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Ohio EPA Awards Grant to Restore Upper Aurora Branch of Chagrin River

Wetland and stream restoration efforts in the [Chagrin River watershed](#) will receive a big boost thanks to a \$478,075 grant awarded by Ohio EPA. The grant to the city of Aurora is one of 10 grants Ohio EPA issued statewide totaling \$2.8 million to help communities restore waterways impaired by nonpoint source pollution.

With the grant and a local match of \$250,000, the city will initiate the Harmon Homestead restoration project. It includes restoring 3,190 feet of two tributary streams, 11 acres of historic wetlands and 17.5 acres of riparian corridor (a natural buffer area along the streambank). A conservation easement will permanently protect 100 acres surrounding and including the project site. The restoration effort is expected to significantly reduce the amount of nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment entering the Aurora Branch of Chagrin River and improve overall water quality in the watershed.

Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairment in Ohio's streams and lakes. It is caused by rain or snowmelt moving over and through the ground, picking up natural and human-made pollutants and depositing them in lakes, rivers, wetlands and other waterways. Other forms of nonpoint source pollution include modifications to natural stream flow, habitat alteration and nutrients. Polluted runoff can have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries and wildlife.

In 1987, [Section 319](#) of the federal Clean Water Act created a national program to control nonpoint source pollution. Ohio EPA administers the program for U.S. EPA and distributes millions of federal dollars to projects proposed by local governments and community organizations such as watershed groups. To be eligible, grant recipients must contribute at least a 20 percent match consisting of cash or in-kind contributions or services. Grants of up to \$350,000 are awarded for three-year periods. More information on Section 319 grants is available [online](#).

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