



Lake Decatur Water Quality Initiative Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The City of Decatur is the recipient of a \$9.8-million-dollar United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant focused on improving water quality in key areas across the Lake Decatur watershed. The 5-year program provides substantial cost-share and flexibility to landowners and growers for certain practices aimed at reducing sediment and nutrient losses to the lake. Funding and non-USDA technical assistance is being directed to key counties, drainage areas and fields within a set proximity to the reservoir. Priority Counties include **Macon, Piatt and DeWitt.**

Four primary practice incentives are being offered:

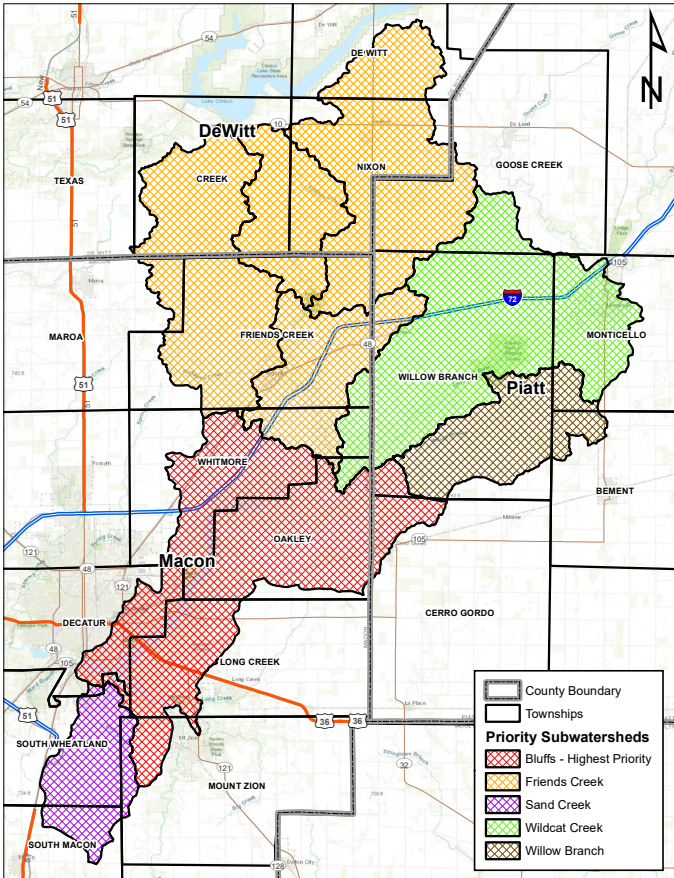
- 1. Cover Crops** – up to **\$103.80 per acre** for drilled, spring terminated, more than one species. Cover crops are being offered on portions of fields more susceptible to erosion and nutrient loss.
- 2. Nutrient Management** – **100% of the cost covered** for a nutrient management plan and up to **\$85.94 per acre** for deep placement of nutrients, and associated record keeping, soil and stalk testing.
- 3. No-Till/Strip-Till** - **\$22.74 per acre** to transition to no-till or strip till.
- 4. Tile Drainage Management** – **100% cost-share** for drainage water management (manual or automated water control structures), bioreactors, and saturated buffers.

Additional financial incentives such as **service and product discounts**, in addition to **base rates**, are available from program partners and vendors, which can further increase cost-share rates.

Other notable program elements include:

- **Streamlined USDA signup process and assistance with paperwork.** When cost-share becomes available in early 2024, interested landowners/growers will contact either the City of Decatur directly or a private contractor to complete initial eligibility screening and begin the sign-up process prior to any interaction with the County USDA-NRCS office.
- Up to **5-year contracts** for cover crops and tillage practices.
- **Free one-on-one non-USDA technical and management assistance** from area farmers and crop advisors.
- Generous **lump-sum payments** for practice test plots prior to enrolling entire or partial fields.
- **No Adjusted Gross Income** or AGI caps.

Free equipment rental may be offered by a local retailer on a first-come-first serve basis. Other practices currently being negotiated with the USDA include generous **short-term land rental payments for harvestable filter and field borders, financial support for transition to organic, and substantial land rental and direct payments to plant hemp.** Fields are not eligible if already enrolled in a USDA program for the same practice.



Priority areas or “subwatersheds” for the initial years of the RCPP include the Bluffs, Friends Creek, Sand Creek, Willow Branch, and Wildcat Creek.

- 1. Bluffs Watershed. Includes all or parts of these townships:**
 Mount Zion Twp., Decatur Twp., South Wheatland Twp, Long Creek Twp., Willow Branch Twp., Whitmore Twp., Oakley Twp., and Cerro Gordo Twp.
- 2. Friends Creek Watershed. Includes all or parts of these townships:**
 DeWitt, Goose Creek, Creek, Nixon, Texas, Maroa, Willow Branch, Friends Creek, Whitmore, Oakley.
- 3. Sand Creek Watershed. Includes all or parts of these townships:**
 Mount Zion, South Macon, Decatur, South Wheatland, Long Creek.
- 4. Willow Branch Watershed. Includes all or parts of these townships:**
 Monticello, Bement, Willow Branch, Cerro Gordo.
- 5. Wildcat Creek Watershed. Includes all or parts of these townships:**
 Goose Creek, Monticello, Willow Branch, Friends Creek, Whitmore, Oakley.

If you own/operate farm ground in one of these areas and are interested in learning more or being considered for financial assistance, please contact your county representative.

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