After helping fund the replacement of two septic systems and the installation of a handful of agricultural best management practices last year, the Bacon Creek Watershed Council and Kentucky Waterways Alliance are back with more funding from Kentucky Division of Water for projects in the upper watershed. We have a new grant for more septic tank pump-outs, repairs, or replacements up to a total of $6,000 for each project.

Has it been more than five years since you had your septic tank pumped out? Does your septic system have a pipe into the creek? Do you notice standing water over your septic tank? If so, then we’d love for you to apply! For our septic work, we pay 80% of the cost of the work, not including permit fees.

We also have funding to help install agricultural best management practices that focus on water quality improvements. In the past few years, we’ve worked with farmers to install stream or pond fencing, stream crossings, heavy use area protection and more. For the agricultural work, we pay 75% of the costs, and farmers are expected to contribute 25% of expenses through financial, labor, or equipment match.

Please apply if you’re interested!
What is a Harmful Algal Bloom?
Excess phosphorus and nitrogen from lawn and agricultural fertilizer can run off the land when it rains. Failing or poorly maintained septic systems can also leach nutrients.

When these excess nutrients flow into our waterways, they feed the growth of algal blooms. As these spread, they can suffocate fish and aquatic species. Some algal blooms produce toxins; these blooms are referred to as **harmful algal blooms**.

Why do they matter?
Human contact with harmful algal blooms can lead to rashes, sore throats, and breathing difficulty. Swallowing the toxins can even cause organ failure or death, especially in pets and livestock.

Over the past several years, these blooms have occurred in many Kentucky lakes. Last summer, a harmful algal bloom formed along 600 miles of the Ohio River.

What can be done?
The first step is to reduce nutrients entering our waterways. Cities must do their part and deal with wastewater. Our work fixing septic tanks and keeping livestock out of ponds and creeks help to reduce nutrient loads. There are plenty other conservation farming practices like grass swales and buffers that help, too! For larger operations, developing and implementing a nutrient management plan is a must!