



LAKE SIMCOE

SOIL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

With new cost-share opportunities!



The Soil Health Improvement Project

The goal of the Lake Simcoe Soil Health Improvement Project (LS-SHIP) is to support efforts to improve soil health on agricultural lands within the Lake Simcoe watershed. LS-SHIP provides multiple options for producers to access financial support to implement eligible Best Management Practices (BMPs) that make a difference on the landscape. The Soil Health Check-Up offers producers an opportunity to work with a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) or Professional Agrologist (P.Ag.), free of charge, to identify soil health challenges and develop BMPs tailored to the specific needs of their operation.

Why is a Soil Health Check-Up important?

The Soil Health Check-Up is a chance for producers to work with a CCA or P. Ag to assess the good, and the less than ideal realities, of a farm's soil health. Developing an in-depth understanding of the fields can help identify problem areas or practices, and reveal opportunities to introduce BMPs that build soil health and improve the overall productivity of the farm. The Check-Up also provides much needed data about conservation practices in Ontario. Data will be aggregated with information from other farms to reveal accurate trends about Ontario's agricultural practices. This will provide answers to the question "What are Ontario farmers doing to address soil health challenges?"

For more information and a list of eligible CCAs and P.Ags visit the Soil Health Check-Up webpage at www.ontariosoilcrop.org/oscia-programsshcu/.

Am I eligible for LS-SHIP?

To be eligible, the farm property where the proposed project will be implemented must:

- 1** Be located in the Lake Simcoe watershed (see map on page 2)
- 2** Have a valid Farm Business Registration Number or be able to provide an appropriate religious, cultural or gross farm income exemption
- 3** Have a Premises Identification (PID) Number – information on obtaining a PID Number is available at www.ontariopr.com, or by calling 1-855-697-7743
- 4** Have completed an Environmental Farm Plan within the last 5 years – information on the Environmental Farm Plan workshop is available at www.ontariosoilcrop.org or by calling OSCIA at 226-706-8669
- 5** Have a completed Soil Health Check-Up with a participating Certified Crop Advisor or Professional Agrologist (a Soil Health Check-Up is not required for all LS-SHIP cost-share options – see page 4 for more information)

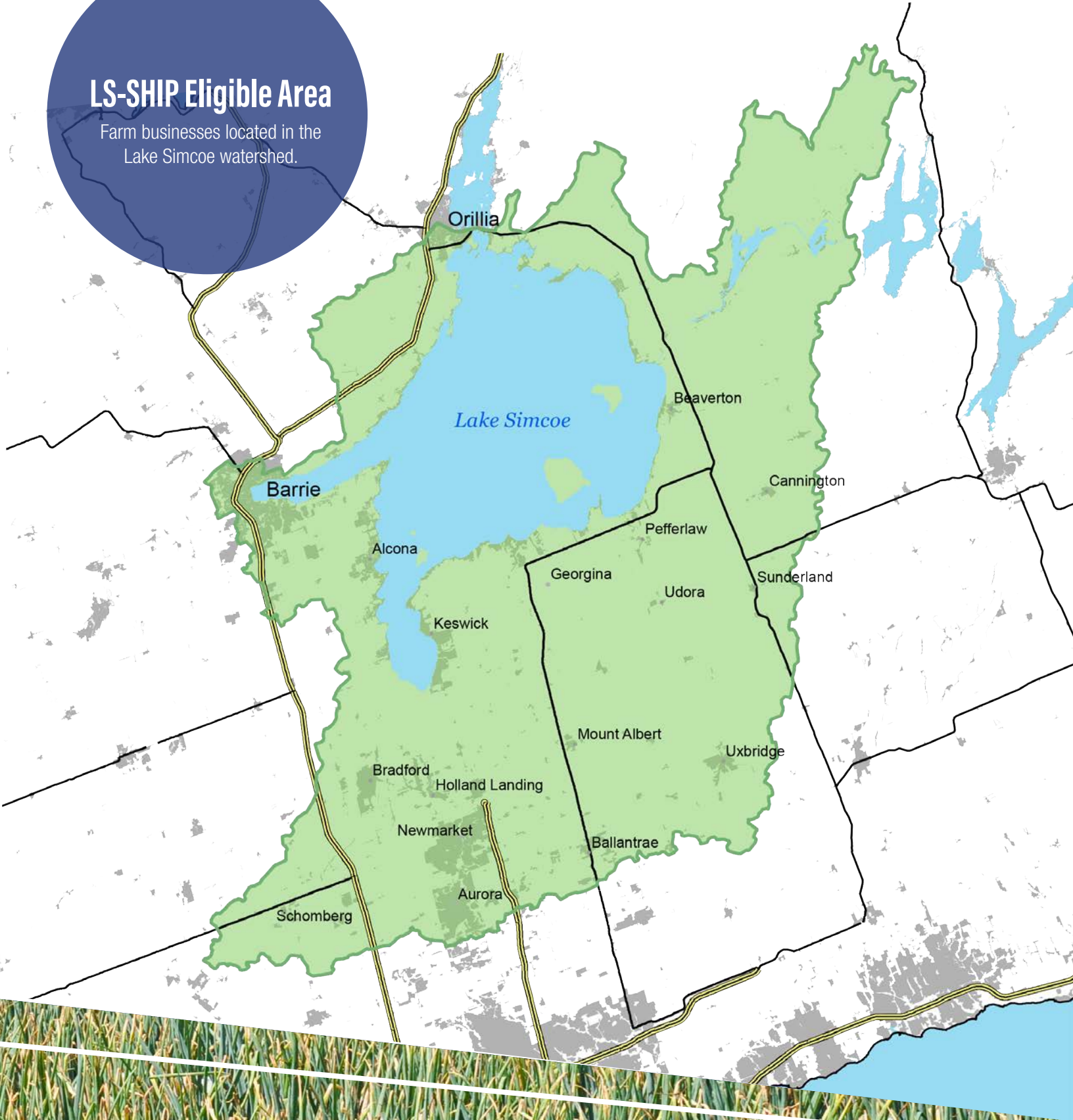
Questions?

