

**FRAGILE LAND RETIREMENT**

**Cost-share Rate:**

- Up to 50%; funding source, program, & location may influence maximum grant

**Purpose:**

- To improve water quality by retiring fragile agricultural land and creating vegetative buffers along watercourses and wetlands.

**Eligibility:**

- Property must fall within SCRCA watershed
- Complete an Environmental Farm Plan (completed EFPs will take priority)

**Eligible Projects:**

- Permanent retirement of flood plains
- Retirement of steeply sloped and erosion-prone lands
- Buffer strips on pasture land and cropped fields
- Tree windbreaks to prevent wind erosion
- Retirement of up to 250' around locally or provincially designated wetland boundaries
- Retirement of sensitive groundwater areas
- Establishment of woody fence rows to create wildlife corridors and linkages from wooded areas

**General Comments:**

- To be eligible for the grant, trees, shrubs or native grasses and wildflowers must be planted on the retired acres.
- A plan is required specifying species, planting density, location, site preparation and maintenance. To promote approval, the plan should be developed in conjunction with Conservation Authority forestry staff or a private consultant.
- Land must have been cropped or pastured agricultural land within 2 years of the application to be eligible for land retirement incentive.
- Proper site preparation is required for tree planting.
- The participant is responsible for the care and maintenance of tree plantings.
- Livestock must be excluded from the site.
- All trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers must be native unless strong reasoning can be provided for alternate stock.

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**Contact SCRCA  
staff for more  
information on  
eligibility criteria  
and technical  
assistance.**

Continued on reverse

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- In most instances, large stock trees will not be eligible for cost-sharing unless strong reasoning can be provided by Conservation Authority forestry staff or private consultants for alternate stock. The Healthy Watershed Program Review Committee may consider providing funding for large stock projects equivalent to seedlings, where suitable, in their opinion.

#### **Project Details:**

##### *Fragile land retirement:*

- Fragile lands are tilled or pastured lands subject to either severe water erosion or flooding.
- Livestock must be fenced out of retired land.

##### *Buffer strips:*

- Buffer strips may be established along watercourses adjacent to either pasture or cropped land.
- Minimum buffer width is 10 feet. Wider buffers are encouraged.
- To be eligible, appropriate tree or shrub species must be planted in the buffer strip.
- May require municipal approval for tree planting along municipal drains.

##### *Windbreaks and Shelterbelts:*

- The purpose of the funds is to protect and improve water quality; windbreak eligibility will be decided on these strengths.

#### **Eligible Costs:**

- Design, engineering, minor excavation, material and labour costs of buffer strips.
- Trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers and planting costs.
- Tree protection systems and maintenance agreement costs obtained through the CA or planting contractor.
- Establishment of cover crops on tilled land (in conjunction with tree planting).

#### **Ineligible Costs:**

- Commercial stock, fruit trees or Christmas tree species that are commercially marketable in less than 5 years are not eligible.
- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.

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