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City of Defiance

# East River Drive Wetlands Design-Build Project

Defiance, Ohio



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*An H2Ohio-funded project transforms 40 acres of agricultural land into a functioning wetland complex, improving habitat and water quality in an important watershed.*

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## **SERVICES**

Design-build  
Ecological Restoration  
Water Strategies

**O**riginating in Fort Wayne, IN, the Maumee River passes by the City of Defiance as it flows along its 137-mile route to the mouth of Lake Erie, forming a watershed vital to agricultural and economic activity.

The Maumee River and ultimately Lake Erie face significant drainage problems, including excessive nutrient loadings from agricultural runoff that stimulate hazardous algal blooms, pose a public health risk, and negatively impact local economies. To address these issues, the State of Ohio launched the H2Ohio Initiative in 2019, a program with goals to restore wetlands and improve water quality in Lake Erie and the Ohio River basins.

Using funds received from this initiative, the City of Defiance selected Biohabitats to provide design and construction services for this project that converted 40 acres of agricultural land along the Maumee River into a functioning wetland complex. Once hydrologically connected to the river, the wetland system helped reduce the number of excess nutrients flowing into the Maumee River, and ultimately Lake Erie, from agricultural, residential, and golf course runoff.

The project restored functional flood flow attenuation, enhanced aquatic, wetland, and riparian habitats, and improved the quality of the water that reaches the residents of Defiance and flows through to Lake Erie. This effort also considered the site's attraction by integrating aesthetic benefits to encourage tourist activity and promote economic growth within the city.