Give us a call at
226-706-8669
or email
SHIP@ontariosoilcrop.org




LS-SHIP Eligible Area

Farm businesses located in the Lake Simcoe watershed.





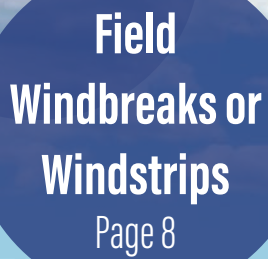
**Eligible Best
Management
Practices**



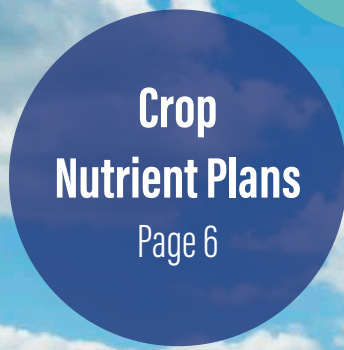
Cover Crops
Page 5



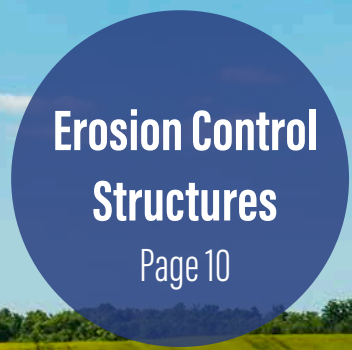
Buffer Strips
Page 7



**Field
Windbreaks or
Windstrips**
Page 8



**Crop
Nutrient Plans**
Page 6



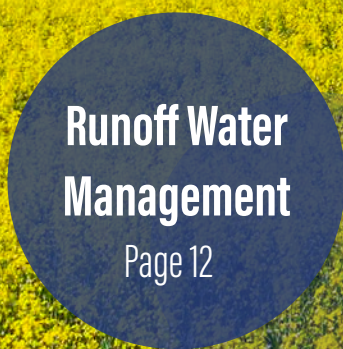
**Erosion Control
Structures**
Page 10



**Equipment
Customization**
Page 9



**Fragile Land
Retirement**
Page 11



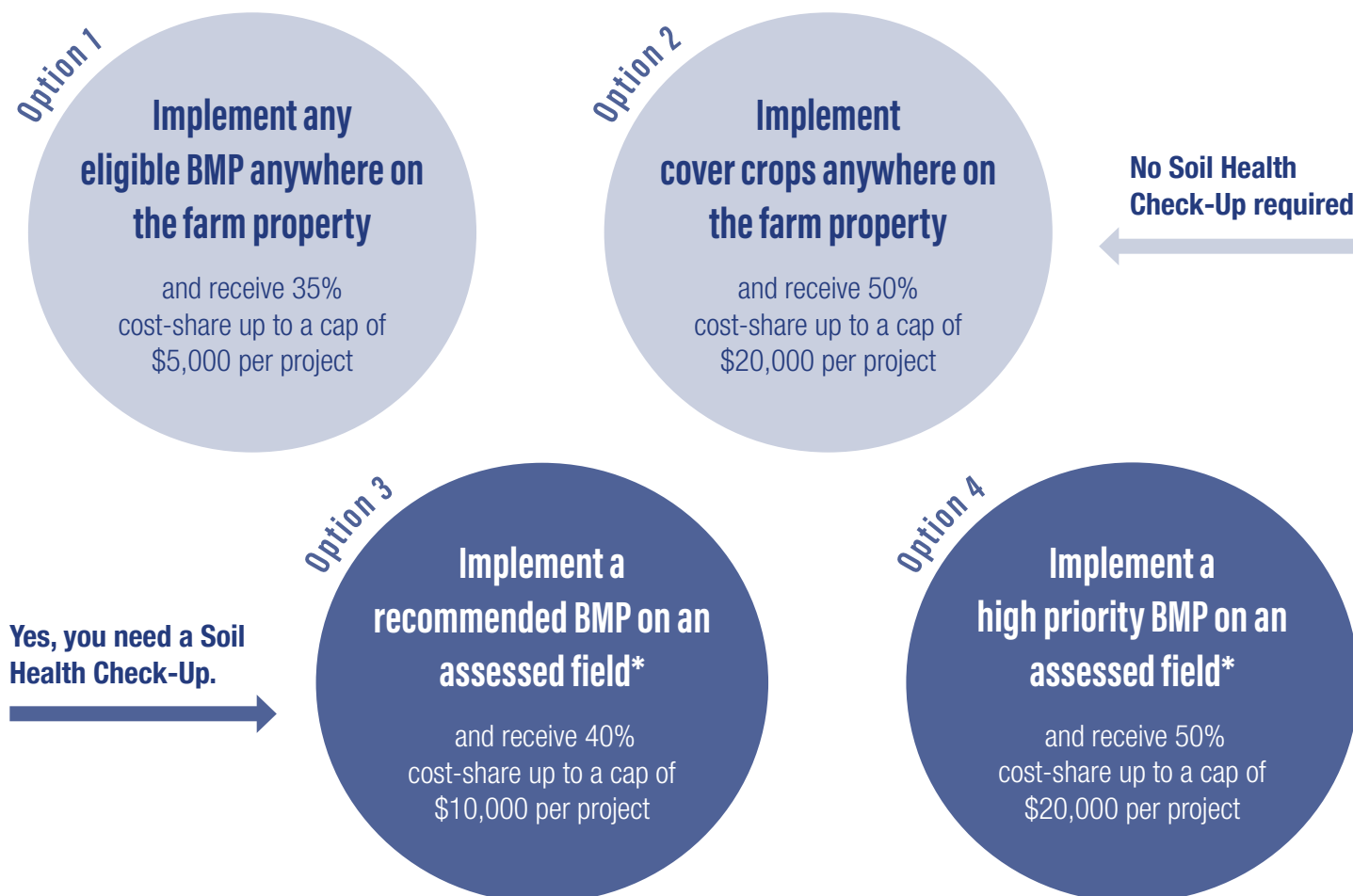
**Runoff Water
Management**
Page 12

Cost-Share Funding Options

The maximum funding available for a single farm business is \$20,000 for 2017 (including the multiple project bonus). There is no limit to the number of applications a farm business can submit.

Multiple Project Bonus!

Receive a 5% bonus (on total cost share) for implementing more than one approved project.



Eligible Invoice Dates:

Options 1 and 2: Eligible project invoices must be dated after February 1, 2017.

Options 3 and 4: Eligible project invoices must be dated after the completion of your Soil Health Check-Up.

Project Completion and Claim Submission Deadline for all approved projects:

December 15, 2017.

*as identified through a Soil Health Check-Up.

Options 3 and 4 require a completed Soil Health Check-Up. If you have not yet completed a Soil Health Check-Up, your projects are only eligible for Options 1 and 2.

Submit your application by:

Email SHIP@ontariosoilcrop.org

Fax (519) 826-4603

Post Environment Programs
Ontario Soil and Crop
Improvement Association
1 Stone Road West, Guelph ON
N1G 4Y2

SUPPORTED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Cover Crops

Funding to support an increased use of cover crops to provide undisturbed cover over winter months and/or early spring months. Funding is available based on invoiced seed and planting costs. We encourage the submission of a photo (geo-referenced and dated after planting) to confirm crop seeding and establishment with the submission of your project claim.

Eligible

- Cover crops seeded post harvest or interseeded into a standing crop
- Single or multiple species cover crop mixes
- Cover crops seeded across an entire field to provide undisturbed cover over winter months
- Cover crops seeded in priority erosion prone areas (e.g. knolls on sandy soils) to provide undisturbed cover over winter months
- Planting costs incurred by the producer (in-kind) or custom applied (dedicated pass only)

Ineligible

- Costs associated with mechanical or chemical termination of the cover crop
- Equipment modification costs
- Fertilizer and crop protection costs
- Crops that will be harvested or grazed leaving less than 6 inches (15 cm) of cover crop growth over winter or fall terminated
- Commodity crop seed, with the exception of fall planted spring cereals (e.g. oats)
- Seed mixes containing invasive plant species
- Seed produced by the farm business applying for funding (bin run seed)



Crop Nutrient Plans

Funding to support the development of a Crop Nutrient Plan that spans one full crop rotation cycle with a minimum three year plan required. This plan should consider crop rotation, cover crops, organic amendments, tillage practices, yield, soil test results, etc. to make a detailed but conservative fertilizer-use plan. An appropriate, qualified professional, such as a Certified Crop Advisor, must complete this plan. A copy of the plan must be submitted to OSCIA with your claim.

Eligible

- Written crop nutrient plan covering one full crop rotation cycle (minimum three year plan required) that must include:
 - Soil sampling and analysis (including frequency of sampling, sampling plan, and soil test results that include organic matter, soil phosphorus, pH, etc.)
 - Maps of fields, locations of any sensitive features requiring special management or setbacks
 - Plan must outline, at a minimum, the following details on a per field basis:
 - Crop rotation
 - Tillage practices for each crop
 - Nutrients applied from all sources (timing, placement, rates)
 - Crop removal and the nutrient balance for each crop, including credits from legumes and/or manure
 - Fertilizer recommendations for each crop
 - Management practices to reduce risk of nutrient loss
 - May also include the following other eligible activities to support the development of the crop nutrient plan:
 - Manure sampling and analysis
 - Data collection materials such as soil probes
 - Plant tissue sampling and analysis
 - Contingency planning
 - Soil conservation practices and planning for implementation within the crop rotation
 - Annual subscriptions to data management systems (limit of one subscription per eligible farm business)
- Consulting fees for plan development services provided by appropriate, qualified professional (e.g. Certified Crop Advisor)
- Plans developed using NMAN or other planning and decision support tools

Ineligible

- Yield monitors and other GPS enabled data collection tools
- Manure storage plans (i.e. the MSTOR portion of any plan)
- Computer hardware and software
- Costs associated with the renewal of an existing plan, or repeat services on the same crop areas
- Crop scouting and pest monitoring
- Professional services not directly related to the Crop Nutrient Plan
- In-kind time invested by the producer for preparing the plan
- All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)
- License activation fees
- Any practice or technology where phosphorus use efficiency is not the primary objective (including the use of Greenseekers and SoilsScan technology)

Note: Plans are living documents and should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis or as required when new soil sample information is collected.

Buffer Strips

Funding to support the establishment of permanently vegetated buffer strips within riparian zones alongside streams, drains, rivers, ponds, wetlands and lakes. Buffer strips shall be a minimum of three metres in width from top of bank.

For tree planting, cost-share applies to total project costs of up to \$20/tree, inclusive of all costs and in-kind contributions.

