



# DEFIANCE RESEARCH ALLIANCE

Defiance College, in partnership with the City of Defiance, received a grant from the federal Department of Education, thanks to Senator Sherrod Brown’s Congressionally Directed Spending request. This funding supported a collaborative research program, through the Defiance Research Alliance (DRA), focused on water quality issues in Northwest Ohio, addressing systemic problems in the Upper Maumee River Watershed. The DRA aims to examine excess nutrients in the Upper Maumee Watershed, enhance education for secondary and college students, and conduct research on real-world solutions. Over the last three years, research took place at Defiance College’s new Maumee River Watershed Research Center, benefiting the local Defiance County community and fostering a better understanding of water as a vital natural resource.



**Defiance, OH—April 3, 2025:** The Defiance Research Alliance and the Maumee Watershed Alliance proudly hosted the Land to Lake Conference: *Partnerships for Practical Solutions*, a full-day event focused on innovative conservation strategies within the Western Lake Erie Basin. Bringing together a diverse group of experts, community leaders, farmers, and environmental stakeholders, the conference fostered collaboration and shared solutions for improving water quality across the Maumee Watershed.

*“The objective of hosting this event was to showcase innovations and demonstrate where partnership opportunities exist, enabling us to work collaboratively across the watershed to enhance water quality,”* said Jennifer English, DRA Project Coordinator, and MS4 Coordinator for the City of Defiance.



## Engaging Presentations and Expert Panels

Attendees heard from a wide range of speakers who are leading the charge in conservation and water quality efforts:

- Dan Wire and Jacquelyn Buck from the Maumee Watershed Alliance (shown, left) shared insights from their Farmer Input Series, highlighting the power of collaboration.
- Matt Fisher of the Lake Erie Foundation presented case studies on successful phosphorus reduction efforts using targeted edge-of-field filters.



- Scott Singer, a third-generation Defiance County farmer, detailed his experience with a conservation ditch project that functions as a linear wetland (shown, above).
- Interactive panel discussions gave attendees a deeper understanding of real-world strategies for conservation and monitoring across the region.



Above: Mayor Mike McCann delivers a memorable closing statement with a call to action.



Dr. Yixi Qiu is the new Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at Defiance College and a member of the DRA.

Dr. Qiu received her masters in Municipal Engineering at Chongqing University in China and her PhD from Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi in Coastal Marine System and Science. At Defiance College, Dr. Qiu not only teaches environmental science and engages students in hands-on learning, but also contributes to research projects with the DRA that strengthen understanding of environmental systems and the connections between land and aquatic ecosystems. She is committed to combining education and research to support sustainable environmental practices in the community.



**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Chris Winslow**

The importance of data and measurement was a central theme, underscored by keynote speaker Dr. Chris Winslow, Director of the Ohio Sea Grant and the Ohio State University's Stone Laboratory. "You cannot manage what you do not measure," Dr. Winslow stated, emphasizing that effective water quality management begins with sound scientific monitoring.



Above, left: Siena Larrick, H2Ohio Outreach & Engagement Coordinator, presents information on innovation in monitoring during the panel discussion.  
Above, right: Attendees review and discuss information in the Watershed Gallery.



For more information visit [landtolake.org/watershed/dra](http://landtolake.org/watershed/dra)

