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Dufferin County extends Rural Water Quality Program funding for five years

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Dufferin County has extended its commitment to the Grand River Conservation Authorities' Rural Water Quality Program (RWQP) for an additional five years.

The Dufferin Rural Water Quality Program is a grant program for landowners undertaking projects to improve and protect water quality.

Led by the Grand River Conservation Authority, in partnership with neighbouring conservation authorities, the program helps protect the headwaters of the Credit, Grand, Saugeen, Humber, and Nottawasaga Rivers and downstream communities.

Eligible landowners can receive grants for a variety of projects through the program, including; fencing to exclude livestock from watercourses; cover crops to protect fields from wind and water erosion over the winter; crop nutrient planning; erosion control structures, such as water and sediment control basins; tree planting for wetlands and natural area restoration; and decommissioning or upgrading water wells.

According to the Grand River Conservation Authority, the program has been able to provide $198,000 in grants to support the completion of 140 projects in Dufferin County, since 2017.

The Grand River Conservation Authority says the projects enabled through the grant program not only aid in water quality but also offer additional environmental, economic and social benefits.

?They help to improve landscape resilience to extreme weather, sequester carbon, maintain healthy soils, and enhance wildlife habitat and biodiversity,? reads a press release from the conservation authority.

The renewal of the Rural Water Quality Program does come with changes to grant rates and the eligibility of projects.

One specific change to the program is to the cover crop category, which will see the cost share amount increased to $60 per acre and up to a maximum of $4,800 per farm business.

?One thing that I have always valued is the soil,? said Scott Caughill, a Melanchthon cash crop farmer and RWQP participant. ?I continue to look for ways to improve the soil, to build up a better growing medium, and to preserve the land we require to produce our crops. The RWQP is designed for producers to learn more, do better, and develop longevity in protecting the soil while also benefiting water quality.?

Applicants who participated in the Rural Water Quality Program previously are now eligible to re-apply.

For more information on the Rural Water Quality Program (RWQP), including how to receive program guidelines and application forms, email ruralwater@grandriver.ca or call 519-621-2763 ext. 2279 to speak with a Conservation Specialist.