Eligible

- Seeding field margins within or adjacent to riparian areas that were cropped within the past two years to permanent vegetative cover
- Purchase and planting of permanent native or non-invasive introduced species of trees or shrubs, grasses, legumes or wildflowers to stabilize riparian zones
- Tree species and planting techniques that adhere to practices that would typically be advocated by a professional forester
- Site preparation and planting time
- Tree guards
- Mulch
- Weed control systems

Ineligible

- Payments for land taken out of production
- Ongoing maintenance costs (including maintenance and renovation of existing tree plantings)
- Trees, shrubs, or other plantings for landscaping or around buildings
- Planting invasive plant species
- Establishment of trees, shrubs, or other plantings that are intended for harvest for economic benefit within 15 years, such as fruit orchards, Christmas trees, ornamental nursery stock, etc.
- Costs for stock and planting in excess of \$20/tree inclusive
- Livestock fencing and stream crossing structures
- Commodity crop seed

Have a question?

Contact OSCIA directly at
226-706-8669 or
SHIP@ontariosoilcrop.org.

Field Windbreaks or Windstrips

Funding to support planting of permanent tree windbreaks or seasonal vegetated windstrips to control wind erosion.

For tree planting, cost-share applies to total project costs of up to \$20/tree, inclusive of all costs and in-kind contributions.

Eligible

Windbreaks:

- Planting of native or non-invasive introduced species of trees and shrubs (seeds, seedlings, or plugs)
- Tree species and planting techniques that adhere to practices that would typically be advocated by a professional forester
- Site preparation
- Weed control system
- Mulch

Windstrips:

- Seed costs for seasonal vegetative windstrips
- Site preparation

Ineligible

- Trees, shrubs or other plantings for landscaping or around buildings
- Establishment of trees, shrubs, or other plantings that are intended for harvest for economic benefit within 15 years, such as fruit orchards, Christmas trees, ornamental nursery stock, etc.
- Ongoing maintenance costs (including maintenance and renovation of existing tree plantings)
- Planting invasive tree, shrub or plant species
- Payments for land taken out of production
- Costs for stock and planting in excess of \$20/tree inclusive
- Costs of grass seed or seed for other commodity crops intended for harvest
- Site preparation costs that exceed 10-times the cost of planting the field windbreak
- Block plantings



Equipment Customization

Funding to support adjusting new or existing equipment to reduce phosphorus loss and/or to increase soil health. Cost-share funding will apply to the cost difference between the current or conventional equipment and the modified or updated equipment, **or** it will apply to specialized components, as applicable.

A detailed quote providing the estimated value of the current or conventional equipment and the new equipment must be submitted with your application form. This must be a written estimate from an equipment dealer for similar or baseline equipment. Choosing not to include documentation for the value of your current equipment will result in a flat rate discount of 50%, with no opportunity for appeal.

Funding is only available if the practice is **new** to your farm operation. To be eligible, the practice can not have been used more than once in the last five years, as identified on your Soil Health Check-Up.

Eligible

Tillage:

- Strip-till units or components
- No-till units or components

Fertility (specifically addressing phosphorus only):

- Equipment or components to enable banding or variable/controlled rate applications
- Equipment that allows the implementation of right source, right rate, right time and/or right place (4Rs of nutrient stewardship, the Fertilizer Institute)

Planting:

- No-till units or components
- Equipment for the purpose of planting and managing cover crops

Equipment or components to manage crop residues, including:

- Row cleaners
- Roller crimpers
- Trash whippers

De-Dirting

- Equipment or components to enable in-field soil removal (de-dirting) of vegetable crops

Ineligible

- All GPS systems, related components and licensing fees (including display systems, autosteer components and modems)
- Yield monitors
- Annual services fees of any type
- Tires and tracks
- Self-propelled equipment
- Maintenance costs
- Warranties for equipment or components used to modify equipment
- Any equipment or equipment customizations that do not support an increase in soil health or a decrease in the risk of phosphorus loss from the farm system
- BMPs that specifically target nitrogen and/or potassium (including Y-drop technology)
- Any tillage equipment that is not no-till or strip-till (including vertical tillage)

Erosion Control Structures

Funding to support building or upgrading in-field erosion control structures. These structures include: Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCoB), terraces, grassed waterways, and contour strips of perennial vegetation.

All structural erosion control projects must be designed by a Certified Erosion Control Contractor or other professional (engineer, Conservation Authority, etc.) following the specifications included in the OMAFRA Publication 832: Agricultural Erosion Control Structures – A Design and Construction Manual. A link to the list of Certified Erosion Control Contractors is available on the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website.

