

December 15, 2016

Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC)—District 6  
c/o Mr. Tim Yova  
Eastgate Regional Council of Governments  
100 E. Federal Street  
City Centre One, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Youngstown, Ohio 44503

Dear Mr. Yova and Members of NRAC District 6:

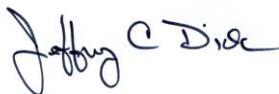
On behalf of Youngstown State University's College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) where I am professor and chair in the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences, I am writing to express my support for Natural Areas Land Conservancy's application for Clean Ohio funding to fund the Bloomfield Swamp Restoration project in Trumbull County.

Natural Areas Land Conservancy is pursuing a one-of-a kind wetland restoration that entails restoring hydrology in an agricultural ditch and redirecting water flow on to the historic floodplain. In conjunction with restoring hydrology, NALC will dedicate funds to the management of invasive species and planting of native species adapted to hydric soils. The full scope of the project includes a 3-mile long restoration of Snyder Ditch that will result in approximately 207 acres of restored wetlands. NALC is requesting funding to match the existing \$1.9M that has been awarded to the project through an Ohio EPA program. The Clean Ohio request will be specifically used and matched by funds dedicated to the Trumbull County portion of the project. The results of the project will include reducing flood potential to downstream communities, reducing nutrient inputs to downstream water bodies including Lake Roaming Rock and Lake Erie, and providing diverse, high quality habitat to numerous threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

Student and faculty researchers from Youngstown State University have been granted access to the Bloomfield Swamp site by the property's current owner since 2012. Access and the unique restoration project create invaluable opportunities for our students to gain hands-on field experience in their chosen fields of Geological and Environmental Sciences. As an educator and a researcher, I have long advocated for these sorts of inquiry experiences "in the field." This particular field site and project, with its exceptional natural resources and exemplary restoration potential, allows my colleagues and I to offer our students a spacious outdoor learning laboratory where lectures and classroom learning come to life. Its relative proximity to the University's campus and the Greater Youngstown area in which the majority of our students reside enables students to take full advantage of this opportunity. The benefits of an opportunity such as this to furthering Youngstown State University's reputation as a 21<sup>st</sup> century STEM learning environment convince me that NRAC District 6's investment in this Clean Ohio restoration project will generate positive outcomes far and wide.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide further information as you consider the merits of this incredibly worthwhile Clean Ohio Conservation Fund expenditure.

Sincerely yours,



Jeffrey C. Dick, Ph.D.  
Professor and Chair, Geological and Environmental Sciences  
College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics