/acre**

**Phosphorus Placement (Variable Rate) - \$15/acre**

**Phosphorus Placement (Other e.g. manure, compost, digestate applied after April 1<sup>st</sup> - \$20/acre**

\*The per acreage rate can only be applied once per field annually. Using multiple methods is encouraged as appropriate for your farm operation but cannot be stacked for funding purposes.

#### **Project Details:**

Appropriate fertilizer application methods that limit the risk of phosphorus loss to waterways by using proper rates and placement where it can be utilized efficiently by the growing crop. This includes variable rate application, subsurface application of phosphorus through strip-till unit or other appropriate means and manure/compost/digestate that is injected or promptly incorporated.

#### **Additional notes:**

- This rate cannot be combined with equipment modification for phosphorus application in the same year
- Preference will be given to those who are changing from broadcast fertilizer application to variable rate or to banded fertilizer
- Priority will be given to new adopters or applicants transitioning from established standard farming practices to more environmentally conscientious application methods
- Fields that received Phosphorus Placement funding the preceding fall will not be eligible for a spring Phos Placement grant
- Phos Placement completed after June 31<sup>st</sup> will only be eligible for the **2026 Fall Grant Program**
- Manure, compost and/or digestate applications are expected to be injected or if broadcast; promptly incorporated to reduce the impact of a phosphorus erosion event
- Please reach out via [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org) if applying for a grant via other methods of phosphorus applications not listed. Other methods will be considered if impactful to the surrounding watershed
- Phos. Application Rates must meet or exceed 20 lbs/acre P2O5

**Eligible project costs will include:**

- Variable rate applications must be accompanied by a soil sampling program and crop nutrient plan no older than 3 years
- Strip Till Application
- Sub-surface application
- Manure, Compost, Digestate applications after Apr 1<sup>st</sup> that are injected or promptly incorporated
- Costs associated with hiring expert services (custom work is acceptable)

**Ineligible Activities (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- Equipment modifications (see separate equipment category)
- Soil sampling and/or crop nutrient plans (see separate soil sampling and crop nutrient plan category)
- Fertilizer application before April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Established standard farming practices such as Corn planter bands (2x2)

**Audit Process:**

1. Applications are received
2. Applications undergo review; approvals are released
3. Work is completed as described on application
4. Submission for claims must include:
  - a. Date and rate of Phosphorus application as P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> lbs/acre
  - b. For variable rate – provide a map of VRA and related soil test information
  - c. Photos of applicator unit in field on the day of application (please ensure photos can be georeferenced)
  - d. Invoicing shows proof of fertilizer purchased/applied (date/field ID on invoice)
5. Payment is issued to the farmer/applicant

## SPRING REDUCED TILLAGE (NEW ADOPTERS ONLY)

### Annual Maximum \$15,000\*

Accepting applications: 1 April – 30 June 2026

Spring Reduced Tillage fieldwork window: April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 31<sup>st</sup> 2026

**Spring Strip Till - \$25/acre**

**Spring Vertical Tillage - \$15/acre**

**Spring No-Till planting - \$10/acre**

\*The per acreage rate can only be applied once per field annually. Using multiple methods is encouraged as appropriate for your farm operation but cannot be stacked for funding purposes. Note that grants for spring tillage are only for those changing their practice to reduce tillage

#### Project Details:

- Reduced tillage minimizes erosion potential and nutrient runoff by minimizing soil disturbance and keeping residue on the surface
- The goal of this category is to support the transition to reduced tillage agricultural systems (e.g. conventional farming to strip till, vertical tillage or to no-till)
- Supported tillage practices will leave a minimum of 80% of soil surface covered with living or dead residue after planting
- Vertical Tillage is defined as a separate pass of straight or wavy coulters that enters and exits the soil on a vertical plane and minimizes soil disturbance

#### Additional notes:

- This rate cannot be combined with equipment modification for reduced tillage in the same year
- Spring No-Till planting grants are only eligible for first crop planted after April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Priority will be given to new adopters and farms transitioning to leaving more residue overwinter
- Priority will be given to farms renting tillage equipment or hiring the tillage work done by a custom operator
- Fields that received **ANY** tillage the preceding fall (2025) are not eligible for a **Spring 2026** reduced tillage grant (spring stale seedbed is not eligible for a reduced tillage grant)
- Reduced Tillage completed after June 31<sup>st</sup> will only be eligible for the **2026 Fall Grant Program**
- Please contact [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org) to confirm your equipment's eligibility