Projects involving municipal drains require approval in writing from the local Drainage Superintendent (letters should be submitted with the LS-SHIP Application). For all erosion control projects, copies of required permits must be submitted to OSCIA with the project claim.

Eligible

- Infrastructure and development costs
- Labour costs
- Consulting and engineering fees
- Upgrade/modify existing tile inlets or outlets
- Grassed waterways
- WASCoBs
- Contour terraces
- Tile inlet upgrades for the purpose of reducing erosion or slowing infiltration
- Improvements to support stream bank or ditch bank stabilization, and grade control structures (e.g. rock chute spillways, surface inlet structures)

Ineligible

- Systematic tile drainage systems that are not an integral part of the erosion control structure
- Constructing new drainage channels or repair of existing
- Installation of drop inlets for drainage of ponded surface water (not associated with erosion control structure)
- Tile inlet upgrades for the purpose of increasing capacity for rapid flow
- Leveling of land/fields
- Applying cost-share to projects initiated through the Drainage Act
- Ongoing maintenance costs
- Constructed works in-channel to provide fish habitat (e.g. pools and riffles, natural channel design)
- Construction and land improvement activities not associated with soil erosion control
- Repair and maintenance of existing erosion control work
- Payments for land taken out of production



Fragile Land Retirement

Funding to support costs of taking fragile lands out of agricultural production and seeding to permanent vegetative cover.

Applicants must demonstrate a long-term commitment (at least 15 years) to retiring land in order to access support under this BMP. For tree planting, cost-share applies to total project costs of up to \$20/tree, inclusive of all costs and in-kind contributions.

Eligible

- Seeding fragile lands sites that were annually-cropped within the past two years to permanent vegetative cover, including severely eroded knolls and compacted headlands
- Establishment of native trees or shrubs, native grasses or native wildflowers to stabilize sites
- Tree species and planting techniques that adhere to practices that would typically be advocated by a professional forester
- Purchase and planting of permanent native or non-invasive introduced species of trees or shrubs, grasses, legumes or wildflowers to stabilize fragile lands
- Site preparation
- Weed control system
- Mulch

Ineligible

- Payments for land taken out of annual crop production
- Planting/establishment/maintenance costs of marketable products (e.g., hay, forages, nuts, fruit, bio-products)
- Commodity crop seed

What is Fragile Land?

Fragile land has limited potential for profitable agricultural production. It is often prone to water, tillage or wind erosion. Years of producing row crops on these lands often result in severely eroded landscapes.

Runoff Water Management

Funding to support activities that are designed to manage and treat runoff leaving agricultural land and reaching watercourses.

All activities completed under this BMP must be supported by a Certified Soil Erosion Control Contractor, your local conservation authority, Ducks Unlimited Canada, an OMAFRA representative, a licensed drainage contractor or licensed engineer to confirm the design is appropriate and supports reducing the loss of soluble reactive phosphorus.

Eligible

- Activities that support the management of runoff water; for example:
 - Constructed wetlands that collect and treat tile drain water or surface waters from agricultural land before entering a watercourse or drain
 - Enhancing standing inlets to slow movement of water from field and increase infiltration time
 - Installing biofilters to reduce nutrients levels in tile flows
 - Installing vegetated grass strips on the contour to reduce velocity of water flow and increase infiltration

Ineligible

- Tile drainage components that are not an integral part of the phosphorus reduction activity
- Applying cost-share to projects initiated through the Drainage Act
- Ongoing maintenance costs
- Constructed works in-channel to provide fish habitat



Soil Health Improvement Project Forms

Enrolment Form

The Enrolment Form collects information about the farm business involved in the proposed project. If you have already enrolled on paper with OSCIA through another program since 2013, there is no need to resubmit this form.

TIP: If you are unsure whether or not you have already enrolled, include a completed Enrolment Form with your application to ensure that your information is up to date.

Application Form

Choose the LS-SHIP Application Form for the BMP you wish to implement and indicate how you will complete the project. Estimated costs of the required materials, services, and in-kind contributions for the project are required (as applicable). You will be notified by email or post of your approval status, cost-share percentages and allocations. At this time, you can safely initiate projects as approved, knowing they will receive financial support if all terms and conditions are followed. Applicants who implement their project(s) before receiving final approval from OSCIA do so at their own risk.

