

Clean Water Creates Opportunities

A sustainable Ox Creek Watershed will enhance the quality of life in Benton Township by improving environmental vitality and supporting regional economic growth.

How Can Farming Impact Watersheds?

Ox Creek is a crucial part of a Watershed.

No matter where you live, we all live in a watershed.

But what is it and what is its place in our community?

A Watershed is an area of land that drains rain water or snow into one location such as a stream, lake or wetland. These water bodies supply our drinking water, water for agriculture and manufacturing, offer opportunities for recreation and provide habitat to numerous plants and animals.

How can standard agricultural practices cause issues?

Runoff and erosion transport soil, fertilizers, pesticides, and pollutants directly into Ox Creek. Good things that crops need, such as organic matter and nutrients, can also be washed away.

How do we keep a watershed area healthy?

Best Management practices to control water runoff are key... water runoff needs to be slowed down, spread out, and soaked in!

What Areas Are Included?

Ox Creek Watershed is in the far west part of the larger St. Joseph River Watershed. Ox Creek flows into the Paw Paw River, then to the St. Joseph River, and out to Lake Michigan.



What is the Plan for Agricultural Areas?

Agricultural conservation practices not only help **improve water quality**, but they can **increase crop yield and quality**.



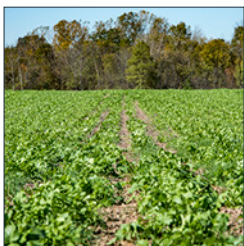
STREAMBANK AND SHORELINE PROTECTION

Controlling streambank and shoreline erosion by restoring and protecting banks will decrease sediment in lakes and other bodies of water. This measure can also significantly reduce phosphorus transport from adjacent agricultural fields.



WETLAND RESERVE EASEMENT

Restoring wetlands to conditions prior to conversion to farmland provides huge benefits. They help recharge groundwater, reduce flooding to surrounding areas by acting as a sponge, filter water before it reaches creeks and rivers, and provide wildlife and pollinator habitat.



COVER CROPS

Plants established for seasonal cover such as grasses or legumes can protect soil from erosion and increase rain infiltration. This reduces sediment and nutrient runoff into nearby waterbodies. Retained organic matter and nutrients are available to crops increasing yields.



FILTER STRIPS

Areas of vegetation are planted in strips between cropland, grazing land, forests and environmentally-sensitive areas such as streams and rivers. Filter strips reduce and slow runoff of sediment and nutrients from soil and increase infiltration and groundwater recharge.



DRAINAGE WATER MANAGEMENT

Water-control structures are used to manage the timing and the amount of water discharged from agricultural drainage systems. DWM improves water quality and crop production by reducing excess nutrient discharge and making water available to plant roots.



NO-TILL

Farming without tilling leaves crop and plant residue in place so organic matter and nutrients are retained. Less soil disturbance protects from erosion and sediment runoff. Crops use water more efficiently as rain and irrigation water is captured and evaporation is reduced.

OUR PARTNERS