**Eligible project costs will include:**

- Adoption of reduced tillage systems, for crops other than winter wheat
- Costs associated with hiring a contractor to provide supported tillage practices (custom work)
- No-Till planting grants are only eligible for first crop planted after April 1<sup>st</sup>

**Ineligible costs (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- In kind land value
- Tillage activities before April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Reduced Tillage grants for double cropping (ie. no-till beans after Canola, wheat or processing vegetables)
- Tillage tools such as high-speed discs or units with shanks, convex or concave blades are not eligible for a vertical tillage grant

**Audit Process:**

1. Applications are received
2. Applications undergo review; approvals are released
3. Applicants will photograph the work being completed in field. Applicants must ensure that the image can be georeferenced
4. A site visit will be completed before June 31st, 2026 to confirm work was completed as described on application. Additional photographs will be taken during the site visit
5. Checks are mailed for imbursement

## EQUIPMENT MODIFICATIONS

### Annual Maximum \$40,000

Accepting applications: 1 April – 1 June 2026

Review Period 1 & Approval Issuance: April 15<sup>th</sup>

Review Period 2 & Approval Issuance: June 15<sup>th</sup>

#### **Project Details:**

Equipment modifications that allow for optimizing placement and timing of phosphorus (P) and/or manure applications **OR** reduction of tillage **OR** modifications to planter that allows for planting into overwintered residue. Funding is extended to the customization of equipment that improves its capabilities of reducing phosphorus loss into the watershed. Each proposal will be reviewed by an impartial sub-committee to determine merit.

**Note** equipment modification cannot be combined with per acreage rate for the usage of the modified equipment in the same year. (I.e. receiving a cover crop equipment modification grant makes the recipient ineligible for a per acre cover crop grant in the same calendar year.

#### **Additional notes:**

- Priority will be given to more impactful projects and projects with seasonal priorities. I.e, Planter Modification in spring, cover crop and phosphorus placement for fall window
- Priority will also be given to applicants who are willing to perform custom work for other farmers in Essex County
- The independent review committee will factor in acres to be affected in Essex County
- Equipment Modifications received after June 1<sup>st</sup> will only be eligible for the **2026 Fall Grant Program** if funding is still available

#### **Eligible project costs will include Equipment modifications that:**

- Enable banding, variable or controlled applications, including high clearance equipment modifications to facilitate in-crop applications
- Achieve incorporation of cover crops and/or nutrients at time of application, combined with appropriate application rate and volume
- Fertilizer carts, only if used to allow for subsurface placement of fertilizer
- Permit one-pass liquid manure application with pre-tillage or incorporation
- Increase accuracy to reduce over-application (i.e. vertical beaters, upgraded tool bars)
- Convert manure application equipment, via specialized components, to allow direct injection, below canopy application, incorporation or pre-tillage methods
- Allow slurry seeding of cover crops with manure application

- Allow applying manure into strip tillage bands in fall in preparation for spring corn or for side-dressing manure into standing corn
- Reduce tillage for crops other than winter wheat
- Allow for year-round cover including modifications to allow planting/spreading cover crops by drone

**Ineligible Activities (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- Any equipment or equipment customizations that do not support a decrease in phosphorus loss
- Any equipment or equipment customizations that are considered necessary or within the scope of normal farming practice (i.e., GPS, RTK)
- Purchase of lift kit without purchase of components that will directly improve in-field fertilizer application
- Drones or Drone modification not for spreading cover crops
- Spinner style fertilizer spreaders
- Annual service fees of any type
- Upgrades to tractors, combines
- Upgrades to spray equipment unless used for precision phosphorus application
- Maintenance costs, warranties for equipment or components
- Equipment to move manure from storage to field (e.g. tankers, box spreaders, drag hoses, pit agitators, hose reels and any other equipment that is not a tool bar or vertical beater)
- Separate pass cultivation unit or incorporation equipment
- Transportation costs of exported or imported manure from or to the farm
- Equipment that facilitates the movement of manure to the spreading unit

