

STATE OF OHIO

WATER CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

December 11, 2025

This Water Conservation and Efficiency Program Annual Assessment is submitted by the State of Ohio to the Compact Council pursuant to the requirements contained in Section 4.2.2 of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (“the Compact”) and to the Regional Body pursuant to the commitments made in Article 304 of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement (“the Agreement”).

1. Lead Agency. The lead agency for Ohio’s water conservation and efficiency program is the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (“ODNR”). The primary contact person is Dena Barnhouse, Chief of the ODNR Division of Water Resources (“the Division”) (telephone: 614-265-6723, email: Dena.Barnhouse@dnr.ohio.gov). An additional contact person is Bradley Lodge, Manager of the Division’s Water Inventory and Planning Program (telephone: 614-265-6727, email: Bradley.Lodge@dnr.ohio.gov).

2. Status of Ohio Goals and Objectives. Ohio’s water conservation and efficiency goals are those contained in Section 4.2.1 of the Compact. Ohio’s water conservation and efficiency objectives have been developed and can be viewed online at the Water Inventory & Planning Program’s Great Lakes Compact webpage in the Water Conservation & Efficiency Program section ([link](#)).

3. Water Conservation and Efficiency Program Overview. Ohio’s implementing laws, regulations and policies are contained in the Compact, codified in Ohio Revised Code (“ORC”) 1522.01, and its implementing provisions codified in ORC 1522.02–.40. ORC 1522.05 requires the Chief of the Division to adopt voluntary watershed-wide goals, objectives, and standards for water conservation and efficiency consistent with Section 4.2 of the Compact. ORC 1522.17 requires an applicant for a water withdrawal and consumptive use permit to submit a facility water conservation plan that, if it reasonably incorporates environmentally sound and economically feasible water conservation measures applicable to the facility, will be considered to be in compliance with Section 4.11.3 of the Compact.

All other elements of Ohio’s water conservation and efficiency program are voluntary, except those authorized by pre-existing statutes, regulations, or programs. The only state program that provides for mandatory water use reductions is the Ohio Emergency Management Agency’s Emergency Operations Plan (authorized by ORC 5502.22), and only when the Governor declares a Level Four Drought Emergency. The elements of Ohio’s voluntary program consist of education on the value of water conservation and efficiency and promotion of voluntary conservation activities. Such efforts are undertaken individually by state agencies pursuant to general education authorities and programs.

4. Consistency with Regional Objectives

Objective	Program Element
Guide programs toward long-term sustainable water use	<p>The Water Inventory and Planning Program Visibility Outreach Initiative continues its campaign to raise awareness about Ohio's water use rules and regulations. Program staff are presenting at various agencies, advisory councils, and conservation districts to inform water users on the requirements of the ORC. The Initiative will improve the accuracy of Ohio's water use data and aid in preventing potential water use conflicts. In 2025, ODNR became chair of the Ohio Water Resources Committee to further extend our reach to water adjacent regulators.</p> <p>ODNR continued its ConServe Ohio State Park Sustainability Plan which is a call to action for park staff and visitors to implement sustainability practices across ODNR owned properties. <i>This past year, ODNR strengthened initiative by continuously implementing conservation-focused infrastructure improvements, piloting innovative projects with university partners and park staff, and evaluating water conservation practices at park golf courses. These efforts continue to reduce water use and support more resilient park operations.</i></p> <p>ODNR partnered with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OPEA) to complete a comprehensive 15-county water study in the central Ohio region. This regional study examines water availability and demand, projects future demand, provides regionalization recommendations, explores water reuse opportunities, and aided in siting locations for high-capacity users. The project was completed in 2025 and is now available for public use here. Similar studies in the southwest and southeast regions are underway.</p> <p>In 2025, ODNR accepted applications for the inaugural Ohio Water Conservation Excellence Awards. The award recognizes water users in the Water Withdrawal Facilities Registration (WWFR) Program whose outstanding leadership and innovation in water conservation practices demonstrate a commitment to efficiently using water while protecting Ohio's water resources. Four participants were awarded, and their initiatives were promoted to all other water withdrawal facilities.</p>
Adopt and implement supply and demand management to promote efficient use and conservation of water resources	<p>ODNR continues to expand the Water Withdrawal Atlas on ODNR's Webpage: The Atlas concisely summarizes data collected by ODNR to assist in answering commonly asked questions regarding water use and to promote conservation focused initiatives by providing a clearer understanding of how water is used in Ohio. Understanding these factors can inform conservation solutions for the entire state as well as localized initiatives that support communities and watersheds. The Atlas now includes an updated Lake Erie Basin-specific page detailing large-scale water use throughout the Lake Erie Watershed.</p>
Improve monitoring and standardize data reporting among state and provincial water conservation and efficiency programs	<p>Annual water use information for registered withdrawals continues to be collected, analyzed, and reported for the various water use sectors.</p> <p>In January 2025, ODNR launched the Water Withdrawal Facility Locator Application. The new tool allows all interested parties to easily access Ohio's Water Withdrawal Facility information including all historical water withdrawal data. Users can export data in various formats, create and print maps, and submit custom data requests. This tool can be used by facility owners to easily reference historical water use to implement best management practices. Coupled with our new online water withdrawal reporting application, Ohio continues its mission to collect and disseminate accurate water demand data.</p>
Develop science, technology, and research	<p>ODNR's Groundwater Program completed a nearly three-year project to create new, seamless, statewide maps and datasets for Ohio of both anticipated aquifer yield and hydraulic conductivity. The new maps will contain information about primary and secondary aquifer designations, the hydraulic conductivity of the primary aquifer, primary and secondary aquifer yield in gallons per minute, and</p>