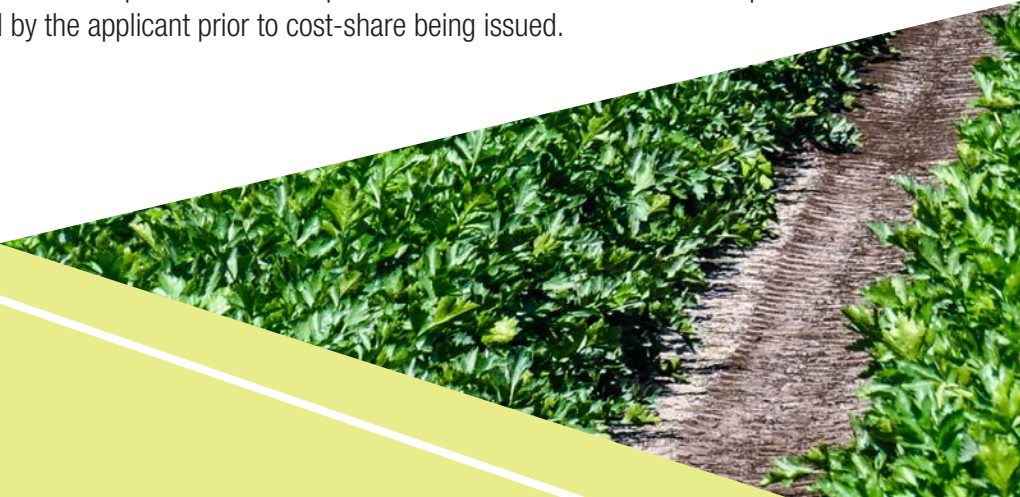
Claim Form

The LS-SHIP Claim Form and In-Kind Claim Declaration Form will be provided to approved applicants by OSCIA upon approval. Upon completion of your approved project, you must submit a LS-SHIP Claim Form in order to receive the allocated cost-share. Invoices, proof of payment and the In-Kind Claim Declaration Form must accompany the Claim Form for each individual project. See page 14 for complete details on in-kind contributions.

All required forms are available to download from the OSCIA website on the LS-SHIP page. Don't have access to the internet? Call Amy Tenbult directly at 226-706-8669 and request a paper copy of the desired form(s) be mailed to you.

What rules should I be aware of?

- All applicable authorizations, permits and approvals are the responsibility of the applicant.
- The maximum LS-SHIP cost-share contribution per farm business for all projects is \$20,000 for the 2017 project year. The maximum cost-share funding level a single project may receive is 50% cost-share funding up to the project cap of \$20,000.
- When determining the total estimated cost of the project, obtain quotes and be accurate regarding figures for all applicable materials, services, equipment and in-kind contributions. Please be very clear in your cost descriptions. Gross over-estimates lead to project dollars being unnecessarily allocated and can limit opportunities for other applicants.
- If the applicant goes ahead with the project before receiving final approval from OSCIA, they do so at the risk of forfeiting the cost-share if all terms and conditions are not satisfied.
- OSCIA issues payments after projects have been completed and the required documentation is received and processed – this means projects must be paid for in full by the applicant prior to cost-share being issued.



In-Kind Contribution Policy

- The applicant's in-kind labour, up to a maximum of \$1,500, as supported by an In-Kind Claim Declaration Form and reported on the Project Claim Form, may be considered eligible for cost-share. Reasonable hours of labour invested by the applicant, his/her dependents, and business partner(s) may be claimed. Costs associated with completing the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP), Soil Health Check-Up, project planning, supervision, or administration **will not be cost-shared**.
- The maximum allowable labour rate is \$20 per hour. OSCIA will make a final determination on what a reasonable number of hours claimed is based on the BMP being implemented and the nature of the work performed.
- The maximum allowable in-kind equipment rate for a tractor and implement is \$50 per hour of operation. This rate cannot be increased for heavy excavation equipment. Applicable in-kind operator charges may be claimed along with the in-kind equipment rate, at up to the accepted maximum hourly labour rate.
- If a business plans to claim in-kind contributions, accurate estimates must be reflected in the total project cost submitted with the LS-SHIP Application. If actual project costs exceed the original estimate, there is absolutely no obligation by OSCIA to extend cost-share to the additional costs.
- When making a project claim for in-kind contributions, the figure added to the Claim Form must be supported by an In-Kind Claim Declaration Form which details specific hours worked, dates the work was performed, and the hourly rate(s) charged. The In-Kind Claim Declaration Form will be provided to applicants upon receiving final project approval.
- Eligible in-kind contributions will be considered equivalent to cash payments for purchased services. As such, the cost-share percentage and project funding cap will also be applied to the eligible in-kind contributions when calculating the final cost-share contribution for the completed project.
- The applicant's signature on the Claim Form declares that the information contained in the claim is true and accurate. In-kind contributions provided to the project after submission of the project claim are not eligible for cost-share.