**Audit Process:**

1. Applications, including at least two sourced quotes are received by April 1<sup>st</sup> or June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026
2. Applications undergo review by a non-partisan Equipment Modifications Committee
3. Approvals are distributed
4. Equipment is purchased and/or installed
5. Applicants submit invoicing and photo documentation of the equipment modification purchased and installed if applicable
6. A site visit during use before Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, to confirm the purchase and implementation of modified equipment
7. Checks are mailed for re-imbusement

## **BUFFER STRIPS**

### **Annual Maximum of \$20,000**

Accepting applications Year Round: 1 April – 31 December 2026

Buffer Strip Deadline: Buffers must be established by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

#### **Buffer strip: Multi-species pollinator friendly - \$3/linear foot up to \$20,000**

- preference will be given to native plant seed mixes, contact [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org) for assistance locating seed

#### **Buffer strip: Grass mix - \$2/linear foot up to \$15,000**

#### **Project Details:**

- Establishment of permanent vegetated buffer strips (minimum 15 years) within riparian zones alongside streams, drains, rivers, ponds, wetlands and lakes
- Buffers must be a minimum width of 10 feet and a minimum length of 250 ft. Up-to a maximum length of 7,500 linear ft per year
- Preference will be given to projects in agricultural fields that increase the setback of farming activities from open ditches
- Note that Windbreaks are covered under the **Habitat Improvement Program** and do not count towards your buffer strip maximums. Please fill out a separate windbreak application or email: [stewardship@erca.org](mailto:stewardship@erca.org) for assistance

#### **Additional notes:**

- Applicants are responsible for site preparation, seed procurement, seeding, establishment and maintenance
- Grass Buffers are expected to be mowed up-to twice per year, Pollinator (Wildflower) Buffers should be mowed once in the fall to encourage regrowth
- If Buffer Strip is damaged via equipment or chemical; applicant will replant as needed
- Pollinator Buffers can be used to facilitate Honey Production

#### **Eligible project costs will include:**

- Established buffer strips are paid at the specified rates per linear foot

#### **Ineligible Activities (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- Buffer strips less than 250 feet in length and 10 feet in width.
- In kind land value
- Buffer strips may not be used as driveways or racetracks



**Audit Process:**

1. Applications are received, including a map of where the buffers will be located and a photo of the area prior to planting
2. Applications undergo review; Approvals are distributed
3. Applicants plant and maintain the buffer strip and document with photos the process
4. A site visit will be completed before Dec 1<sup>st</sup> 2026, to confirm the buffer strip is established before the winter
5. If necessary, any additional photograph will be submitted once the buffer has become better established
6. Checks are mailed for reimbursement

## **SURFACE DRAINAGE ROCK CHUTES**

### **Annual Maximum \$30,000 @ \$10/sq. ft**

Accepting applications Year Round: 1 April – 31 December 2026

Rock Chutes Deadline: Rock Chutes must be established by Mar. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027

### **Rock Chutes - \$10/square foot**

#### **Project Details:**

- Only structures that reduce soil erosion from agricultural fields will be funded (e.g. WASCoB, rock chutes)
- Rock chutes must be installed by an OMAFRA **certified contractor**, or a contractor on a **municipality approved contractor** list according to accepted practices (e.g., gabion rip rap stone with a filter fabric layer, appropriate slopes, etc.) and properly designed in accordance with specifications included in the OMAFRA publication 832 titled [Agricultural Erosion Control – A Design and Construction Manual](#)
- Minimum 3-foot-wide buffer required with the rock chute(s)
- Liaison with the municipal Drainage Superintendent is recommended and may be required
- Grant amount will not exceed 100% of costs paid by the landowner plus pre-approved in-kind contributions for labor and machinery

#### **Eligible project costs will include:**

- Professional design, labor, material and equipment
- Costs associated with materials and construction of rock chute
- In-kind labor and machinery cost per attached [Eligible Expenditure Guidelines](#).

#### **Ineligible costs (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- In-kind land value
- Rock chutes at lateral tile ends or header tile end (included under header tile category)
- Leveling of land/fields
- Constructing new drainage channels or the repair of existing
- Ongoing maintenance costs
- Rock Chutes not installed by an approved contractor

#### **Audit Process**

1. Applications are received, including a map showing where the rock chutes will be located and a photo of the area prior to installation
2. Applications are reviewed internally.
3. Erca will meet with applicant at the proposed project sites to help determine the rock chute sizing, placement and the priority of works to be funded.