Objective	Program Element
	<p>information about the relative position of the primary to secondary aquifer, when present. These maps are the result of extensive data collection, compilation, and interpretation, much of which was not available when these parameters were last evaluated. This project was partially funded by the Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA). Final maps and associated digital data were released in January 2025.</p> <p>ODNR installed twelve new groundwater observation wells in Willaims, Defiance, and Fulton counties. This project will advance our understanding of the aquifers in northwest Ohio and provide new, high-quality data and opportunities for long-term monitoring of groundwater. In addition to the twelve new groundwater observation wells, new pumping tests and geophysical logging will be performed. The data from these tests can be used for future groundwater studies, models, and as references for future drilling and withdrawals. This project was funded in part by Ohio H.B. 33 as a one-time priority project to determine the estimated storage capacity and maximum annual yield of the network of aquifers that are north of the Maumee River in Ohio.</p>
Develop education programs and information sharing for all water users	<p>Current water conservation and efficiency education programs continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide an online forum for submitting input from water withdrawal facility managers on best management practices and conservation and efficiency initiatives. -Provide updated material conveniently accessible to the public containing information on water conservation and efficiency; the water conservation webpage can be viewed online on ODNR's Compact webpage by selecting Water Conservation Resources. <p>The H2Ohio program, launched by Governor DeWine in 2019, is a comprehensive water quality initiative that is strategically addressing water issues like harmful algal blooms (HABs) caused by phosphorus runoff, failing drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, and lead contamination. The Governor, Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), ODNR, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC), and many partners are working together to invest in projects that will provide long-term economic and water quality benefits to communities and ecosystems statewide. In 2023, Governor DeWine expanded the H2Ohio initiative with a program called H2Ohio Rivers to focus on improving and maintaining the health of Ohio's large rivers. More information about the program, including educational resources, can be found at the H2Ohio website.</p> <p>ODNR contracted with the Lake Erie and Aquatic Research Network (LEARN) to develop and implement the H2Ohio Wetland Monitoring Program (WMP) to assess the effectiveness of H2Ohio's natural infrastructure projects and improve the design and management of projects in the future. In 2025, the Wetland Monitoring Program released its 2024 Annual Report showing promising water quality results for H2Ohio's restored wetlands. The H2Ohio WMP continues to provide additional support in sharing data, information, and educational resources throughout their effort (website).</p>

5. Program Implementation Timeline and Status. Ohio's Water Conservation and Efficiency Program, continues to be implemented as described above.