

CONSERVATION EASEMENT PURCHASE

STATE PROGRAM: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT: The Nature Conservancy

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT: \$110,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Ohio EPA recently awarded a low-interest SRF loan to the Nature Conservancy to foster creek bank conservation. The Nature Conservancy received the \$110,000 loan to purchase a permanent conservation easement along Brush Creek in Adams County, Ohio. This is the first time The Nature Conservancy has obtained financing for stream restoration and protection from a State Revolving Fund.

Ohio EPA's water quality standards classify this section of Ohio Brush Creek as almost achieving the exceptional warm water aquatic habitat classification. The Creek is a significant state-wide water resource and is known to contain four endangered aquatic species, including the club shell mussel.

The Nature Conservancy will purchase a 154-acre permanent conservation easement on property immediately adjacent to Brush Creek. Conservation easements allow owners to voluntarily place permanent restrictions on how their property will be used. "Conservation easements are an effective way to protect the quality of streams and their adjacent areas," said Ohio EPA Director Donald R. Schregardus. "Restoring and preserving these riparian areas is an important part of controlling contaminated runoff that threatens water quality and stream habitat. This type of loan is a new assistance tool for protecting and preserving Ohio's water resources. We hope other state and local organizations will consider using the [SRF] loan program in their areas to help protect our waterways." This \$110,000 project is eligible under the Nonpoint Source Program (CWA §319).

To read more about this case study, please visit https://19january2021snapshot.epa.gov/sites/static/files/2015-10/documents/2002_05_23_cwfinance_cwsrf_wetcase.pdf.