4. Approvals are distributed
5. Work is completed by a licensed and approved contractor
6. A site visit will be completed before Mar 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027 to confirm and document the completion and specifications of the rock chute(s)
7. Invoicing is submitted for review
8. Checks are mailed for imbursement

# **GRASSED WATERWAYS**

## **Annual Maximum \$10,000**

Accepting Applications Year Round: 1 April – 31 December 2026

### **Grassed Waterways – 80% of costs up to \$10,000**

#### **Project Details:**

- Projects must be constructed to the standards specified in the OMAFA Soil Erosion Manual
- Design by professional engineers may be advisable on complex and/or large projects
- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies prior to construction. Any work done on municipal drains requires prior approval from the municipality
- All collected water must be taken to a sufficient and legal outlet

#### **Eligible project costs will include:**

- Infrastructure and development costs
- Professional services and consulting fees
- Contracted Labor Costs
- Purchase of Necessary Materials

#### **Ineligible Activities (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents, and the applicant's business
- Permits and fees
- Project must not be a legislative or legal requirement
- New tile drainage that is not part of the project
- Costs associated with developing engineer reports for municipal drainage projects
- Invoices not issued in the applications name or farm business

#### **Audit Process**

1. Applications are received containing a detailed description, maps and estimated completion date of project
2. Applications undergo review
3. Approvals are distributed
4. Contractors complete work as described on application
5. A site visit will be required before March 1, 2027, to confirm the purchase and/or implementation of the grassed waterways as outlined in the project description
6. Checks are mailed for imbursement

## **INNOVATIVE ACTIONS**

### **Annual Maximum \$10,000**

Accepting Applications Year Round: 1 April – 31 December 2026

#### **Innovative Actions – 80% of costs up to \$10,000**

##### **Project Details:**

Other innovative practices that limit the loss of phosphorus from the field.

Each proposal will be reviewed by an impartial sub-committee to determine merit.

##### **Eligible project costs will include:**

- Infrastructure and development costs

##### **Ineligible Activities (expenses not covered by a grant):**

- In-kind land value
- Projects that will not improve soil health and/or reduce nutrient loss

##### **Audit Process:**

1. Applications are received containing detailed descriptions and goals of project
2. Applications undergo review by a non-partisan committee.
3. Approvals are distributed
4. A site visit will be required before March 1, 2027, to confirm the purchase and/or implementation of innovative actions outlined in the project description
5. Checks are mailed for imbursement

## **Clean Water ~ Green Spaces Program**

### **In Kind Landowner Contributions Eligible Expenditure Guidelines**

The rates included in the table below should be used by landowners when calculating their in-kind contributions to projects. Information on whether your project qualifies for in-kind contributions is outlined in the *Eligibility Criteria* section of this application package. Rates are based on Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Custom Rate Schedule and Essex Region Conservation Authority Fee Schedule.

Project Type	Activity	Specifications
Rock Chutes	Backhoe	Up to \$75/hour (includes equipment & operator)
	Excavator	Up to \$130/hour (includes equipment & operator)
	Rock	\$20/ton (including trucking)
Tree Planting/ Buffer Strip/ Windbreak	Ploughing	Minimum \$148 or \$29/acre (includes operator)
	Discing or Roto tilling	Minimum \$289 or \$16/acre (includes operator)
	Broadcast seeding	Minimum \$94 or \$5/acre (includes equipment & operator)
	Drill seeding	Minimum \$136 or \$17/acre (includes equipment & operator)
	Pasture seed mix	\$2/lb at 10 to 35 lbs/acre
	Clover seed	\$3.50/lb at 8 to 15 lbs/acre
	Tree planting	\$0.65/seedling
	Spraying rows of trees (pre-emergent herbicide)	\$0.15/seedling (includes chemical, equipment & operator)
	Site burn down (Pull type sprayer) (broad spectrum herbicide)	Minimum \$452 or \$10/acre (includes chemical, equipment & operator)
Mowing between rows of trees	\$15/acre (based on 2-3 times/year for 2 years) (includes equipment & operator)	

Funding for the Clean Water ~ Green Spaces program is provided in part by the Government of Canada the Federal Environment Initiative.