Eligible In-Kind Costs

- Applicant, applicant's business partner(s) or applicant's family members

Ineligible In-Kind Costs

- Applicant's employee(s)
- Rates that exceed \$20 per hour for in-kind labour
- Rates that exceed \$50 per hour for a tractor and equipment

Submit your application by:

Email SHIP@ontariosoilcrop.org

Fax (519) 826-4603

Post Environment Programs
Ontario Soil and Crop
Improvement Association
1 Stone Road West, Guelph ON
N1G 4Y2

LS-SHIP Limits of Funding

1. LS-SHIP cost-share is available to new projects initiated on or after February 1, 2017 or the date of the approved party's Soil Health Check-Up, whichever is later. To receive cost-share, all projects must be complete and operational with the Claim Form received in the OSCIA Guelph office by **December 15, 2017**. OSCIA reserves the right to perform a project inspection at a mutually agreeable time, prior to the claim being processed.
2. LS-SHIP cost-share may be utilized by eligible applicants for approved Best Management Practices that will be used on farm properties in the Lake Simcoe watershed. Evidence of the area in which the project is completed may be requested.
3. Participation in *Growing Forward 2* or other OSCIA delivered cost-share programs over previous years by the business does not affect the allowable contribution available for LS-SHIP in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
4. OSCIA cannot issue cost-share funding for incomplete projects.
5. Stacking of LS-SHIP contributions towards the same project by two or more applicants is not permissible.
6. Only invoices from vendors or service providers directly involved with the item or service purchased by the approved party will be accepted with the project claim.
7. All invoices that support materials or services provided to a project must originate with companies or individuals not in any way associated through ownership with the business making the project claim. All eligible invoices must match the business name identified on the 2017 Claim Form.
8. OSCIA reserves the right to require additional documentation and ultimately accept or reject submitted project invoices and proof of payment for cost-share consideration.
9. A single project may receive cost-share from one BMP category only.
10. A single project may receive a maximum of \$20,000, which is the project cap at the "High Priority" funding level.
11. A single eligible farm business may not receive more than \$20,000 for the 2017 project year.
12. The business shall ensure that the total cost-share assistance from all sources, including other government or non-government programs, for eligible expenses shall not exceed 100 percent. The business is required to identify (at the time the claim is submitted) all other sources of funding for eligible project expenses.
13. Across all BMP categories, HST is not an eligible expense.
14. Hand or power tools or attachments are not eligible for cost-share. Maintenance or extended warranties are not eligible.
15. OSCIA will not accept additional LS-SHIP Applications once the total LS-SHIP funding available for the project year has been committed. The funds will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.
16. All applicable information on the LS-SHIP Application Form must be complete before it is submitted to OSCIA Guelph. If OSCIA Guelph office considers a 2017 Application Form to be incomplete, the form will be returned in its entirety to the applicant to retrieve the missing information, when time permits. Only proposed projects deemed to be complete by OSCIA Guelph office will be considered for cost-share.
17. If the applicant starts work on the project prior to receiving final approval to proceed from OSCIA Guelph office, they do so at the risk of forfeiting the cost-share if all terms and conditions are not satisfied.
18. The information presented is the best available at the time of printing. Check with OSCIA for applicable updates. Material is subject to change without notice as the cost-share project evolves.
19. If a proposed project receives a LS-SHIP allocation, the same project is not eligible for other funding programs delivered by OSCIA.
20. Hourly wages and benefits of seasonal and full-time employees of the business are not eligible for cost-share.
21. Financing charges and loan interest payments are not eligible for cost-share.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Ontario.



LAKE SIMCOE SOIL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT