

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative



Since 2010, the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)** has served as a catalyst for unprecedented federal agency coordination to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has provided the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) approximately \$227,225,207 through several Interagency Agreements to support the Great Lakes Action Plan II goals, primarily through Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Through the GLRI, NRCS can provide additional assistance beyond Farm Bill Programs to farmers and landowners to combat invasive species, protect watersheds and shorelines from non-point source pollution, and restore wetlands and other wildlife habitat areas.

NRCS focuses its work on private lands in priority watersheds, and GLRI helps to accelerate voluntary conservation efforts throughout the region. NRCS targets GLRI funds to watersheds that could have the biggest impacts on improving water quality. Some of the watersheds include the Genesee River, the Lower Fox River and Green Bay, the Western Lake Erie Basin, and the Saginaw Bay Basin.



Since 2010, NRCS has funded more than 2,700 conservation contracts, with over \$115 million in GLRI financial assistance, to help farmers implement conservation practices on over 613,000 acres within the Great Lakes Basin priority watersheds. Through implementing conservation practices in the Great Lakes Region efforts to target phosphorus delivery have reduced over 1.1 million pounds of phosphorus in GLRI targeted areas.

The top conservation practices installed within GLRI under CTA and EQIP are: Conservation Crop Rotation; Residue and Tillage Management; Nutrient Management; Integrated Pest Management; Cover Crops; Forest Stand Improvement; Early Successional Habitat Development; Brush Management; and Herbaceous Weed Control.

NRCS GLRI efforts also target wildlife habitat and invasive species control. Over 8,000 acres of wildlife habitat has been protected, restored and/or enhanced by GLRI through implementing 84 contracts totaling \$284,534. Over 2,600 acres of aquatic/terrestrial invasive species were controlled by GLRI funded projects in 70 sites totaling \$539,200.





NRCS has established partnership with federal, state, and private partners to better target conservation for improving water quality in the Great Lakes Region. NRCS is proud to be involved in GLRI, working directly with landowners and communities to improve and protect our natural resources and help people help the land.

NRCS continues to work with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) through edge-of-field monitoring to monitor water quality benefits of conservation practices in priority watersheds located in Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, New York, and Indiana.

Through GLRI funding, the NRCS, the USGS, University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, and Purdue University are monitoring sediment and nutrient export in surface water tile runoff from select farm fields in four priority watersheds.

The Great Lakes states have entered into more than 95 agreements with local conservation entities to provide technical assistance, outreach, education and conservation practice implementation.

Some of these local partners are: Soil and Water Conservation Districts; universities; state Departments of Agriculture; Farm Bureau; and state watershed alliances. As part of this partnership approach, NRCS can publicly showcase and demonstrate leading innovative conservation practices via a network of Demonstration Farms.

NRCS has developed a unique partnership with the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) to collaboratively reduce nutrient and sediment loss with an emphasis on a significant reduction of phosphorus loads in the Great Lakes Region. GLC has successfully supported over 120 local projects.



NRCS also has other target conservation initiatives in the Great Lakes Region to enhance water quality: National Water Quality Initiative, Western Lake Erie Basin Initiative and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

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GLRI Conservation success by the numbers

- More than **2,700 conservation contracts** with private landowners.
- **Over 500** Conservation Nutrient Management Plans
- **550,000 acres** of Nutrient Management
- **Over 1.1 million pounds** of Phosphorus reduced in the GLRI Priority Watersheds
- **Over 120 Projects** Great Lakes Commission Sediments and Nutrient Reduction Program
- **Over 8,200 acres** of wildlife habitat protected
- **Over 2,600 acres** of invasive species controlled

